

## BLUNDELL'S COLLIERIES: WAGES, DISPUTES AND CONDITIONS OF WORK

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WHEN Jonathan Blundell and his partners took over Michael Jackson's Orrell Colliery in 1776, the rate paid at Orrell to a collier for getting, filling and drawing a "score" of 24 baskets, each weighing 150 lbs. was 1s. 0d.—an almost exact equivalent to  $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton. The average amount of coal produced by each collier per day was two "score", so that an average week's wage was 12s. 0d. for a six-day week. Men on day wage received 8s. 0d. to 10s. 0d. a week, but girls, youths and old men got from 4s. 0d. to 6s. 0d.

In the lean years after poor harvests, when the price of bread rose, colliers' wages were often insufficient to provide food for their families. Consequently there was much unrest which very often led to rioting, quelled only by the calling in of troops. The first of these riots in Orrell and Pemberton that we know anything about occurred in 1779 when food prices were high. Perhaps colliers were not involved in this, because the main object seems to have been the smashing of some of Arkwright's spinning frames in Pemberton. Thirteen years later, however, there was again much unrest, and Henry Blundell, who was then a partner in the Orrell Collieries with his father Jonathan, and was also mayor of Liverpool, wrote to William Pitt, the prime minister, in April 1792 about the threat of the journey-men carpenters to pull down the houses of people agitating for the abolition of the slave trade, if they were successful in getting that trade abolished. Blundell's house was not threatened however, as he and his father and brothers were engaged in the trade. Blundell also wrote to Henry Dundas, the home secretary, regarding the masters of the coal flats on the rivers and canals:

"There seems too general an appearance of discontent amongst all artificers and labourers, which must if possible be prevented spreading into tumult. Annexed is the copy of a note I have this moment received, which comes from a large body of men, and we must either comply with this demand or be guarded against the consequences. The other owners of collieries and flats in this neighbourhood have received a like notice."

*Enclosure*

Liverpool

26th May 1792

"The masters of the coal flats in your employ do hereby give notice that they will not proceed in the said flats after the ninth day of June next ensuing, under one shilling per ton per trip—which they hope you will agree and consent to

give, without any stop being put to the said business, as we are determined not to proceed under that price from that date."

Dundas replied that:

"although there may not be any immediate disposition to riot among these people, it appears from your representation, that you should be watchful over their conduct and that you should pursue every legal and constitutional means of suppressing such combinations and bringing the leaders to punishment. From the disposition which has recently been shown by a certain class of people at Manchester, it is not conceived to be advisable at this moment to remove any part of the troops now stationed there from thence, unless in a case of absolute necessity and if such necessity should hereafter exist, of which you must of course be the most competent judge, the Commanding Officer at that place will have instructions to comply with any requisition from you for a detachment from the forces under his orders."

In the following October there was trouble at the collieries at Orrell, and Blundell again applied to Dundas for troops.

"The agents from the extensive collieries in the neighbourhood of Wigan (and on which the town [Liverpool] depends for its fuel) came this evening with the news of the colliers having left their work and collected in a riotous manner to the number of near five hundred, and had been with them thus assembled to demand an extravagant advance of wages. They have given them only till tomorrow at 3 o'clock to consider of it and if their demand is not complied with, they threaten to destroy the Works by pulling up the engines, throwing down the wheels and filling up the pits. The consequences to the coal proprietors would be very serious, and to the country in general, if this combination is not immediately suppressed. I am requested by the coal owners who are now with me to entreat of you to give orders to Major Campbell and the Commanding Officer at Manchester, to march part of their men to Wigan in aid of the Magistrates."

Dundas instructed Major Campbell to give "every assistance in his power to the Civil Magistrates in preventing any mischief". He also remarked that such combinations had lately become so frequent that it required more than ordinary exertion of the civil power to suppress them and they should enforce a rigid execution of the law, "against those on whom it can clearly attach". The strikers had only been out for two days when Blundell again wrote to Dundas:

Liverpool

3rd October, 1792

"I returned this morning from Wigan. . . . Our grand object is to save our steam engines for drawing the water. No material mischief had been done last night, but they threatened much for today if their terms were not complied with. A good collier and his drawer can at present earn from five shillings to eight shillings per day between them and if we were to comply with their demands the advance would be near 2s. per day more."

These earnings are nearly as high as those a collier and his drawer got a hundred years later in 1892 at Blundell's Pember-ton Colliery. The appearance of the military had the desired effect, and on 10 October the colliers began to return to work. No damage was done to the engines; they were prevented from working for two days "but from which I expect we shall none



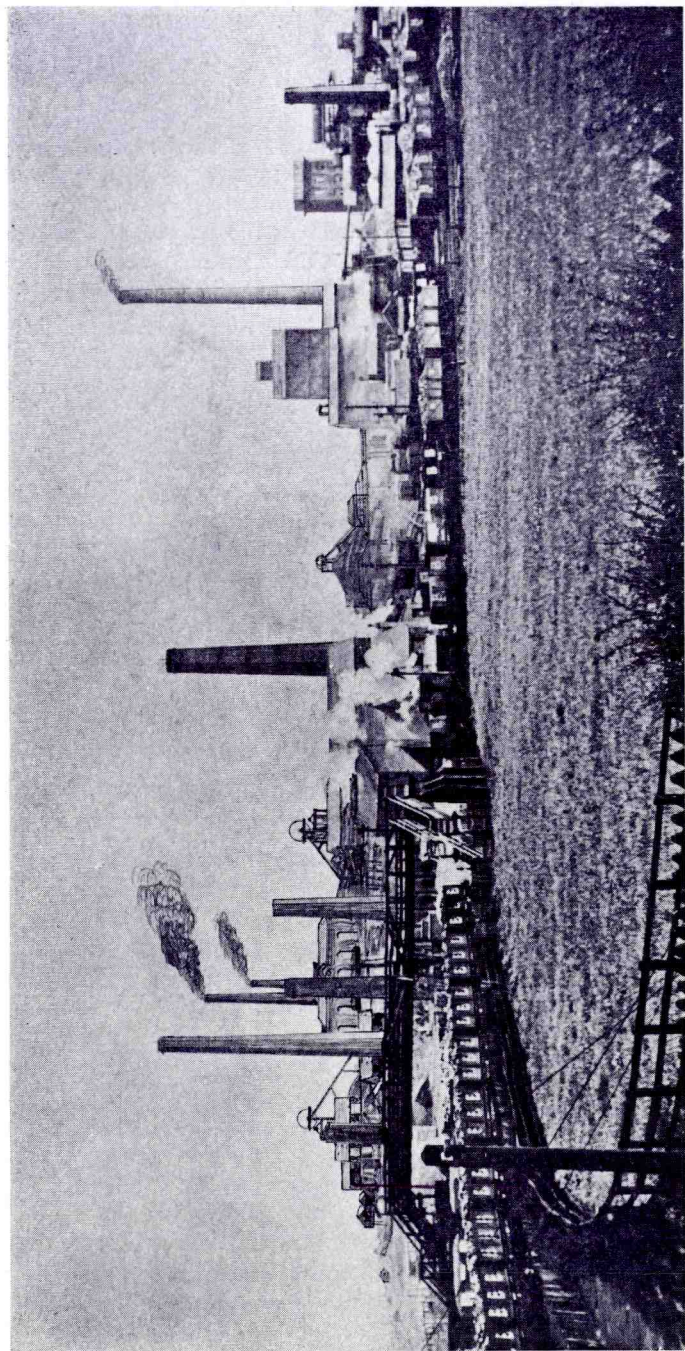


Plate 18.

BLUNDELL'S PEMBERTON COLLIERY IN THE EARLY 1920s

of us sustain any material injury." Many colliers and cannelers from distant works had "come to observe the progress of our people and had they succeeded it would certainly have spread far over this county".

In 1791 Henry Blundell and his father Jonathan had taken over the Ince Cannel Works at Kirkless near Wigan. Cannel commanded a higher price than coal, but it was harder to get and a higher scorage rate had to be paid. Weekly score sheets, signed by John Harvey the agent, for the cannelers at two of the pits at Blundell's Works at Ince, have been preserved. They cover the period from Michaelmas 1792 to Lady Day 1793 and show that the maximum amount of cannel produced in a week of six days by one man (a Christopher Santus) was 9 score at 24 baskets of 150 lbs. to the score, which is equal to 14.4 tons or 2.40 tons per day. The average was very much less than this, however, at 1.43 tons per day. Getting cannel was an unenviable task as, after it had been holed or undercut, pieces burst off the face due to pressure and, while it was being holed, sharp splinters of it flew from the pick point. For this reason gauze masks were used by cannel getters in the cannel seam at Ince during the latter part of the nineteenth century. A cannel getter's face and body generally had more blue marks from this cause than a collier's.

During the 25 weeks under review, the pits were idle for 11 odd days. These included Michaelmas, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, and Lady Day. In addition to these holidays there was a considerable amount of absenteeism: for instance, John Green absented himself on 23 days, James Miller on 27 days and Henry Etock on 21 days. This was typical of all the cannelers.

Although the eleven-month and twelve-month bonds were common in Lancashire at this time, it would appear that at these pits bonds were entered into for the six months from Michaelmas to Lady Day, and from Lady Day to Michaelmas as new names appeared and old names disappeared from the lists on those days. The system of binding a collier to a particular coal master for a definite period was universal throughout Lancashire, and indeed throughout most other coalfields. Small sums of money were given in "earnest" to the collier on the signing of the bond. Since a minimum period of twelve months' residence within a parish entitled a man to parish relief during times of distress, most coal masters preferred that the contract or bond should be for eleven months or less. By this means the collier was prevented from fulfilling his residential qualification



for parish relief, and, in consequence, from becoming a burden on the local community. Typical local agreements at this time contained such items as these:

1. The collier was to serve the master to the best of his skill and ability for the period stated.
2. The collier must furnish drawers "to draw the coals to the Eye of the Pitts and there hang or cause to be hung the same upon the hook or hooks and do and perform all other things for making the same ready for raising and winding up out of the said pitt or pitts."
3. The master on his part contracted to pay a certain sum per work, load or score of baskets hewn, drawn and hung upon the hook ready for winding.
4. If a collier was absent from his work he had to pay a fine, generally about a shilling per day or night and in proportion for a lesser period.
5. Fines were also levied on colliers who holed in the coal instead of the floor or warren earth, or who persuaded drawers not to fill the baskets full.
6. All coal had to be sent up free from "earth, bass, dross, sleck, slags, or other rubidges".
7. Very heavy fines were imposed on men who did not work according to the "liking and satisfaction" of the steward, agent or underlooker.
8. The master could demand that the collier work in the night turn if the occasion was urgent.
9. Long-drawing money was paid generally after 45 or 50 yards, and when slack was required there was a set payment for filling and drawing it to the pit.
10. Concessionary coal was supplied free to every collier.
11. For the supply of way-candles, riddles, sleds, picks, spades and for sharpening the picks, a certain number of baskets had to be supplied free to the owner.
12. On the other hand, the owner allowed baskets to be booked for opening out new places, *etc.*

There are many similarities between old collier's bonds and modern agreements for strait-work: long-drawing money, and fines for dirty coal, for example. One colliery in the old part of the South Staffordshire coalfield still refers to the working places in strait-work or pillar-work as "so-and-so's bond" and to the men who work in them as "bondsmen".

The bond system prevailed in the Wigan area until the early 1840s. John Winstanley, a collier, said in 1842 that it was quite common for Mr. Thicknesse, who had taken over the Ince Cannel Works at Kirkless in 1815, to hire men, and lads who could just use a pick, for eleven months.

"A collier will borrow three pounds or four pounds from Mr. Thicknesse for himself and if he has a lad who can use a pick, he will borrow three pounds or two pounds for him and they will both sign an agreement to work with Mr. Thicknesse for eleven months. Mr. Thicknesse will stop three shillings a week off the reckoning of the father and two shillings a week off the lad until it is paid and they always make the father put his hand to the lad's paper and if the lad does not pay his two shillings a week to the master he looks to the lad's father to pay it."

Some masters were said to take advantage of this indebtedness to them and forced colliers to work in wet places. Wm. Harrison, the relieving officer for Orrell, Pemberton and Up Holland

said in 1842 that the system was dying out and most colliers "are now hired with a fortnight's notice". The system continued in the Northern coalfield however for a further thirty years.

During the famine winter of 1800 serious rioting again occurred in the Wigan district, and there were many disturbances during the following twenty years, notably in 1812 and 1819. In 1812 the situation was so serious that a meeting of the lieutenantancy was held in Wigan. The earl of Derby, the lord lieutenant, presided, and 56 deputy lieutenants were present including the following who had interests in the coal industry: Sir William Gerard, Meyrick Bankes, Sir T. D. Hesketh, Sir Richard Clayton, Nicholas Ashton, Isaac Blackburn, George Case, John Clarke, T. S. Standish, R. Willis, J. Walmesley, William Hulton, Michael Hughes and R. G. Hopwood. A statement after the meeting said they viewed "with horror and extreme sorrow the riots, tumults and breaches of the peace that have occurred in this county which disgrace civilised Society and are most dangerous to the Commonwealth or public polity of the Kingdom. Any of His Majesty's subjects may arm themselves and of course may use the ordinary means of force to suppress riots and disturbances". They advised the forming of regular associations for mutual defence. Informers, eager to condemn and expose the rioters, were numerous and forthcoming, though their reports were not always relied upon as appears from an editorial in the *Liverpool Mercury* for the 22 May 1812:

"The eagerness with which the violence committed by rioters in different districts is exaggerated in the Ministerial papers, frequently attracts our notice. Incidents are given continually before they are authenticated and when authenticated they are enlarged by additions of extraneous and extravagant falsehood."

There was great distress at this time, and it was said that the "common necessities of life had become luxuries to working people". The maximum earnings of a collier employed at Orrell Collieries in 1817 were from 6s. 1d. to 6s. 6d. per day, out of which the colliers had to pay their drawers. Datal or day wages varied from 10d. to 1s. 2d. for boys, and 2s. 0d. to 2s. 2d. for men. The score price for 24 baskets of 150 lbs. was 2s. 11d., which is the approximate equivalent of 1s. 10d. per ton. Henry Blundell, who had had sole control of the collieries after his father's death in 1800, had sunk his first pits at Pemberton Colliery in 1815. A wage book, covering the years 1825-6 and 1827, has survived, in which the rates of pay quoted for day-wage men differ only very slightly from those operating at the Orrell Collieries a decade earlier. Men's wages varied between 1s. 6d. and 2s. 10d. per day, and boys' between 8d. and 1s. 4d. per day. In 1830,



however, as much as 3s. 8d. was paid for a day wage, and 2s. 6d. per day was quite common.

The Combination Laws, passed in 1800, had been repealed in 1824, but during the 25 years of their existence, the colliers had used the many friendly societies as a cloak for trade union activities. At least ten of these societies were operating in Wigan before 1800, and during the period of the Combination Laws, eleven new ones were formed. The Union Society was founded at Orrell on 2 May 1808, and the Brotherly Union Society, which functioned at the Ben Jonson Inn in Pemberton from October 1794, was active during the whole period of the Combination Laws. There is a record of its rules being altered in October 1804, and again in December 1830.

By 1830 a Colliers' Union had been formed at Wigan, and, indicative of the violence of the times, is the conviction of six colliers who broke into the house of a fellow collier, smashed his furniture and raped his wife and daughter because he refused to attend a union meeting. These vicious and violent assaults by union zealots upon those of their fellows who did not share their own enthusiasm, and especially (later) on "blacklegs", were known as *ravin*, and although *ravining* was condemned by the unions, it was an all too common occurrence. The first action of this new Colliers Union was a strike in 1831 in the Wigan area, after which a general increase in wages was given to the miners. During the 1830s food prices continually rose, but wages were slow to follow and consequently there was again great distress in Wigan. A national holiday and strike was proclaimed by the Chartists in 1839, but at that time there were only about 150 Chartists in Wigan, less than a dozen of whom, it was said, would resort to violence. By 1842, however, the situation had changed completely and on 12 August of that year, a mob of 10,000 Chartists from surrounding areas descended on Wigan, forced their way into all the collieries and cotton mills, stopped the engines and turned 3,000 people out of work. It is beyond doubt that Blundell's important collieries, especially their Mesnes Pits in the centre of the town, were among those affected. On the following day some 3,000 Wiganers assembled, and after parading around the town with banners flying, marched off up Wigan Lane, where they were dispersed by a detachment of the 72nd Highlanders stationed in the town.

About this time, efforts were being made to form a National Miners' Union, and at a meeting called for that purpose in April 1843 at Newcastle-on-Tyne, a representative from a "Pemberton Colliery" was present. If this Pemberton colliery was Blundell's and not Pemberton Main Colliery at Sunderland,

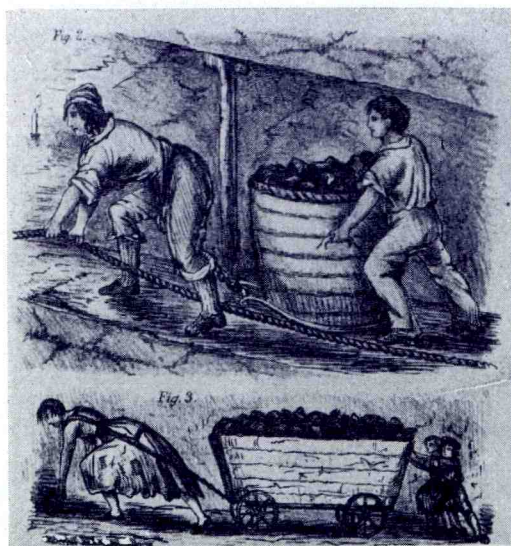


Plate 19.

THE BELT AND CHAIN SYSTEM OF DRAWING BASKETS AND TUBS USED IN THE 1840s

it was the only Lancashire colliery represented, and it is highly probable that the delegate was John Berry, who, born at Standish in 1806, had been prominent in four previous unions. During the latter part of August 1843, placards were posted in Wigan and its environs headed *Slaves, stop and read!* They announced a meeting, to be held on Amberswood Common<sup>(1)</sup> on 27 August, to be addressed, among others, by David Swallow of Wakefield, one of the founders and the first secretary of the new Miners' Association of Great Britain and Ireland. Henry Dennett presided. Daniel Thompson of Newcastle-on-Tyne proposed the resolution that wages paid to the miners in the Wigan district were insufficient to maintain themselves and their families, and that it was the opinion of the miners present that the only remedy was cordially to unite with their brethren of England, Scotland and Wales. During the afternoon the delegates held a meeting at the Crofters' Arms in Wigan: there they appointed Berry and Thompson to attend a conference of delegates to be held at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

There were strikes in Wigan during the following months, and some colliers were prosecuted for not giving notice and

<sup>(1)</sup> Amberswood Common was a favourite meeting place for large gatherings of miners for the following fifty years, and situated as it was on the doorstep of Blundells Amberswood Colliery, these meetings must have "raised the temperature" there more than at most collieries.



thereby committing a breach of contract to which they had legally bound themselves. There was great distress everywhere in the district, and further meetings proclaimed that "nothing short of strict union can have the effect of extricating the miners from their fallen condition". Wages were abysmally low, and two quoted cases of miners' earnings, after paying their drawers and paying for candles, tools, pick sharpening, etc., were 7s. 4d. and 10s. 5d. per week. The score price in the King seam at most of the Wigan pits working it had been reduced during repeated depressions from 24s. 0d. to 15s. 0d.

The new National Union rapidly gained in strength and funds. It paid £1,000 a year to William Prowting Roberts, a very able lawyer, to fight its cases. He was probably responsible for the printed addresses from the colliers employed at the largest collieries in Wigan, which appeared before the public during the last weeks of November 1843. The one composed for the miners of Blundell's Mesnes Cannel Pits reads:

To Jonathan Blundell & Son, Mesnes, Wigan

November 20th, 1843

We, the miners in your employ, beg leave most respectfully to call your attention to the present deplorable condition of ourselves and families, which we know by sad experience is mainly attributed to the very scanty pittance we receive as remuneration for our labours. You are aware that, during the late depression of trade, we bore our privations almost without a murmur and now that trade is generally admitted to be in an improving condition, we think common justice requires that we should participate in the advantages derivable from such improvements. We do not remind you of the many dangers we have to incur when toiling in the bowels of the earth nor need we refer to the insalubrious atmosphere we have to breathe, or the unnatural position in which we have to labour; you know these things at least theoretically as well as we do. Our object in presenting you with this short address, is to respectfully yet firmly, demand a slight augmentation in the scale of prices you are at present paying for the work we perform. In the name of that God who has declared "the labourer is worthy of his hire" we ask it on behalf of our once-blooming but now hunger stricken and emaciated wives and children; we ask it on behalf of ourselves who, in many instances have to descend into the pit without a breakfast for no other purpose but that you may be able to grow rich, while we hunger and sink by slow degrees into a premature grave.

We, the miners in the Mesnes, who are employed in getting good strong Cannel, think a man can get ten tubs per day.

Prices wanted

as the tubs stand now

Per tub for Cannel	6d.
Per tub for Slack	3d.
In the end	2s. per yard
Drifts	1s. per yard
Openings	1s. 8d. per yard
Roofing down as it is	6d. per yard
Sixty yards from the shaft, one penny per Score more; and so on in proportion.	

Bottom day wage men, one third added to their present wage.

We subscribe ourselves

The Miners in Your Employ

At the Wigan Cannel Works

The largest meeting of colliers that had been held in the district up to that time took place on Aspull Moor on 20 October 1844 to hear an address from Mr. Roberts, the "miners' attorney general". The colliers from Pemberton and Orrell joined their Wigan brethren and formed an impressive procession; the members of the different lodges wore their ribbons to which were appended their cards of admission. The next big meeting was at Lamberhead Green, Pemberton. George Ramsden, a Burnley miner, occupied the chair, and over 2,000 persons were present. Mr. Roberts, who gave the main address, advocated peace, law and order, and said that if work was available for 950 men and 1,000 applied for work, it was better that 950 should work and support the other 50 in idleness rather than that 1,000 should work and thus reduce the wages of all. Local colliers spoke in support, stressing the need for every miner to join the union and claiming that the union could bring men great benefits. About this time, the colliers, on the advice and direction of their "attorney general", brought a number of legal cases against the owners. In one of them, Roberts represented a collier, who wanted to be released from his contract because he alleged that the manager of his company, Harrison and Turner of Clapgate Colliery, Pemberton, was incompetent. The magistrates who heard the case were William Gerard Walmesley, a royalty owner, and John Woodcock and James Acton, both coal owners. Not unnaturally they found for the defendant, and, we may assume, they were unanimous in their verdict.

Colliery owners or their agents in the Pemberton district had already agreed not to employ each other's men unless such men had a regular written discharge from their last place of employment. It was alleged that some of the masters refused to give such discharges, and they were sued for wages under the direction of Mr. Roberts. The colliers at Winstanley Colliery were in a very unsettled state, and on 7 December 1844 serious damage was done to the houses at the Pingot, Pemberton, of two Winstanley colliers who refused to strike. Just before this on 7 November 1844 a letter was sent from the Pemberton Branch of the National Union to Mr. Tebay, the agent at the Winstanley Collieries. This was probably the first request for an increase in wages ever sent by the Pemberton branch. It was obviously not written by Mr. Roberts and mentions Blundell's Pemberton Colliery, their "next neighbouring colliery".

"Mr. Teabey,

We the colliers in Winstanley under your employ as agreed to ask for six to be taken of the score and 3d. per yard [to be added] to the coals and alf prize



of the coals for sleek and way drawing to proposal [proportion] to the coals as our next neighbouring colliery men as been receiving alf price of coals for sleek ever singst our price was taken off and they have had 2d. per yard more than we have had and 3d. per score for coals more than we have had and they have sent their statement for six to be taken of the score but if this cannot be agreed to we then ask for 3d. per shilling upon the field prices at the pit shaft.

We remin

Your obedent servants in the  
bond of unity

The common coal pit men has agreed to ask for the same advance upon the field price as the five feet men and six to be taken of the score and way drawing in proposal as before and alf price for sleek and way drawing in proposal to the coals"

The signature was a circular stamp with a figure of a heart and hand in the centre bearing the following words: "Miners Association of Great Britain and Ireland, Pemberton District, Lancashire."

Notwithstanding the very able manner in which the National Union was launched in 1841, it petered out after a disastrous strike in 1847. District lodges carried on, however, and the Wigan Colliers' Union was again active during the 1850s. It asked for an increase of 2d. in the shilling in 1853. On Friday, 4 November 1853, a large number of the coal owners and agents met at the Royal Hotel in the Market Place at Wigan to discuss this request. By the time the meeting ended, several hundred colliers had assembled in front of the hotel and showed great anxiety to know whether or not the owners were prepared to give an advance. The colliers thought that the employers might compromise and give them half the increase they demanded, but, when they learned that they were to get nothing they were bitterly disappointed. They assaulted some of the owners and agents as they left the hotel, and then went on to rampage. For several hours the town lay completely at their mercy. They broke into provision shops and distributed the contents, overturned the market stalls and broke them up for weapons, smashed street lamps, and forced an entry into some of the larger private houses in the Queen Street and Chapel Lane area. The Royal Hotel suffered the worst fate, for, apart from the smashing of doors, windows, furniture, pictures and other effects, all the drink was stolen and consumed on the spot. An attempt was even made to burn the place down. Two of the borough magistrates not connected with the coal trade tried to pacify the mob but without success. The chief constable with his seven regular constables and about twenty specials could do little; on the contrary, the sight of the special constables only incensed the mob further. Nathaniel Eckersley, the mayor and both a colliery and mill owner, decided to call in the military and about 6 p.m. despatched a locomotive to

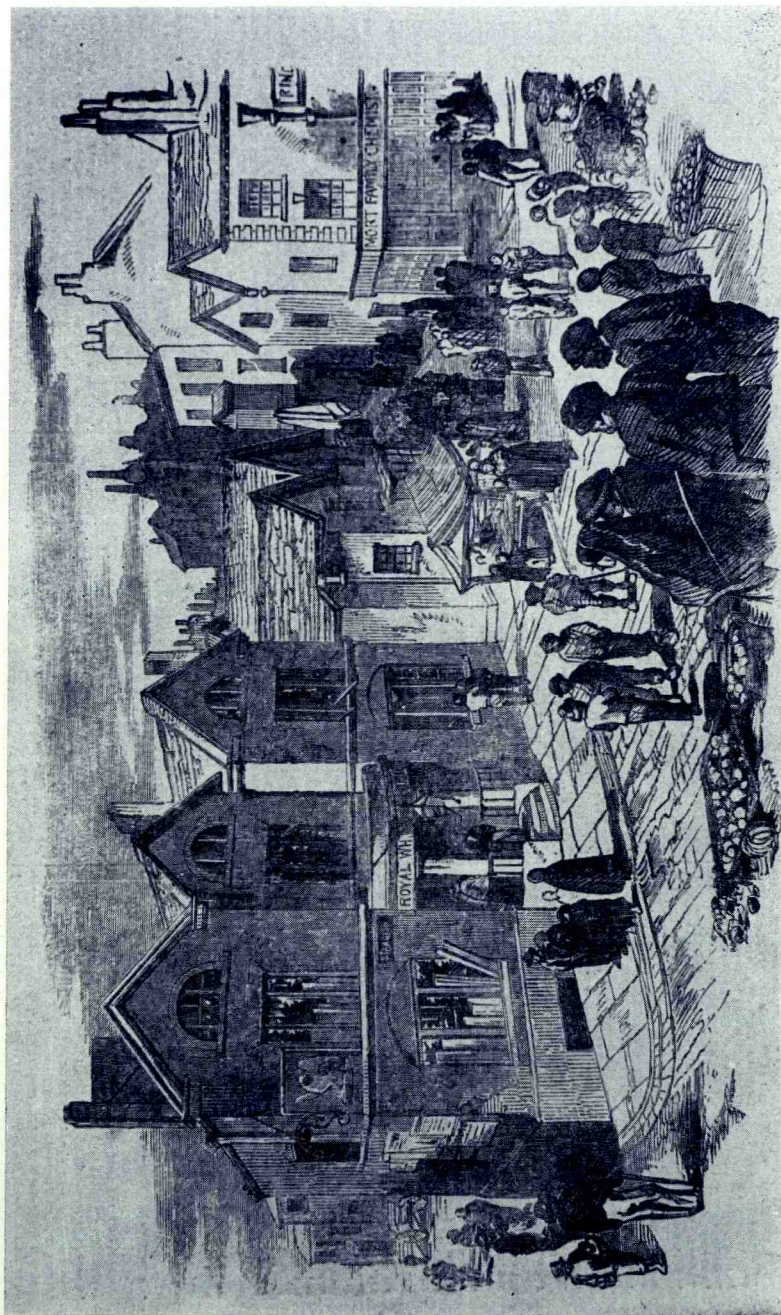


Plate 20.

THE ROYAL HOTEL, STANDISHGATE, WIGAN, AFTER THE COLLIERIES' RIOT OF 4 NOVEMBER 1853



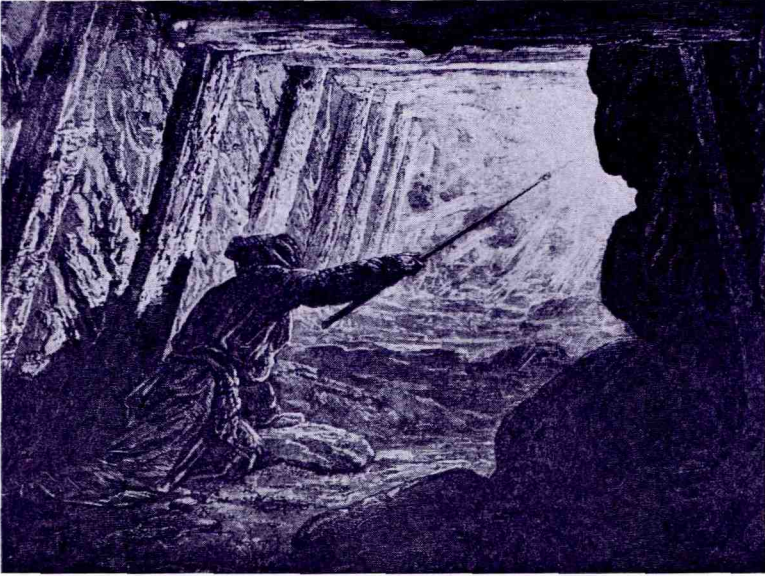


Plate 21.

FIREMAN IGNITING AN ACCUMULATION OF GAS BEFORE  
THE BEGINNING OF A SHIFT

This was common practice until the mid-nineteenth century

Preston with a request for immediate assistance. It was after midnight when the troops arrived. By then the mob had dispersed, but two foolish youths who had stayed on were arrested.

It was at this time that William Armstrong, the noted Newcastle mining engineer, was asked to go thoroughly into affairs at Blundells' Collieries, and to make a report to the executors of Richard B. B. H. Blundell, who had died in mysterious circumstances in April 1853. Armstrong's report commented on the practice of stocking coal.

"The chief reason assigned—a protection against strikes—is I think insufficient. In Northumberland and Durham no such motive ever influences colliery owners and in the Whitehaven Colliery where to a recent period considerable accumulations were encouraged to counteract a similar disposition in the colliers, the result of the present practice in having no coals in store and the freedom from stocks shows conclusively that the fear was in this instance wholly without foundation. Wages tend to equality in all collieries and if in an individual case below the standard the largest stock of coal will not prevent the men leaving for better paid employment and if equal to or above the district standard the temptation to strike is at once withdrawn. It requires but a better system in which the men have more confidence to supersede much of the complaints now alleged to prevail. If prices improve it is but fair that wages should participate in the advance and this principle is, in the Midland Counties, fully conceded, any rise or fall will affect wages rateably."

Two years later, William Greener, who had succeeded Thomas Sherratt as agent and general manager of Blundell's Collieries, fitted cages at the Bye Pit at Pemberton instead of the baskets previously in use. The price paid to the colliers when the baskets were in use was 7s. 2d. for a score of 20 baskets of riddled coal through a riddle of 19 wires, one inch mesh. Slack was paid for at the rate of 3s. 9d. for a score of 20 baskets. Each basket contained 5 cwts. of coal, so the rate per ton was 1s. 5·2d. for riddled coal. Wood Pit prices were similar for riddled coal but rather less for slack: 5s. 6d. and 2s. 9d. respectively for 20 baskets each containing 4 cwts. In the Venture Pit, where Greener introduced tubs and cages in January 1858, the rate for getting, filling and drawing the Orrell coals to the shunt was changed to 6s. 10d. for every score of 5 cwt. tubs of riddled coal, 3s. 5d. for slack, 5s. 6d. for burgey, together with an extra penny a score when the shunt was a hundred yards from the coal face.

The men had suffered a 10% reduction of wages in 1855, and by 1858 were agitating strongly for an increase of 2d. in the shilling. But they were faced by well-established masters' associations. For at least the last thirty years the colliery owners in the Wigan district had met together regularly, and they also attended meetings of the Lancashire and Cheshire owners in the Queen's and Clarence Hotels in Manchester. Not until October 1860 did the masters restore the 10% cut, and then they imposed it again in July 1861. A further reduction of 10% occurred in March 1862. Between that date and 1870, there were three wage increases of 10% each time, and two reductions, one of 10% and the other of 15%.<sup>(2)</sup> Then the boom of 1870-3 caused increases in wages totalling 60%, but in the depression which followed, the Lancashire coal owners enforced reductions amounting to 50%. The last of these reductions was in July 1877. Although only about one-fifth of the miners were union members, the resultant poverty and distress caused them to act as a body, and in 1880 meetings were held to press for an increase of 15% on the field rates at each colliery. It was due to this agitation that the Pemberton District Miners' Association was reformed in 1881.

The Employers' Liability Act was due to come into force on 1 January 1881. The coal owners in South-West Lancashire gave all their workmen notice that existing contracts of service would cease at the end of 1880, and that the new contracts

<sup>(2)</sup> A. J. Mundella, M.P., a pioneer of industrial arbitration, successfully intervened in the bitter dispute of 1868 in South Lancashire when the 15% reduction was enforced.



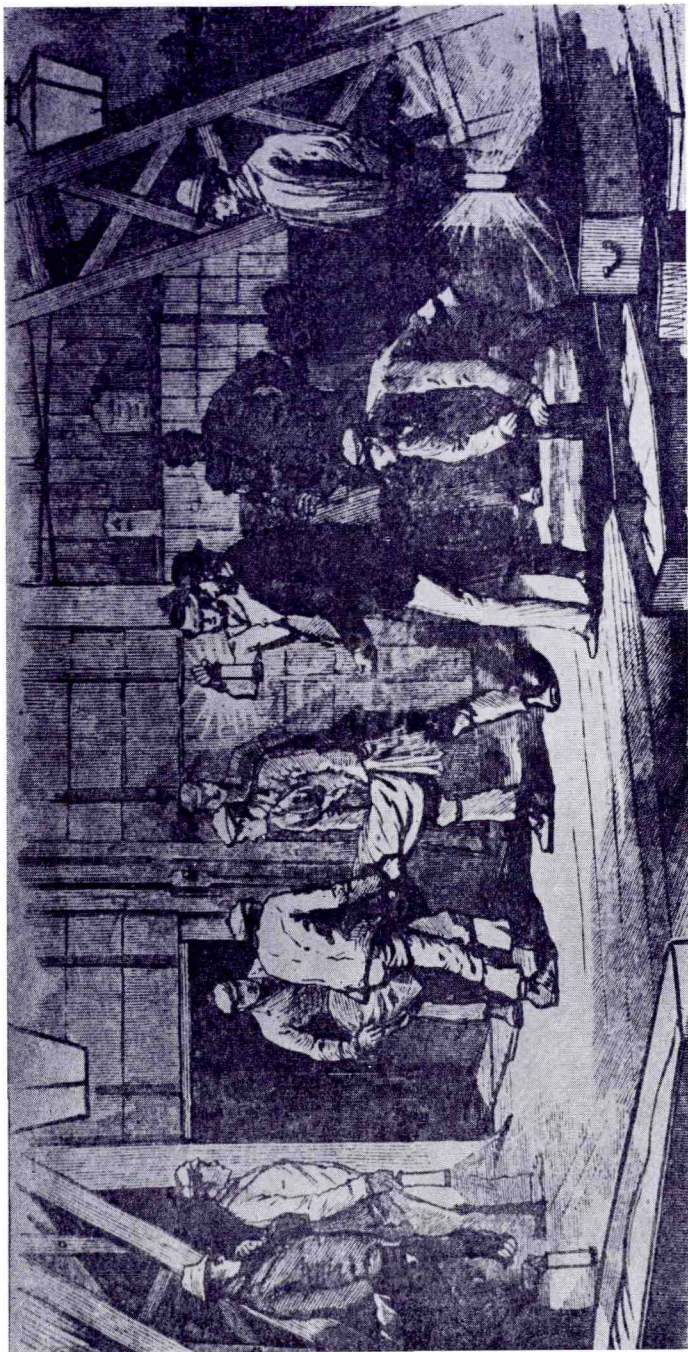


Plate 22.

BRINGING THE DEAD UP THE SHAFT AFTER THE KING PIT EXPLOSION, 11 OCTOBER 1877



Plate 23.

STAFF OF PEMBERTON COLLIERY, c. 1880  
W. J. Greener, general manager, is seated second from the left



would require them to contract out of the Employers' Liability Act. This the men would not do, and although the employers withdrew their demand early in January, the men refused to work until the increase in wages they had asked for was granted. Pemberton along with the other South Lancashire collieries was idle until March, when the increase was partially met. In 1884 the coal industry in Lancashire was again in a very unsettled state, and 27,952 men in the county received notice of a reduction in wages. A national conference was held in Manchester on 14 and 15 July. It decided against a general strike, but proposed that one or two of the largest firms in the county should come out on strike. The collieries selected were Pemberton and its neighbour, Park Lane. However, after remaining out for only four days, the men at these collieries declined to continue the fight alone and returned to work.

In 1885-6 a sliding scale, by which wages were made to correspond to coal prices, was discussed, and after much negotiation was adopted in 1888 for Lancashire and Cheshire. The miners proposed that for each variation of 3d. per ton in the selling price a change of  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  would take place in wages, but the owners insisted on 4d. instead of 3d. as the basis of the scale. After this agreement no serious disputes occurred until the newly-formed Miners' Federation of Great Britain<sup>(3)</sup> opposed the coal owners' proposal to reduce wages by 25% in 1893. In July of that year, all the men at Pemberton Colliery were given notice that their rates were being reduced by 25%. They were unanimous in their decision not to submit. The lock-out which followed lasted sixteen weeks and resulted in extreme poverty and suffering. Union funds were low, and all the money that could be scraped together only amounted to two weeks' strike pay. This provoked the Rev. John Wood, the curate at Highfield, to write an article in his magazine asking where all the funds had gone to, as there had been no major strike since 1880, and during the intervening period each miner had paid more than £12 in contributions. Doctor Ryle, bishop of Liverpool, also stirred up resentment by declaiming the miners' leaders as "fluent agitators who had nothing to lose by mistakes or strikes." Strike committees were established at Lamberhead Green, Highfield, Goose Green and Worsley Mesnes, and

<sup>(3)</sup> Formed in 1889, the Miners' Federation of Great Britain did not at first cover all the coalfields, notable exceptions being Durham and Northumberland, but nevertheless, it brought 400,000 men out in 1893. Sam Woods, M.P., of Lancashire was vice-president and Thomas Ashton also of Lancashire was secretary. Other active Lancashire officials were William Pickard of Wigan and Thomas Aspinwall of Skelmersdale. John Cheetham was agent to the Pemberton Branch.

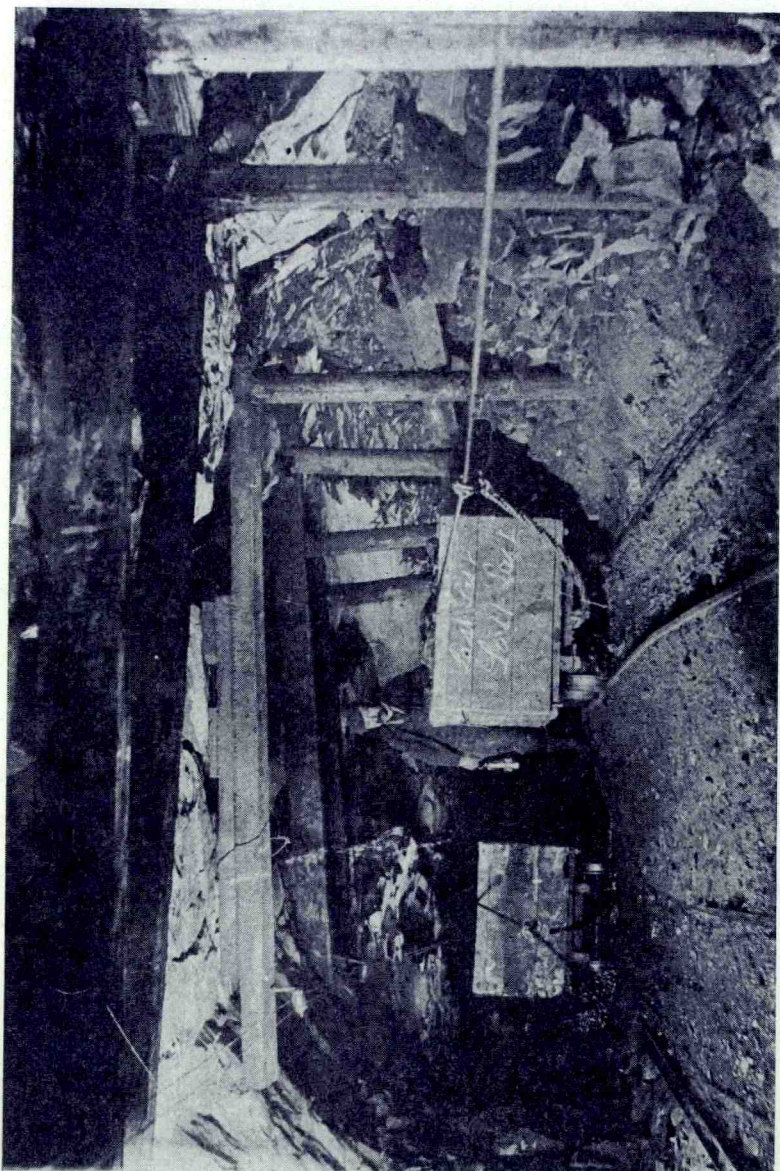


Plate 24.

J. RITSON, ASSISTANT MANAGER AT PEMBERTON COLLIERY IN THE 1890s





Plate 25.

CONTRACTOR'S MEN ENLARGING AN UNDERGROUND ROADWAY, 1898

arrangements were made to feed children at the various chapels, Sunday schools and some day schools in the district. At Highfield, soup kitchens were set up in the Blundell Arms, Railway Hotel, Pony Dick Inn, Halfway House, Hare and Hounds and Castle Inn, and the men and older children were fed there with soup, hot-pot and potato pie. The women and young children were fed at Mount Zion Sunday school, and old people at home. In addition to this, food tickets were given to needy people so that they could obtain necessities from shop-keepers. Many of the local farmers, butchers and grocers very generously gave meat, milk, potatoes and other food, and allowed their regular customers considerable credit, and many of the colliery companies contributed weekly amounts to the distress funds. Worsley Mesnes Colliery in Pemberton gave out food tickets and Winstanley Colliery Co. ran a soup kitchen at the colliery. Garnier, the estate agent at Winstanley, reported to Mrs. E. S. L. Bankes in September 1893 that he had been feeding fifty miners every day since the strike began at a cost to her of £1 12s. 0d. a week. Lord Gerard, the big royalty owner whose family had made a fortune from coal and who was reputed to be one of the richest men in Britain, gave £50 to the fund at Ashton-in-Makerfield. This was applauded in the local press as a most generous act. A month or two previously he had spent £53,000 on the stables and a private chapel at one of his mansions in the south of England.

When the colliers and their families were at the limit of their endurance, a settlement was arrived at on 7 November 1893. The men resumed work at the old rate of wages, and a conciliation board, consisting of an equal number of coal owners and mens' representatives was to be set up to determine from time to time the rate of wages. Membership of the union dropped after this dispute, but those who remained loyal to it wore a silver coloured badge with a blue enamelled centre either in their caps or lapels. In March 1894, when coals were being stacked at Pemberton Colliery and the average working week was four days, the local branch proposed that they should keep to a four-day working week with eight hours from bank to bank, and that no collier should earn more than 6s. 6d. a day. As the union regained its strength, more and more disputes were referred to it, sometimes very trivial ones that ought to have been settled at pit level. There were always fractious groups of men, who were unreasonable and difficult to deal with, but likewise, there were a good number of autocratic and awkward officials, who on occasions could degenerate into bullies.





Plate 26.

T. GRUNDY, HORSEMAN, WITH PONY IN THE UNDERGROUND STABLES IN THE WIGAN FIVE FEET SEAM AT PEMBERTON COLLIERY

After 1893, many miners' disputes occurred at Pemberton, mostly about payment for changed methods of working in the King coal and Wigan four feet seams. Typical entries in the minute books of the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation are:

*September 1896.* King Pit, Blundells: Men at this pit on strike six weeks ago. Dispute again broken out and on strike again.

*May 20th, 1899.* Blundells Wigan nine feet: Officials refuse to fire shots because coal was not holed the way they wanted.

*August 26th, 1899.* Blundells dispute: Attempt being made to reduce tonnage rate to 1s. 9d. from 2s. in places 4 yds wide.

*September 2nd, 1899.* J. Lawrence. Blundells: Off work ill three weeks—now allowed to start.

*September 12th, 1902.* Blundells: Jas. & John Cullen had a box taken off for containing 56 lbs. of dirt, also fined 2s. which they refused to accept. Sent out at once with their tools."

Pony putting was introduced at Pemberton Colliery in 1905 by Ernest Douglas, who was then general manager. The ponies replaced the drawers who were paid by the colliers, and who often assisted them in coal getting. A reduction in the field rate was made which was said to be equivalent to what the collier

paid the drawer—6d. per ton. This resulted in the dispute known as the "Pony Strike", which only affected Pemberton Colliery. The men came out in July, and not until the following February was a settlement arrived at. As in the 1893 lock-out, committees were set up, and eleven soup kitchens were opened where free meals were given to 2,000 children, five days a week. The school children at Highfield were fed at the schools. There were many non-union men, who could not be paid strike pay from union funds, but branches contributed to the strike fund, and collections were also made at the various pits. Terms of settlement were arranged at a meeting at Peace & Ellis's office, Wigan, on 5 February 1906, and agreed to by the management with the approval of the Coal Owners' Defence Committee. The men accepted it at a meeting held the same night. As usual, the rough element was present. Mr. Walker and Mr. Foster who took the ballot of the men, reported to the union secretary that a number of rowdies interfered very much with their work; they went so far as to compel some of the men to open their ballot papers and show how they were voting. They followed Walker and Foster into the room where the votes were counted, and jumped on the forms and tables and even on the backs of the two tellers, cursing and shouting. Levies received from the branches of the federation in aid of Pemberton Colliery strike from 17 December 1905 to 21 February 1906 amounted to £1,439 0s. 6d.

For many years, men working in abnormal places and not making a wage had to depend on their underlooker for an allowance. As will be imagined, this was not always readily given, and men working in such bad conditions either had to stick it out, hoping that the place would improve, or else had to leave the colliery. There were many cases similar to the following:

"Thomas & Charles Box, William Bibby and Jas. Unsworth, Queen Pit; crossing a step of 3 ft. Promised a day wage. This was paid for a week, but last week they only received 4s. a day. Further allowance refused. Brought tools out."

Instances like this led to agitation for a minimum wage in such places of 7s. 0d. a day, which was later amended so that there should be a minimum wage irrespective of abnormality of working place. In January 1911, the Miners' Federation of Great Britain declared in favour of enforcing this demand, and in the following December, they formally demanded a national minimum wage. The government intervened with a plan for a reasonable minimum wage to be settled by each district, but this was wrecked by the coal owners of South Wales and



Scotland, and on 26 February 1912, there began the biggest strike Britain had ever witnessed. On 19 March, the government, seeing the strength of the men, introduced the Minimum Wage Bill. This bill proved acceptable to the Miners' Federation, and, after Stephen Walsh, M.P., had addressed them on Highfield football ground, the Pemberton men voted for work by 888 votes against 326. Many colliers who opposed this majority decision attempted to prevent others from returning to work. The police called for military assistance, and Major-General Bethune, who commanded the South-West Lancashire Territorial Division, and his staff took over the Royal Hotel. The 16th Lancers came from Norwich and were billeted in the town, and 450 officers and men from North Wales took up quarters in the Drill Hall. Pemberton Colliery was idle from 26 February until 5 April, but even so, 742,971½ tons of coal were raised at the colliery during that year. During the war years, this high rate of output was maintained, but as prices of essential goods continually rose wages followed suit. The average wages cost per ton in Lancashire and Cheshire was 9s. 11¾d. in 1914. By 1918 it had risen to 14s. 5¾d. Between 1911 and 1920 the wages bill at Pemberton Colliery increased by 111%.

A committee of management and men was formed to look into cases of persistent absenteeism and other factors contributing to loss of production. The following two entries in the reports of this committee are typical:

July 14th 1916

"John Pennington, collier, lost 48% of his time; third time before committee. Said he did not want a summons taken out. Mr. Angus asked Mr. Douglas to overlook it this time seeing that he had promised to attend his work."

"John Davies, collier, lost 32% of his time; got drunk on Monday, overslept on Tuesday. Promised to attend."

Ballots were held in the lamp room to pick men for the armed forces. At one such ballot of 28 June 1918, 85 men were chosen. John Cheetham, the branch secretary, brought up the question of lamp mens' wages in December 1918. They were receiving 4s. 3d. per day, but the minimum wage was 5s. 0½d.: Cheetham said it was "sweated labour". The question of travelling time was frequently discussed by the joint committee; 100 yards per minute was allowed, and this was deducted from the working shift. Another common topic was working in abnormal places. It was reported to one meeting that some men in the King coal seam were only filling two or three tubs a day. Other men working in the Wigan five feet seam complained that they were always paid the minimum day wage of 7s. 3d., and contractors' men were disgruntled because the contractors were

given blank pay tickets, which they made out themselves. The men said they should be made out by the colliery clerks.

The short week-end shift for the afternoon and night men, and the fact that men were sometimes told that it was "play" for the pit only when they arrived there in the morning were other matters brought before the committee.

When the war ended, the government set up a commission under Mr. Justice Sankey to enquire into conditions in the coal industry. The recommendations of this commission, which advocated nationalisation of the mines, were far reaching. Mr. Millward, the manager at Pemberton Colliery, made a report to Mr. Douglas on the effects on the colliery of the Sankey Award and the seven-hour working day. He complained that the colliery had been hit harder than any other in the district; winding time had been reduced by 17%. In 1918, 47 hours were worked for a week of six working days, but after 16 July 1919, the six-day working week was reduced to 41 hours. This resulted in a loss of output at Pemberton of 2,300-2,500 tons per week. Under the terms of the Sankey Award, underground firemen were given one week's holiday with pay, and their working hours were reduced from nine to eight. All officials were given an award of 15s. 0d. a week; and 2s. 0d. and 1s. 0d. a day were given to all men and boys. These awards were made retrospective to January. Working hours were reduced to seven hours a day from Monday to Friday, and to six hours on Saturday, including the twenty minutes allowed for meals.

A railway strike occurred in September 1919. The King and Prince Pits were closed, but the Queen Pit was kept continuously at work. During the strike men were engaged in the King and Prince Pits to maintain all the roadways. To all colliery employees, who were made idle in consequence of the strike, the government paid an out-of-work donation in the form of a war wage. During the year, there had been a considerable increase in absenteeism among colliers and piece-rate workers at Pemberton Colliery. The reason for this was attributed to income tax, which the men resented and sought to avoid by reducing their earnings. During their absence large numbers of these men indulged in every form of sporting activity, coursing, bowling, pigeon tossing, racing and the like. A certain percentage of the increased absenteeism was blamed on the returned soldiers not being equal to working eleven days a fortnight. Some of them received a small pension which made their need to turn out to work less acute.

On 16 October 1920, the miners struck for an advance in wages. This demand was met, although the government, who





Plate 27.

OPENING OF PITHEAD BATHS AT SUMMERSALES COLLIERY, 1 NOVEMBER 1952

Left to right: W. Cross, area labour officer; A. Bradshaw, branch treasurer; J. Anderton, area general manager; H. Ashurst, manager of Summersales; J. Hammond, Wigan miners' agent; J. Taberner, branch secretary



still controlled the mines, knew it could only be a temporary settlement. The men went back to work on 1 November.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1921, however, the government handed back the mines to the coal owners, who had already announced cuts in wages.<sup>(2)</sup> The miners refused to work at the reduced rates and were locked out on 1 April. At Pemberton Colliery, officials and others, such as the winding engine men and some non-union men, stayed at work to keep the fan, pumps, winding-engines and some of the boilers going. Close on 300 ponies were brought up the pit and taken to Parbold Hall Farm, which Mr. Douglas had taken over, and where the foreman carpenter with two labourers and eight apprentices from the carpenters' shops fenced the fields for them. Soup kitchens were opened at most of the local public houses and schools. As the lock-out wore on without any signs of the owners giving way, bitterness grew. Thousands of men gathered each day and demonstrated in the streets of Highfield and Pemberton. On one occasion "the mob", as it was called, some of them armed with pick shafts, went to Norley Nos. 3 and 4 pits at Pemberton, broke the engine-house windows and threw the tubs off the pit brow. They afterwards went down Enfield Street, where they broke into two "off-licences" and drank all the beer. Thus fortified, they went to Pemberton Colliery sidings and knocked open the side doors of loaded coal wagons. Their next move was up the Bye Pit steps on to the main gangway. There they seized the surface manager and held him over the gangway rails threatening to throw him over and kill him. Fortunately they had second thoughts about this, and the only harm he suffered was to have his chewing-tobacco stolen.

Some of the strikers began to get their own coal from the outcrop of the Ravine seam in Blundell's Wood, Pemberton. This belonged to Mr. G. H. Bankes of Winstanley Hall, who attempted to control the getting of his coal by issuing permits. Not satisfied with this, however, some of the colliers cut down the large trees and sold them to mangle roller makers. Understandably, the strikers who were not working in the wood, were very jealous of those who were, and one day "the mob" arrived

<sup>(1)</sup> At this time there were over 3,500 men employed at Pemberton Colliery, 1,100 of whom were colliers and drawers. The output per man shift was very low—0.64 tons as compared with 0.666 tons for Lancashire and Cheshire as a whole. Absenteeism was also worse than average: the worst figure was 39.3% on Mondays for colliers and drawers during the third period of 1920. The corresponding figure for Lancashire and Cheshire was 20.76%. During the whole of 1920 the average figure for absenteeism of colliers and drawers at Pemberton was 17.975%.

<sup>(2)</sup> At Pemberton Colliery it was estimated that these cuts would reduce the cost of production by 3s. 7.1d. per ton.



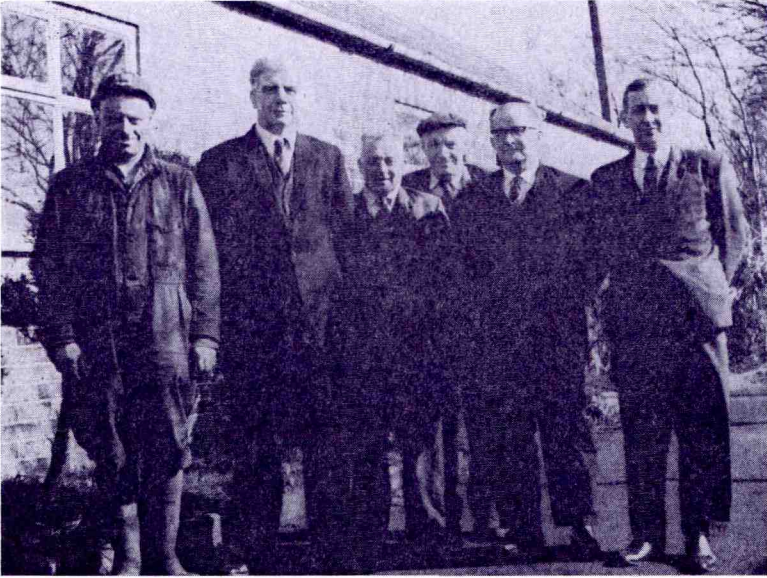


Plate 28.

SENIOR STAFF AT SUMMERSALES COLLIERY ON THE DAY THE  
PIT CLOSED, 18 MARCH 1966

Left to right: A. Bradshaw, overman; J. Foster, manager; J. Webster, mechanical engineer; J. Edwards, electrical engineer; D. Kew, manager's clerk; T. W. Lowe, undermanager

to turn them out, only to find the coal getters, who had been forewarned, lined up armed with picks and ready for them. After a slight skirmish, "the mob" thought better of it and retreated. By the end of June it was abundantly manifest to the meanest intelligence among the miners that they were defeated, and that further striking would only result in increased penury, indigence and distress to themselves. Therefore, they reluctantly accepted the wage cuts and returned to work on 1 July.

The temporary boom, which followed the French occupation of the Rühr, soon came to an end, and in 1925 the coal owners again demanded heavy cuts in wages and the lengthening of hours. The government, alarmed at the situation, promised a nine months' subsidy to the coal owners, but once the subsidy ended in April 1926, the lock-out notices went into effect. At Pemberton Colliery the same routine was followed as in 1921. All the officials, winding engine men, a few boiler firemen and some others stayed at work. The ponies were again brought to the surface and put to graze in Winstanley Park, and the carpenters', fitters' and wagon shops were converted into stables.

Soup kitchens were again set up in public houses and school-rooms, but after a time there was much privation and suffering amongst the strikers' families. Huge stocks of coal were on the ground and some non-union men were persuaded to go to work to load this. The burgey coal was loaded into tubs, wound up to the brow and put over the screens to be sized and loaded into wagons. Three or four girls went to work on the picking belts. When they were returning home one day with the screen foreman, they were met by hundreds of demonstrators at Pemberton station. They were shouted and jeered at and called "knobsticks" and other names, but no violence was offered. Suddenly a single-decker 'bus drew up, full of policemen, who, led by the chief constable of Wigan, leapt out and attacked the crowd with their truncheons. Many innocent bystanders were injured, including women and children, and this brought about bitter feelings against the police for some time afterwards.

The colliery was handed over by Major Cuthbert L. B. H. Blundell to a new company in 1929. Mr. C. D. Gullick, M.C., was the managing director of the new company. During the depression years which followed, there was short-time working at the pits; in 1930 the average earnings of Lancashire miners fell to £2 1s. 8½d. By 1936, however, they were working full time and mostly continued to do so until November 1946 when the old colliery closed. Summersales Pit had been sunk in 1944 to work the remaining reserves of coal, and this was the only pit working at Pemberton on Vesting Day. During the whole of this period, there were no serious wages disputes at the colliery, and when Mr. Gullick retired just before Vesting Day, he received from the Pemberton Branch of the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation the following letter, which shows that labour relations during at least the last years of the old colliery were very good:

LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE MINERS' FEDERATION  
PEMBERTON BRANCH

Secretary:  
JAMES BENT

5, Chatsworth St.  
Pemberton  
Wigan  
4th December, 1946

Dear Mr. Gullick,

re Your letter of Monday, 2.12.46.

I read your letter to the Branch Meeting on Monday night and they instructed me to let you know they were very sorry to hear that you were finishing as our Managing Director after the end of the year, and they send you their Best Wishes wherever you may go. Also for the very kind way you have met the Branch Officials in the work we have had to meet each other on, work between our Branch and yourself.

For myself I am sorry to say I shall miss a great friend.



Hoping you prosper wherever you may go and always think of you as a great friend to both me and my members.

I remain on behalf of the Pemberton Miners' Branch.

Yours faithfully,  
James Bent.

On 1 January 1947 the remaining Pemberton Colliery pit, Summersales, was taken over by the National Coal Board. The many agreements arrived at between the National Coal Board and the National Union of Mineworkers have improved the miners' conditions of employment tremendously since 1947. Training schemes, pension schemes, five-day week and bonus, two weeks holiday with pay, six days statutory holidays each year, seven rest days per year, supplementary injuries benefit and other advantages have all been introduced. This is all as it should be, but the miner of the present day must not forget what he owes to the great struggles of past generations.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge the help he has derived from the following unpublished sources in Wigan Public Library:

"A short history of Trade Unionism", by G. Derbyshire.

"Chartism in Wigan and District", by V. G. Cotsworth.

The Anderton Papers.

He has also been privileged to use the Minute Books of the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation; Report Books and other papers belonging to Pemberton Colliery Company; William Greener's Diaries; the 1853 report on Blundell's Collieries now at the office of William Armstrong and Son, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; the petition of Blundell's miners, 1843, now in the possession of Mrs. J. H. M. Bankes, and notebooks kept by several colliery managers. Mr. James Hammond, president of the National Union of Mineworkers, North-West Area, allowed him to print the song in Appendix E, and Mr. James Anderson of Parbold and Mr. James Parkinson of Pemberton have enriched his narrative with their eye-witness accounts of strikes in the Wigan coalfield. The author is also grateful to Mr. M. J. Dolan and the staff of Wigan Public Library, the County Archivist and his staff in Preston, the Honorary Editors of the TRANSACTIONS, Mr. John Foster, manager of Summersales Colliery and Mr. J. Gormley and Mr. Knowles of the National Union of Mineworkers for the aid they have given him.

## APPENDIX A

## AGENTS AND GENERAL MANAGERS AT BLUNDELL'S COLLIERIES

Before 1788	Henry Ellam <sup>(1)</sup>
1788-1796	William Ingold <sup>(2)</sup>
1796-1818	John Harvey <sup>(3)</sup>
1818-c. 1830	John Cunliffe
c. 1830-1854	Thomas Sherratt <sup>(4)</sup>
1854-1865	William Greener <sup>(5)</sup>
1865-1877	William John Laverick Watkin <sup>(6)</sup>
1877-1896	William John Greener <sup>(7)</sup>
1896-1929	Ernest Douglas <sup>(8)</sup>
1929-1946	Charles Donald Gullick <sup>(9)</sup>
1947 to date	N.C.B.

## COMMERCIAL MANAGERS AT LIVERPOOL

Before 1854	Woolfall
1854-1898	James Pickering <sup>(10)</sup>
1898-1929	James Colin Pickering <sup>(11)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> A Matthew Ellam was agent at Jonathan Case's collieries at Whiston, Sutton, and Eccleston in the 1770s, and a Henry Ellam owned an estate in Sutton at that time.

<sup>(2)</sup> A Staffordshire-Shropshire name.

<sup>(3)</sup> John Harvey became a partner with Henry Blundell and John Menzies in the Chain Colliery at Orrell in 1799.

<sup>(4)</sup> A Staffordshire name, but a Richard Sherrat was agent to Sarah Clayton at Parr Colliery in 1757, and mention is made of an R. Sherratt, agent at German's Orrell Colliery in 1796.

<sup>(5)</sup> Appointed by William Armstrong, consultant viewer of Newcastle-upon-Tyne; came from Durham; killed at Rainford Colliery, 9 July 1865.

<sup>(6)</sup> Came from Durham. Killed in King Pit explosion, 11 October 1877, whilst attempting to rescue others.

<sup>(7)</sup> Son of William Greener. Killed in Bye Pit, 1 February 1897.

<sup>(8)</sup> Came from Durham.

<sup>(9)</sup> Nephew of Douglas; managing director and later chairman of Pemberton Colliery Ltd.

<sup>(10)</sup> Lived first at Fisher House, Orrell, and later at Harvey House, Orrell, which Colonel Blundell rebuilt for him. Prominent churchman and public figure in Pemberton and Orrell.

<sup>(11)</sup> The Liverpool office was closed and the depots sold in 1929. From 1774-1865 the head office was at Canal Basin, Liverpool; from 1865-1929 at Borough Buildings, 7, Rumford Street, Liverpool.

## APPENDIX B

## GRADES OF WORKERS AT THE COLLIERIES

1776

<i>Managerial Staff</i>	<i>Underground Workers</i>	<i>Craftsmen</i>	<i>Other Surface Hands</i>
Agent	Colliers	Smiths	Winders or gin drivers
Auditor	Drawers	Carpenters	Browmen
	Datallers	Masons	Horsemen
			Pumping engine men



1890

<i>Managerial and Admin. Staff</i>	<i>Underground Workers</i>	<i>Craftsmen</i>	<i>Other Surface Hands</i>
Agent	Shot lighters	Carpenters	Winding engine men
Manager	Pushers-on	Joiners	Browmen
Mechanical engineer	Colliers	Sawyers	Weighmen
Surveyor	Pony drivers	Wagon builders	Check weigh men
Coke oven manager	Drawers	Tub repairers	Main haulage men
Underlookers	Helpers up	Bricksetters	Boiler firemen
Foreman carpenter	Spunney boys	General fitters	Loco drivers
Foreman fitter	Trappers	Loco fitters	Brakesmen
Foreman blacksmith	Haulage lads	Blacksmiths	Screeners
Washery foreman	Wagonway men	Pick sharpeners	Pit brow girls
Screen foreman	Rope men	Plate layers	Screen engine drivers
Clerks	Shunt minders	Pit shaft men	Lamp men
Overmen	Rope changers	Saddler	Beam pumping engine men
Firemen	Horsemen	Tinsmith	Labourers
	Contractors	Painters	Wagon loaders and emptiers
	Contractors' men	Approximately 22 carpenters', black- smiths, and fitters' apprentices	Washery hands
	Datallers		Compressor attendants
	Haulage engine men		Ash disposal men
	Pumpers		Coke burners
			Brick burners

1965

N.C.B. WEST LANCS. AREA OFFICE, HAYDOCK, WEST LANCS.  
AREA MARKETING OFFICE, MERE HOUSE, NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS.

<i>Managerial and Admin. Staff</i>	<i>Underground grades</i>	<i>Underground Craftsmen</i>	<i>Surface Craftsmen</i>	<i>Other Surface Hands</i>
Area general manager	154 grades	31 grades	172 grades, including those employed in the central work- shops	162 grades
Large area staff				
Group manager				
Colliery manager				
Colliery engineer				
Colliery electrical engineer				
Unit surveyor				
Undermanagers				
Five grades of under officials				
74 grades of weekly paid in- dustrial staff				

## APPENDIX C

## 1. SCORE PRICES IN ORRELL FIVE FEET SEAM AT ORRELL AND PEMBERTON COLLIERIES, 1776-1966

1776	1s. 0d. per score of 24 baskets each 150 lbs.	7½d. per ton
1819	2s. 8d. " " " " " " " " " " " "	1s. 7d. " "
1855	5s. 6d. per score of 20 baskets each 4 cwts.	1s. 4½d. " "
1858	6s. 10d. per score of 20 tubs each 5 cwts.	1s. 4-4d. " "
1885		1s. 4-6d. " "
1895	18s. 5d. per score of 10 tons	1s. 10d. " "
1906	22s. 5d. " " " " " "	2s. 3d. " "
1908	24s. 8d. " " " " " "	2s. 5-6d. " "
1916	28s. 1d. " " " " " "	2s. 9-7d. " "
1966	13s. 6d. per cu. yd. for all face operations in Orrell four feet seam at Summersales pit	14s. 6d. " "

*Note:* The prices up to and including 1916 were for hand-got coal filled into baskets or tubs and drawn to the shaft or to the shunt on the haulage road. The 1966 price is for a face which is machine cut, the coal being blasted and hand-filled on to conveyors. Construction of the two roads serving the face is included in the price. In the days of hand-got coal, Orrell four feet prices were on average 12% higher than Orrell five feet prices, so that the present day price for Orrell five feet would be in the region of 12s. 9d. per ton.

## 2. "PEMBERTON COLLIERY: QUEEN PIT ORRELL FIVE FEET MINE

As and from 19 February 1916, the following prices will be paid in the above Mine, being an advance of 5% on 1911 prices:

Per score of 10 tons	Colliers drawing their own	Owners doing the drawing
<i>Hewing</i>		
Without explosives		
Longwall & Pillars throughout mine	28s. 1d.	21s. 3d.
Narrow Places " "	26s. 7d.	19s. 6d.
Wide Places " "	29s. 7d.	22s. 9d.
<i>Yard Work</i>		
Narrow Places	6s. 6d.	6s. 6d.
<i>With Explosives</i>		
Longwall & Pillars	28s. 1d.	21s. 3d.
Narrow Places	24s. 11d.	18s. 1d.
<i>Yard Work</i>		
Narrow Places	5s. 2d.	5s. 2d.

## Day Wage Work

The following increases in wages to be given to all Day Wage Hands.

From per day	To per day	Amount per day to be given
1s. 6d.	3s. 2d.	1d.
3s. 3d.	5s. 3d.	2d.
5s. 4d.	7s. 4d.	3d.
7s. 5d.	9s. 4d.	4d.
Colliers minimum 7s. 9½d. per day.		
Fillers & Drawers minimum 6s. 10d. per day.		

PEMBERTON COLLIERY  
3rd April 1916

E. Douglas, Agent."



## APPENDIX D

## PROSECUTIONS AND THE SYSTEM OF FINING AT THE COLLIERY

The various coal-mines' acts and regulations, and before these the Colliery Rules, were always strictly enforced by the management at Pemberton Colliery, and prosecutions for contravention of these regulations and rules were fairly frequent. The following are typical examples of many recorded cases:

"3.2.1858. John Bradshaw fined 23s. before the magistrates for a breach of rule. He would not work where ordered.

1.3.1858. John Piggott had left his engine in charge of his brother, a lad of about sixteen years of age. He had drawn the cage against the pulley and broke the rope. The cage had rolled upon the shed and broke it very much. Went this morning and arranged for taking out a warrant for his apprehension.

19.3.1858. Three colliers from the Tanpits sent to prison for fourteen days for having tobacco pipes in their possession.

2.12.1858. Henry Allsworth the engine man had allowed the fire to get low and the boiler had burst two seams in the bottom. I told Peter Parkinson to go and get a warrant for his apprehension which he did do and locked him up.

1.6.1881. John Cadman, a collier employed in the four feet mine in the Bye Pit, ordered to pay costs at court for not timbering his place according to the rules.

November 29th, 1915. William Gorner, pusher-on in the Ravine mine was fined £5 and costs for striking a pony with a pick blade.

December 22, 1919. Thomas Lowe, pony driver, King coal seam, fined £5 for kicking pony.

February 17th, 1921. William Thorpe and John Rathbone, haulage hands, Wigan five feet, fined £5 each for smoking underground.

July 27th, 1925. Enoch Jones, fireman Orrell yard mine, fined £1 for taking a defective lamp into the mine.

May 29th, 1927. Geo. Fred Millington, fireman Orrell yard, fined £5 and costs for having three shots charged and stemmed at one time.

December 13th, 1928. William Wilde, fireman, Wigan nine feet had to pay costs at court for using violence in the mine."

Other offences at Pemberton Colliery were riding ponies underground, riding on the haulage, filling dirty coal, losing safety equipment and, for some categories of workers, negligence of duty in respect of coal production. Any tub containing 28 lbs. or more of dirt was confiscated. Loss of a "scotch" cost the offender 1s. 0d., a lost drag cost 2s. 6d., whilst some shotfiring offences dealt with at the colliery, cost the offender £1. Pushers-on who neglected to ensure that the pony drivers got the coal out from the working places to the shunt, in order to keep the main haulage running to a proper system, were also fined, generally 5s. 0d. Fines for loss of company's property, or for negligence in the production of coal, were put to the company's account, but fines for contravention of the Coal Mines Act or the special safety rules for the colliery, were given to charitable institutions such as Wigan Infirmary.

## APPENDIX E

## THE MINERS' LOCK-OUT

[Written and composed by Burnett O'Brien, Wigan,  
probably concerning the 1893 lock-out]

UNITED  
WE STAND

DIVIDED  
WE FALL

*Air—Castles in the air*

Ye gallant lads of Lancashire,  
Come listen unto me—  
I will unfold a tale of woe  
That's very sad to see.  
Our children they are starving  
You can see them day by day:  
The offsprings of our collier lads  
For food they have to pray.

## CHORUS

Then let us be united  
We never must give way  
Uphold the Federation lads  
And we will win the day.

It's very hard on us poor lads  
That we must go away  
To beg for our maintenance  
We do it day by day.  
But 'tis far better to do it  
Than that we should engage  
To go and take our shirts off  
And work for a pauper's wage.

But we must keep our tempers  
Don't let our hearts go down,  
We are getting well supported  
By the people of our town.  
The Publicans and Tradesmen  
Throw in their little mite;  
They are working well in our behalf,  
They know we're in the right.

We must thank our trusty leaders,  
They're well worthy of their steel;  
The masters have not done what's right,  
The hunger they don't feel.  
They have found their opportunity,  
It was not hard to seek;  
We'd nothing lads to start with  
Now we must put on the cheek.

All honour to Sam Woods my lads  
He's doing all he can—  
Trying to get an honest wage  
For the British working man.  
The day is fast approaching  
When the victory we will shout,  
And we'll remember those who helped us  
When we were all locked out.



Don't forget the collier lads  
That are trying with their might—  
Enduring so much suffering  
To get that which is right;  
And when you see his box displayed,  
No matter where he'll roam,  
Think of his wife and children  
Who are starving in their home.

## CHORUS

Then let us be united,  
We never must give way;  
Uphold the Federation lads,  
And we will win the day.

