

## The Black Diamonds Kirkcaldy and Coal

There have been a number of instances when the team has secured the services of guest writers to weave their passion and interest into particular objects. There have been three principal reasons for this. Firstly, it produces a different voice in the shape of the style of writing. This is always refreshing and broadens the standpoint and scope of the narrative. Secondly, the authors are all experts in their own fields having spent many years honing and developing their interest and knowledge – resulting in the definitive story being told which on every occasion has brought an outstanding contribution to the project. Thirdly, while the team has a basic knowledge of most of the objects, a significant volume of research is required to supplement the skeleton – sometimes stressful, often time-consuming, but always worth the effort.

However, there are some objects which cover such a lengthy period, are complex and wide ranging to such an extent that it is not possible to do the object justice in the scope of the 50 Objects Project. In essence during the course of a month, research, recording, checking, embedding and publishing must take place if the project is to conclude and coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kirkcaldy Civic Society in October 2024.

This month's object is quite simply one that must be told but, with our scant and superficial knowledge, significant research would be mandatory to produce the story and almost impossible to do in the timescale outlined above. For this reason *Kirkcaldy and Coal* has had to be produced by a guest writer with an intimate knowledge of the subject – but by whom?

The team set about trying to find an individual who would have the knowledge and the desire to produce this important object.

Individuals recommended to us were approached directly and appeals were placed on social media sites which deal with mining history, heritage and memorabilia. No one put up their hand but one name was constantly, continuously and persistently, suggested to us. It is no exaggeration to say that some 25/30 enquiries all resulted in the same name being championed as – the man!

The name of this individual is Chris Sparling and having spoken to and corresponded with Chris – there is no one better suited and able to produce *Kirkcaldy and Coal*. Words can be exaggerating and flattering to one degree or another but the simple blunt truth is, that in this instance – *no one is better suited and able*. The team were relieved, thankful and delighted when Chris accepted the invitation to produce this object.

Chris Sparling was born in Glencraig set in the heart of Fife's landscape of mines and pit bings. His late father, David, spent a lifetime as a miner ending up at Kirkcaldy's Seafield. That is not the end of it – in Chris's own words – *Ironstone and Coal mining have featured in the Sparling family over many generations*.

Chris did not follow his father into the mines instead starting a career in the PVC Research Laboratories with Michael Nairn & Co Ltd., in Kirkcaldy. Chris takes great pride in being part of the team which developed the product which came to be known as Cushionfloor. A career change saw Chris embarking on a teaching career at Kirkcaldy High School between 1968 and 1973 before taking up the role of Principal Teacher of Chemistry at Dunfermline High School between 1973 and retirement in 1994.

Chris has always had an interest in mining history and heritage and his retiral in 1994 gave full scope to researching mining records, documents, geological memoirs, books, newspapers and maps, to establish the location of, and information on, the 'forgotten coal pits and mines of the *Kingdom*. The story which follows is a direct result

of the 23 years Chris Sparling has spent in research enabling him to produce what must be the definitive history of coal in this local area.

There is probably no better way to illustrate the importance coal had in this area than using his own words and they are well worth taking time to reflect on them:-

“Not many residents of Kirkcaldy today will be able to recall the mighty Seafield Colliery of the 20th century and even fewer will have a clue about the extensive mining of coal from the 17th century onwards in various parts of the Kirkcaldy Burgh and within the town itself.

“I drew many sketch maps for our website showing the locations of the early pits of the Dunnikier and Begg Collieries and there will be many residents in the Chapel Level area reaching eastwards towards Dunnikier Estate and just beyond the High School grounds who will not know that the lands on which their homes are built were once mined for the 'black diamonds'. The lands close to the former Forth Park Maternity home, the present day Victoria Hospital, Hayfield Road, Smeaton, the harbour area and at various other spots within the old town of Kirkcaldy, all had commercially successful coal mines even though they were on a much smaller scale to the mid-20th century giant which itself was on the site of earlier Seafield Mines”.

Although the following is formatted in a different way to previous Objects it is nonetheless valid for a guest author to produce their story in the form of their choice. Chris in his initial response remarked that:-

After compiling, over several years, somewhere in the region of 110+ coal-related booklets, split between the Benarty Heritage Preservation Group and for the Local History Department of the Dunfermline Carnegie Library, I must admit to a level of "burn-out"

and don't see myself compiling any more booklets or even re-working some of the content.

A rejection yes, but what we were able to do was secure permission to reproduce two of his books which are both masterful and definitive in their detail and presentation. The books are entitled – *Mining at Seafield Kirkcaldy* and also *Dunnikier, Begg and Kirkcaldy Pits*.

Our response to this generous offer was to respond to Chris with:-

You have completed the definitive historical account of mining in the Kirkcaldy area....we think that is beyond dispute....and we certainly could not get near to bettering that! ....You have de facto "done the job" for us already....

Before moving to the story it would be remiss not to mention the *Fife Pits and Memorial Book* which can be found online at:- [fifepits.co.uk](http://fifepits.co.uk). Chris has been the webmaster of the site since 1990, which was started by his friend, Mick Martin, who developed a desire to weave his mining knowledge and experience together with a newly found interest in computing.

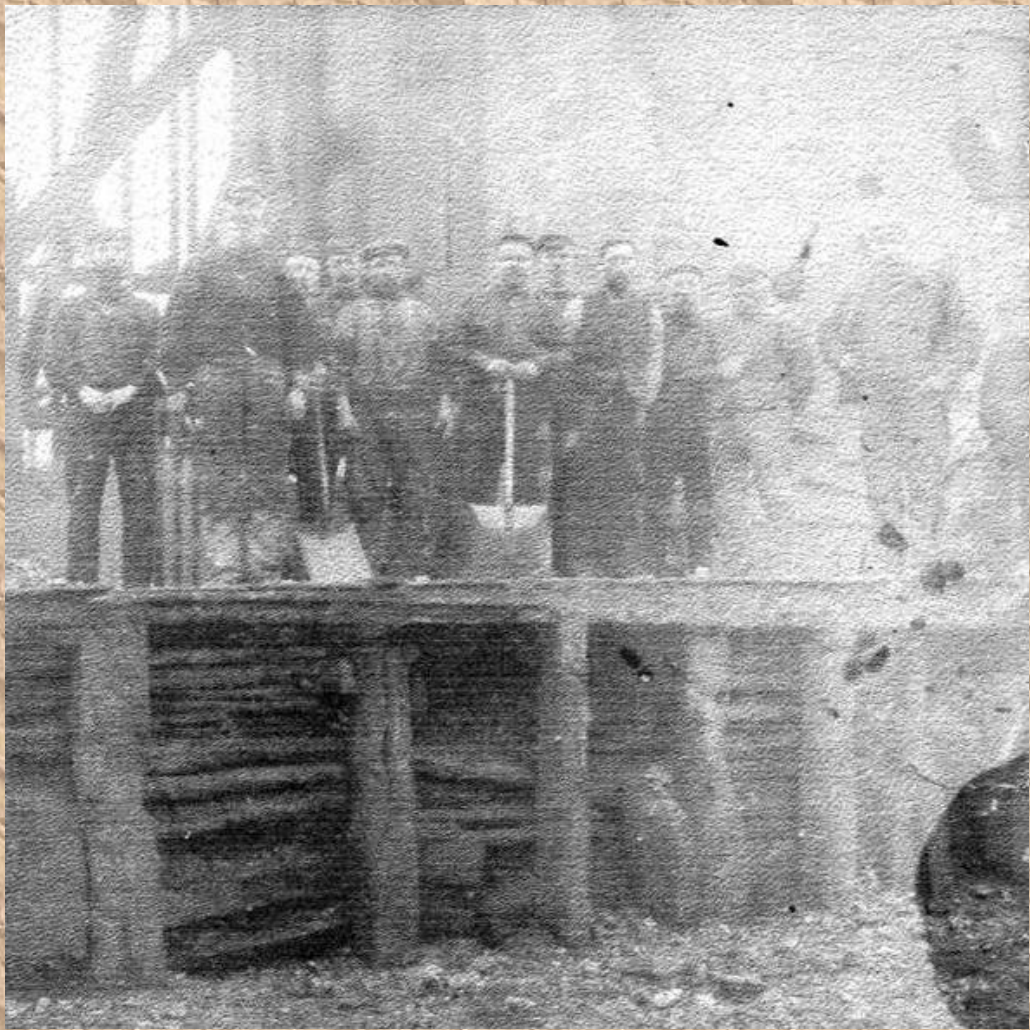
The website is a must visit which records the history of Fife's pits and mines, along with tales of the men, women and children, who worked in the industry. In recent years contributions from Chris's research and from a huge number of site visitors has continued to add to the sites information and popularity. The Memorial Book itself contains 2406 entries relating to miners who were killed in Fife alone – a stark reminder of the price once paid in the pursuit of the *black diamonds*.

Please bear in mind as you read this excellent article that:-

**No portion of these publications may be reproduced without the written permission of the author.** In this instance the author is Chris Sparling.

The introduction over, the narrative now moves on, initially to the more general *Dunnikier, Begg and Kirkcaldy Mines*. This volume was completed during the Covid pandemic and first published in 2020. Extensive research has been undertaken by ploughing through historical documents, mining documents and newspaper articles. The result is a thorough, fascinating and structured timeline of an underground industry now covered by housing, retail parks, commercial premises, road layouts and even schools –with very few clues to show that it ever existed.

# DUNNIKIER, BEGG & KIRKCALDY PITS



Researched, presented and printed by  
Chris Sparling  
2020

## Introduction

The Kingdom of Fife has been mined for centuries and many early pits and mines wrought coals in and around Kirkcaldy, the Fife town which became world famous for the production of its linoleum and other floor coverings.

In this publication the author takes a look at the pits of the Begg and Dunnikier Collieries in addition to the many coalworks sunk within and without the boundaries of old Kirkcaldy town, on lands now occupied by vast estates of domestic housing, shopping complexes, business premises, road systems and schools.

Information on coal mining in the Kirkcaldy area, from historical and mining documents, will be included along with related newspaper articles to provide the reader with a structured time-line of 'pit snippets'.

Separate publications are available by the author on mining at Seafield and at Dysart.

## Early Kirkcaldy Pits

A. S. Cunningham provides us with a fascinating description of the early Dunnikier Collieries:-  
*"On the western fringes of Dysart parish, mining has been carried on by the proprietors of Dunnikier or by lessees for more than 400 years. As far back as 1659, the Town Council of Kirkcaldy ordained that all "coalholes" should be filled up. At that time the miners operated upon a thin seam of coal which lay near the surface, and landslips must have been common through the "coal heugh" wastes falling in."*

In "Kirkcaldy Burgh Records", Mr Macbean has the following entry:-

*"11th October 1731 - The Council, considering the coal heugh is so near the town, and the way so good and easy, the present price of threepence for the cartload of coals is extravagant, and three halfpennies for the sack; therefore, they reduce the price of the cartload to twopence, and of the sack load to two halfpennies, and ordains the carriers to serve at that price, and discharges any of the burgesses to pay a greater sum, and ordains intimation to be made on Saturday next by the drum."*



Kirkcaldy also had a number of early, small pits sunk in the vicinity of Kirkcaldy Harbour, and right through Smeaton to the Muttonhall, Capshard, Chapel Level, Tough and Begg districts to the north-west of modern-day Kirkcaldy.

Probably its most well-known pits were the later 'Panny Pits', located in the Pathhead district approaching Dysart, but some Kirkcaldy pits, such as the Isabella and the Spitheads, were located closer to old Kirkcaldy town in the Bennochy Road district, north-east of the railway station.

Early Dunnikier coal-works were under the ownership of landowner Sir John Oswald but most of the successful pits were worked under lease by Goodall, Goodall & Herd, Walter Herd and then by the Company involving several of his sons.

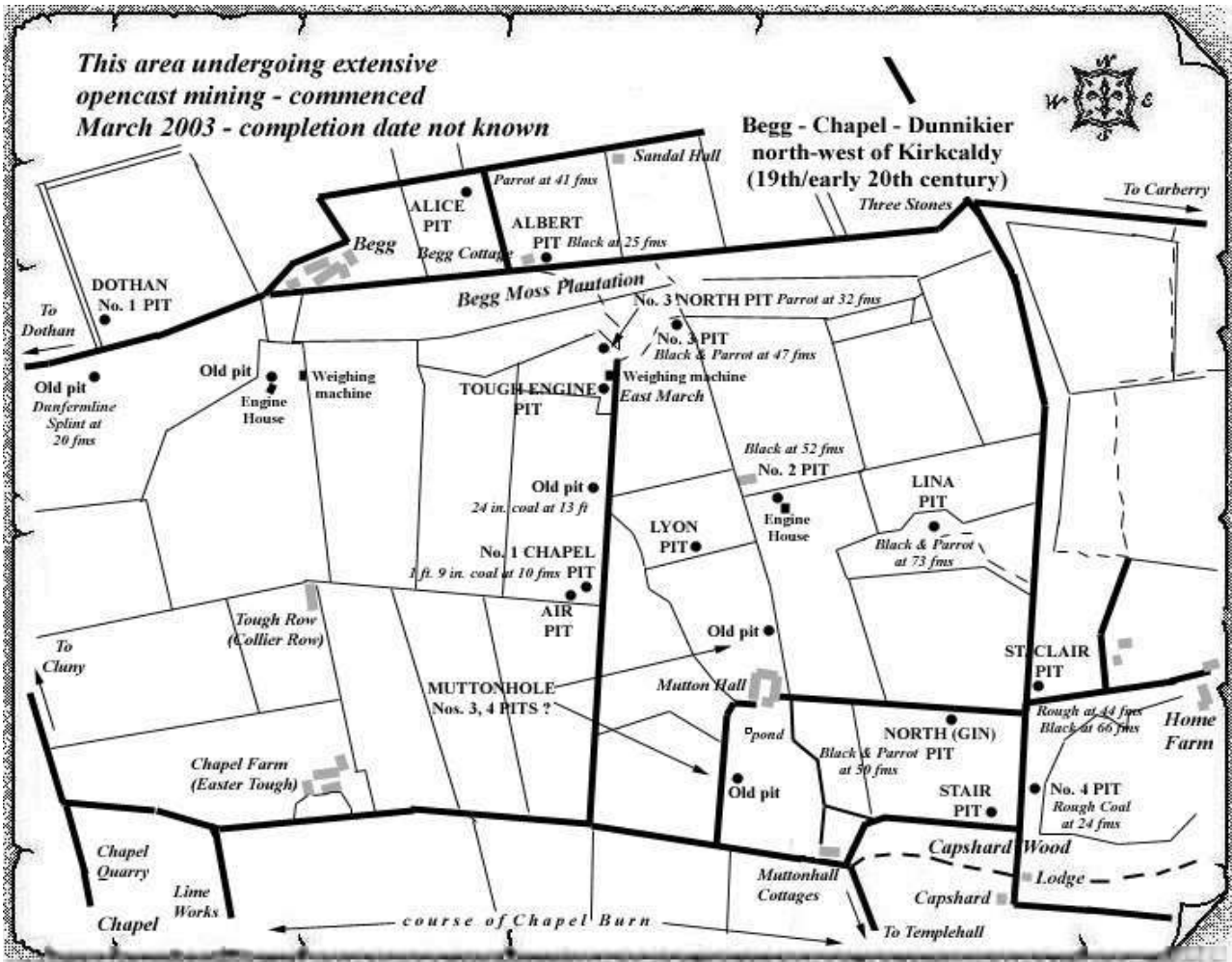
The area to the north of Chapel Level was extensively mined by the early Dunnikier Colliery lessees and, in the lands near Muttonhall, close to the site of the Kirkcaldy Crematorium, there were several coalworks.

After a brief period of ownership under the Bowhill Coal Co., the modern Dunnikier Colliery was taken over by the Fife Coal Co. Ltd. The Dunnikier or Panny Nos. 1, 2 Pits, north of Pathhead, finally ceased coaling in 1927.

It is not known when the first pits of Begg Colliery were sunk but the colliery was worked in conjunction with Dunnikier Colliery, by Goodall & Herd, from around 1869 until 1872. The Alice Pit of the Begg Colliery just to the east of the Dothan Pits, south of Cluny, is believed to have been the re-named Ronald Pit of the Begg Colliery, the new name appearing around 1879/80. The Black and Parrot Coals of the district had been worked from the Goodall's named Ronald Pit at this same location - identical shaft dimensions - for a number of years previous.

The final closure date of the Alice Pit is not known but it had probably ceased coaling before the start of the First World War.





The Begg district embraced the portion of the Kirkcaldy Coalfield around the Begg Farm, the Chapel area to the north-west of Kirkcaldy and had its eastern limit at Carberry which is just north of the present-day, large shopping complex close to the Dunnikier Way/Overton Road roundabout.

It was separated from the district of Kirkcaldy and Dunnikier by a north-easterly line passing through Dunnikier House (now Dunnikier Hotel), and from the district of Redford, Strathore and Pitteuchar, in the north, by an east-south-easterly line drawn through Fosterton, one mile east of Cluny Bridge.

## Begg Colliery

<b>Source Date of Information (Owner)</b>
<b>Manager / Under-Manager / Men underground / Men above ground [Pit/Mine]</b> <b>Coal seams worked / Shaft Details</b>
<b>1869?-1872 (Goodall &amp; Herd)</b>
Partnership dissolved January 1872.
<b>1873</b>
Mr Wm. Arnott, <i>Manager</i>

NOTICE.

**T**HE Subscribers beg to intimate that the Firm of GOODALL & HERD, Coalmasters, was DIS-SOLVED by mutual consent, on the 1st day of January last. All debts due to and by the said Firm will be collected and paid by the Subscribers.

WILLIAM GOODALL.

RICHARD WATERS, Miner, Begg Colliery,  
Witness.

DAVID BALFOUR, Banksman, Begg Colliery,  
Witness.

WALTER HERD.

DAVID BALFOUR, Banksman, Begg Colliery,  
Witness.

ANDW. FOOTE, Engineer, Dunnikier Colliery,  
Witness.

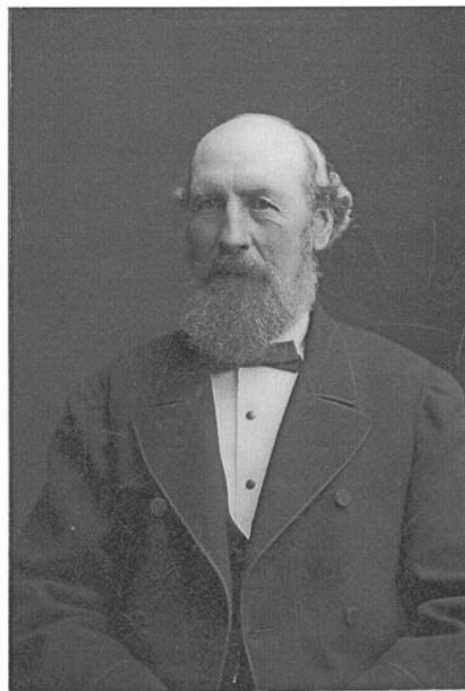
The Subscriber begs to intimate that the Business hitherto carried on at Begg Colliery by the Firm of Goodall & Herd, will in future be carried on under the Firm of GOODALL BROTHERS.

WILLIAM GOODALL.

RICHARD WATERS, Miner, Begg Colliery,  
Witness.

DAVID BALFOUR, Banksman, Begg Colliery,  
Witness.

Begg Colliery, by Kirkcaldy,  
January 16, 1872.



R. G. RETTIE

WEMYSSFIELD  
KIRKCALDY N.B.

*Mr Walter Herd*

<b>1879/80 (Goodall Bros.)</b>
Mr Wm. Goodall, <i>Manager</i> Alice Pit listed in Begg Colliery - Black and Parrot seams (same as Ronald Pit)
<b>1881 (Goodall Bros.)</b>
Mr Wm. Goodall / ----- / 65 / 8 / Black, 2' 4"; Parrot, 2' D'cast (9 x 5) 246 ft. : U'cast (9 x 5) 150 ft. Manpower shared with Ronald Pit. Furnace ventilation.
<b>1882 (Goodall Bros.)</b>
Mr Wm. Goodall / ----- / 63 / 7 / Black and Parrot D'cast (9 x 5) 246 ft. : U'cast (9 x 5) 150 ft. <i>Ronald Pit no longer listed.</i>
<b>1890 (Goodall Bros.)</b>
Mr Alex. Danskine / ----- / 56 / 7 / Black; Parrot; Smithy D'cast (9 x 5) 246 ft. : U'cast (9 x 5) 150 ft. Furnace ventilation.
<b>1893 (Goodall Bros.)</b>
Mr Alex. Danskine, manager, Begg Colliery.
<b>1896 (Walter Herd &amp; Son.)</b>
Mr Alex. Danskine / ----- / 57 / 9 / Household, manufacturing and steam coals. Listed as Begg Colliery.
<b>1902 (Walter Herd &amp; Son, Ltd.)</b>
Mr Wm. Clark / ----- / 13 / 1 / Household, manufacturing and steam coals. <b>Begg Colliery listed as abandoned.</b>
<b>1904 (Walter Herd &amp; Son, Ltd.)</b>
Mr J. Henderson / ----- / 103 / 16 / Gas, household, manufacturing and steam coals. <b>Begg Colliery operating.</b>
<b>1905 (Walter Herd &amp; Sons, Ltd.)</b>
----- / ----- / 65 / 14 / as Begg Colliery
<b>1908 (Bowhill Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
Mr Archibald Bowman, Jr. / Mr William Lyon / 84 / 18 /
<b>1911 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
----- / ----- / 96 / 24 /

### Dunnikier and Begg Collieries (19th century report)

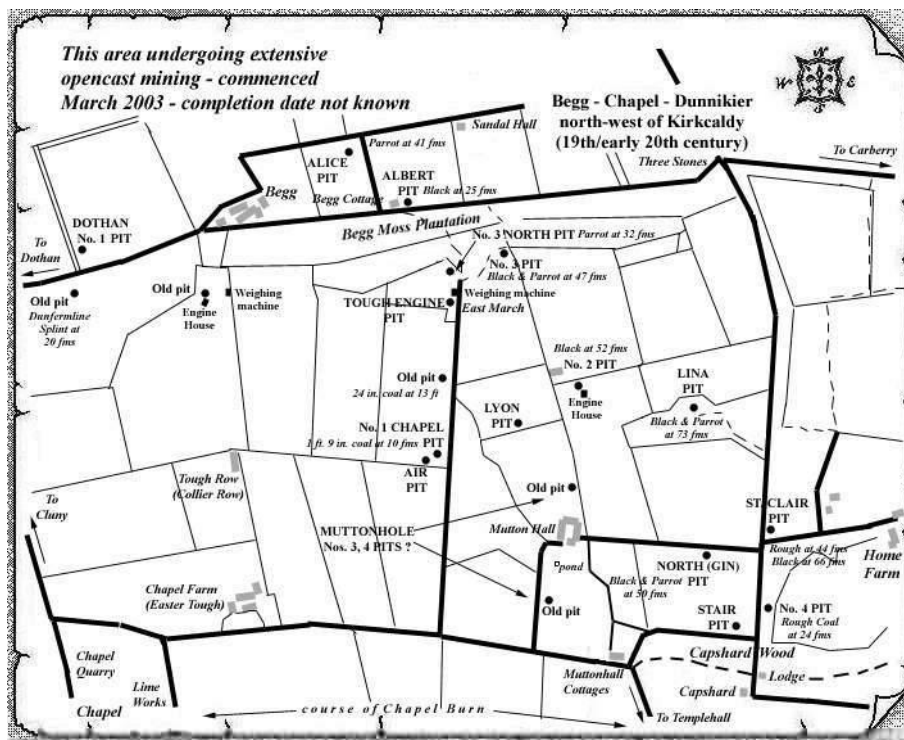
Coal seams worked	Thickness	Quality	Class
Rough Coal	3 ft. 6 in.	2nd class	Steam (cherry)
Black Coal (Lochgelly Splint)	3 ft.	1st class	Steam and household
Parrot Coal	2 ft.	2nd class	Gas coal
Glasse Coal	3 ft. 6 in.	1st class	Steam (cherry)
Mynheer Coal	2 ft.	2nd class	Smithy Coal

## Coal seams worked in the Begg District

The thickness of the Limestone Coal Group was fairly constant throughout the district and was comparatively small, ranging from around 650 ft. in the west to about 700 ft. near Carberry. The total content of coal was correspondingly low, falling to as little as 30 ft. at Carberry. There were six or seven separate seams averaging 2 ft. or more in thickness, so that, in this respect, the district did not compare unfavourably with that of Dunnikier and Kirkcaldy where the group as a whole was more fully developed.

The strata were inclined to the north and north-east at an average angle of about 15°, but between Begg and Muttonhall, steeper dips up to 25° and 30° were encountered. Stink or Sulphur Coal was proved in a bore put down half a mile NNW of Carberry where it reached a thickness of 2 ft. 4 in., including a 1 in. rib of coaly fireclay.

In a boring, in the north-eastern corner of the district, a thin coal with parrot, believed to be the Dunfermline Splint, lay 12½ fathoms below the Five Foot Coal, the intervening layers consisting largely of coarse sandstone. No records are known of workings in the Five Foot Coal, although its average thickness in bores was about 2 ft. 9 in. It was, however, known at several localities to be associated with a thin whinstone intrusion, which, despite its small thickness, was likely to have caused fairly extensive damage to the coal. An outcrop of Five Foot could be seen on the footpath, 300 yds. north of Tough Row, north of Chapel, where its thickness was 2 ft. 6 in.



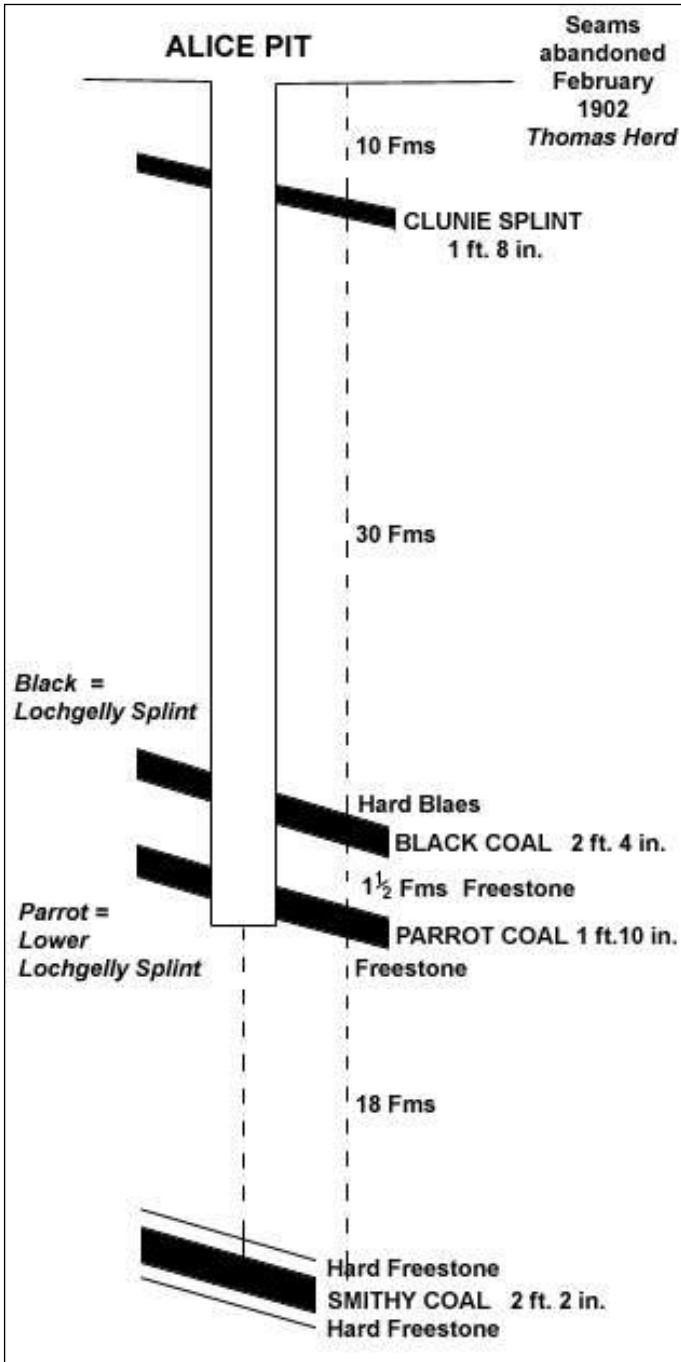
The Rough and Little Splint coals have been worked in the past from old pits in the vicinity of Begg, where the former seam was known alternatively as the 'Rough' or 'Cluny Coal' and the latter as the 'Cluny Splint'. Both seams showed considerable variation not only in thickness, but also in position relative to one another and to the underlying Main group. The distance from the Rough Coal to the Cardenden Smithy was fairly constant over the whole district, averaging a little less than 18 fathoms.

The intervening layers consisted mainly of sandstone and faky beds and, besides the Little Splint Coal, usually included a rib of coal 6 to 9 fathoms above the Rough, which probably represented the Lochgelly Blackband Ironstone.

The lower leaf of the Cardenden Smithy was little more than a rib of coal, separated from the upper leaf by less than a fathom of sandy strata.

The Blairhall Main Coal was recognised at one point only, in the bore half a mile north of Carberry.

# Information on coals worked at, or near, the Alice Pit



The pit was sunk to a 2ft. 2 in. coal, below freestone, at a depth of 61 fathoms. The coal was worked as a 'smithy' coal and was almost certainly the Dunfermline Splint. A level mine was driven southwards from the pit from the pavement of the Lochgelly Parrot Coal for nearly 250 yds., at which point a coal, called the Five Feet, was encountered dipping to the north at 11°. There is no record of the thickness of this seam, but it is believed to be the Dunfermline Splint and not the Five Feet Coal, as a 3 ft. coal was passed in the mine about 4 fathoms higher up in the sequence. The strata between the Five Feet and the Lochgelly Parrot, the lowest seam in the Main group, consisted largely of faky beds and sandstone and normally measured from 21 to nearly 28 fathoms in thickness.

In the Alice Pit, however, the distance between the seams appeared to be no more than 14 or 15 fathoms. (This reduction in thickness may have been due to faulting.) The Lochgelly Splint and Parrot Coals were generally separated by about 2 fathoms of fakes and sandstone. They have been worked as the Black and Parrot Coals from this pit. The Little Splint Coal was recorded in the Alice Pit as 1 ft. 8 in. thick at a level of about 30 fathoms above the Lochgelly Splint Coal.

The Albert Pit of the Begg Colliery just to the east of the Dothan Pits, south of Cluny, may have been sinking in the 1890s. It is known to have wrought the Black Coal at a depth of 25 fathoms. The exact colliery closure date is not known but it had probably ceased coaling

before the start of the First World War. The filled shaft now lies beneath a section of the A92 dual carriageway to the north of Kirkcaldy.

Plans of Abandoned Seams for Alice Pit, Begg Colliery	Pits or Mines designated in Plans
COAL; Black; Parrot (February, 1902)	BEGG, Albert; Alice (including portion of workings probably from Dothan Nos. 1, 2)
COAL; Black; Parrot; Smithy; Clunie Splint (February, 1912)	BEGG, Albert; Alice
COAL; Glassee	BEGG, Alice

## Dunnikier Colliery, Kirkcaldy

Source Date of Information Supplied
Manager / Under-Manager / Men underground / Men above ground / Coal seams worked
<b>1833 (Sir John Oswald)</b>
Pit at Spithead Farm working the Smithy Coal and another at Dunnikier working with sales of Great and Small coals reported. Supplies at both pits described as considerable. Coal shipped at Kirkcaldy Harbour.
<b>1835 (Sir John Oswald)</b>
Reports of colliery, salt pans and coals to be Let.
<b>1840 (Mr Alexander Park Knight, Lessee)</b>
Source: A. S. Cunningham account of Dunnikier Collieries.
<b>1842 (Mr A. P. Knight, Lessee)</b>
Mr. Alexander Park Knight, Lessee, Dunnikier Colliery, reported to the 1842 Commission. A level to be driven from an engine pit of the colliery.
<b>1844 (Mr A. P. Knight, Lessee)</b>
October - roof fall reported causing an accumulation of "bad air" and two-week-long suspension of coal excavation. Mr. Knight reported to be sinking a new pit in "another and more central quarter of this extensive coalfield."
<b>1845</b>
Colliery let advertised in local press; engine pit sunk to about 20 fms. from the Smithy Coal/engine will be put in order.
<b>1849</b>
Local newspapers carry advertisements for engineers, wanted for further sinking and development of engine pit.
<b>1850</b>
Mr. A. P. Knight, Lessee, Dunnikier Colliery, died 30 January.
<b>1851</b>
15 April - death of Mr. Robert Pratt in scalding accident May - Mr. T. Knox, Dunnikier Collieries - owner. "Coal Hill" - understood to be in the vicinity of St Mary's Road. Mr David Dryburgh, Engineman, Coal Hill Mr William Ramsay, Engine Keeper
<b>1854</b>
Mr Thomas Knox, owner.
<b>1856</b>
Adit from engine pit redd out.

<b>1857 (J. Goodall)</b>
<b>1860 (John and A. Goodall)</b>
Old engine house at St Mary's demolished.
<b>1861</b>
Final removal of engine at St Mary's.
<b>1868</b>
Mr William Goodall, Coalmaster, Dunnikier Colliery - died 17 February, 1868, aged 54 years. Source: "West Fife Graveyards"
<b>1869 (Goodall &amp; Herd)</b>
Messrs Goodall & Herd worked the Begg Colliery in conjunction with Dunnikier Colliery but the partnership was dissolved in January 1872. Source: A. S. Cunningham account of Dunnikier Collieries.
<b>1873 (Walter Herd)</b>
St Clair Pit; Isabella Pit (sinking)
<b>1874 (Walter Herd)</b>
St Clair Pit; Isabella Pit; Lena Pit (just opening)
<b>1875 (Walter Herd)</b>
St Clair, Isabella and Lena Pits
<b>1876 (Walter Herd)</b>
Isabella and Lena Pits St. Clair Pit listed as abandoned
<b>1877 (Walter Herd)</b>
St Clair, Lena, Smeaton and Spithead Pits
<b>1878 (Walter Herd)</b>
St Clair, Lena and Spithead Pits Smeaton - stopped May, 1878
<b>1879 (Walter Herd)</b>
St Clair, Lena and Spithead Pits
<b>1880 (Walter Herd)</b>
St Clair, Lena and Spithead Pits St. Clair Pit - abandoned 16 July, 1880
<b>1881 (Walter Herd)</b>
Lena, Spithead and Panny Pits
<b>Panny:</b> Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 54 / 12 / Rough Coal D'cast (16 x 7) 348 ft. : U'cast (12 x 5) 342 ft. Furnace ventilation.

**1882 (Walter Herd)**

Lena and Panny Nos. 1, 2 Pits

**Panny No. 1:** Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 23 / 4 / 3 feet  
 D'cast (16 x 7) 516 ft. : U'cast (12 x 5) 504 ft. Furnace ventilation.  
**Panny No. 2:** Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 43 / 11 / Black and Parrot  
 D'cast ---- : U'cast ----. Furnace ventilation.

**1886**

Mr Walter Herd, Coalmaster, Dunnikier Colliery - died 11 November, 1886, aged 63 years.  
 Source: "West Fife Graveyards"

**1890 (Walter Herd & Son)**

Lena and Panny Nos. 1, 2 Pits

Mr Thomas Herd / ----- / 188 / 23 / Black, Parrot and Three Foot Coals.

**Panny No. 1:** Mr Thomas Herd / ----- / 50 / 5 / Three Foot  
 D'cast (16 x 7) 348 ft. : U'cast (12 x 5) 336 ft. Fan (Waddle) 16' dia.  
**Panny No. 2:** Mr Thomas Herd / ----- / 79 / 11 / Black and Parrot  
 D'cast 516 ft. : U'cast 504 ft.

**1893 (Walter Herd & Son)**

Mr Thomas Herd, manager.  
 June - death of Major Oswald of Dunnikier.

**1896 (Walter Herd & Sons)**

Mr Thomas Herd / ----- / 158 / 41

**1898\* (Walter Herd & Sons)**

Mr Thomas Herd / ----- / 258 / 32 / Gas, household, manufacturing and steam coals.  
 [\*Another source lists this information for 1896.]

**1899 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 271 / 44

**1900 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 378 / 53

**1901 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 433 / 65

**1902 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

Mr John Henderson / Mr D. Skinner / 436 / 66  
 Gas, household, manufacturing and steam coals.

**1903 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

Mr John Henderson / ----- / 385 / 50

**1904 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

Mr John Henderson / ----- / 381 / 48 / Gas, household, manufacturing and steam coals.



**1905 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 387 / 52

**1906 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 395 / 53

**1907 (Bowhill Coal Co. Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 434 / 56

**1908 (Bowhill Coal Co. Ltd.)**

Mr Archibald Bowman Jr. / Mr C. Mackay / 571 / 110  
Electricity used.

Mr John M. Thomson, late of Dundonald Collieries, Cardenden, appointed general manager of  
Dunnikier Collieries, Kirkcaldy, lately purchased by Bowhill Coal Company.

Mr Thomas Herd, former Manager, Dunnikier Colliery - died 20 August, aged 48 years.

**1909 - Fife Coal Company Ltd. purchase Dunnikier Colliery.**

----- / ----- / 705 / 115  
Coal cutters used.

**1910 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 638 / 130

**1911 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 633 / 134

**1912 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)**

Oct: Mr Robert Crawford (ex-Kirkford Colliery, Cowdenbeath) appointed manager.

**1913 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)**

Mr David Jack / ----- / 634 / 139

**1918 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)**

**Panny Pits:** Mr David Jack / Mr William S. Brown / 395 / 115  
**Lena Pit:** Mr David Jack / Mr W. T. Lyons / 60 / 18

**1920 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 614 / 173

**1922 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 284 / 97

**1923 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 296 / 96

Nov: Mr Thomas T. Thyne, ex-Bowhill Surveying Office, appointed manager.

**1924 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 274 / 99

1926 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)

----- / ----- / 19 / 18

1927 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)

----- / ----- / 40 / 14

Coaling in the Dunnikier field ceased 19 April, 1927.

## Abbotshall Crop Pits

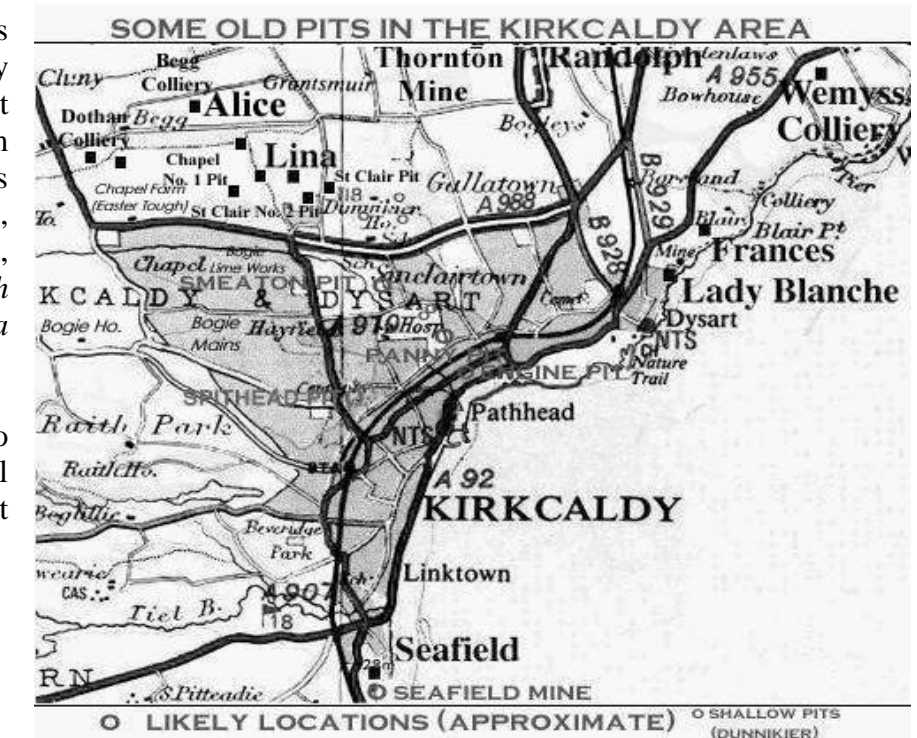
A few small mid-18th century pits, probably towards the Bogie Mains and Chapel areas in the north of the parish, are known to have worked crop coal seams in the estate of Raith, Abbotshall parish, but these had probably ceasing coaling around the 1770s.

No detailed information has been gleaned on these early Kirkcaldy crop pits but researched information from the Earl of Rothes papers has revealed that a David Brown, oversman at Bogie, in 1724, - 'Provides advice along with Adam Anderson re making a bearers gate'.

A Mr Robert Craig is also reported to have been a coal magazine manager, at Kirkcaldy, from 1749-1752.

### Extract: Statistical Account of Fife (Abbotshall) 1791

"The lands of Abbot's Hall, which belong to Mr Ferguson of Raith, abound in coal of different seams, it is said, some 3, 5, and even 14 feet. Part of the crop-coal was wrought about 40 years ago. ... Within these twenty years, the population of the town is increased between 300 and 400; but the country part of the parish is decreased above 100. The increase of the former is owing to the manufactures, and the decrease of the latter to a coal-work being entirely given up, and 7 or 8 farms being taken into one. ... The only fuel is coal, price paid on the spot, 6d. the load, weighing 22 stone. On different coal-hills the weight is different, and so are the prices. Some within half a mile, 2 and 3 miles, &c."



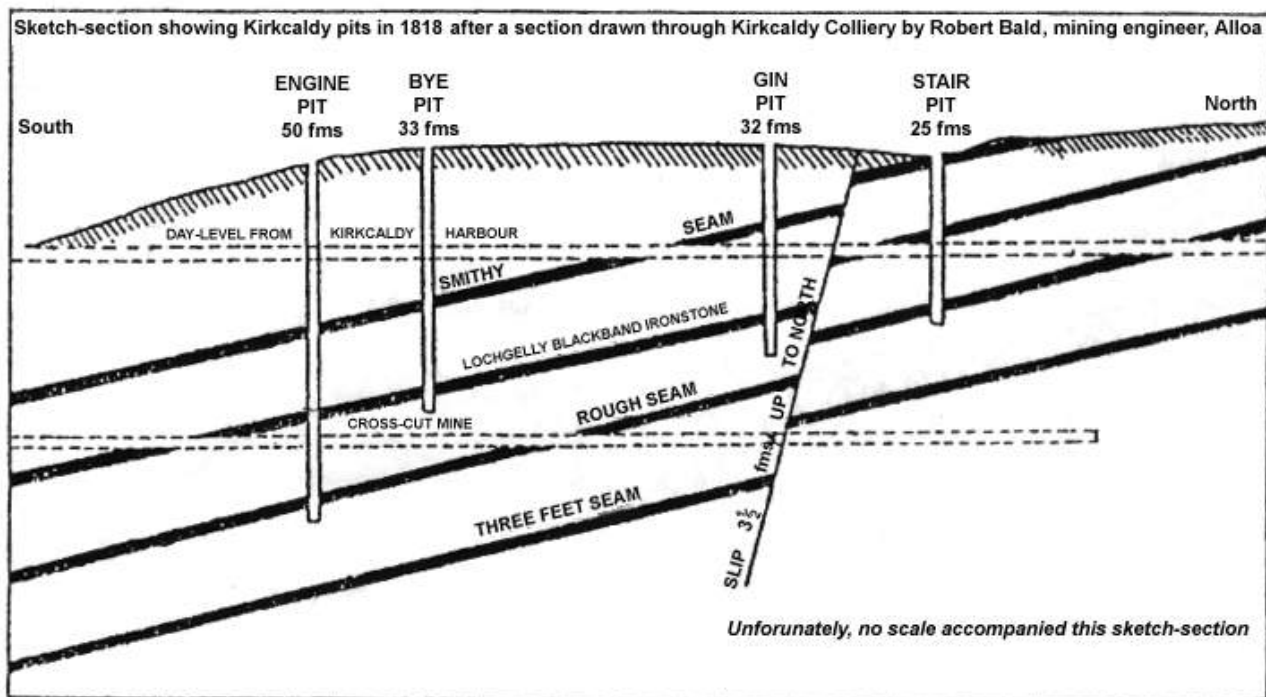
### Extract: Statistical Account of Fife (Kirkcaldy) 1792

"*Minerals*. - Besides the produce of the surface of the ground, this parish yields free-stone, iron-stone, and pit-coal. At present, however, there is little or no increase of value derived from these sources. ... The *iron stone* is found in the coal-pits, and the working of it depends on that of the coal.

**D U N N I K I E R / B E G G / K I R K C A L D Y**

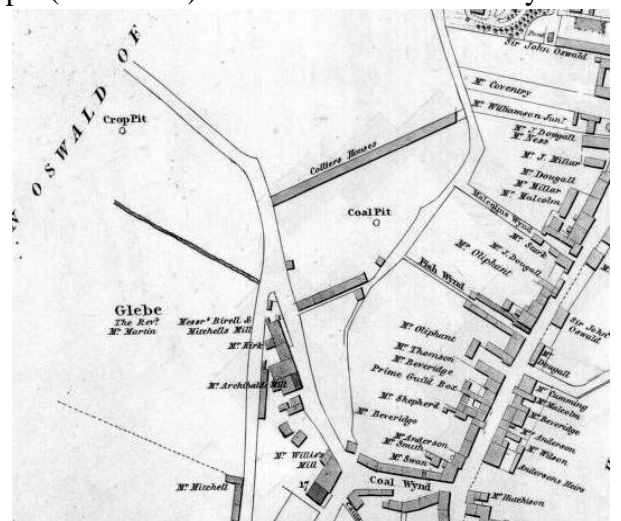
Different seams of coal from 2¼ to 4½ feet thick were formerly wrought; but they have for some time been exhausted above the draining level. They continue, and are supposed to be more valuable, below the level; but the expense of machinery for draining, has hitherto prevented the working of them. - At present, the inhabitants are supplied from the coaleries of Dysart, belonging to Sir James St. Clair Erskine, or of Cluny, belonging to Mr Ferguson of Raith. The former is distant from Kirkcaldy about 2 miles, the latter about 4. At the former 2 *metes*, about 9½ cwt of small coals or *chews*, the kind generally used for home consumption, are sold for 2s. 1d. and the expense of carriage to Kirkcaldy is 1s. At the latter, 3 *loads*, weighing about 9¾ cwt. are sold at 1s. 6d. and the expense of carriage is 2s. There is a depot of Cluny coals kept at Kirkcaldy for exportation; from which about 600 tons have been annually shipped during the last 5 or 6 years, partly for Hamburg, but chiefly for Middleburg, where the Cluny *splint* is said to have the preference of every other species of Scotch coal. As there is now a turnpike road from Cluny to this place, it is probable that the quantity of coal exported from it will increase."

Some pits of the Kirkcaldy coalfield, to the south of Dunnikier estate and close to the harbour and promenade areas, were operating in the early 19th century. Pits identified include: Engine Pit; Bye Pit; Gin Pit; and Stair Pit.

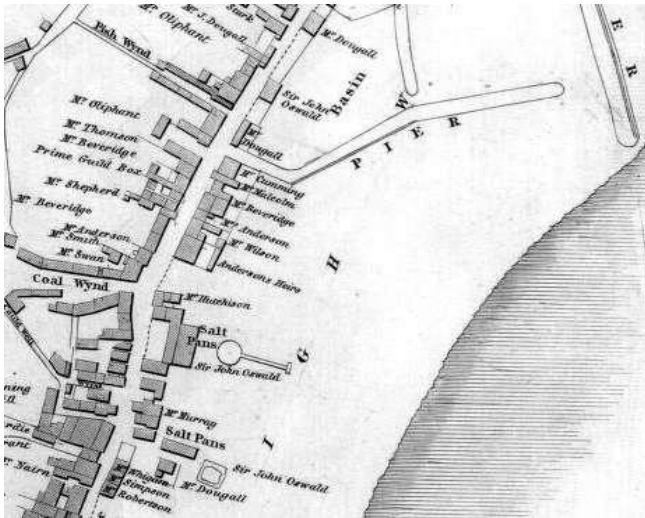


Plans of Abandoned Seams for Kirkcaldy	Pits or Mines designated in Plans
COAL; Three Feet; Four Feet; Five Feet (1818)	<b>KIRKCALDY:</b> Bye; Engine; Gin; Stair
COAL; Three Feet; Four Feet; Five Feet (1818)	<b>HARBOUR;</b> Gin; Stair Plan Custodian: Fife Coal Co., Ltd., Cowdenbeath.
COAL; Seam unnamed (1820)	<b>KIRKCALDY</b> <b>Plan Custodian:</b> <b>Stella Coal Company, Blaydon, Durham</b>

Crop Pit features on an early 19th century map section on land which would now be just west of Dunnikier Road, north of Coal Wynd. Another coal pit (un-named) is shown a few hundred yards to the south-east, close to the top of Fish Wynd. No details of these early coal-works, other than location, have been uncovered but it is quite likely that they worked small areas of Rough Coal as the *St. Clair Coal*, and the upper leaf of the Cardenden Smithy Coal.



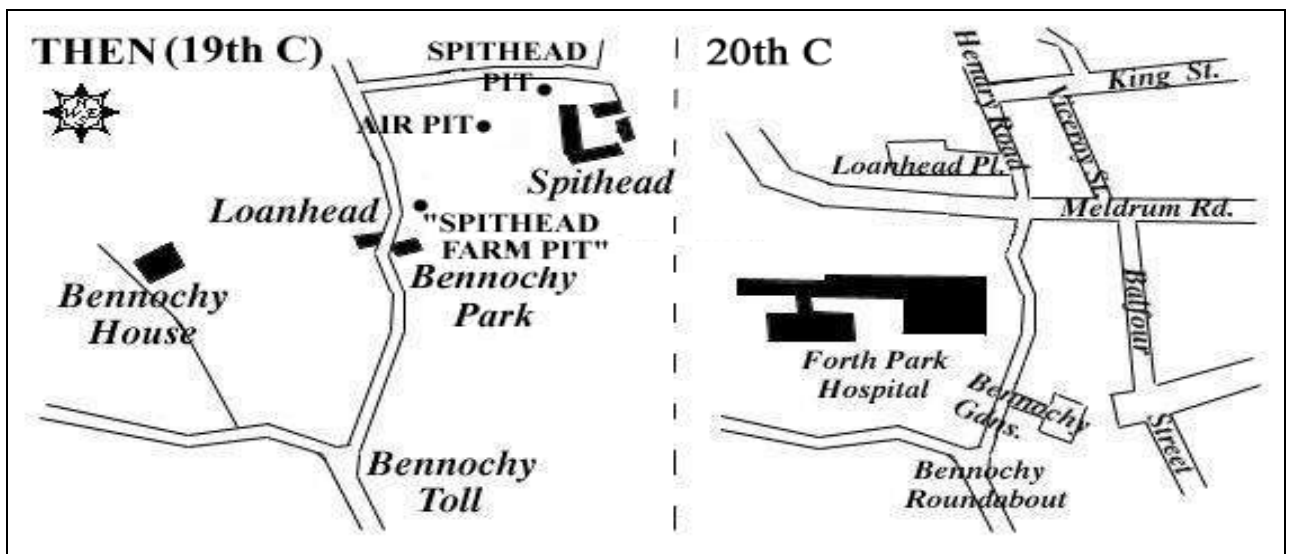
The early 19th century map section (below) shows the locations of some of Sir John Oswald's salt pans on the foreshore at Kirkcaldy.



**"Fifeshire Journal"**  
**26 January, 1833**  
**PRICE OF COAL REDUCED**

THE SMITHY COAL on Dunnikier Estate, which is now working a Pit on the Farm of SPITHEAD, near Kirkcaldy, is reduced in price to One Shilling per Load. This Coal (equal to English Coal) is found to be of superior quality for the Forge and is also well suited for Family use having the property of caking, when put on the fire a little damped. Great and small Coal continues for sale at a pit near Dunnikier, the Great at 1s. per Load, in small quantities, and 11d. per Load in Tons; and the Small for Furnaces at 6d. per Load. As the Quantities on hand at both Pits is considerable, the Public may depend on a steady supply. The Smithy Coal is shipped at Kirkcaldy Harbour on very moderate terms.

*Dunnikier Colliery, near Kirkcaldy. 24 January, 1833.*



*The "Spithead Farm Pit" appears as 'old coal pit' on the OS Map of 1856.*

**Extract: Statistical Account of Fife  
(Abbotshall) 1836**

"Upon it [carboniferous limestone], rest the coal strata which run through the district, and which contain valuable seams of coal. ... Coal being profitably worked by some of the proprietors in the immediate neighbourhood, there are no pits open at present in this parish. The inhabitants, however, are well supplied with that article of fuel, and at an easy rate. The nearest colliery is that at the back of the town of Kirkcaldy, belonging to Sir John Oswald, where the price of coal is 7s. 7d. per ton of 21 cwt. At the colliery of Dysart, belonging to the Earl of Rosslyn, the price is 7s.; and at the colliery of Cluny, belonging to Mr Ferguson of Raith, the price is 6s. 5d. The Cluny coal, though the most distant, is generally preferred. ... Number of miners working in the parish = 21."

**Extract: Statistical Account of Fife  
(Kirkcaldy) 1845**

**Minerals.**- ... The general dip of the strata, where their bearings are regular, and have not been deranged by the convulsions which threw up the trap rocks, that intersect this coalfield, are so troublesome in the working of the coal, is south-south-east, from a ridge near the northern extremity of the parish. The prevailing strata are sandstone, slate, clay, and till, containing a number of seams of coal, varying in thickness from 9 inches to 3½ feet. Above the coal, which is now being wrought, there is a bed of whinstone 8 fathoms thick. There is only one coal-pit in operation at present. It is 46 fathoms deep. The bed of coal is 5½ feet in thickness; but the expense of turning out this coal is much increased, in consequence of its being composed of two seams, separated by a stratum of clay 15 inches thick. This, however, only lessens the value of the coal-field to the proprietor, and does not raise the price of coal to the consumer;- for this is prevented by the competition of other coal-works in the neighbourhood. Considerable quantities of iron ore are also found in this coal-field in globular masses. About thirty years ago, when the iron trade was more profitable than it is now, this ore was wrought along with the coal, and was sold at 10s. 6d. per ton to the Carron Company. The working of it has been discontinued for many years. The present tacksman of the Dunnikier colliery could find buyers of the iron in England; but the prices offered are not sufficiently remunerating to encourage him to embark in this branch of trade.

**Mines.**- One coal-pit is at present in operation. Forty (*pick-men*) colliers are employed in it, besides labourers, and young persons to draw the coals below ground."

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## Coals in the Dunnikier coalfield

The total thickness of the Limestone Coal Group (excluding igneous intrusions) was close to 115 fathoms and contained a total thickness of coal of 44 ft. It has been calculated that there were 12 coal seams with 18 in. or more of coal, and 9 coal seams with 2 ft. or more coal present in the Dunnikier Colliery workings.

The development of the Limestone Coal Group varied from bore to pit to bore in this area, however, the general succession of coal measures in the Kirkcaldy field is representative of the strata as passed through in the Panny Pits of the Dunnikier Colliery.

The following table is from a 1900 report:

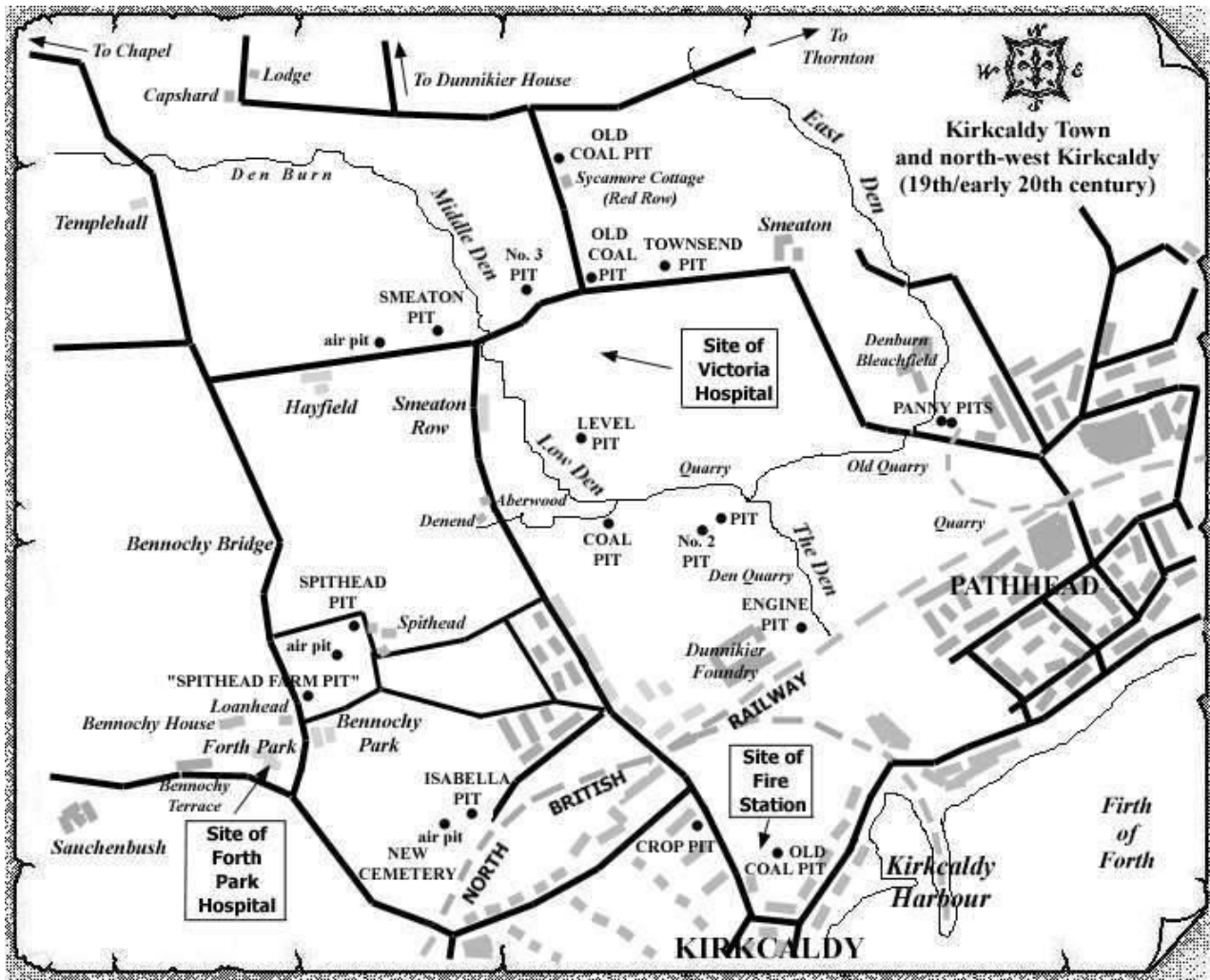
Description	Thickness
Various strata	180 ft.
UPPER SMITHY COAL	2 ft. 9 in.
Strata	150 ft.
COAL (rough and parrot) and Shale (= position of Lochgelly B. B. Ironstone)	3 ft. 9 in.
Strata	50 ft.
COAL	2 ft. 2 in.
Strata	38 ft.
COAL (coarse)	3 ft.
Whinstone	18 ft.
Freestone	24 ft.
COAL	10 in.
Strata	9 ft. 10 in.
COAL	1 ft. 4 in.
Strata	17 ft. 8 in.
BLACK COAL }	4 ft.
Strata } ( <b>Lochgelly Splint and Parrot</b> )	2 ft. 4 in.
PARROT COAL }	2 ft. 6 in.
Strata (including some thin coals and 40 feet of whinstone)	200 ft.
CARDENDEN COAL ( ? Glasse Coal of western fields)	4 ft.
Strata	21 ft.
GIBBS HALL COAL (Mynheer)	2 ft. 1 in.
Strata	25 ft.

The outcrops of the lower Dunfermline seams of coal have not been traced through the Kirkcaldy field. The lowest seams that have been followed are the Gibbs Hall and Carden seams, which, as they approach Kirkcaldy, are known as the Lower and Upper Smithy seams.

The Black Coal and Parrot run on beyond the end of the basalt-sheet at Mutton Hall, and crop out in the dell of the Chapel Burn a little below Smeaton Row, in the old Dunnikier Colliery. The strata are traversed immediately to the south of that section by a powerful fault which, throwing them down to the south, strikes from the middle of the Pathhead Sands north-westwards to beyond Bogie Parks. The effect of this dislocation is to shift the outcrops 600 yards to the west.

Another intercalated basalt has been exposed in the railway cutting north of Kirkcaldy Station with the outcrops of the two coal seams coming out from under it.

The two seams [Splint and Rough Coals] have their outcrop in the ravine of the Dunnikier Colliery, a little further down than those of the Black Coal and Parrot.

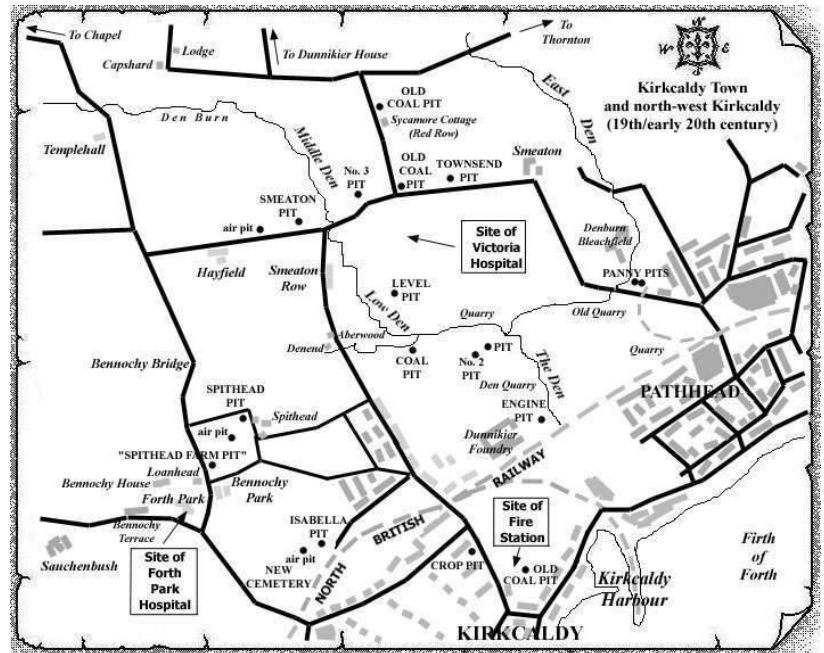


It is a curious fact that, notwithstanding the comparative regularity of the strata in this field, and the small number of serious dislocations, a number of sills have been injected into the coal-bearing measures on several horizons.

Plans of Abandoned Seams for Dunnikier	Pits or mines designated in the abandonment plans
COAL; Glasse; Mynheer	DUNNIKIER
COAL; Three Feet; Four Feet; Five Feet	DUNNIKIER

## Information on coals worked in the southern Kirkcaldy coalfield (based on a report from 1934)

The Raith fault, with a downthrow of 30 to 35 fathoms, is the most southerly of the major dislocations in the Kirkcaldy coalfield; it traverses the Limestone Coal Group from the north side of Castle Hill, north of Raith Lake, to the shore about midway between Kirkcaldy Harbour and the gas-works. Several minor faults, belonging to the same system, and ranging in size from a few feet to 8 or 9 fathoms, have also been encountered, more particularly between the Raith and Pathhead faults and also between Begg and Muttonhall; most of these smaller fractures throw down to the north.



Nowhere are they so numerous as to present any serious obstacle to mining. However, in the Dunnikier field, a whinstone splits into two separate sheets, which, when traced to the south, transgress downwards, so that first the lower sheet, in the Panny Pit shaft, and finally both sheets, in a boring near Kirkcaldy Harbour, come to lie below the Lochgelly Parrot Coal. It is probable, therefore, that somewhere between these two points, the Lochgelly Splint and Parrot coals are destroyed or rendered valueless. South of the Pathhead fault, which runs from Bogie Mains to the shore below The Path of Pathhead, the whinstone sill reappears at the surface in the railway-cutting 500 to 600 yards north of Kirkcaldy Station, where it lies just below the Lochgelly Splint and Parrot coals, and again in a small quarry on the south side of the Raith fault, about a quarter of a mile west of the Station. The Dunfermline Splint the lowest workable seam in the district, lay 13½ fathoms above the Sulphur or Stink Coal near the gas-works, Pathhead. It was worked under the name 'Smithy Coal' and at one time was thought to represent the Mynheer Coal of the Lochgelly field, a seam which, if represented at all in this district, is rarely more than a few inches thick. In a bore near the mouth of the Tiel Burn, the seam is 2 ft. 10 in. thick, with a fireclay pavement and a roof of dark fakes in which there is a thin irony rib 3 in. above the coal. Farther north, near the gas-works and again near the harbour, the following sections have been recorded:

### Near the Gas-Works

Description	Thickness
Faky sandstone	-
Blaes	1 ft. 11 in.
COAL	9 in.
Faky fireclay	2 ft. 8 in.
PARROT, coarse	4 in.
COAL, splint	2 ft.
Faky sandstone	-



**Near the Harbour**

Description	Thickness
Fakes and blaes	-
Blaes	1 ft. 2 in.
Parrotty blaes	2 in.
COAL, splint	2 ft. 1 in.
Fireclay	3 in.
Fakes	-

In a bore at Linktown, on the south side of Ramsay Road, the Dunfermline Splint was 2 ft. 8 in. thick with a 1 in. parting near the top, and a thin irony rib in the roof which consisted of blaes (9 in.), below fakes. The Five Foot Coal was a first-class steam coal and was separated from the Dunfermline Splint by sandy strata averaging more than 4 fathoms in thickness. In this southern part of the coalfield, the Five Foot is normally 4 to 5 ft. thick, and frequently contained one or two thin stone ribs. Its pavement was typically of sandstone or fakes, but the roof was variable. Sections of the seam proved in borings near the gas-works and near the harbour, at depths of 102 fathoms and 116 fathoms, respectively, are given in the following table:

**Near the Gas-Works**

Description of Five Foot seam	Thickness
Faky fireclay	-
COAL	10 in.
Faky fireclay rib	2 in.
COAL	2 ft. 2 in.
Fake rib	½ in.
COAL	2 ft. 9½ in.
Fakes	1 ft. 1 in.
Faky sandstone	-

**Near the Harbour**

Description of Five Foot seam	Thickness
Fakes and sandstone	-
Blaes	1 in.
COAL	8 in.
Blaes	1 in.
Coaly blaes	2 in.
COAL	2 ft. 1 in.
Stone	¼ in.
COAL	1 ft. 11¾ in.
Fakes	3 in.
Sandstone	-

An exceptional development of the Lochgelly Splint and Parrot coals was recorded in a bore near Kirkcaldy Harbour where they were separated by almost 20 ft. of sandstone below 7 ft. of fireclay. The coals themselves, however, were of more or less normal thickness.

The Splint was a first-class steam and household coal and was usually about 3 ft. 3 in. thick. The roof of the seam was formed of sandstone, except in the Seafield district where a bed of blaes made its appearance above the coal. The following section was proved in a bore near the gas-works; the Lochgelly Splint being rather thicker than usual, but otherwise the section is fairly typical for the Kirkcaldy district:

Description	Thickness
Sandstone	-
<b>LOCHGELLY SPLINT COAL</b>	3 ft. 8 in.
Faky fireclay rib	4 in.
<b>COAL</b>	5 in.
Faky fireclay	2 ft.
Fakes	2 ft. 9 in.
<b>COAL</b>	8 in.
<b>PARROT</b>	2 ft. 6 in.
<b>COAL</b>	2 in.
Sandstone	-

The Swallowdrum Coal was a comparatively thin seam separated from the Lochgelly Splint by 3 to 5 fathoms of sandstone and faky beds. South of the Pathhead fault, it varied little in thickness, its development in the Kirkcaldy district being illustrated by the following section from a bore near the gas-works:

Description	Thickness
Sandstone	-
Faky blaes	2 ft. 5 in.
<b>COAL</b>	1 ft. 4 in.
Coaly blaes	2 in.
Faky fireclay	-

The Jersey Coals formed a well-defined group of thin seams included within 8 to 10 ft. of strata and separated from the Swallowdrum Coal by about 2 fathoms of sandstone and faky beds in which a thin coal may be developed near the top.

In a bore near Kirkcaldy harbour, the Upper Jersey was 28 in. thick, including three ½ in. stone ribs. It was separated by 35 in. of fakes and blaes from the Lower Jersey which is 34 in. thick with partings of 3 in. and 5 in. Farther south, where these coals have been proved, their separation into an upper and a lower group was not apparent.

The Rough Coal was the lowest seam in the Blairhall group of coals and was one of the thickest and most valuable coals in the Kirkcaldy district. It was closely overlain by the Little Splint which was rarely more than 1 ft. thick. The Rough Coal was classed as a good steam coal and was wrought extensively as the *St. Clair Coal* from pits and crop workings. It is believed that small areas of the coal were worked in the early decades of the 19th century, below the north end of Kirkcaldy, from old pits near the harbour, the sites of which are now built over. The distance between the Rough and Kelty Main coals has been proved only in a few instances; it varies from 9½ fathoms at the Panny Pits to 12½ fathoms near the gas-works. The intervening strata are chiefly sandstone and fakes in which two thin coals are generally developed in the upper half.

In a bore near the harbour, the distance between the seams is reduced to 6½ fathoms by a 5 to 6 fathom fault, which cuts the bore just above the Main Coal, and probably throws down to the north. South of the Pathhead fault, the Rough and Little Splint coals have been proved only in two borings, one near the harbour and one near the gas-works. In the latter, the Rough Coal lies at a depth of 38 fathoms, and, with the Little Splint, gives the following section:

Description	Thickness
Sandstone	-
<b>LITTLE SPLINT COAL</b>	11 in.
Faky fireclay	4 ft.
<b>COAL</b>	6 in.
Faky fireclay	8 in.
<b>COAL</b>	2 ft. 11 in.
Faky fireclay	8 in.
<b>COAL</b>	5 in.
Faky fireclay	1 ft.
Sandstone	-

In the former bore, the Little Splint is 1 ft. 9 in. thick with a 1 in. rib of parrot coal near the base, and is separated from the Rough by 8½ ft. of fakes and sandstone. The section of Rough Coal, cut at 45 fathoms, is given below in condensed form:

Description of Rough Coal	Thickness
Fakes and sandstone	-
Blaes	4 in.
<b>COAL</b>	11 in.
Fakes and blaes	10 in.
<b>COAL</b>	1 ft.
Fakes, with 1 in. coal near base	9 in.
<b>COAL, with two ribs, 1½ and ½ in. thick</b>	4 ft. 9 in.
Fireclay	5 in.
Fakes and sandstone	-

Very little is known about the Lochgelly Blackband Ironstone in this part of the field, but it appears to be represented by a coal which has been recorded about midway between the Little Splint and Cardenden Smithy coals in a bore near the harbour:

Description	Thickness
Fakes and blaes	-
COAL	4 in.
COAL, parrot	4 in.
COAL	1 ft. 1 in.
Fakes and sandstone	-

In a bore near the gas-works, 4 in. of parrot coal, with a 2 in. irony rib above it, occurs at this horizon.

In a bore near the harbour, at a depth of 24½ fathoms, 2 ft. 10 in. of 'clear waste' and 1 ft. 7 in. of 'loose rubble' resting on fireclay were recorded below a thick sandstone. This waste marks the position of the upper leaf of the Cardenden Smithy Coal and is separated by about 1½ fathoms of sandy strata from the lower leaf which is 25 in. thick with a ¼ in. fireclay rib near the top and a fireclay pavement. The upper leaf of the Cardenden Smithy Coal was probably wrought at the north end of Kirkcaldy, around the 1820s, from the pits a short distance west of the harbour. As stated earlier, these pits have long been abandoned and their sites built over, but it is probable that the coal has been worked out over a greater part of the area bounded on the west by the outcrop of the coal itself, on the north by the Pathhead fault, and on the south-east by the coastline at the Forth.

During the demolition of a lodging-house in Bute Wynd, Kirkcaldy, an old 'stoop and room' working in coal was temporarily exposed and gave the following section:

Description	Thickness
Sandstone	-
Fakes	4 in.
COAL, clean	2 ft. 2 in.
COAL, sclitty	4 in.
Fireclay	-

This coal is considered to be the upper leaf of the Cardenden Smithy. The beds are inclined to the north-east at about 15°, but there cannot be any great extent of the coal in that direction as there is evidence in a bore just 300 yards away that the seam is replaced by a spread of ash. A similar replacement is likely to have occurred in a northerly direction at least as far as the Raith fault.

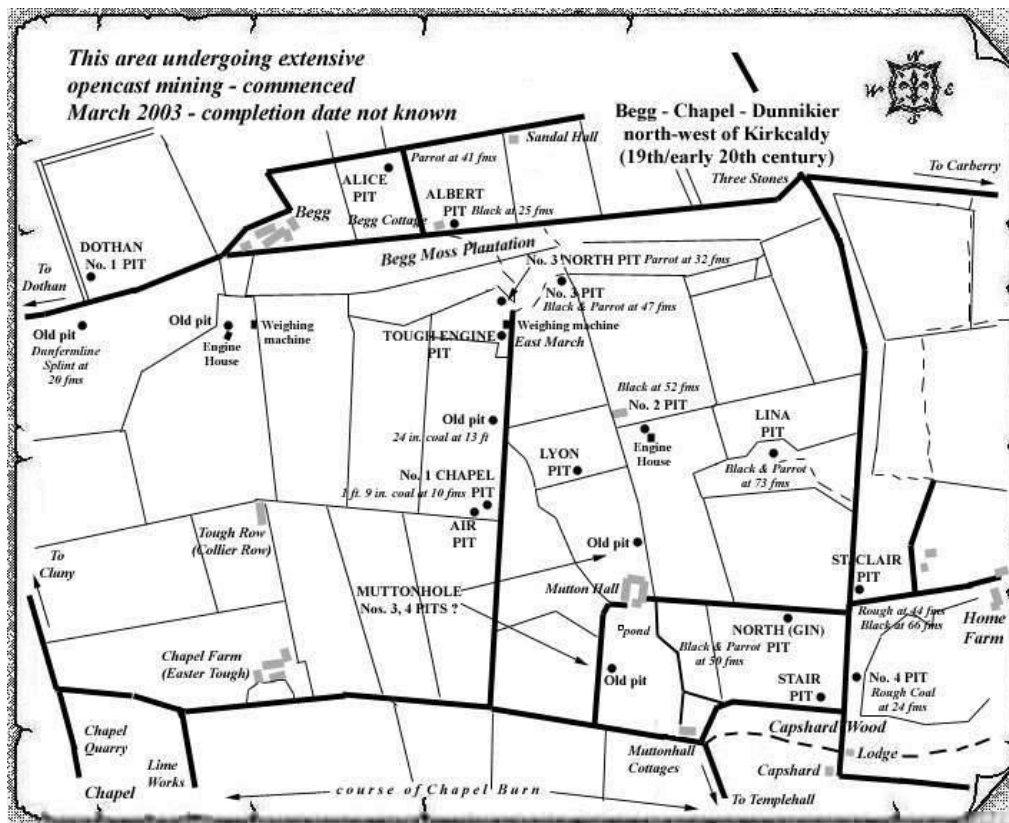
An even older 'stoop and room' working was revealed in an excavation at the linoleum works of Michael Nairn & Company on the east side of Den Road, just north of Victoria Road.

The following is a section of the coal taken in the working below a 9 ft. cover of sandstone:

Description	Thickness
Sandstone	-
COAL	1 ft. 5 in.
Blaes parting	4 in.
COAL	1 ft. 3½ in.
Fireclay	7½ in.
Fakes	-

The dip of the beds was slightly to the north of east at about 14°.

## Pit Snippets



## Tough Pits

1842 - Mr James Beveridge, Lessee  
John Goodall, manager

Tough Engine Pit has been indicated on abandonment plans close by East March, to the south of Begg Moss Plantation. Research by the author has identified two early 19th century pits to the north and north-west of Tough Row (Collier Row), north of Chapel Farm - formerly known as Easter Tough - and it is believed that these pits were part of a Tough Colliery operating in the 1840s.

The most westerly sited of these 'Tough pits' was sunk to the Lower Smithy Coal (Dunfermline Splint) at a depth of 20 fathoms.

Apart from the existence of an engine house and a nearby weighing machine, little is known about the 'Tough pit' to the north of Tough Row which the author, at one time, thought might be an earlier Tough Engine Pit.

Plan of Abandoned Seams for Tough Pits, Dunnikier	Pits or Mines designated in Plan
COAL; Three Feet; Black; Parrot; Smithy (1860)	No. 4; Bye North; Engine; Lyon; Muttonhole Nos. 3, 4
COAL; Rough (1875); Parrot (1879); Black (1880)	No. 4; North (or Gin); Lina; Lyon; St. Clair; Tough Engine
COAL; Black; Parrot; Five Feet; Jersey; Bright; Cairncubie (April, 1927)	Nos. 2, 3; Lina; Lyon; North; Panny Nos. 1, 2; St. Clair No. 2; Tough

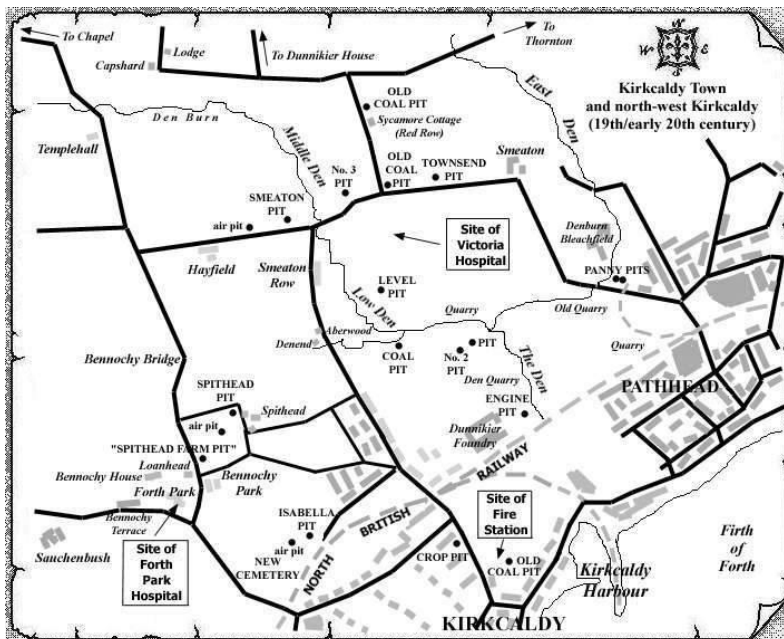
## Muttonhole Pits

The two shafts - one north and one south of Mutton Hall Farm - are likely to be the Muttonhole Nos. 3, 4 Pits which operated until around 1860 in this part of the Dunnikier field.

Plan of Abandoned Seams for Muttonhole Nos. 3, 4 Pits, Dunnikier	Pits or Mines designated in Plan
COAL; Three Feet; Black; Parrot; Smithy (1860)	No. 4; Bye North; Engine; Lyon; Muttonhole Nos. 3, 4

## Dunnikier No. 2 Pits

The Dunnikier No. 2 Pit (west of The Den and approx. 300 yards south-east of the Level Pit) probably dates from the 1850s. This pit shaft reached the Smithy Coal (Dunfermline Splint) at 25 fathoms; and, the Glasse (Five Feet) at 40 fathoms.



An unidentified pit is located just yards to the east of this No. 2 Pit.

The Dunnikier No. 2 Pit to the north of Muttonhall (see map on previous page) would appear to pre-date the nearby Lina Pit, which was sunk in 1874 just a few hundred yards E. S. E., by around twenty years.

In this No. 2 pit shaft about 375 yds. W.N.W. of the Lina Pit, the Rough Coal was recorded at 25 fathoms above the Lochgelly Splint (Black) Coal. In this same shaft, the Cardenden Smithy coal was recorded as the "Cluny Smithy" at a depth of

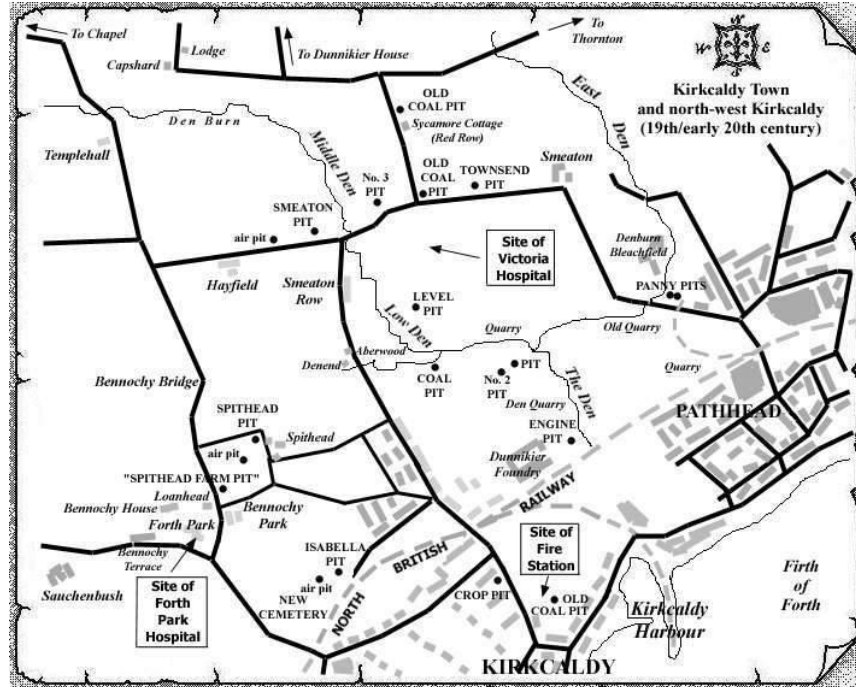
6 fathoms and at a level of 21 fathoms above the Rough Coal. The roof of the seam consisted of sandstone or fakes, but a bed of blaes up to 2 ft. 4 in. thick may have lain above the coal.

## Dunnikier No. 3 Pits

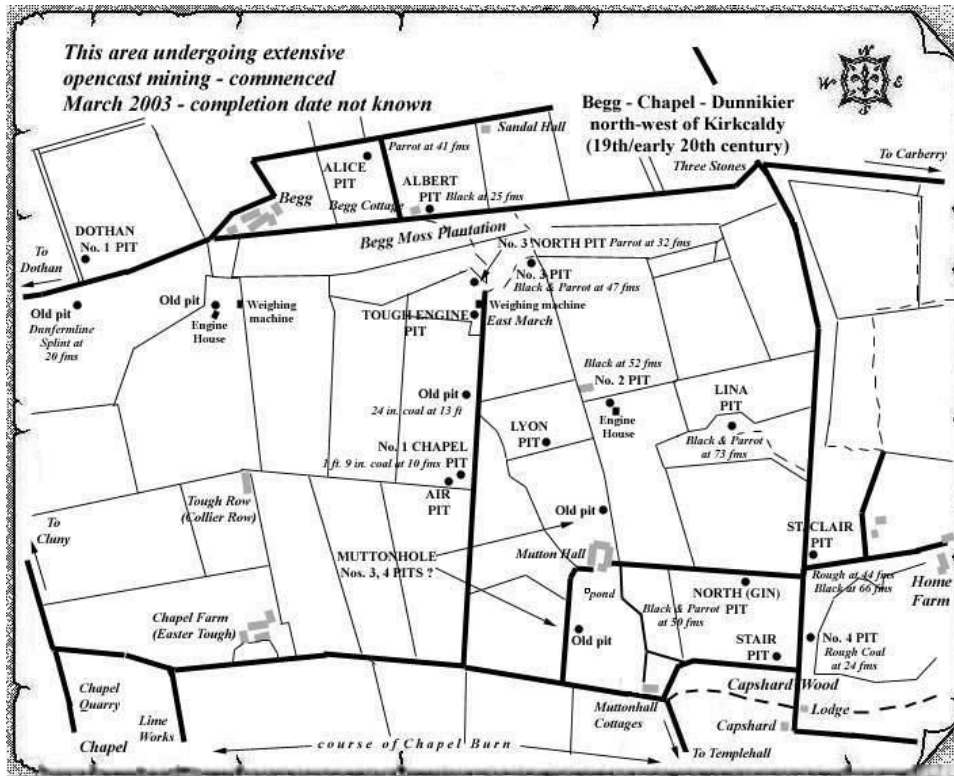
The Dunnikier No. 3 Pit (east of lower Middle Den and sunk on land just north of the present day Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy) probably dates from the 1850s. This pit shaft reached the Black Coal at 15 fathoms; and, the Glassee (Five Feet) at 47 fathoms.

An unidentified pit is located around ¼ mile north of this No. 3 Pit by the roadside close to Sycamore Cottage (formerly Red Row).

The Dunnikier No. 3 Pit, by Begg Moss Plantation, was sunk to the Black and Parrot Coals at a depth of 47 fathoms about ¼ mile to the north-west of the No. 2 Pit.



This Dunnikier No. 3 pit would appear to pre-date the Lina Pit, which was sunk in 1874 less than ½ mile to the south-east.



The No. 3 North Pit of the Dunnikier Colliery was on the southern edge of the Begg Moss Plantation just 100 yards north of the location of the Tough Engine Pit.

The No. 3 North Pit may also have been known as the Bye North Pit and was probably sunk in the 1850s and closed by 1860.

It worked the Parrot Coal of the district at a depth of 32 fathoms.

## Dunnikier No. 4 Pit

The Dunnikier No. 4 Pit was sunk to the Rough Coal at a depth of 24 fathoms just ¼ mile south-west of the Home Farm, Dunnikier estate, and 260 yards south of the St. Clair Pit. It was probably sunk around 1860 and may have operated into the 1870s.

### Level Pit

The Level Pit was sunk on the east side of the Low Den, around 200 yards from Smeaton Row, in an area close to the present car parks serving the Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy. This small pit probably dates from around 1853 when workings are known to have taken place in this vicinity and it may have been in existence for only a few years.

### Stair Pit

A Stair Pit of the Dunnikier Colliery was located by Capshard Wood, less than 200 yards south-west of the No. 4 Pit. No shaft depth or other pit details have been uncovered.

Plan of Abandoned Seams	Pits or Mines designated in Plan
COAL; Rough (1874); St. Clair (1878); Smithy (1880); Black; Parrot; Glassee	Level; Lina; St. Clair; Spithead; Stair

## Townsend Pit

The Townsend Pit of Dunnikier Colliery, named after James Townsend Oswald, was located close to the site of the present-day road junction at Smeaton, outside the Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy. It was believed to have a circular shaft sunk to the Black and Parrot Coals at a depth of 36 fathoms and probably operated in the 1840/50s.

Plan of Abandoned Seams	Pits or Mines designated in Plan
COAL; Glassee; Lochgelly Splint; Mynheer.	DUNNINKIER Smeaton; Spithead; Townsend

## Lyon Pit

The Lyon Pit was located under ¼ mile north-west of Mutton Hall to the west of Dunnikier estate. The pit was probably sunk around 1860 and may have closed by 1865.

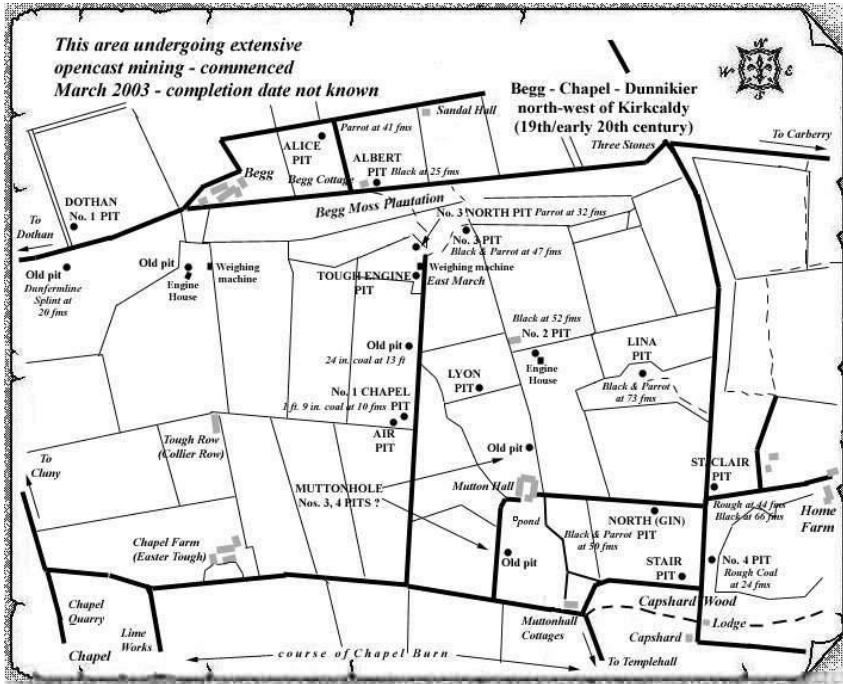
Plan of Abandoned Seams	Pits or Mines designated in Plan
COAL; Three Feet; Black; Parrot; Smithy (1860)	No. 4; Bye North; Engine; Lyon; Muttonhole Nos. 3, 4
COAL; Rough (1875); Parrot (1879); Black (1880)	No. 4; North (or Gin); Lina; Lyon; St. Clair; Tough Engine
COAL; Black; Parrot; Five Feet; Jersey; Bright; Cairncubie (April, 1927)	Nos. 2, 3; Lina; Lyon; North; Panny Nos. 1, 2; St. Clair No. 2; Tough



# St Clair Pit

Small areas of Rough Coal, also known as "Cluny" Coal, were wrought from the St. Clair Pit and from an old shaft some 260 yards farther south. The St. Clair Pit (St. Clair No. 2) of the old

Dunnikier Colliery was probably sunk in the 1860s just over ¼ mile west of Dunnikier House, Kirkcaldy, on the eastern edge of the route known locally as 'Johnnie's Loan'. It was by the orchard on the north side of the Home Farm Road and to the south were located the No. 4 and the Stair Pits of the Colliery. Just 200 yds. to the south-west of the St. Clair Pit was the site of its nearest neighbour, the North (or Gin) Pit which worked the Black and Parrot coals at a depth of 50 fathoms. The St. Clair Pit reached the Rough Coal at a depth of 44 fathoms where the seam was 2½ feet thick. Workings in the Rough Coal



were abandoned in July, 1875. The Black Coal (2 ft. 2 in. thick) and Parrot Coal (2 ft. 4 in. thick) were found in the St. Clair Pit at 66 fathoms and workings in these seams were abandoned in July, 1880.

Source Date of Information Supplied
Manager / Under-Manager / Men underground / Men above ground / Coal seams worked / Shaft details
1873
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / --- / --- / Rough / D'cast 240 ft. : U'cast 228 ft.
1874
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / 20 / 2 / Rough / D'cast 240 ft. : U'cast 228 ft.
1875
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / 17 / 2 / Rough / D'cast 240 ft. : U'cast 228 ft. / Abandoned
1876 (St. Clair Pit not listed in colliery record)
1877
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / 17 / 2 / Black and Parrot / D'cast 396 ft. : U'cast -----
1878
Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 36 / 4 / Black and Parrot / D'cast 396 ft. : U'cast -----
1879
Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 31 / 3 / Black and Parrot / D'cast 396 ft. : U'cast -----
1880 (Walter Herd & Sons) (Abandoned - 16 July, 1880)
Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 30 / 3 / Black and Parrot / D'cast 396 ft. (9.5 x 5 ft) : U'cast -----

## Information on coals worked in the St. Clair Pit area

From the abandonment plan of Black and Parrot Coal workings of July, 1880:

Description	Thickness
Rock	-
Blaes	3 ft.
Free Coal (BLACK COAL)	2 ft. 2 in.
Stone	2 ft.
Free Coal }	9 in.
Gas Coal } (PARROT COAL)	10 in.
Free Coal }	9 in.
Freestone bands	2 ft.

... and based on reports from 1900 and 1934 ...

A section of Lochgelly Splint and Parrot Coals (or Black Coal and Parrot as it was known in the nineteenth century), in the eastern area of this district, was recorded in a bore half a mile north of Carberry where the Splint (Black Coal) was recorded as 1 ft. 11 in. of coal, a 1 in. parting of fireclay and 5 in. of coal.

The Parrot Coal, reached at 66 fathoms in the St. Clair Pit, was recorded as 3½ in. of coal, 4½ in. of parrot coal, 1 ft. 3 in. of coal resting on 11 in. of blaes and separated from the Splint by over 12 ft. of sandstone, fakes and blaes.

The Swallowdrum Coal was recorded in this same bore as 11 in. coal with a ½ in. parting, and the Jersey Coals, as five leaves of coal totalling 3 ft., were distributed through 17 ft. of strata into which a thin whinstone had intruded.

Kelty Main Coal in the Carberry bore was recorded as being in four coal layers of 6 in., 2 in., 5½ in. and 10 in. thick, separated from each other by ½ in. fakes, 2 in. coaly fireclay and 2 in. blaes, respectively.

Small areas of Rough Coal, also known as "Cluny" Coal, were wrought from the St. Clair Pit and from an old shaft [Dunnikier No. 4 Pit] some 260 yds. farther south. In the Carberry bore, the seam which was tentatively correlated with the Rough Coal, together, possibly, with the Little Splint, lay 18 fathoms above the Lochgelly Splint, but little more than 5 fathoms above the Kelty Main. In skeleton sections of the St. Clair Pit, the Rough Coal was recorded at 22 fathoms above the Lochgelly Splint Coal. In the Carberry bore, both the Rough and Little Splint Coals appeared to be represented by a 22½ in. seam with a 1½ in. median parting, below a thick post of sandstone, at a depth of 226 fathoms.

The Cardenden Smithy coal, north of Carberry, was 3 ft. thick including a 1 in. and a 2 in. parting, and the Blairhall Main Coal was recognised at one point only in the Carberry bore where it lay about 22½ ft. above the Cardenden Smithy Coal; elsewhere, it did not appear to be present.

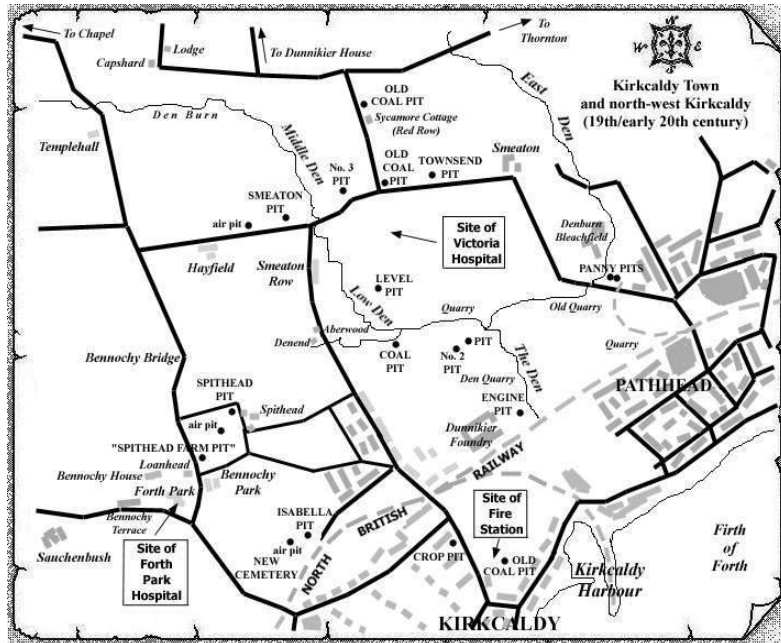
## Smeaton Pit

A Smeaton pit was known to be in operation in 1859 but a 'new' Smeaton Pit of the Dunnikier Colliery was sinking around 1875/76 on the north side of Hayfield Road, close to the Middle Den, in ground which is now part of the Cemetery.

This later Smeaton Pit, which worked the 3 feet coal, and the neighbouring Air Pit, sunk to a depth of 23 fathoms, were stopped May, 1878.

It was known to have wrought the Dunfermline Splint Coal over small areas. This coal was worked under the name "Smithy Coal" and at one time was thought to be the Mynheer Coal of the Lochgelly field, a seam which, if represented at all in this district, was rarely more than a few inches thick. This error was almost certainly due to the mistaken correlation of the overlying Five Foot Coal, a much more valuable and widely wrought seam, with the Glassee Coal of Lochgelly.

In the Smeaton Pit the Five Foot Coal was 3 ft. thick and lay below 1 ft. 6 in. of fireclay at a depth of 28 fathoms. This information is also indicated on an abandonment plan of May, 1878, but it refers to "3 Feet Coal Workings".

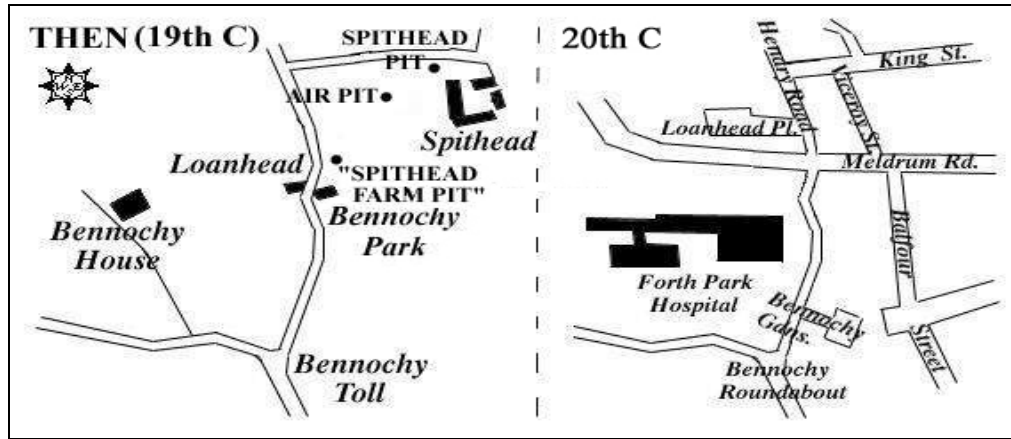


Source Date of Information Supplied	
Manager / Under-Manager / Men underground / Men above ground / Coal seams worked / Shaft details	
<b>1877</b>	
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / 24 / 4 / 3 feet D'cast 162 ft. : U'cast 120 ft.	
<b>1878</b> <b>(Stopped May, 1878. One fatality recorded.)</b>	
Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 20 / 3 / 3 feet D'cast 162 ft. : U'cast 120 ft.	

Plans of Abandoned Seams	Pits or Mines designated in Plans
COAL; Three Feet (May, 1878)	Smeaton
COAL; Glassee; Lochgelly Splint; Mynheer	Smeaton; Spithead; Townsend

# Spithead Pit

This later Spithead Pit of the Dunnikier Colliery was sunk about ¼ mile north-east of the location of the Forth Park Hospital, Kirkcaldy, in 1877, to work the Smithy Coal (Dunfermline Splint) at a depth of 27 fathoms. There was an Air Pit a short distance to the south-west of the shaft and an older coal pit from the 1830s, the "Spithead Farm Pit", which was located a few hundred yards to the south-west.



Waste from the workings of the Spithead Farm pit is believed to have been detected during the working of the Isabella Pit which lay to the south of both pits. The Spithead Pit ceased coaling in July, 1882.

Source Date of Information Supplied
Manager / Under-Manager / Men underground / Men above ground / Coal seams worked / Shaft details
<b>1877</b>
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / 8 / 2 / Black and Parrot, 20" / D'cast 162 ft. : U'cast 162 ft.
<b>1878</b>
Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 7 / 2 / Black and Parrot, 20", Smithy / D'cast 162 ft. : U'cast 132 ft.
<b>1879</b>
Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 6 / 2 / Black and Parrot, 20", Smithy / D'cast 162 ft. : U'cast 132 ft.
<b>1880 (Walter Herd &amp; Sons)</b>
Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 7 / 2 / Black and Parrot, 20", Smithy D'cast 162 ft. (9 x 5 ft.): U'cast 132 ft. (6 x 4 ft.)
<b>1881</b>
Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 6 / 2 / Smithy / D'cast 162 ft. : U'cast 132 ft.
<b>1882</b> <b>(Spithead Pit not included in colliery record)</b>

## Information on coals worked at Spithead Pit, Kirkcaldy

(based on a report from 1934)

The Dunfermline Splint Coal, the lowest workable seam in this district, was wrought from the Spithead Pit. It was worked under the name 'Smithy Coal' and at one time was thought to be the Mynheer Coal of the Lochgelly coalfield, a seam which, if represented at all in this district, was rarely more than a few inches thick. This error was almost certainly due to the mistaken correlation of the overlying Five Feet Coal, a much more valuable and widely wrought seam, with the Glassee Coal of Lochgelly. In the pit, probably abandoned in 1882, the roof and pavement of the seam, which measured 1 ft. 8 in. thick, were recorded as being of 'freestone' or 'rock'.

Plans of Abandoned Seams	Pits or Mines designated in Plans
COAL; Rough (1874); St. Clair (1878); Smithy (1880); Black; Parrot; Glassee.	Level; Lina; St. Clair; Spithead; Stair
COAL; Three Feet (1876); Smithy (1881)	Isabella; Spithead
COAL; Glassee; Lochgelly Splint; Mynheer	Smeaton; Spithead; Townsend
COAL; Smithy (July, 1882)	Spithead

### Isabella Pit

The Isabella Pit of the Dunnikier Colliery was sunk ½ mile west of Kirkcaldy Harbour and 400 yards east of today's Bennoch Roundabout near Forth Park Hospital, Kirkcaldy. Sinking in 1873, to the Three Feet Coal at 40 fathoms and the Smithy Coal at 45 fathoms, the Isabella Pit was abandoned by Walter Herd on 8th February, 1877.

Source Date of Information Supplied
<b>Manager / Under-Manager / Men underground / Men above ground / Coals and Seams worked / Shaft details</b>
<b>1873</b>
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / --- / --- / 3 feet; Smithy / D'cast 276 ft. : U'cast 168 ft.
<b>1874</b>
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / 50 / 6 / 3 feet; Smithy / D'cast 168 ft. : U'cast 276 ft.
<b>1875</b>
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / 50 / 5 / 3 feet; Smithy / D'cast 168 ft. : U'cast 276 ft.
<b>1876</b>
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / 41 / 5 / 3 feet; Smithy / D'cast 168 ft. : U'cast 276 ft.
<b>1877</b>
<b>(Isabella Pit - abandoned February, 1877)</b>

The Air Pit just 100 yards to the west of the Isabella shaft was sunk 28 fathoms to the Three Feet Coal. Sections of old waste were encountered to the north of the Isabella Pit as far as Spithead, and old waste was encountered to the north, south and west of the Air Pit. These are likely to have been the former workings of the old coal pit (name not known) to the south-west of Spithead Pit.

## Information on coals worked in the Isabella Pit

A section of the Three Feet Coal at the Isabella Pit is given as:

Description	Thickness
Freestone Bands	-
Daugh	6 in.
COAL	3 ft. 3 in.
Rock	-

... while the Smithy Coal was typically:

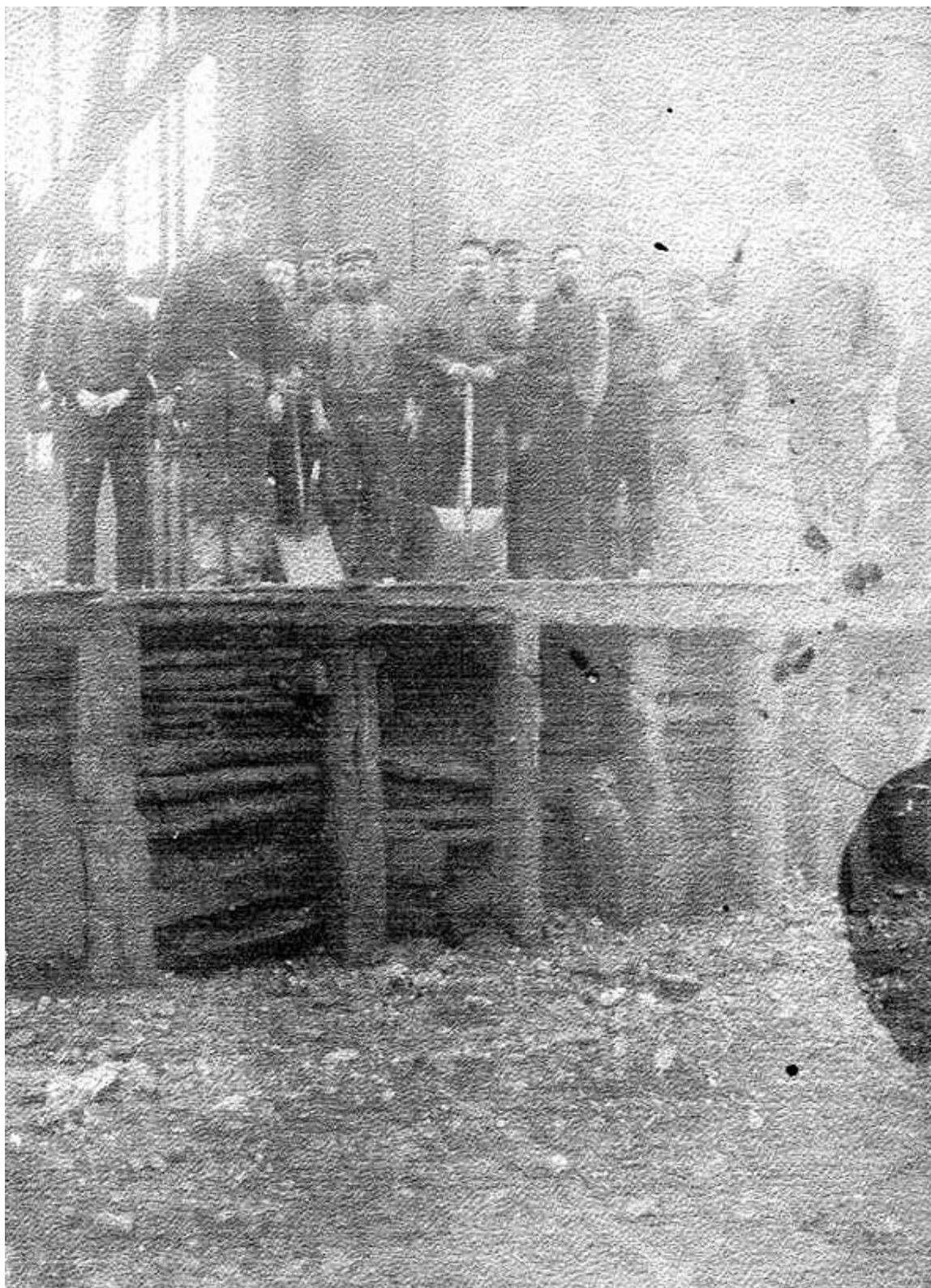
Description	Thickness
Rock	-
COAL	1 ft. 8 in.
Rock	-

Plans of Abandoned Seams	Pits or Mines designated in Plans
COAL; Three Feet (1876); Smithy (1881)	Isabella; Spithead
COAL; Three Feet; Smithy (February, 1877)	Isabella

## Lena (Lina) Pit

The Lena (Lina) Pit was situated just outside the north-west limit of housing in the present-day Dunnikier housing estate in the northern area of Kirkcaldy, and lay only 350 yds. north-west of the St. Clair Pit. Sinking in 1873, the pit opened in 1874 to work the Black and Parrot seams at a depth of 73 fathoms. The exact closing date is not known but some records suggest that the pit may have still been in operation in 1918.

*[The two names Lena and Lina appear on different sets of official plans and records of this pit of the Dunnikier Colliery. The records from the period 1874-82 name the pit as Lena, and a newspaper article of 1879 mentioning the Helena Pit is probably referring to the 'Lena' Pit. However, in the 1890 record and in area memoirs, the Dunnikier pit is listed as the 'Lina'.*



*An early scene at a Dunnikier Pit, perhaps the Lena. It is believed that the tall man, second from the left of the group, may be a relative of the late William MacLeod, Guardbridge.*

## Lena Pit

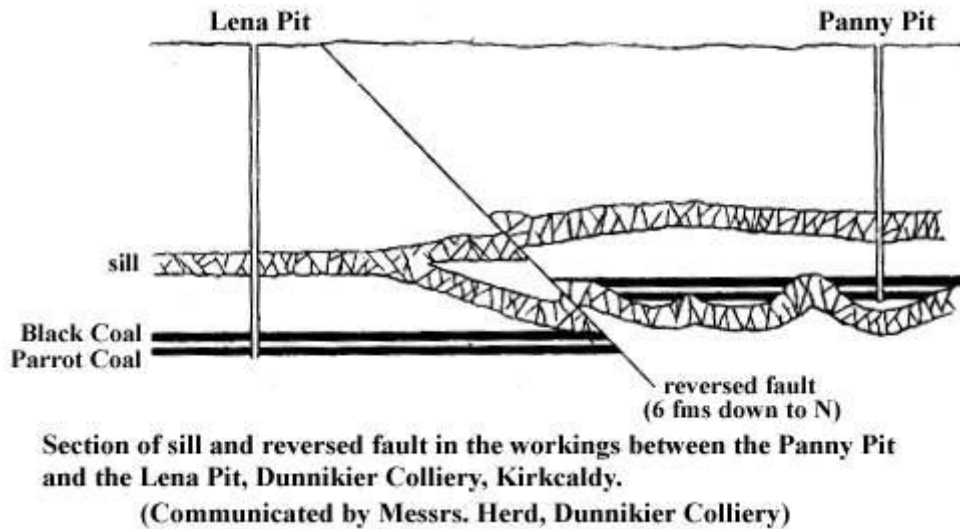
Source Date of Information Supplied
Manager / Under-Manager / Men underground / Men above ground / Coal seams worked / Shaft details
<b>1874</b> (Listed as Lena Pit - just opening up)
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / 13 / 4 / Black and Parrot / D'cast (14 x 5) 440 ft. : U'cast (14 x 5) 440 ft.
<b>1875</b>
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / 39 / 6 / Black and Parrot / D'cast (9 x 5) 440 ft. : U'cast (4½ x 5) 440 ft. Furnace ventilation.
<b>1876</b>
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / 46 / 6 / Black and Parrot / D'cast (13 x 5) 440 ft. : U'cast (9½ x 5) 440 ft. Furnace ventilation.
<b>1877</b>
Mr Walter Herd / ----- / 42 / 5 / Black and Parrot / D'cast (13 x 5) 440 ft. : U'cast (4½ x 5) 440 ft. Furnace ventilation.
<b>1878</b>
Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 38 / 6 / Black and Parrot / D'cast (13 x 5) 440 ft. : U'cast (4½ x 5) 440 ft. Furnace ventilation.
<b>1879</b>
Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 43 / 6 / Black and Parrot / D'cast (9 x 5) 440 ft. : U'cast (4½ x 5) 440 ft. Furnace ventilation.
<b>1880 (Walter Herd &amp; Sons)</b>
Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 44 / 6 / Black and Parrot / D'cast (9 x 5) 440 ft. : U'cast (4½ x 5) 440 ft. Furnace ventilation.
<b>1881</b>
Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 50 / 6 / Black and Parrot D'cast (9 x 5) 440 ft./ (9½ x 5) 396 ft. : U'cast (5 x 4½) 440 ft. Furnace ventilation.
<b>1882</b>
Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 49 / 6 / Black and Parrot D'cast (9 x 5) 440 ft./ (9½ x 5) 396 ft. : U'cast (5 x 4½) 440 ft. Furnace ventilation.
<b>1890</b> (Walter Herd & Son - Lina Pit)
Mr Thomas Herd / ----- / 59 / 7 / Black and Parrot D'cast (9 x 5) 440 ft./ (9½ x 5) 396 ft. : U'cast (5 x 4½) 440 ft. Furnace ventilation.
<b>1891</b> (Walter Herd & Sons - Lina Pit)
----- / ----- / 63 / 8 / Black and Parrot D'cast (9 x 5) 440 ft./ (9½ x 5) 396 ft. : U'cast (5 x 4½) 440 ft.



## Information on coals worked in, and near, the Lina (Lena) Pit

(based on a report from 1900)

One form of whinstone intrusion met with in the workings in the same two seams between the Lena and Panny pits of the Dunnikier Colliery is worth a comment.



In this case, the sill appears to split into two sheets, one of which keeps above the coals, while the other lies below but invades them. It may be stated that a reversed fault occurs at this place which appears to cut the sills. The dislocation of the ground would seem to have occurred after the injection of the igneous rock.

(based on a report from 1934)

In a blind bore, 700 yds. north of the Lina Pit, the Dunfermline Splint Coal was closely overlain by a thin whinstone which rendered the upper part of the seam foul. In a boring about half-a-mile north of Carberry, it appeared to be represented by a few inches of coal and parrot, below a 2 in. irony rib, at a depth of nearly 290 fathoms.

At the Lina Pit, the Five Feet Coal was recorded as only 2 ft. thick with a roof and pavement of faky sandstone, and about half-a-mile north of the pit, it was split by 10½ in. of whinstone which, again, rendered part of the seam foul. The Five Feet Coal reached its maximum thickness of 4 ft. 1 in. in the north-eastern corner of the Dunnikier district where it was proved in a boring at a depth of 277 fathoms where again it was associated with the thin whinstone from which it was separated by 3 ft. 8 in. of sandstone.

In the north Carberry boring, an 18 in. coal, separated from the Five Feet by 13 ft. of strata, of which 3 ft. were whinstone, may have represented the Jewel Coal of Cowdenbeath, or possibly the Mynheer Coal.

The Lochgelly Splint Coal (Black Coal) which was usually about 2 ft. thick here, recorded a minimum of 1 ft. 2 in. in the blind bore north of the Lina Pit and, in the pit, the Parrot Coal seam was reached at around 74 fathoms. In the shaft some igneous rock was met with at a distance of 5 fathoms above the coal. The roof of the Splint seam consisted of fakes or sandstone, from which the coal may be separated by a bed of blaes up to 1 ft. 2 in. thick.

In an old shaft [*Dunnikier No. 2 Pit*] about 375 yds. W.N.W. of the Lina Pit, the Rough Coal was recorded at 25 fathoms above the Lochgelly Splint (Black) Coal. In this same shaft, the Cardenden Smithy coal was recorded as the "Cluny Smithy" at a depth of 6 fathoms and at a level of 21 fathoms above the Rough Coal. The roof of the seam consisted of sandstone or fakes, but a bed of blaes up to 2 ft. 4 in. thick may have lain above the coal.

## Chapel No. 1 Pit

Chapel No. 1 Pit was situated just over a quarter of a mile north-west of Muttonhall and worked the Clunie Splint Coal. The workings, sunk to 63 ft., were ventilated naturally and were of a very limited extent. A geological survey map indicates a small air pit immediately west of the main shaft. The workings stopped just south of the pit against an east-west fault with a southerly downthrow of 9 fathoms. The coal was of average thickness and was inclined to E.N.E. at 25°, its roof being formed of sandstone. An old shaft, situated about 250 yds. north of the Chapel No. 1 Pit, was sunk to a 2 ft. coal at a depth of 13 ft. This seam was called the Five Foot Coal but was in all probability the Lochgelly Parrot Coal. Chapel No. 1 Pit, leased by A. Graham & Co., probably only operated around 1874-76.

Source Date of Information (Owner)
Manager / Under-Manager / Men underground / Men above ground / Coal seams worked / Shaft Details
1874 (A. Graham & Co.)
----- / ----- / 5 / 1 / Clunie Splint / D'cast (8 x 4½) 63 ft. : U'cast (5 x 4) 30 ft. Natural ventilation.

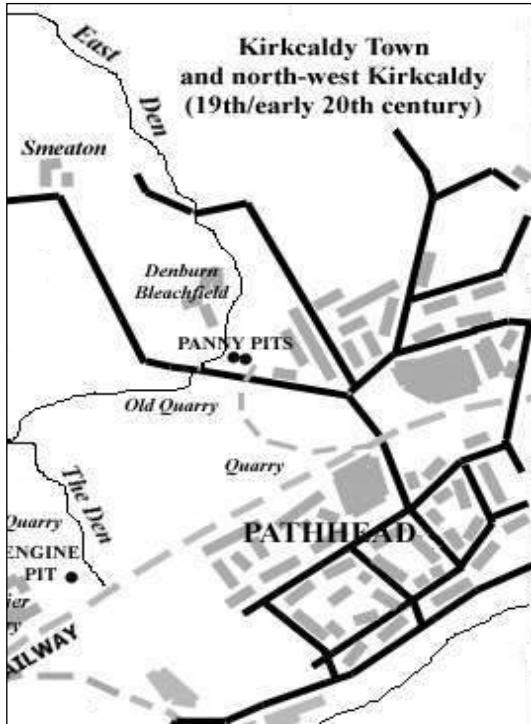
## Abandonment Plans

Plan of Abandoned Seams	Pits or Mines designated in Plan
COAL; Clunie Splint (October, 1876)	Chapel No. 1

Plans of Abandoned Seams	Pits or Mines designated in Plans
COAL; Rough (1874); St. Clair (1878); Smithy (1880); Black; Parrot; Glassee	Level; Lina; St. Clair; Spithead; Stair
COAL; Rough (July, 1875)	No. 4; Lina; Lyon; St. Clair
COAL; Rough (1875); Parrot (1879); Black (1880)	No. 4; North (or Gin); Lina; Lyon; St. Clair; Tough Engine
COAL; Black; Parrot (July, 1880)	St. Clair
COAL; Black; Parrot; Five Feet; Jersey; Bright; Cairncubie (April, 1927)	Nos. 2, 3; Lina; Lyon; North; Panny Nos. 1, 2; St. Clair No. 2; Tough

## Panny Pits, Dunnikier Colliery

The Dunnikier Colliery pits known locally as the Panny (or Pannie) Pits are probably the best known pits of the Dunnikier coalfield. Panny No. 1 is believed to have been sinking around 1880 and Panny No. 2 a year later. The pits were located in the south of the East Den to the north of Pathhead.



Both pits first appear together in a colliery record from 1882 and they had a long life, until 1927, bringing to a close coal-working in the Kirkcaldy area until the much later sinking of the modern Seafield Colliery.

The pit-workings north of Pathhead show the strata to be remarkably regular and undisturbed. The working level runs in the Black Coal and Parrot for a mile to the north-west of the Panny Pit, and shows only one serious displacement caused by a fault with a downthrow of 6 fathoms to the north. This pit, the section of which has already been given, lies immediately to the north of Pathhead. It struck the Rough and Splint seams at 57 fathoms and the Parrot at 90 fathoms.

An intrusive whinstone, lying below the Parrot Coal is believed to have been responsible for the destruction of the Black and Parrot Coals over an area to the north of the Panny Pit.



Section of Sill in the workings of the Panny Pit, Kirkcaldy  
(Communicated by Messrs. Herd, Dunnikier Colliery)

*The sill, 4 to 5 fathoms thick, has been thrust along a line immediately below the Parrot Coal, into which, and into the overlying Black Coal, it sends tongues. It is obvious that such important injections of molten rock cannot have invaded the coal-field without doing it harm.*

### ... and based on a report from 1934 ...

At a depth of 123½ fathoms in the shaft, the Dunfermline Splint Coal was 2 ft. 1 in. thick without any parting, but in three blind bores just north of the pit, it included a parting that ranged from 2 in. of blaes to 1 ft. 7 in. of sandy strata; the total thickness of coal, however, varied little from an average of 2 ft.

The Five Foot Coal was a first-class steam coal and was one of the most valuable seams in the district. It was wrought extensively as the "Three Foot" and also as the "Glasse Coal" from this pit and other shallower pits in the Dunnikier field. In the Panny No. 1 shaft, at a depth of 120 fathoms, it was 3 ft. 9 in. thick with a sandstone roof and a pavement of fakes.

The thickness of metals between the Five Foot Coal and the Lochgelly Parrot Coal ranged from 22 to 30 fathoms. These intervening layers included no workable coals with the possible exception of a seam of coal and ironstone - probably the equivalent of the Jewel Coal of Cowdenbeath and of the

Pittencrieff Blackband Ironstone of Dunfermline - which lay about 7 fathoms above the Five Foot Coal.

Higher in the sequence was the well defined horizon of the Black Metals. The Lochgelly Splint and Parrot Coals usually occurred within a few feet of one another and, lying not many fathoms above the Black Metals, were wrought over a wide area from this pit as the Black and Parrot Coals. The lower Parrot was a fairly good gas coal with a minimum known thickness of 2 ft. in the workings north of the Dunnikier Pit.

About half a mile to the north of the Panny, there was only a 9 in. stone between the Lochgelly Splint and Parrot Coals. In the Panny shaft the thickness of the Parrot was 2 ft. 6 in. and it was separated from the Splint by a bed of fireclay 2 ft. 4 in. thick.

The Lochgelly Splint was a first-class steam and household coal and varied little throughout the district being 4 ft. thick in the shaft at the Panny. The roof of the seam here was formed of sandstone.

The Swallowdrum Coal was a comparatively thin seam separated from the Lochgelly Splint by 9 to 11 ft. of sandstone and faky beds. This coal was worked as the "Bright Coal" to a small extent from the pit, north of which it was found in contact with the top of the whinstone. In the shaft, the seam was about 2 ft. 4 in. thick with a 1 in. parting and a sandstone roof.

The Jersey Coals formed a well-defined group of thin seams, included within 8 to 10 ft. of strata, and separated from the Swallowdrum Coal by about 2 fathoms of sandstone and faky beds in which a thin coal was often developed near the top.

The following record, at a depth of around 80 fathoms, is taken from a cross-cut mine in the Panny Pit:

Description	Depth
<b>Upper Jersey</b> Coal	11 in.
Faky blaes	8 in.
Coal	1 ft. 3 in.
Blaes	3 ft. 4 in.
<b>Lower Jersey</b> Coal	1 ft.
Blaes	6 in.
Coal	11 in.

Kelty Main Coal, found at 67½ fathoms, marked the top of the Main group, and it was separated from the Upper Jersey by sandy and faky beds up to 32 ft. thick at the Panny Pit. The Main Coal had been worked as the "Jersey Coal" along a narrow strip stretching northwards from the pit for over half a mile. The average thickness in the area was about 2 ft. 9 in. including a 1 to 4 in. median parting and it reached a maximum of 2 ft. 10 in., including a 4 in. blaes parting, in a cross-cut mine near the Panny Pit.

In the pit itself, a section had 1 ft. 2 in. coal separated from 10 in. coal by a 2 in. stone parting. In a second mine about half a mile north of the Pit, it split into a number of thin leaves which lay within 3 or 4 fathoms of the Upper Jersey. The Rough Coal was the lowest seam in the Blairhall Group and

was one of the thickest and most valuable coals in the district. It was closely overlain by the Little Splint which was rarely more than 1 ft. thick.

In the Dunnikier field, the Rough Coal was classed as a good steam coal and was wrought extensively as the St. Clair Coal from the Panny Pit and crop workings nearer the Harbour area. The distance between the Rough and Kelty Main Coals was 12½ fathoms at the pit with the intervening strata being mainly sandstone and fakes in which two thin coals were generally developed in the upper half.

In the Panny, at a depth of 58 fathoms, the section of the Rough and Little Splint was recorded as:

Description	Depth
LITTLE SPLINT COAL	6 in.
Fireclay	1 ft. 6 in.
ROUGH COAL	3 ft. 6 in.

In both cross-cut mines just north of the Pit, the coals appeared to merge into one seam, 2 ft. to 2 ft. 3 in. thick with a ½ in. to 2 in. rib near the top.

Very little was known about the Lochgelly Blackband Ironstone in this area but it appeared to be represented by a coal which was recorded about midway between the Little Splint and Cardenden Smithy coals in the shaft. The ironstone was in two leaves, 8 in. and 9 in., and separated by 4 in. blaes.

The Cardenden Smithy coal recorded in the shaft was also in two leaves; the upper leaf had two layers of coal of 1 ft. 6 in. and 1 ft. 5 in. with a 3 in. stone parting, while the lower leaf had two layers of coal of 7 in. and 1 ft. with a 7 in. stone parting. The "upper" was separated from the "lower" by 11 ft. 5 in. of blaes, the lower leaf being 4½ fathoms above the Lochgelly Blackband Ironstone.

**Black Coal**, separated from the lower Parrot seam by 72 - 78 in. sandstone, varied from 38 - 42 in. thick; the lower **Parrot Coal** being 26 - 28 in. thick at the pits.

On an April, 1927, abandonment plan, a section of the Bright Coal seam is given as:

Description	Depth
Sandstone	-
COAL	16 in.
Stone	2 in.
COAL	10 in.
Blaes	-

The same abandonment plan showed the Cairncubie Coal seam in No. 2 Pit to be at a depth of 73½ fathoms and composed of:

Description	Depth
Irony blaes	-
COAL	14 in.
Stone	3 in.
COAL	43 in.
Blaes with iron ribs	-

... while a section of the **Jersey Coal** seam was composed of:

Description	Depth
Rock (roof)	-
COAL	15 in.
Stone	2 in.
COAL	10 in.
Clay	2 in.
Blaes (pavement)	-

## Abandonment Plans

Plans of Abandoned Seams for Dunnikier	Pits or Mines designated in Plans
COAL; St. Clair (March, 1922); Bright or Swallowdrum (May, 1924)	Dunnikier Nos. 1, 2
COAL; Black; Parrot; Five Feet; Jersey; Bright; Cairncubie (April, 1927)	Dunnikier Nos. 2, 3; Lina; Lyon; North; Panny Nos. 1, 2; St. Clair No. 2; Tough

Source Date of Information Supplied
Manager / Under-Manager / Men underground / Men above ground / Coal seams worked / Shaft Details
<b>1881 (Walter Herd)</b>
<b>Panny:</b> Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 54 / 12 / Rough Coal D'cast (16 x 7) 348 ft. : U'cast (12 x 5) 342 ft. Furnace ventilation.
<b>1882 (Walter Herd)</b>
<b>Panny No. 1:</b> Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 23 / 4 / 3 feet D'cast (16 x 7) 516 ft. : U'cast (12 x 5) 504 ft. Furnace ventilation. <b>Panny No. 2:</b> Mr Peter Herd / ----- / 43 / 11 / Black and Parrot D'cast ---- : U'cast ----. Furnace ventilation.

**1886**

Mr Walter Herd, Coalmaster, Dunnikier Colliery - died 11 November, 1886, aged 63 years.  
Source: "West Fife Graveyards"

**1890 (Walter Herd & Son)**

**Panny No. 1:** Mr Thomas Herd / ----- / 50 / 5 / Three Foot  
D'cast (16 x 7) 348 ft. : U'cast (12 x 5) 336 ft. Fan (Waddle) 16' dia.  
**Panny No. 2:** Mr Thomas Herd / ----- / 79 / 11 / Black and Parrot  
D'cast 516 ft. : U'cast 504 ft.

**1891 (Walter Herd & Sons)**

**Panny No. 1:** Mr Thomas Herd / ----- / 60 / 6 / Three Foot  
D'cast (16 x 7) 348 ft. : U'cast (12 x 5) 336 ft. Fan (Waddle) 16' dia.  
**Panny No. 2:** Mr Thomas Herd / ----- / 82 / 11 / Black and Parrot  
D'cast 516 ft. : U'cast 504 ft.

**1893 (Walter Herd & Son)**

Mr Thomas Herd, manager.  
June: death of Major Oswald of Dunnikier.

**1896 (Walter Herd & Sons)**

Mr Thomas Herd / ----- / 158 / 41

**1898\* (Walter Herd & Sons)**

Mr Thomas Herd / ----- / 258 / 32 / Gas, household, manufacturing and steam coals.  
[\*Another source lists this information for 1896.]

**1899 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 271 / 44

**1900 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 378 / 53

**1901 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 433 / 65

**1902 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

Mr John Henderson / Mr D. Skinner / 436 / 66  
Gas, household, manufacturing and steam coals.

**1903 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

Mr John Henderson / ----- / 385 / 50

**1904 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

Mr John Henderson / ----- / 381 / 48  
Gas, household, manufacturing and steam coals.

**1905 (Walter Herd & Sons Ltd.)**

----- / ----- / 387 / 52

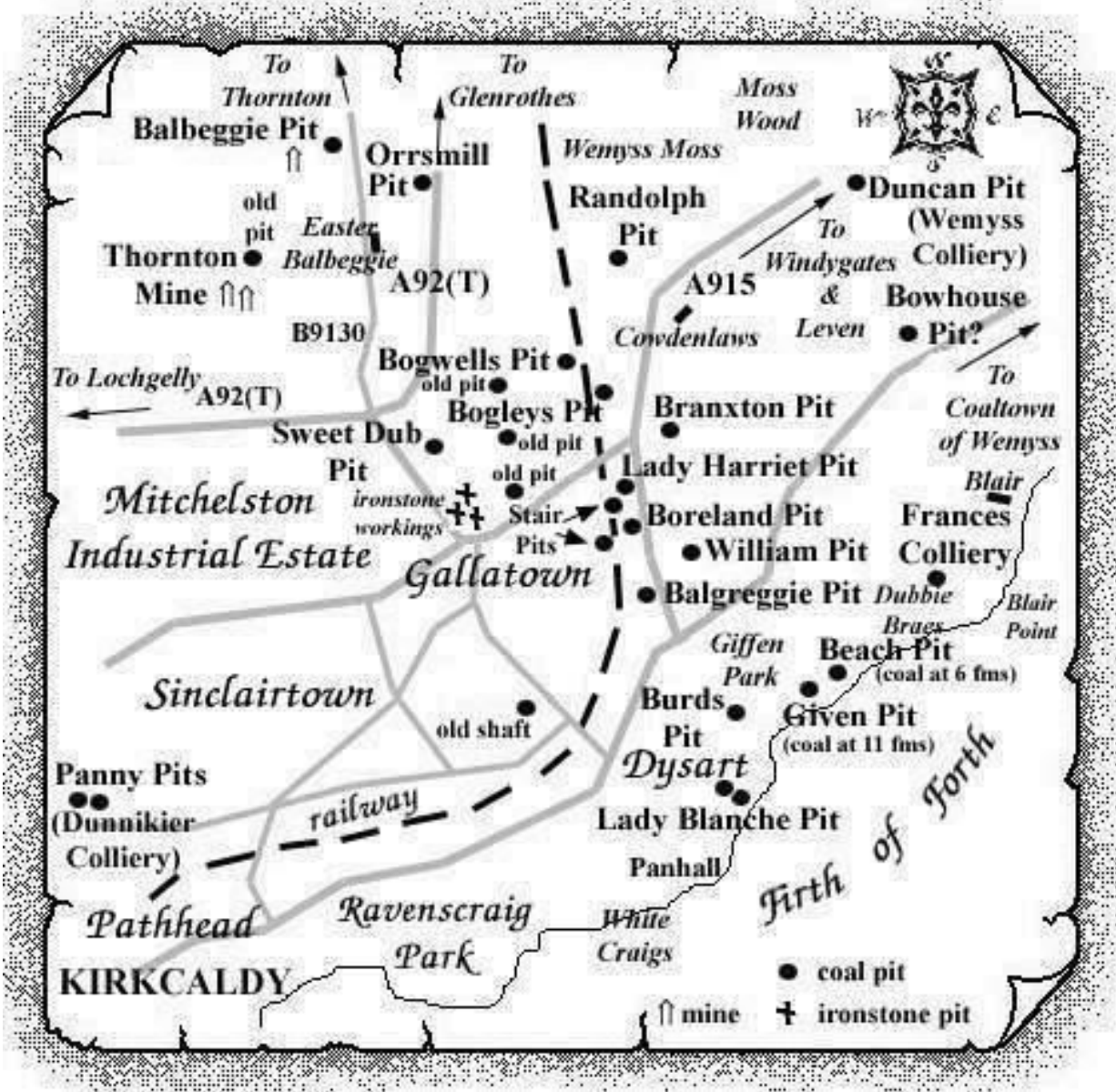
<b>1906 (Walter Herd &amp; Sons Ltd.)</b>
----- / ----- / 395 / 53
<b>1907 (Bowhill Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
----- / ----- / 434 / 56
<b>1908 (Bowhill Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
Mr Archibald Bowman Jr. / Mr C. Mackay / 571 / 110 Electricity used.
Mr John M. Thomson, late of Dundonald Collieries, Cardenden, appointed general manager of Dunnikier Collieries, Kirkcaldy, lately purchased by Bowhill Coal Company.
Mr Thomas Herd, former manager, Dunnikier Colliery - died 20 August, aged 48 years.
<b>1909 - Fife Coal Company Ltd. purchase Dunnikier Colliery.</b>
----- / ----- / 705 / 115 Coal cutters used.
<b>1910 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
----- / ----- / 638 / 130
<b>1911 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
----- / ----- / 633 / 134
<b>1912 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
Oct: Mr Robert Crawford (ex-Kirkford Colliery) appointed manager.
<b>1913 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
Mr David Jack / ----- / 634 / 139
<b>1918 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
<b>Panny Pits:</b> Mr David Jack / Mr William S. Brown / 395 / 115 <b>Lena Pit:</b> Mr David Jack / Mr W. T. Lyons / 60 / 18
<b>1920 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
----- / ----- / 614 / 173
<b>1922 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
----- / ----- / 284 / 97
<b>1923 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
----- / ----- / 296 / 96
Nov: Mr Thomas T. Thyne, ex-Bowhill Surveying Office, appointed manager.
<b>1924 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
----- / ----- / 274 / 99
<b>1926 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
----- / ----- / 19 / 18



1927 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)

----- / ----- / 40 / 14

Coaling in the Dunnikier field ceased 19 April, 1927.



The Panny Pits lay to the south-west of the Dysart coalfield

## Newspaper Reports

### "Fifeshire Journal"

26 January, 1833

#### PRICE OF COAL REDUCED

THE SMITHY COAL on Dunnikier Estate, which is now working a Pit on the Farm of SPITHEAD, near Kirkcaldy, is reduced in price to One Shilling per Load. This Coal (equal to English Coal) is found to be of superior quality for the Forge and is also well suited for Family use having the property of caking, when put on the fire a little damped. Great and small Coal continues for sale at a pit near Dunnikier, the Great at 1s. per Load, in small quantities, and 11d. per Load in Tons; and the Small for Furnaces at 6d. per Load.

As the Quantities on hand at both Pits is considerable, the Public may depend on a steady supply. The Smithy Coal is shipped at Kirkcaldy Harbour on very moderate terms.

*Dunnikier Colliery, near Kirkcaldy.  
24 January, 1833.*

### "Fifeshire Journal"

Saturday, 25 April, 1835

#### TO LIME BURNERS

THE LIMeworks at EASTER BOGIE, will be Let, on very advantageous terms, for such period as may be agreed upon, with immediate entry. The Lime is of excellent quality, and the Rock of considerable thickness.

Offers will be received by Mr. ALEX. KNIGHT, overseer, of Dunnikier Colliery.

Kirkcaldy, April 24, 1835.

### "Fifeshire Journal"

Saturday, 2 May, 1835

#### COLLIERY AND SALT PANS TO LET

To be Let, for such term of years as may be agreed upon, with entry at Whitsunday first, or as soon after as a bargain can be concluded.

THE COLLIERY as at present going on the ESTATE of DUNNIKIER, with the MACHINERY and UTENSILS, together with the SALT PANS and SALT GIRNAL, &c., at Kirkcaldy.

Offers will be received by ANDREW INGLIS, Kirkcaldy, Factor to Lieut.-General Sir John Oswald of Dunnikier.

Kirkcaldy, May 1, 1835.

### "Fifeshire Journal"

Saturday, 18 July, 1835

#### COAL TO LET

IT is proposed to Win the SEAMS of COAL immediately behind KIRKCALDY. The working Pit which is already sunk, is put down at the top of the large park. The coal will be let for such period of years as may be agreed upon, and information will be given by applying to Mr A. P. KNIGHT, Lessee of Dunnikier colliery; and offers received by MR ANDREW INGLIS, Kirkcaldy, Factor to Lieutenant-General Sir John Oswald of Dunnikier.

### "Fifeshire Journal"

11 June, 1840

*This issue announced the death of General Sir John Oswald of Dunnikier who was 69 years of age was described as one of the bravest soldiers of modern times. It was reported that he had seen much service and had been fifty-three years on full pay.*

### "Fifeshire Journal"

10 February, 1842

#### KIRKCALDY

#### LOCHGELLY AND KIRKCALDY RAILWAY

We are very happy to see that the proposed railway from here to Lochgelly is being surveyed. Mr Grainger's engineers have been here for some days, and have completed the

out-door part of the survey. The plans, books of reference, &c., will be lodged on the 1<sup>st</sup> March with the proper authorities; and it is likely that a bill may be brought into Parliament in 1843. The line is to commence at the east end of Lochgelly Avenue, to pass Dundonald, Dothan, East Touch, and join the Edinburgh, Dundee, and Northern Railway, where it branches to Kirkcaldy Harbour. About the one-half of the sum required for making the railway is already subscribed. We hope the work will go on; and, from the abundance of superior coal and lime on the line, there can be no doubt that it will be a profitable concern.

**"Fifeshire Journal"**

**17 February, 1842**

**LOCHGELLY AND KIRKALDY  
RAILWAY**

Last week we were indebted to a correspondent for a brief notice announcing the fact that this project had assumed something like a practical appearance, that the survey had been completed, and that a great portion of the stock had been subscribed for. Since then we have been asked by parties in other districts of the county for information relative to the character and probable results of such an undertaking. So far we have learned the intention of the projectors, the railroad will be one of the simplest construction, and intended solely for the transport of coals and such like materials as may be along its course.

Commencing in the heart of the Lochgelly coal-fields, and sweeping through that of Dundonald, Clunie, and Dunnikier, by Dothan, Touch, and Easter Bogie, it will terminate near the harbour of Kirkcaldy, the only port conveniently situated for the coal-fields alluded to. Commencing, therefore, at Kirkcaldy, the proposed line will pass through the coal-fields of Dunnikier and Touch-fields which, though limited and of inferior quality, are still fair items of estimate on this occasion. The next coal-field along which the line will skirt is Clunie - a field not very conveniently situated for the purpose, but yet, by due enterprise, capable of being much benefited by such an undertaking. The mineral has been

long won in this locality, but not to any depth; and with sufficient demand, the whole of the field, from the railway northward of the Ore, could yield for many years a very excellent supply of splint and cubic coal fit for household and machinery purposes. Passing Clunie, we arrive at Dundonald field, scarcely as yet broken in upon, and which, from its position to the railway, would be one of its most fertile feeders. Several of the Dundonald seams are of excellent quality, either for household or steam purposes, and have long been manufactured into coke, a commodity the demand for which is daily on the increase.

The next fields are those of Lochgelly and Lumphinnans, occupying a space of six or eight square miles, and containing splint, cannel, cubic, and cherry coal, of first-rate quality and fit for any purpose. Although the Lochgelly field has been won for nearly two centuries, it can scarcely be said to be touched, for beyond a system of the merest cropping and poaching, nothing in the way of fair working has been attempted; - and this will be readily believed when we mention that until recently no engine beyond twelve or twenty horse power has ever been erected for drawing.

We look upon Lochgelly, Lumphinnans, and Dundonald, as the three great fields which are to yield the supply to the projected railway - a supply which, in point of quantity or quality, is not now to be equalled by any other contiguous coal-fields in Fife. There are other patches of coal-fields - such as Cowdenbeath, Lochore, Capledrae, &c., which we have not taken in to this estimate; for, though they will undoubtedly profit by this undertaking, and yield part of its revenue, they are not so adjacent to the line as to be taken into account in calculating the certain revenue of the project. It may, and indeed it has been said by some, that were once the line laid down to Lochgelly, it would be easily extended to the more western fields in the parishes of Beath and Aberdour; but from this we dissent, as such an extension could only be made with facility to the worst of these coalfields, while the best could have, or have already, easier and cheaper access to St David's or Inverkeithing. Indeed, Lochgelly is the

natural and proper termination to the projected line; to this point all is certainty and within practical computation - beyond it would be expensive and hazardous enterprise. It is the coal especially to which the parties speculating now look for a profitable return. These range in number from four to twelve seams, and vary from 2 feet to 11 feet in thickness, of almost every quality. The most valuable are the main splint, the cannel, and the large cubic coal. They are easily one, and lie much less broken up by upheaves and troubles than most of the coal-measures within the country.

**Royal Commission, 1842**  
**Dunnikier Colliery,**  
**parish of Kirkaldy**  
**(Mr. Alexander Park Knight, Lessee.)**  
**John Bowman, 16 years old, hewer :**

*"Been five years at coal - hewing; works 12 & 13 hours day about and 10 when on night work. was at school before working and at writing, now cannot sign own name; did not sign the big paper but a man at the pit mouth wrote it for me. I work on step-fathers account with sister, who is 17 years of age, she is a little [?] and goes to Sabbath- school to learn the Scripture. I live near Kirkaldy, which is in Fife, can't say what country it is in, unless it is in Edinburgh." (Can answer many of the questions in the short Catechism; reads very badly.)*

**"The Scotsman"**  
**12 November, 1842**  
**KIRKCALDY - DISTRESSING**  
**OCCURRENCE**

On the morning of Thursday last, a boy about eight or nine years of age was sent as usual with breakfast to his grandfather, who is fireman at Dunnikier engine pit. While the grandfather was taking his breakfast, the boy employed himself in drawing some coals from the heap towards the furnace, and got out of sight occasionally, owing to some part of the premises intervening. The old man thinking the boy rather long of returning, went to see what he was about. Not seeing him about the premises, he looked down one

of the pits, in which there is a considerable depth of water, and seeing the coal hurley swimming on the top of the water, he thought that he had let it fall into the pit, and had run home from fear of his displeasure. The old man, however, feeling alarmed at the sudden disappearance of the boy, ran down to his house to see if he were there. Not finding him, he instantly returned with others, to assist in searching the pit in which he had seen the hurley, and in which he now believed the boy to be, as it was likely that, having to pass close by the pit, he had gone too far, and thus fallen in backward, dragging the hurley with him. The body has been searched for in the pit with grappling irons, but in vain. We understand the pit is not fenced round, which surely ought to be the case; and we are sorry to observe that too many, both of disused and of working pits, are in such an unfenced state as to look like traps for either man or beast, exhibiting a gross carelessness of the lives of those who may have occasion to pass that way. - *Fife Herald.*

**"Fifeshire Journal"**  
**31 October, 1844**  
**DUNNIKIER COLLIERY**

In consequence of the roof of Dunnikier colliery having fallen down in several places, which has been the cause of the accumulation of a quantity of bad air in the working vaults, the excavation of coal in the mine has been for the last fortnight altogether suspended. It is, however, expected that the cessation of the work will be only temporary, as the tacksman, Mr Park Knight, has been for some time engaged in sinking a new pit in another and more central quarter of that extensive coal-field. The accident, however, in the meantime may be considered as untoward having occurred at a time when the supply of coals in general is not equal to the demand, and especially as the Dunnikier coal is considered by consumers as the best, especially when it is used for steam, to which it has been applied extensively by the owners of steam-boats as well as factory proprietors.

**"Fifeshire Journal"**

**9 October, 1845**

**EXTENSIVE COAL-FIELD IN FIFE.**

To be Let, for such a number of years as may be agreed upon -

THE COLLIERY upon the Estate of Dunnikier, consisting of a variety of Workable Seams, containing superior Smithy Coal, Parrot or Gas Coal, as well as Coal adapted for Household purposes, Steam-Boats, Engines, &c. The Engine Pit is sunk to about 20 fathoms from the Smithy Coal; and the Engine, Machinery, and Utensils, will be put in good repair, and handed over to the Tenant at a valuation.

This extensive Coalfield is situated in the immediate vicinity of the thriving and populous Burgh of Kirkcaldy, where a great Quantity of Coals are consumed for Steam, Gas, and Household purposes - and besides, the Edinburgh and Northern Railway intersects the Coalfield, passing within a few yards of the Engine Pit; thus opening up facilities for supplying Perth, Dundee, and other large Manufacturing Districts, as well as other parts of the North-East Counties of Scotland.

For further particulars, application may be made to Messrs Tosh & Gibson, Writers, Kirkcaldy, or to Mr Paton, Factor on the Estate. Kirkcaldy, October 8, 1845.

*[This advertisement also appeared in the issue of 6 November, 1845.]*

**"Fifeshire Journal"**

**20 July, 1848**

*This edition carried an advertisement for the sale of lime from Chapel and also coal from the nearby Tough Colliery.*

Archibald Sharpe, Lime and Coal Agent, selling Coals from TOUGH at all the Stations of the Edinburgh and Northern Railway betwixt Kirkcaldy and Ferry-Port-on-Craig.

SMITHY Coal, per Ton ... .. 10s. 0d.

Superior HOUSEHOLD Do., ... .. 10s. 6d.

*Coal was also available in smaller quantities e.g. Household coal at 6½ d. per cwt., and 3½ d. per Half-Cwt.*

Railway Depot, No. 1, Cupar

July 19, 1848.

**"Fifeshire Journal"**

**11 January, 1849**

**ENGINEER WANTED**

An experienced working engineer for the further sinking of Dunnikier Engine Pit. Apply to Mr Alex. Paton, Kirkcaldy.

**"Fifeshire Journal"**

**1 November, 1849**

**TO ENGINEERS**

Wanted, an engineer accustomed to all kinds of pit work and well-acquainted with machinery. Apply to Mr Alex. Paton, Dunnikier Colliery Office.

**Information from the Edinburgh, Perth & Dundee Railway Minute Books.**

[Contributed by Ed McKenna, Edinburgh.]

At the Board Meeting of 23 October, 1850, a request was received from Captain Oswald of Dunnikier that the EPDR lay in a siding to his Dunnikier Coal Pit. The request was rejected but at a further meeting on 30 October, 1850, Captain Oswald stated that he would construct the siding at his own expense if the EPDR laid in the connection to the main line. This was agreed to.

*The 1st Edition OS 6" map does not show the connection although it does show a tram road running up the west side of the Den from the Engine Pit.*



**"Fifeshire Journal"**  
**15 April, 1851**  
**KIRKCALDY - ACCIDENT**

On Thursday last, at 2 o'clock p. m., the boiler of the pumping engine at one of the Dunnikier coal pits burst, by which Robert Pratt, banksman, was so severely scalded that he died at 11 o'clock the same evening. He has left a widow and five children to deplore his loss.

**"Fifeshire Advertiser"**  
**9 May, 1851**

The Lessee of KIRKCALDY COLLIERY has now opened up the Black and Parrot Seam of Household Coal and is prepared to deliver at the following rates:-

Best Household Coal ----- 7s. per ton  
 (including Cartage) from the Engine Pit  
 Household Coal ----- 7s. 6d. per ton  
 (including Cartage) from the Old Pit  
 Orders will be received by:  
 Mr P Marshall, Jeweller  
 Mr H. Ross, Post Master, Pathhead  
 Mr J. Henderson, Tinsmith, Links  
 or at the Colliery Office, Coal Wynd.

**Information from the Edinburgh, Perth & Dundee Railway Minute Books.**  
 [Contributed by Ed McKenna, Edinburgh.]

*The railway siding connection agreed to in October, 1850, must have been constructed, for later, on 7 December, 1854, Robert Douglas asked the EPDR for access to his proposed works at Dunnikier by means of the siding to the colliery there. Douglas's proposed works was what became known as The Dunnikier Foundry, later owned by Douglas & Grant.*



**October, 1857**

At 7.30 a.m. on the 8th October, 1857, a young coal miner, John Summers (15), lost his life in one of the Muttonhole (Mutton-hall) pits. Young John was crushed by a fall of stone in one of the coal pits and died instantaneously.

*[The author is grateful to a relative, Rachel Shelley, Wellington, N.Z., for sending the information on John's death certificate which was resourced by Avril Cunningham, a descendant of John's father, James Summers.]*



**"The Scotsman"**  
**Thursday, 24 March, 1859**  
**FATAL COLLIERY ACCIDENT**

While a young man named Waters was busily engaged at work at Smeaton coal-pit, about two miles from Kirkcaldy, on Tuesday, a large piece of coal became detached and buried him in its fall. Timely assistance was at hand, but before the unfortunate youth was got out he had breathed his last.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**3 October, 1860**  
**ENGINE, PUMPING MACHINERY, &c., FOR SALE.**

FOR SALE, an 80 Horse-power CONDENSING ENGINE, having Two BOILERS, the one 45 feet by 7½ feet, and the other 40 feet by 7 feet, with about 30 Fathoms

of 15-Inch PUMPS, with Spear-Rods, Buckets, and everything complete; and also a 10-Inch SET of PUMPS, with the usual accompanying Gear. Also, GRABS, ROPES, and a great many MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES used in COLLIERY operations. The Machinery is in perfect order, and quite recently stopped. The whole will be sold separately, or together, as offerers come forward.

For terms and particulars, apply to Mr W. GOODALL, Dunnikier Colliery, Kirkcaldy. Dunnikier Colliery, September 28, 1860.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**23 April, 1863**

**Narrow Escape From Drowning**

On Tuesday morning, two miners, named John Rankin, and John Campbell, narrowly escaped drowning in St Clair Pit, near Dunnikier. It would appear that the water in an adjoining pit had burst in upon the one at present being worked, and on the men descending in the morning to commence work, they were precipitated into the water, which was fully eight feet deep. Fortunately both of the men could swim, and having caught hold of the cage they managed to alarm the person at the top of the pit by means of the chain, when they were again pulled up very much exhausted. The water is still rising in the pit.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**25 April, 1863**  
**A COAL PIT FLOODED**  
**NARROW ESCAPE FROM**  
**DROWNING**

A narrow escape from drowning took place at St. Clair coal-pit, near Dunnikier, on Tuesday. It would appear that during the night the water in an adjoining old coal-pit had burst into the one at present being worked, and on two miners, named John Rankin and John Campbell, going down next morning to resume work, they were precipitated into the water, a depth of eight feet. Fortunately both of the men could swim, and on making signs with the rope that lowered them down, they were again pulled up in a very exhausted condition. The water is still rising, and the

miners have been necessitated to look for work at another pit. Had the water burst into the pit during the day, when the miners were at work, the loss of life must have been very great.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**2 February, 1867**  
**ACCIDENT**

On Tuesday, while a man named John White, a miner, was engaged in Dunnikier coal-pit, a large block of loose stone fell from the roof and injured him severely on the back or other parts of the body. The unfortunate man is under medical treatment, and is making favourable progress.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**21 January, 1871**  
**MINERS' WAGES**

On Saturday, the miners employed at Messrs. Goodall and Herd's collieries (Dunnikier and Begg) had an advance made on their wages to the extent of 6d. per day. At several other collieries in the neighbourhood there has lately been a similar rise of wages, which is due to the recent agitation among the employees, and likewise to the now increasing demand for coal.



**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**3 October, 1874**  
**KIRKCALDY - FATAL COLLIERY**  
**ACCIDENT**

On Tuesday morning a man named John Macleish [McLeish] was killed at a new coal-pit on the estate of Dunnikier. Macleish, along with several others, had been engaged sinking a shaft, and on his going down to commence work the light which he was carrying went out. He called to his fellow-workmen at the top of the shaft that there was something wrong - the air being foul - and to draw him up. They at once commenced to

pull him up to the mouth of the shaft but before he had reached half-way he was heard to cry that he was not able to hold on longer, and to fall out of the hutch to the bottom of the shaft. No time was lost in getting him to the surface, but notwithstanding he was found to be dead. The body was at once conveyed to Pathhead, where the unfortunate man resided. He leaves a wife but no family.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**11 September, 1875**  
**KIRKCALDY - NEW COAL PIT**

Another addition to our coal supply has been made by the opening of the Smeaton Pit by Mr. Herd, and which will prove a valuable acquisition to the district. The pit is situated in close proximity to Smeaton Row, a little to the north of the town, and commands a good road for cartage. The coal is of splendid quality, and especially adapted for steam purposes; is very clean and lasting; indeed, it is doubtful if coal better adapted for this purpose can be had in Fife. Besides, the black diamond fireclay is abundant, and of excellent quality, commanding a ready sale at the potteries of the district. This is the same pit in which sometime ago the frog was found and released from his long imprisonment.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**24 February, 1877**  
**KIRKCALDY**

Dunnikier Coal Pit is worked out. The process of removing the pillars, & c., is progressing, after which it will be closed. The new pit at Smeaton has been opened in its stead. Another new pit is about to be sunk at Spithead for the purpose of working the Smithy Coal seam.

**"Dunfermline Journal"**  
**3 March, 1877**  
**KIRKCALDY**

A new coal pit has been opened at Smeaton, and will now be worked instead of Dunnikier Colliery which is exhausted.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**14 May, 1877**

A new coal pit has been sunk at Spithead, near Kirkcaldy, by Mr Herd, for the purpose of working smithy coal.



**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**26 January, 1878**  
**KIRKCALDY - FATAL ACCIDENT**

A fatal accident happened to a miner on Wednesday while engaged in the underground workings of the pit lately sunk at Spithead. The unfortunate man was in the act of removing a piece of coal from the facings, when a large block of stone came away with it, which fell upon him and crushed him beneath its weight - about two tons. Deceased, whose name is James Knight, leaves a widow and six children.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**28 June, 1879**  
**ACCIDENT TO A MINER**

A serious accident occurred at the Helena Pit at Dunnikier Colliery. It appears that while James Houston was employed in the underground working a large piece of coal fell from the roof, crushing him beneath it. He was extricated from his perilous position by his fellow workmen, and conveyed at once to his home in a cab. Dr. Houston was soon in attendance and found that Houston's collar bone was broken and his left arm severely bruised.

**"Fife Free Press"**  
**9 July, 1881**

"THE PANNIE COAL PIT- SUCCESSFUL ISSUE OF SINKING OPERATIONS - A few days ago the sinking operations at the new coal pit at the Pannie came to a very successful issue. A seam of black coal, four feet four inches in thickness, and of splendid



quality, was struck and thus a rich reward is promised to the costly mining operations so long carried on by Mr Herd."

**"Fifeshire Advertiser"**  
**11 March, 1882**

"THE EAST BURN CASE - On Wednesday, in the Second Division of the Court of Session, their Lordships disposed of an appeal from the Sheriff Court of Fifeshire in reference to the Denburn at Kirkcaldy. The action was originally brought at the instance of James Heggie, Auchtermuchty, against Mrs Catherine Ingram or Nairn, residing in Kirkcaldy; Robert Nairn, floorcloth manufacturer, and Michael Barker Nairn, floorcloth manufacturer. The pursuer [Heggie] is owner of a property on the east bank of the Denburn, and is entitled to the use for dyeworks belonging to him of the water of the Burn as it flows past his property. This burn is a little way above the pursuer's property, augmented by the water which is discharged from an artificial mine or level constructed more than forty years ago, and

which now drains the mineral workings of the estates of Dunnikier and Raith. The greater part of this water is pumped up by the mineral tenants, from workings at a lower level. In 1874 the defenders [Nairn] who are proprietors of manufactories in the neighbourhood, enlarged a previous existing hole in the level, and have since withdrawn from the mine for the purposes of their works, a large quantity of the water flowing through it. The pursuer objected to this, and maintained that he had a right to all the water which flowed into the Denburn before it passed his property. Their Lordships dismissed the appeal on the grounds that the appellant [Heggie] had not proved any right to the water in the artificial conduit from the mine, but that the respondents, who had obtained permission from the colliery tenants were in the same position as if they had got the permission from the proprietor."

*[The author is very grateful to Mr Alan Simpson, Kirkcaldy, for supplying this information and other data on some early pits and manpower figures at Dunnikier Colliery.]*

**"THE FIFESHIRE ADVERTISER"**  
**27 May, 1882**  
**IN THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH.**  
**A VISIT TO THE PANNY COAL PIT.**

One fine warm afternoon last week a few of us were permitted, through the kindness of Mr Herd, the proprietor, to pay a visit to the Panny Pit. The sun shone brightly overhead, and all Nature seemed to rejoice in the freshness and beauty of early summer, utterly regardless of the boding hearts of some of our company. What did Nature care though a number of human beings were going forward to their fate, to meet the unknown dangers of subterranean caverns, colliery explosions, cage accidents, and similar perils! What cared Nature for the fears and anxieties of "wives an' mothers maist despair" in their anxiety for the brave band of adventurers who went down, 'mayhap to be entombed' for days in some dangerous drift of the coal mine? The truth is that Nature did not care a button.

Our company was a conglomerate one, made up of all professions, and drawn from more than one town. It was to have contained a considerable contingent from Dundee, but, alas, for human frailty! three of these got sick, and were unable to make the descent.

The rest of us mustered at the pithead at two o'clock in the afternoon, and had a look at the buildings above ground, which are pretty considerable. They include a blacksmith's shop, which is indispensable for sharpening the miners' pikes, as well as making repairs that are required. Here also is the extensive series of boilers for driving the steam-engine which raises and lowers the cages

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in the shafts, as well as the engine for freeing the mine of water. The latter is a beautiful piece of machinery.

The Panny Pit, as readers of the *Advertiser* must know, is a comparatively new pit, and hence the workings are not far advanced yet, but the visit, and I hope this description of it, will be none the less interesting for that.

We were shown the utmost courtesy at the pit, and ascertained that the underground workings are reached by either of two shafts. These two shafts are sunk at a distance of 25 feet apart, and the depth of each is 88 fathoms. No. 1 acts as an upcast shaft, and No. 2 as a downcast for the purposes of ventilation; that is to say the air goes down No. 2 shaft to ventilate the mine and comes up again by the other.

There are three seams of good workable coal passed through, the first, called the three feet coal, which is of a soft nature, and chiefly used for steam purposes, at a depth of about 68 fathoms, and which is wrought from No. 1 shaft.

The other two seams, called the black and parrot, 4 feet and 2½ feet in thickness respectively, being almost together, and only separated by a thin layer of stone, are got at a depth of 68 fathoms, and are wrought from No. 2 shaft. The first of these seams is a very good household coal, and the latter a fair second class parrot.

We gathered round the top of No. 2 shaft just as a cage full of miners - black and grimy - came to the surface, each bearing in his hand or affixed to the front of his cap a small oil lamp, whose lurid flame flickered as if ashamed to be noticed in the bright sunlight. We were supplied with one of these lamps for each, and then went down the shaft in instalments - four at a time.

I did not go in the first cage, but I stood at the top of the shaft and watched its swift descent until it became invisible in the blackness, but long after that I could see a gleam of light now and then as someone in the cage held out his lamp to examine the sides of the shaft.

At last the wire rope on which the cage was suspended ceased to shoot down past me, and a few minutes later it began to move upwards. When at last the cage came in sight again we saw, to our alarm, that though it went down dry it was now dripping wet as if it had been dipped in the sea. Truly, it was not without reason that we had all been warned to put on our oldest suits of clothes. And now took we a last long lingering look of the bright sky and fair earth, stepped into the cage, gave the signal, and immediately began to descend into the dark. It isn't an unpleasant feeling, there being none of that sinking sensation that haunts a weak stomach on board a storm-tossed boat.

Down we went through many an ancient rock formation, the debris of previous worlds - greenstone strata, beds of fireclay, gneiss, red sandstone, and limestone, all pass in quick succession. At one side of the shaft is the pumping apparatus, a most interesting and important concern, and as we descend our guide explains to us that this is a chief feature in mining operations, and one entailing considerable cost.

The pumping here is done by means of an improved direct acting pumping engine (condensing). The cylinder, which is 60 inches diameter, rests on girders placed over the dip end of the shaft, and the piston rod, the stroke of which is 12 feet, is thus directly connected with the pump rods below. The engine works two sets of pumps, one a lifting set, 19 inches diameter, and 30 fathoms (180 feet) in height. The other, a forcing set, 20 inches diameter, which forces a distance of 51 fathoms (306 feet), the water being delivered 7 fathoms (42 feet) from the surface into a drift leading to Denburn. An injection set of pumps, 13 inches diameter, lifts water from the delivery drift to supply the condenser.

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About 360 feet from the surface we pass the opening into the upper working, where the coal seam is about three feet thick, but our destination is 170 feet further down.

At last our long descent is at an end; the cage has stopped, and we step out into an unknown and invisible land, which reminds one of Edgar Poe's remark about "the night's Plutonian shore." I had formed my own idea of what a coal pit was like - an idea formed chiefly from what I have read in novels and magazines. My notion was that the shaft was pretty deep, but not too deep to let a glimmer of daylight be seen at the bottom; that the space about the foot of the shaft was wide and roomy, with sheds and stables in it, probably a roaring fire also, and long spacious passages stretching out on every side to the workings lighted up with lamps like our streets at night. Bless you, I was never more deceived in my life.

When we stepped out of the cage, we found ourselves in "a land of darkness, as darkness itself," a world of thick and oppressive gloom, and were at once conducted into one of the low narrow passages that diverge from the foot of the shaft. The centre of the floor of this passage is occupied by a pair of rails, over which the hutches run from the working to the shaft. The roof is of solid limestone rock, and the sides of coal which is left unworked for a very considerable distance along this strange passage by the fitful light of our lamps all dimly burning, we were a merry lot.

It isn't easy to be light-hearted with five or six hundred feet of earth above you. A few thousand million tons of earth and rocks resting over you - the base only an inch or two from your head - should weigh down the most exuberant spirit. But yet we all did our best with quip and crack and jest and jollity to be cheerful.

A Dundee friend was particularly successful in assuming the guise of mirth, while loud we laughed with counterfeited glee at all his jokes, for many a joke had he. Some of these, I am sorry to say, I lost, for I kept up close to our guide, eager to get information on this dark question of coal-mining. From him I learned that we were now between three and four hundred feet under the level of the sea - a statement I could scarcely credit at the moment. This coal seam lies at an angle of 1 in  $4\frac{1}{2}$ , rising towards the north-west, but the passage we were in was quite level, running from north-east to south-west.

All coal pits contain water, and miners consider an abundance of water in a pit a good sign of the quality of the coal. This water has, however, to be got rid of, and this is done by water-levels running from the workings to the bottom of the shaft, and raised thence by pumps. The main levels or roadways for bringing the coals to the shaft are kept a little towards the rise, and thus are pretty dry.

As already mentioned, a considerable space of coal is left unworked at the bottom of the shaft, but at each side of this space a "heading", that is, a drift or passage, is cut, and from these roadways, branching outwards to the rise of the seam, are formed at intervals of 20 yards, each interval being constituted a wall, a working place where sets of three men work together. These sections or districts are opened out, and the workings carried forward as the coal is being wrought out. The debris and rubbish made in working the coal is used to pack the waste, and thus with the assistance of props the roof is allowed to sit, or subside gradually.

The roadways by which the coals are conveyed are roughly but strongly built on each side with stones blasted from the roof for the purpose, and the roof is regularly barred and secured at intervals with timber. These headings or wheel braes, as they are called, are laid each with two pair rails for the hutches, or little waggons, to bring down the coal to the level. By means of an endless chain, the force of the full hutches going down is used to impel the empty ones up to the working.

One advantage of a visit to a pit of comparatively recent origin, was that we had not a very great distance to travel to the working. As we proceeded along the level, we observed that the coal is worked on the "long wall" system, that is, when the coal is excavated, the roof is supported by long walls of solid stone, with a packing of rubbish between.

At various points along this level passage, we passed "wheel-braes" leading upwards through the seam, and at the extremity of the passage we came to the working. The miners were away, but we were shown how the work is done. Along the face of the seam there was an excavation of several inches under the coal, which being thus undermined, is left all night, and when the men return next day they find the mass fallen by its own weight. In making this excavation, the men have to lie on their sides and dig away in what cannot be a very comfortable attitude, the space being extremely limited. We made an attempt to pass along the two or three feet of space left in front of this working, but as the coals might come down at any moment, discretion was considered the better part of valour, and we beat a retreat, some of the party making uncomplimentary remarks about dangerous mines in general, and expressing a decided aversion to being entombed in a black diamond sepulchre. Turning up one of the wheel-braes we got to another face, which was of a less dangerous appearance, and which we immediately proceeded to explore.

My dear reader, imagine a long dark tunnel three or four feet square, and you can easily conceive that our attitudes in passing along it, were not remarkably graceful. One of the employees scouted in front for hidden dangers, next came our courteous guide, with yours truly at his below, drinking in the words of information that fell almost visibly from his mouth, for the atmosphere of the mine makes the breath quite visible. Next came my Dundee friend, and after him the rest of the party in due order. Thus "stooping down, as stoop we must who cannot stand upright", we dragged ourselves along till - Bang! a rush of air! lamps blown out! darkness!

Apart from the glory of the thing there is no great pleasure in being the victim of a colliery explosion, and as I sat down to collect my idea I thought so. Meanwhile the movements behind me showed that some one was in full retreat, and, apparently, coming into collision with some one else in the darkness.

It was a grotesque situation, and despite the grimness of it I could not help being amused as I followed my friends. A turn in the passage showed that the lamps of those in rear had not been blown out at all, and to them we gathered like the foolish virgins to get ours lighted. The smell of gunpowder that soon filled the mine revealed the cause of our alarm. The men were blasting down a part of the roof in front - that was all.

Why should I dwell on the rest of our explorations through dark and devious paths, from which we emerged looking vile and ferocious enough to be arrested for Irish assassins? Sufficient is it to state that we mustered again at the foot of the shaft and were hoisted upwards through the earth to the surface, that it was a lot of merry birds that escaped out of the cage when it reached the top, and that the first thing we did was to have a wash externally, and the next to have a ditto internally - all loudly declaring that we had enjoyed the visit immensely.

For myself I was deeply grateful for the opportunity of seeing how coal is worked, and I mentally resolved that after what I had seen of the difficulty of obtaining the black mineral, I would insist on paying half-a-crown per ton for it above the market price.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**14 August, 1882**

NEW HARBOUR FOR KIRKCALDY. - There are now some prospects of a new harbour for Kirkcaldy an engineer from Edinburgh having inspected a site. Our correspondent states that the idea is to connect Kirkcaldy by rail with the Caledonian system, the line to run from Alloa down the Valley of the Tiel to the coast at Seafield, thus laying open for working on an extensive scale some of the largest and richest coal and mineral fields in Fife. At Seafield a natural site for dock and harbour works, with a good depth of water, could easily be got. The site of the present harbour is also receiving attention, as it is thought it could be made available at much less expense than Seafield. Were the old harbour scheme adopted, a line of railway would be laid along the Sands Road.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**17 March, 1883**  
**KIRKCALDY - COLLIERY**  
**ACCIDENT**

A serious accident occurred on Friday last week, at Dunnikier Colliery. Two miners were engaged propping up a roof of the pit when a large fall of rock took place, literally burying them. Both men were injured, one named Simpson severely. Nearly an hour elapsed before he could be extricated.



**"The Scotsman"**  
**18 January, 1888**

FATAL ACCIDENT AT KIRKCALDY. - Yesterday morning, James Nicholson, a miner residing in Gallatown, met his death under painful circumstances. Deceased had been engaged at the coal face in the underground workings of Begg Colliery when a huge piece of stone of almost three tons weight fell from the roof and crushed him to the ground. Death

was instantaneous. Nicholson was 26 years of age and leaves a widow and four of a family.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**21 January, 1888**  
**KIRKCALDY - MINER KILLED**

On Tuesday, James Nicholson, a miner, was crushed to death while at work in Begg Colliery, Kirkcaldy. The unfortunate man was engaged at the coal face of the pit when a huge piece of stone about three tons in weight fell from the roof, and crushed him to the ground. Death was instantaneous. Nicholson was 26 years of age, and leaves a widow and four of a family.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**29 September, 1888**  
**KIRKCALDY - COLLIERY**  
**ACCIDENT**

On Wednesday morning, a lad named George Skinner met with an accident at Dunnikier Colliery. He was conducting some hutches along one of the passages when, owing to some obstruction, they were overturned, and Skinner had his leg and foot severely crushed, some of the bones being broken.



**"The Scotsman"**  
**8 December, 1888**

FATAL COAL PIT ACCIDENT. - Yesterday forenoon David Watters, a miner, residing at Dunnikier Row, was killed at the Lina, Dunnikier Colliery. Deceased and his son had just commenced work in the underground workings after breakfast, when about two tons of coal from the roof gave way, crushing him very severely. He died about ten minutes after the accident. Watters was fifty-five years of age, and leaves a widow and family.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**1 February, 1890**  
**DYSART - ACCIDENT TO A**  
**MINER**

On Tuesday, a miner employed at the Pannie Pit, named William Cunningham, was severely injured. He had been engaged firing a shot in the coal face, and had retired to wait the result. As the charge did not go off, he was in the act of going forward when it exploded and severely injured him. He was removed to the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh.



**"The Scotsman"**  
**5 September, 1891**

FATAL ACCIDENT. - Last night an accident occurred at Pannie coal pit, Kirkcaldy, by which a miner named James Collins, about 40 years of age, lost his life. Collins had been engaged at the brushing, when a quantity of rock weighing between three and four tons fell upon him. Nearly an hour elapsed before his body was extricated.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**14 January, 1893**  
**PIT ACCIDENT**

On Monday, a miner named Maich, residing in Gallatown, was seriously injured in the underground workings of the Pannie Pit, Pathhead. He was knocked down and seriously bruised by some trucks.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**4 February, 1893**  
**READING ROOM FOR**  
**DUNNIKIER MINERS**

On Thursday night, a handsomely fitted up reading-room for the miners connected with Dunnikier Colliery - the gift of Major Oswald - was formally opened. The reading-room, which is situated at Dunnikier Row, is equipped with all the modern requirements of

a first-class reading-room. The opening ceremony was performed by the donor. Mr John Leitch, on behalf of the miners, thanked Major Oswald for the splendid hall he had placed at their disposal.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**10 June, 1893**

*This issue announced the death of Major Oswald of Dunnikier. He died in London where he had been living during the last two months.*

**"The Scotsman"**  
**26 August, 1893**

Last night a meeting of the Dunnikier miners was held in Kirkcaldy for the purpose of considering the present situation. The masters' threat to hold out was regarded with indifference, the fact that some of the smaller collieries in the district had got 25 per cent. seemingly giving the men great hope of an early settlement. A resolution agreeing to insist on their original demand was unanimously adopted, and delegates to the miners' conference at Dunfermline today were instructed to support nothing short of this. Coals have gone up in price 5s. per ton. Most of the coals have been taken from the pit heads for domestic consumption only.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**18 August, 1894**

At Dunnikier Colliery a great number of men are now employed, one pit being manned by about 100 men. A good quantity of coal is thus being raised, and as consumers prefer newly-drawn coal, it is being eagerly brought up. At Dysart, men are now being found ready to descend the shafts.

**"Cowdenbeath & Lochgelly Times**  
**& Advertiser"**  
**27 February, 1895**

BEGG COLLIERY. - It is currently reported that an extensive addition is being negotiated for the Begg Colliery, Cluny. We hope the rumour's true.



**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**25 May, 1895**  
**KIRKCALDY - MINER KILLED**

On Monday, a fatal accident occurred at the Lena Pit, Dunnikier Colliery, whereby John Sinclair, miner, Todd's Row, Dunnikier Road, lost his life. Yesterday was the miners' idle day, but Sinclair and his brother were engaged in the underground workings of the pit clearing up the roads. The unfortunate man was in the act of shovelling out small coal when the roof gave way, and he was crushed to death.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**2 November, 1895**  
**HORRIBLE CRUELTY TO A PONY**

On Monday, at the Police Court, John Eadie, pony driver, residing in Gallatown, was charged with having within the underground workings of Pannie coal pit, stabbed a pony four times on its left side with a miner's pick. Accused pleaded not guilty. After hearing evidence, the presiding Magistrate said he thoroughly believed Eadie assaulted the pony with a pick or other sharp instrument, and a more cruel, vile, and abominable action he could not conceive. He imposed a fine of 15s., with the option of fourteen days in jail.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**11 April, 1896**  
**FIFE MINERS' ASSOCIATION**

The ordinary monthly meeting of the Executive Board of the Fife and Kinross Miners' Association was held at Dunfermline on Thursday - Mr James Innes, the president, in the chair.

*It was resolved to hold the eight hours anniversary demonstration in Dunfermline this year. The date fixed was Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> June. The secretary was instructed to invite Mr Sam Woods, vice-president of the British Federation, to address the meeting. In the event of Mr Woods being unable to comply with the request, some other member of the Federation Executive will be asked to attend.*

**ORGANISING LANARKSHIRE**

*The proposal to give a grant from the funds of the Scottish Federation for the purpose of organising the miners in Lanarkshire was under consideration. It was left to the discretion of the Secretary to vote for or against the proposal.*

**BALANCE SHEET**

*The financial statement for the year ending 12<sup>th</sup> March 1896 was submitted. The statement showed that the sum in bank on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1895 was £2326, 6s. 8d., and in treasurer's hands £63, 19s. 9½d. The contributions from the various collieries during the year amounted to £4721, 4s. 0½d., the details being as follows:-*

Rameldry	£14 - 0 - 6	Lochore	£131 - 3 - 6
Balgonie	£160 - 11 - 5½	Lochgelly	£440 - 3 - 7
Kennoway	£19 - 1 - 11	Cowdenbeath	£323 - 18 - 5
Leven	£205 - 2 - 4½	Raith	£188 - 0 - 4½
Methil	£120 - 3 - 4	Lumphinnans	£158 - 6 - 10½
Methilhill	£120 - 3 - 4	Kelty	£343 - 1 - 0½
Kirkland	£30 - 5 - 0	Lassodie	£151 - 3 - 5
Wellsgreen	£56 - 13 - 0	Donibristle	£132 - 0 - 0
Buckhaven	£324 - 9 - 2½	Fordell	£98 - 10 - 6
Windygates	£54 - 18 - 0	Crossgates	£134 - 15 - 6
East Wemyss	£86 - 1 - 11½	Hill of Beath	£160 - 16 - 3½
West Wemyss	£224 - 18 - 3	Halbeath	£181 - 15 - 6½
Dysart	£128 - 15 - 1½	Townhill	£240 - 13 - 3
Dunnikier	£76 - 7 - 3	Wellwood	£107 - 8 - 10½
Begg	£22 - 4 - 9	Rosebank	£117 - 17 - 6
Cardenden	£69 - 16 - 3	Blairhall	£86 - 8 - 6
Kinglassie	£9 - 4 - 6	Kinneddar	£48 - 12 - 7½

The income from other sources was £170, 15s. 11d. - the total income thus being £7282, 6s. 5d.

The expenditure was £1849, 18s. 5d. This included £914, 10s. for funeral claims.

The other outstanding items of expenditure were:- Scottish Federation dues and levy (£211); delegate's wages (£155, 13s. 11d.); secretary's salary and lawyers account.

The total sum in bank at the close of the account is £5163, 3s. 1d., and in the treasurer's hands £269, 4s. 11d.

The value of the Association's property, which falls to be added, is estimated at £700.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**15 August, 1896**  
**PIT ACCIDENT NEAR**  
**KIRKCALDY**

On Tuesday morning, two men, named Alexander Clark, weighman, residing at Clunie Bridge, and Joseph Wyse, checkweighman, residing at Redford, were injured while employed at Begg Colliery, which is about three miles from Kirkcaldy. Both men were employed on the pithead when the accident occurred. It appears that while a quantity of coal was being raised in one of the cages, the winding rope became detached from the drum, and was drawn right over the winding pulley, and fell with great force on the pithead, knocking the two men down. Dr Mackay found that Clark had both his arms broken, besides being injured internally. He was taken to the Kirkcaldy Cottage Hospital. Wyse, although injured, was able to walk home.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**3 September, 1896**

COLLIERY clerk wanted. Apply with references, Dunnikier Colliery, Kirkcaldy.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**5 September, 1896**  
**AN ENTERPRISING MINING FIRM**

Messrs Walter Herd & Son, Dunnikier Colliery, have just arranged with Mr Munro Ferguson of Raith, for a lease of a large

portion of Raith coalfield. The firm have also acquired Begg Colliery from Messrs Goodall Brothers. There is every probability that in the near future coal will be wrought more extensively than ever in the immediate neighbourhood of Kirkcaldy.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**5 February, 1898**

An accident occurred at Pannie Coal Pit on Saturday, whereby Philip Henderson, miner, 21 years of age, residing at St Clair Street, was seriously injured. It seems he was sheltering in one of the passages while a shot was being fired, when a waggon was let down the incline, and before he could get clear he was struck by the loaded waggon, which toppled over him. He was conveyed to the Cottage Hospital, where it was discovered that several of his ribs and his collar-bone had been fractured.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**12 August, 1899**

On Tuesday, an accident occurred in the underground workings at the Pannie Pit, whereby a miner named David Mathie, 59 years of age, residing in Nether Street, was very seriously injured. It seems that Mathie was riding up an incline on a rake of hutches, and when nearing the brow of the dook, where the roof was rather low, he was squeezed between the roof and the hutches. The unfortunate man was conveyed home and attended by Dr McNab, who found that he was suffering from injuries to the spine and breast, and that several of his ribs had been fractured.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**19 May, 1900**  
**KIRKCALDY**  
**ANCIENT COAL WORKINGS**

In connection with the construction of Kirkcaldy Victoria Bridge and the formation of the connecting road, considerable interruption has lately been experienced owing to the discovery of some old coal workings at a point about 30 feet from the



surface. These workings seem of ancient type, consisting of long passages, which are in some cases 12 feet in height, the entrance having been from the Den. The contractor found it necessary to build brick walls in these passages to support the ground above.

**"Dunfermline Press"  
29 September, 1900**

On Tuesday forenoon, an accident took place at the Panny Coal Pit, whereby Alexander Bowman, aged 73, was injured. Bowman, who is said to be the oldest working miner in Fife, was engaged in undermining an apparently sound face of coal. Shortly after beginning operations, however, he heard the coal "working", and ere he could get away a mass weighing many hundredweights fell upon him. He was extricated with the least possible delay, and conveyed to the Cottage Hospital, Pathhead, where he was found by Dr Proudfoot and Dr Clow to be suffering from severe injury to the right shoulder and back.



**"Dunfermline Press"  
1 December, 1900  
STRANGE ACCIDENT AT A  
KIRKCALDY PIT**

On Wednesday afternoon, while William Beveridge, aged about thirty years, a pit engineman, employed at Lena Pit, Dunnikier Colliery, was at work in the engine-room, he suddenly expired after setting the engine in motion. As there was no one to stop the engine, a hutch of coals which was being hoisted was carried past the pit head, and, coming in contact with the gear, broke the wire chain. Fortunately none of the men at the pit head were injured, but the miners underground had to travel through the workings to Pannie Pit before they could be brought to the surface.



**"Dunfermline Press"  
7 December, 1901**

On Wednesday morning, an accident occurred at Pannie Coal Pit, whereby William Reynolds, miner, residing at Rosslyn Street, lost his life. It appears that deceased, along with another miner, had been working an underground windlass, when something caught the hutches which were being drawn up, and the men lost control of the windlass, one of the handles of which struck Reynolds on the head, inflicting injuries from which he died before medical aid arrived.

**"The Scotsman"  
22 April, 1902  
DISPUTE AT DUNNIKIER  
COLLIERY.**

Messrs Weir and Innes, of the Fifeshire Miners' Association, have met with the Dunnikier miners for the purpose of discussing a partial reduction of wages, notice of which has been posted at Pannie Pit, Dunnikier Colliery. Over fifty men are affected by the reduction, which comes into force on the 29th instantaneous., and they state that even without this their wages are below the proper standard. No decision was arrived at in the conference, but there is every probability that the reduction will be resisted by the miners.

**"The Scotsman"  
10 January, 1903**

FIRE AT A FIFE PIT. - While the night shift were at work in Pannie Pit, Kirkcaldy, on Thursday evening dense smoke was observed issuing from one of the workings. The men at work in that section were at once warned of the danger, and several of them were most overcome by the smoke before they could get clear. The fire was found to have originated in

the woodwork in connection with a pumping engine. A large staff of men were at once called upon to fight the flames, and fortunately they succeeded in extinguishing the fire before it had spread to any serious extent.



**"Dunfermline Press"  
21 November, 1903**

At the Lina Pit, Dunnikier Colliery, Kirkcaldy, yesterday morning, a race of hutches ran away on a wheel brae. Andrew Herd (22), a pit drawer, was caught by the runaways and crushed against a wall, death being instantaneous.



**Thursday 26 October, 1905  
Mines Inspectors Report  
by Mr Robert McLaren**

Richard Walters, 68, *Miner*. A horse rake consisting of five tubs was proceeding out-by, and deceased and three others rode on the tubs; on the way out the last tub occupied by deceased left the rails and he was thrown off and was pricked on the right leg by one of several picks he had with him. Blood poisoning set in and he died eight days afterwards.

**"The Scotsman"  
4 November 1905**

STRANGE ACCIDENT TO A KIRKCALDY MINER. - Richard Walters (67), a miner, residing at Den Road, Kirkcaldy, met with an accident in Pannie Coal Pit a few days ago which has terminated fatally. When returning from his work at the coal face he fell and was pricked on the leg by two picks which he had been carrying. As the

wounds appeared slight, no serious consequences were anticipated, but ultimately blood poisoning set in, and he was removed to Kirkcaldy Cottage Hospital, where he died yesterday.

**"Dunfermline Press"  
2 December, 1905**

David Marshall and David Marshall, jun., both miners, 31 Victoria Road, and David Paterson, pony driver, 6 Dunnikier Place, all of Kirkcaldy, were charged - before Sheriff Armour at Cupar on Tuesday - with having on 26<sup>th</sup> October, in the underground workings of No. 2 Pannie Pit, Dunnikier Colliery, ridden on hutches without the permission of the manager. They pleaded guilty. The Fiscal said this case was the sequel to a fatal accident recently held. A man [Richard Walters] was thrown off a hutch, and received injuries which caused his death.

**"The Scotsman"  
5 June, 1906  
THE REMARKABLE  
DEVELOPMENT OF  
FIFE COAL TRADE.**

The commanding position which the coal trade possesses in connection with all things industrial, and the fresh efforts that are still being made to develop the coalfields on a larger scale, and to export the mineral in greater quantities, justify the question being considered from the point of view of finance. It has been claimed for the coal trade that it is the greatest of the world's industries, in this respect that few industries could be carried on without it. The time may come when the coal measures of the country have been exhausted, that some other heat-producing substance may be discovered or invented, but until nature's stores have been depleted the providing of a substitute is likely to be deferred. There is, however, no slackening on the part of man in his efforts to dig out the riches which nature has buried deep in the bowels of the earth.

Coal mining is not the product of the present generation. It has been going on for centuries,

but the methods now employed are more methodical and complete than they were in former times, and, in keeping with the spirit of the times, the rate of production and distribution is being largely accelerated. The total quantity of coal produced in the United Kingdom thirty years ago amounted to nearly 132 million tons. In 1900 this was increased to 225 million tons, and for the past year the total production was little short of 240 million tons. Taking this total at the general average price of 5s. per ton, the total value of the coal raised could not be far short of 60 millions sterling, and the capital invested in the collieries of the country may roughly be estimated at that amount. It is in the county of Fife, however, that the largest development of the coal trade of Scotland is being effected, and where a large amount of capital has been and is about to be spent in the opening up of new coalfields and in the construction of docks chiefly to meet the exigencies of the export trade. The Fife colliery companies, within recent years, have shown a remarkable amount of enterprise in the development of the coalfields there, and by reason of their importunity they have succeeded in getting the one railway company in the county to assist them in getting rid of their output; and an inquiry into the amount of capital invested in the Fife coalfields and the amount of capital sunk in the providing of export facilities is interesting as well as suggestive.

The coalfields are owned, leased, or wrought by a dozen or so of companies, some of the smaller collieries being the property of or leased by private individuals or firms, and information as to the capital invested in them is not available. Excluding them, the Fife collieries are in the hands of nine different companies, whose nominal capitals range from £55,000 to over £830,000. The Fife Coal Company, which at its origin was a modest concern, now occupies the premier position, the result of judicious management and engineering efficiency, and next in importance are the Lochgelly Iron and Coal Company, the Wemyss Coal Company, and that known as the Wilson and Clyde, whose capital, however, is not wholly invested in Fife.

The nominal share capital of the different colliery companies is as follows:-

Fife Coal Co.	£831,250
Lochgelly Iron and Coal Co.	£350,000
Wemyss Coal Co.	£300,000
Wilson & Clyde Co.	£230,000
Bowhill Coal Co.	£200,000
West Fife Coal Co.	£130,000
Earl of Rosslyn Colliery Co.	£100,000
T. Spowart & Co.	£90,000
Dunnikier Coal Co.	£55,000
Total	£2,286,250

This aggregate capital of fully 2¼ millions is, presumably, designed to meet future as well as present operations, as the whole of it has in several instances not yet been fully called up. Within the last few years some of the companies have increased their capital development, so it may be assumed that provision has been made to cover the cost of contemplated extensions. With this capital of 2¼ millions, the gross output of coal may be set down at between seven and eight million tons per annum, the great proportion of which is got rid of for home consumption, and the balance by exportation. As to the profits earned by the operations of the different companies, it should not be necessary to enter into these in detail. The dividends in all cases are not publicly announced, but it is known in all business circles that dividends of 25 per cent. are not uncommon. Even if some of the companies pay considerably less, yet the aggregate dividends earned on the gross capital should work out at a comparatively high remunerative return on investments. That colliery shares are always in demand - and some of the companies' shares are quoted on the Exchange at over 100s. for a £1 share is an evidence that there paying capabilities are strongly appreciated.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**25 August, 1906**  
**DEATH OF A COALMASTER**

The death of Mr Thomas Herd, coalmaster, occurred at his residence, Parkhill, Dunnikier Road, Kirkcaldy, on Monday. Mr Herd, who was a native of Kirkcaldy, was only forty-

seven years of age. He had been ailing for the last two months, and his death was not unexpected. Mr Herd and his brother, Mr Peter Herd, succeeded their father as partners of Dunnikier Colliery, Kirkcaldy, and the Begg Colliery. Mr Herd was well known throughout the district, and was highly esteemed by a large circle of friends. He was of a quiet, retiring disposition, and took no active part in public affairs, although his business aptitude did much to promote the success of the collieries. In politics he was a staunch Unionist. He was a warm-hearted member of Bethelfield U. F. Church, and was one of its highly respected managers. He was unmarried.



**H. M. Inspector of Mines Report  
1907**

**Mr. Robert McLaren's Report**

**Fatal Accident at Dunnikier, Fife  
Owner: Walter Herd & Son, Ltd.  
14 February, 1907**

Andrew Galloway, 24, *Miner*. Deceased was travelling up an incline towards his working place, when he was met by an empty runaway tub which injured him and he died 22 days later. His drawer, in turning an empty tub on the plates at the incline, allowed it to go over to the rails, and it ran down.



**H. M. Inspector of Mines Report  
1907**

**Mr. Robert McLaren's Report**

**Fatal Accident at Dunnikier, Fife  
Owner: Walter Herd & Son, Ltd.  
22 February, 1907**

James Griffiths, 47, *Pumping Engineman*. Deceased was walking up a dook, and was overtaken by a loaded rake of tubs being drawn up, and seriously injured, the injuries terminating fatally on 21st May, 1907. He apparently did not think the rake was so close upon him, as he had plenty of room to step aside and allow it to pass.



**H. M. Inspector of Mines Report  
1907**

**Mr. Robert McLaren's Report**

**Fatal Accident at Dunnikier, Fife  
Owner: Walter Herd & Son, Ltd.  
28 March, 1907**

Lewis Park, 30, *Wheeler*. The tubs on a self-acting incline, became derailed, and deceased and the hanger-on at the foot re-railed them. Owing to some obstruction on the rails the tubs did not at first move, and afterwards they went away, just as deceased was leaning over them, and he was crushed against the roof which was low at the part.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**3 May, 1907**

KIRKCALDY PIT ACCIDENT. - Last night an accident occurred at Pannie Coal Pit, Kirkcaldy, by which Robert Hunter, miner, was seriously injured. A large stone came away from the roof and crushed him underneath. On being relieved he was taken to Kirkcaldy Hospital, where it was found that several of his ribs had been fractured, while he had also sustained other internal injuries.



**H. M. Inspector of Mines Report 1907**  
**Mr. Robert McLaren's Report**  
**Fatal Accident at Dunnikier, Fife**  
**Owner: Walter Herd & Son, Ltd.**  
**21 October, 1907**

William Bowman, 55, *Repairer*. A room was being made for a motor, in an old roadway, which had fallen a considerable height, and while deceased was filling a tub with debris, a small stone fell off the side and struck him. The injuries were considered very slight, but he succumbed from the effects 16 days later.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**10 August, 1907**  
**SERIOUS AFFAIR AT A**  
**KIRKCALDY PIT**

On Tuesday morning a serious accident occurred at the Lina Pit, Dunnikier Collieries, which created no little anxiety to the friends of the miners engaged on the night shift in the underground workings of the pit. At an early hour in the morning the pit shaft slides, up and down which the cages work, broke down, and the night shift, numbering about a score of brushers, repairers, etc., on arriving at the pit bottom for the purpose of ascending on the completion of their shift, found that they would be unable to reach the surface in consequence of the slides being completely wrecked.

As soon as possible men were sent to repair the damage, one of the sides of the shaft being temporarily put to rights sufficiently to allow the men to get up, but that was not effected until four hours after their stopping time. Much alarm was caused among the friends of the men, who were so long behind their time, and anxious inquiries were made at the pit as to the cause. The pit, which employs nearly 100 men, was idle on Tuesday in consequence of the breakdown.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**15 February, 1908**

IMPORTANT FIFE COLLIERY AMALGAMATION. - An arrangement of much importance to all concerned in the Fife coal trade has been arrived at whereby the Bowhill Coal Company (Limited) have acquired the collieries and minerals at present worked by Messrs Walter Herd & Sons, Dunnikier Colliery, Kirkcaldy. The coalfields of the two companies adjoin each other, and the combination will give the amalgamated company control over those seams of coal extending from Bowhill to the shore, and also coal under the sea. The Dunnikier Collieries have been many years in existence, and include the seams of Begg and Dunnikier, and also the seams on Dysart estate underlying the Dysart main. The coalfields will extend over several miles, and very extensive developments of the industry are anticipated at an early date. Borings have already been made near the village of Thornton, and extensive work is likely to be undertaken between Kirkcaldy and Markinch.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**20 May, 1908**

Mr John M. Thomson, late of Dundonald Collieries, Cardenden, is leaving to take up the more important duties of general manager of Dunnikier Collieries, Kirkcaldy, lately purchased by Bowhill Coal Company.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**10 October, 1908**

A mass meeting of the miners connected with Bowhill Collieries was held on Saturday in the Dunnikier Hall, Kirkcaldy. It was reported that the warnings of the sixty men employed in the cross-cut section of the St Clair seam, Dunnikier Pit, had been lodged that morning, and that there was a likelihood of a strike taking place, as the manager of the collieries had intimated that he would not raise the hewing price per ton as requested by the men, who had asked for an advance of 3d per ton.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**21 November, 1908**

The miners employed in the St Clair seam of the Pannie Pit, Kirkcaldy, (Bowhill Colliery Company), have accepted proposals put forward by the Company for the settlement of the strike.



**"The Scotsman"**  
**15 January, 1909**

FATAL RESULT OF A KIRKCALDY ACCIDENT. - William Beall (41), miner, Kirkcaldy, died in Kirkcaldy Hospital yesterday as the result of injuries received in Pannie coal pit, Kirkcaldy, on Monday night.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**16 October, 1909**  
**KIRKCALDY AND THE**  
**SHIPMENT OF COAL**

A communication has been received by Kirkcaldy Town Council from the North British Railway Company regarding the proposal to ship coal from Kirkcaldy Harbour. The letter states that it is impracticable to work shipment coal over the Kirkcaldy Harbour branch. The branch, having regard to its being a single line, and being on a gradient of one in twenty, was already fairly well taxed to overtake the goods traffic which at present required to be dealt with thereon, and it could not reasonably be used for shipment coal traffic. The question of improving the gradient had also been considered, but it was not possible to make any improvement without altering the levels of the line for a considerable distance, and it was quite impracticable, both from the point of view of cost and of the detriment that would be suffered by the main line were any such proposal carried out. The Town Council have resolved to take the opinion of counsel in regard to the town's prospects of success in the event of their making an application for facilities to the Railway Commissioners.



**"The Scotsman"**  
**13 November, 1909**

ACCIDENT AT KIRKCALDY. - An accident occurred last night at Pannie Coal Pit, Kirkcaldy, whereby David Fisher, pitworker, residing at St Clair Street, was severely injured. It seems that he had been working behind the coal-cutting machine and was engaged erecting props, when his leg was severely crushed. He was removed to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**19 February, 1910**  
**COAL CUTTING MACHINERY**

Mr J. M. Thomson, general manager of the Fife Coal Company's works at Dunnikier, is the patentee of an apparatus for reducing the risk of accidents associated with bar coal-cutting machines. The invention has been adopted by a well-known Glasgow firm, Mavor & Coulson, Limited, and fitted to their coal-cutters.



**"The Scotsman"**  
**12 December, 1910**

FATAL RESULT OF KIRKCALDY PIT ACCIDENT. - Thomas Thomson (28), a miner, died on Saturday from injuries received in Pannie Coal Pit early on Thursday morning. Deceased was buried under a fall of coal and stone from the roof.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**12 March, 1910**

*John Muir Thomson, colliery manager, Denend House, Kirkcaldy, was examined in Kirkcaldy Bankruptcy Court on Wednesday before Sheriff Shennan.*



**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**30 July, 1910**

Mr J. M. Thomson, the Fife Coal Company's manager at Dunnikier Colliery, Kirkcaldy, has introduced a patent cable suspender for use in collieries, which, it is believed, will supply a much-felt want in mining circles. The suspenders have been approved of by mining experts, and will probably be introduced to most up-to-date collieries. Mr Thomson, who has a high reputation as a mining engineer, has already other engineering inventions to his credit.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**7 January, 1911**

A fatal accident occurred at Pannie Coal Pit, Kirkcaldy, on Saturday afternoon. James Robertson, about seventy years of age, had been employed at the pit for about forty years, and on Saturday afternoon had been accustomed attending the pumping engine at the pit bottom. He had just started the engine when one of the valves burst, and he was struck on the head by a piece of metal. Death was instantaneous.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**1 October, 1910**

James Lonie, miner (25), was admitted to the Kirkcaldy Hospital suffering from burns on the face. He had received his injuries by an explosion of gas in Pannie coal pit.



**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**1 October, 1910**

William Mackie (39) was admitted to Kirkcaldy Hospital on Saturday suffering from injuries to his back, caused by a fall of coal in Begg Pit.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**Tuesday, 7 March, 1911**  
**FIVE MEN'S BRAVERY**  
**REWARDED**

At a fatal accidents inquiry in Kirkcaldy Sheriff Court on Saturday, Sheriff Armour Hannay presented the Carnegie Hero Fund certificates and £10 each to Colin Campbell Mackay, underground manager, Pannie Pit, Kirkcaldy, and John Foster, miner, March

Street, Kirkcaldy, in recognition of their bravery in the pit on 18<sup>th</sup> December last. A fall from the roof, estimated at about 20 tons, came away at midnight, burying one of the men underneath, while another was caught by the feet. In order to effect the rescue of a man named Thomson it was necessary to burrow underneath the fall, and even then he could only be got out by Mackay and Foster taking hold of him, while other workmen got Mackay and Foster by the legs and dragged them into safety. It took four hours to extricate the unfortunate man, who survived the accident by only a few days. Mackay and Foster incurred great risk on account of the danger of being overwhelmed in the fall. In making the presentation, his Lordship said these gallant men were facing death in one of its most terrible shapes. Mackay and Foster only acted according to the splendid traditions of their class, for in his Lordship's experience, the first thought of a Fife miner when overtaken by a disaster was to rescue his comrade without a moment's consideration of the risk to his own life.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**15 July, 1911**  
**FIFE COLLIERY MANAGER'S**  
**INVENTION**

Mr Thomson, the talented Fife Coal Company's manager at Dunnikier, has added to his inventive reputation by his recent device with coal-cutting machines. In the report just issued by the Mines Inspector for Scotland, it is given a flattering reference, and the invention has created a favourable impression in mining circles. It will probably be an effective medium in reducing the death and accident roll in Scotland. One of the most prominent firms in Britain has secured from Mr Thomson the selling rights of the machine at a satisfactory royalty to the inventor. The device consists of an apparatus for throwing the bar of a coal-cutting machine out of gear while the machine is travelling, and has already worked in a very satisfactory manner in Dunnikier and other collieries.



**"The Scotsman"**  
**13 September, 1911**

FIFE JURY ON MINING METHODS. - At Cupar yesterday, Sheriff Armour Hannay and a jury heard evidence in fatal accident inquiries. In regard to the death of William Glass, chain-runner, 70 Nairn Street, Pathhead, Kirkcaldy, which occurred on 8th August, as the result of an accident in No. 1 Pannie Pit, Kirkcaldy, belonging to the Fife Coal Company (Limited), evidence was led at considerable length. It seemed that deceased was engaged bringing the loaded hutches up the south dook when the coupling between the first and second broke away, and Glass was thrown off, sustaining fatal injuries. Mr Robinson, H.M. Inspector of Mines, said chain-running was one of the most dangerous occupations in mining. The percentage of accidents in that work was greater than in any other underground occupation. On that account he hoped the Sheriff would assist in the direction of getting rid of that kind of work. Advised by the Sheriff, the jury added the following rider to their formal verdict:- "In the opinion of the jury the deceased was engaged in very dangerous work, which should be discontinued in all mines as far as possible."



**"The Scotsman"**  
**20 January, 1912**

FATALITY AT KIRKCALDY PIT. - An accident occurred in Pannie Coal Pit, Dunnikier Colliery, Kirkcaldy, yesterday morning, which resulted in the death of John Linton (61), a pit repairer, residing in Kirkcaldy. He had been engaged in the underground workings repairing the roof,



when a fall took place, and he was buried under about a ton of rubbish. Death seemed to have been instantaneous.

**"Cowdenbeath & Lochgelly Times"**  
**21 February, 1912**

Wm. Duncan (50), residing at Randolph Road, Gallatown, Kirkcaldy, was admitted to Kirkcaldy Hospital on Monday suffering from severe injuries to his back and also internally. The unfortunate man was badly crushed by a fall of coal from the roof of one of the underground workings in the Pannie Pit, Kirkcaldy, in the forenoon. His condition is somewhat serious.



**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**22 June, 1912**  
**EAST FIFE PIT FATALITIES**

Two mining fatalities were investigated by Sheriff Armour-Hanney and a jury at Cupar on Tuesday. The victim in the first case was William Shepherd, miner, Kirkcaldy, who was killed at Lochhead Pit, Wemyss Coal Company, Ltd., on Saturday, 11 May. ... The other case had reference to the death of William McCormack, pithead worker, Sinclairtown, who met his end at the Pannie Pit on 22 May. The evidence brought out that deceased climbed over the guard railing, and in some manner unexplained got in contact with one of the revolving drums of the coal conveyors, and was crushed to death. In both cases formal verdicts were returned.

**"Cowdenbeath & Lochgelly Times"**  
**26 June, 1912**

*An article in this issue covered the sad drowning of John McCormick (20), pit worker at Dunnikier, at Pathhead Sand, Kirkcaldy. It also stated that "Only about six weeks ago a younger brother of deceased, who had just commenced work in the Pannie Pit beside his brother and father, met with a*

distressing death at the pithead, being crushed amongst machinery which he had been examining." *This victim was William McCormick (14), who died at the Pannie Pit, Dunnikier Colliery, on 22 May.*

**"Cowdenbeath & Lochgelly Times"**  
**7 August, 1912**

The miners at Lina Pit, Dunnikier Colliery, had a very trying experience on Thursday. It appears that about eight o'clock in the morning a spur wheel of the winding engine broke down, thus calling off the communication with the pit bottom. At this time about fifty men were in the pit, and as it was impossible to bring them to the surface a long piece of cord was obtained, and a note lowered down the shaft instructing the men to travel by the air course to the Pannie Pit, a distance of over two miles. A telephone message was also sent to the Pannie Pit asking the manager there to send out a party to meet the Lina men. Mr Wm. Lyon, manager at the Lina Pit, on obtaining the message from the pithead, at once summoned all the miners together, and having made certain that every man was present, they set out about 9.20 on their long tramp. The men were led by the fireman, Andrew Summers, while the manager brought up the rear to see that no one dropped out. At some places the roof was so low that the men had to crawl on their hands and knees through the mud and water accumulated on the floor of the air passage. When about half-way to the Pannie their further progress was stopped by a fall in the roadway and a large accumulation of water. It was now eleven o'clock, and some of the younger men proposed retracing their steps to the pit bottom and waiting till the machinery had been repaired. Some of the older men, however, were already too much exhausted to think of covering the distance again, and it was accordingly decided to wait until the relief party from the Pannie side cleared the obstruction. As a precaution against possible emergencies it was decided to extinguish half of the lamp, and thus save the supply of tallow. The men, in their wet clothes, remained in their uncomfortable position till 2 o'clock, when the Pannie men arrived and removed so much of the

obstruction that the Lina miners, by crawling through the muddy waters, were able to gain the Pannie Section, and on reaching the main haulage road they were glad to be able to complete the remainder of their journey to the pit bottom in the hutches. Many of the men were quite exhausted when they reached the surface, and in their dripping and mud-begrimed garments they presented a sorry picture.



**"The Scotsman"**  
**11 September, 1912**

CRUSHED TO DEATH IN A KIRKCALDY PIT. - An accident occurred in Pannie Coal Pit, Kirkcaldy, yesterday morning, which resulted in the death of James Hay or Keddie (35), a miner residing in Kirkcaldy. Hay, with another workman named Christie, were employed in connection with the coal cutting machine in the parrot seam. They had just finished their meal between two and three o'clock in the morning, when a slip in the roof was observed, but after consultation the "place" was considered safe, and the men decided to proceed with their work. The machine had only proceeded about a yard when a huge stone came away from the roof, crushing Hay to the pavement. The "place" was so narrow where the fall occurred that in order to reach the body a road had to be cut through the waste, and explosives used, and several hours elapsed before the body was recovered. Deceased leaves a widow and six children.



**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**9 November, 1912**

A fatal accident occurred on Tuesday night at Pannie Pit, Dunnikier Colliery, Kirkcaldy, resulting in the death of James Forrest, a

miner, who resided in St Clair Street. He was engaged brushing when a heavy stone fell from the roof, crushing him underneath, and causing instantaneous death.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**24 May, 1913**  
**MINERS AND SUNDAY LABOUR.**

At the monthly meeting of the miners of Dunnikier Colliery, Kirkcaldy (Fife Coal Company) on Tuesday, it was reported that a large amount of unnecessary Sunday labour is at present being carried on at this colliery. After discussion, it was unanimously agreed that a determined effort be made to stop this practice, and the General Secretary, Mr Wm. Adamson, M.P., is to be asked to confer with the management with a view to obtaining this end. A strong desire was expressed that if this proceeding prove abortive Sunday picketing should be at once resorted to.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**26 August, 1913**

BURNING ACCIDENT IN A FIFE PIT. - A serious burning accident took place at the Pannie Pit, Dunnikier Collieries, Kirkcaldy, yesterday, as the result of which William Jack (26), night under-ground manager, Ingleside, Kirkcaldy, and John Stewart, miner (39), 102 Mid Street, both lie in Kirkcaldy Hospital suffering from severe injuries. The accident occurred in the parrot coal section of the pit, where it is understood Jack, accompanied by Stewart, had gone to investigate, in consequence of complaints made regarding fire-damp in this part of the mine. The two men were in the vicinity of fire-damp when, through some cause, this had become ignited. Hearing their cries for assistance, several miners ventured into the section, and found them so badly burned about the face, arms, and hair that their immediate removal to hospital was necessary. Mr Jack, who holds a first-class certificate in mining, is a brother of the colliery manager.

**"Cowdenbeath & Lochgelly Times"**  
**27 August, 1913**

Two miners were injured in the Pannie Pit, Kirkcaldy, on Monday as the result of an explosion caused by firedamp. They were John Stewart, 105 Links Street, and William Dick, Smeaton Road, Kirkcaldy. Both men were badly burned about the face and arms, and were conveyed to Kirkcaldy Hospital, where they were detained.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**22 May, 1914**  
**KIRKCALDY PIT STRIKE**  
**AVERTED**

As a result of a ballot of the men employed at the Fife Coal Company's Lena Pit, Kirkcaldy, taken last week, it was agreed that the notices be lodged with a view to securing payment of wages every alternate Friday. A strike has been averted by the Company having intimated acquiescence in the request of the men.



**"The Scotsman"**  
**6 July, 1914**

FATAL MINING ACCIDENT AT KIRKCALDY. - On Saturday, in the Pannie Pits, Kirkcaldy, two accidents took place, one of which terminated fatally. William Williams (27), Links Street, while proceeding to the pit bottom in Pannie Pit No. 1, was buried beneath a large fall of coal, and when extricated two hours later was found to be dead. He leaves a wife and three young children.

Andrew Knight (43), Dunnikier Place, Kirkcaldy, in Pannie Pit No. 2, sustained severe injuries to his hand through having it pressed between two heavy stones, and required to have a finger amputated.



**"The Scotsman"**  
**Tuesday 27 July, 1915**

SEQUEL TO A KIRKCALDY MINING ACCIDENT. - In Kirkcaldy Sheriff Court yesterday, Sheriff Umpherston issued his interlocutor in an action at the instance of Mrs Annie Bollan or Hill, 27 Nicol Street, Kirkcaldy, who, on behalf of herself and six children, claimed compensation from the Fife Coal Company, for the death of her husband, William Hill, miner. Hill was engaged in Pannie Coal Pit, Kirkcaldy, on the morning of 25th December last driving a heading into an old working, when he was caught by a rush of water and carried down the level, sustaining bruises about the body, in addition to his clothing being soaked with water. He was confined to bed until 30th December, and the following day he went to the colliery office with a doctor's certificate. That night he became very ill, and the next morning he was found to be suffering from pneumonia, from which he died on 8th January. His Lordship said the only point was whether Hill's death resulted from the accident on 25th December. He found that death was due to pneumonia due to a chill. There was no doubt Hill suffered a very severe chill on 25th December, but there was no evidence that he received a chill at all when he went out on 31st December. Discussing whether Hill's going out on the 31st December was a *novus actus interveniens*, his Lordship stated that in the present case neither Hill nor the doctor knew that he had pneumonia on 31st December. He went out, not for his own pleasure or against doctor's orders, but to comply with a request from the respondents by furnishing them with a medical certificate, and having done that, he returned home again. That, in his Lordship's view, was not a *novus actus* at all. He awarded claimant compensation to the amount of £289, 11s. 4d., and found respondents liable to the claimant in expenses.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**27 May, 1916**

George Blyth, a Kirkcaldy miner, residing at 176 Overton Road, received severe injuries in the Pannie Pit, Kirkcaldy, on Wednesday. He had just prepared a fuse for firing a shot, and had got a considerable distance off, when the shot exploded, and a piece of stone struck him on the back, badly bruising it, and fracturing a rib on his right side.



**"West Fife Echo"**  
**8 December, 1920**

**COWDENBEATH MINER'S DEATH**

As the result of an explosion which occurred in the Pannie Pit, Dunnikier Colliery, Kirkcaldy, early in the week, Peter Gardiner (45), a married man residing temporarily at 7 Rosslyn Street, Kirkcaldy, has succumbed in Kirkcaldy Hospital. A native of Cowdenbeath, the deceased went to Kirkcaldy, some months ago from England, where he was last employed.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**28 February, 1921**  
**DISMISSAL AT FIFE PITS.**  
**LEVY ON WORKERS.**

At a special meeting at Dunfermline on Saturday of the Executive Board of the Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan Miners' Association, a discussion took place with regard to the large amount of unemployment in the pits of the counties. At Dunnikier Colliery, Kirkcaldy, it was reported, 200 men had been dismissed, and at Dysart Colliery the services of 100 men had been dispensed with. There had also been dismissals at other collieries.

With a view to alleviating the prevalent distress, the Executive recommended to the favourable consideration of the members the imposition of a voluntary levy. The suggestion was that each man should

contribute a sum of sixpence per shift, and the hope was expressed that it would be possible to collect the contributions at the colliery offices.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**2 July, 1921**

With the exception of the Wellesley Pit, in the Wemyss area, and Dunnikier Pit in the Kirkcaldy district, all the pits in the East of Fife will be in full working order within a few days. At each of these pits, the full working complement in normal times is about eight hundred men.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**24 September, 1921**  
**DUNNIKIER COLLIERY.**  
**TO BE CLOSED DOWN IF**  
**OUTPUT IS**  
**NOT INCREASED.**

The Fife Coal Company has given notice to the men employed at their Dunnikier Colliery that the pit will be closed at the end of this week. As the colliery normally employs about 500 men the officials of the Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan Miners' Association feel that they cannot allow such a large addition to the ranks of the unemployed to be made without making some effort to avert the calamity. Mr William Adamson, M.P., had a meeting with Mr C. Augustus Carlow, joint managing director of the Fife Coal Company. Mr Carlow explained the reasons for the Company's decision. He pointed out that the output from the colliery only averages 15 cwts per person per day, as against a pre-war output of 35 cwts per person per day. Mr Adamson, who recognises the importance of output, pleaded that the pit should be kept open, and referred to the distress which would inevitably follow its closing.

Mr Carlow stated that the Company had no desire to close the pit if it could pay its way. At present, however, the coal raised cost the Company from 28s to 30s per ton, and they had to sell it at £1 per ton. An output of 30 cwts per person per day - less than the pre-war rate - would enable them to keep the pit

open. Mr Adamson said he would place the facts before the men and strongly advise them to do all they could to increase output.

**"The Scotsman"**

**26 September, 1921**

**THE THREATENED CLOSURE  
OF A FIFE PIT.  
MEN AGREE TO MONTH'S TRIAL  
OF OWNERS' CONDITIONS.**

At the monthly meeting of the Executive Board of the Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan Miners' Association at Dunfermline on Saturday, a report was submitted of the negotiations which had taken place with regard to the threatened stoppage of the Fife Coal Company's Dunnikier Colliery, Kirkcaldy. Three interviews, it was stated, had been held during the week between the heads of the Company and representatives of the men. The result of these was that certain rates of wages had been proposed by the Company and accepted temporarily for one month by the men, in order to avert the danger of a stoppage at the colliery, where 800 persons are normally employed. Mr William Adamson, M.P., the general secretary, reported an interview he had had with the umpire under the National Unemployment Insurance Act with regard to the question of men who had not yet been able to resume work. The report showed that the umpire had favourably decided the claim of the men still unemployed at the Mary Pit, Lochore, the settlement, so far as these men were concerned, representing a lump sum payment of £9 per adult member.



**"Dunfermline Press"**

**29 October, 1921**

An accident occurred at Pannie Pit, Kirkcaldy, on Monday, resulting in the death of one of the employees and the severe injury of another. While on his rounds, a fireman noticed a weakening in the structure

supporting the roof of one of the cuttings, and conveyed the news to the foreman on duty, who immediately dispatched four men to effect repairs. While they were thus engaged two of the beams gave way, crushing two of the workers underneath. The other men raised the alarm, and help was at once forthcoming. It was discovered that in the case of Robert Traill, 7 Orchard Lane, Dysart, the accident had proved fatal. The other man, George Burt, 36 Viceroy Street, Kirkcaldy, was found to be badly crushed, and was immediately removed to the hospital to receive treatment. The deceased, who was about 46 years of age, leaves a widow and five of a family.

**"DUNDEE ADVERTISER"  
SEQUEL TO A KIRKCALDY  
PIT FATALITY  
October, 1921**

**PLEA FOR MORE  
CONSIDERATE  
TREATMENT OF THE DEAD**

A feeling of strong resentment has been created in the mining community of Dysart over the manner of conveyance home of the body of a miner named Traill, who was killed in the Pannie Pit, Kirkcaldy, last week. The allegation is that the body was laid upon a coal lorry, covered by a blanket, and driven through the streets of the town in broad daylight for a mile and a half, the distance between the pit and the deceased man's residence.

The Rev. Hugh Menzies, minister of the First Charge at Dysart, who has been the means of attracting public attention to the matter, was interviewed on Saturday by a "Dundee Advertiser" - representative. He had, he said been summoned to the bereaved home to await the coming of the corpse. He understood that the body would be conveyed to the house by an ambulance waggon, and therefore when a coal lorry stopped at the door he paid no attention to its arrival until some one informed him that the body was lying on the lorry. He looked out of the window and saw a form on the lorry, only covered by a blanket. The shape of the body was apparent from the covering, which was so

slight that a gust of wind could have blown it off the body on the journey. When the body was brought into the house it was found that it was in the same condition as when the accident occurred, and bore all the traces of the mine. Some time ago, Mr Menzies continued, he was called at midnight to a house, a young inmate of which had been killed during the nightshift at the local pit. In this instance, the body was brought in an ambulance. It had, however, to be carried up a somewhat awkward entrance and the blood which had gathered beneath the body on the stretcher actually dripped on the steps of the stair.

"These fatal accidents," said Mr Menzies, "are usually sufficiently tragic and painful without having these unseemly and gruesome details added. A little more considerate treatment of the dead would do something to temper the severity of the blow which in our mining districts falls so heavily on so many, and be appreciated by the men among us who daily risk their lives to minister to the comforts of others."

The suggestion of Mr Menzies is that a proper conveyance should be provided to meet emergencies and that a mortuary be arranged for, so that when a fatal accident occurs, the body could be taken there, washed and dressed and coffined, before being conveyed to the family.

**"Cowdenbeath & Lochgelly Times"**  
**15 February, 1922**

That many miners at Dunnikier Colliery, near Kirkcaldy, are now unable to earn wages was reported at Saturday's meeting at Dunfermline of the Executive Board of Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan Miners' Association. Much dissatisfaction prevailed at this colliery as a result of the drastic reductions which had taken place there in the tonnage rates allowed to miners. It was stated that the working faces had recently been examined on behalf of the men, and that a meeting had taken place with the management, at which claims for reconsideration of the rates were put forward. The management have agreed to consider the claims, and have promised an early reply.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**24 November, 1923**

Mr Thomas T. Thyne, who has been in charge of the surveying office at Bowhill Colliery for a considerable number of years, has been appointed manager at Dunnikier Colliery. Mr Thyne has been at Bowhill Colliery for about eighteen years, having served his apprenticeship there. For some time he was in charge of the evening continuation classes in connection with mining, and was successful a few months ago in gaining a first-class manager's certificate.

**"Fife Free Press"**  
**9 October, 1926**

A good deal of water has risen in the Dunnikier pit during the strike, and it is not expected to open for some time.

**"The bing of the Pannie Pit."**

*"This was removed during the mid 1960s and as a pupil at Pathhead Primary School during that era, I can remember a steady stream of tipper trucks belonging to a Windygates-based haulage contractor passing by the playground at break-time and full of the bing material. I understand that this spoil was used as road bottoming on the Standing Stane Road (this last point may have been anecdotal)." Alan Simpson, Kirkcaldy.*

**Colliers' Cottages, Dunnikier Road**  
**"Fife Free Press"**  
**10 January, 2003**

The Dunnikier Colliery open in 1885 when Walter Herd feued the rights to mine coal from James Oswald of Dunnikier. This was an extension to the Pannie Pit which had been started in 1881. Dunnikier Colliery was entered from Dunnikier Road where the Fire Station is now. The little lane on the side, leading to garages, is where the colliery cottages were for the miners. These were mostly simple two-roomed cottages with an attic.

Large families lived in these little houses and it was not unusual for a miner and his wife to rear 10 or more children. Dunnikier Colliery closed after the General Strike of 1926.



**"The Courier"**  
**4 February 2009**  
**EARLY KIRKCALDY**  
**MINEWORKINGS**

Mine workings dating back to the 11th century could put a higher price tag on Kirkcaldy's sea wall project. Drilling work has begun at the town's esplanade ahead of a proposed £8 million project to reinforce the sea wall, which is close to collapse.

Norwest Holst contractors have been boring holes on both sides of the wall to determine how deep the sand on the beach is and if there are any voids in underground coal seams. The work will last around three weeks and holes up to 50 metres deep will have to be drilled in the search for voids, which are the gaps left by coal mining.

Evidence of coal mining has been found around the town centre. Monks from Dunfermline Abbey are known to have set up coal mines in Kirkcaldy as far back as 900 years ago.

Fife Council lead officer for harbours, floods and coasts Jim Moodie said, "There is a capped mine shaft just south of High Street near Nicol Street and a mine was discovered

at the top of Nicol Street beside Abbotshall Road, which would have been used by monks. The coal mines go back hundreds of years.

"If we find voids we need at least 25 to 30 metres of rock cover over the void, otherwise we would have to consolidate the ground." Ground consolidation work would inevitably lead to escalating costs.

Mr Moodie said, "It would increase the cost of the proposal but we're hopeful that won't occur. We think we shouldn't have a problem but you've always got to check these things out. This work has given us basic information about the rock strata. When we get to the full design stage there will be a much larger site investigation."

In some places the sea wall is only expected to last five years before it gives way, and there are two options for refurbishing it.

The project, led by Mr Moodie, would include strengthening the sea wall and raising it by about half a metre, as well as introducing "rock armour" to break the waves before they hit the wall.

Kirkcaldy Renaissance Partnership has drawn up a £50 million scheme to overhaul the town centre, which would include more ambitious work at the Esplanade. The partnership's scheme would include aesthetic improvements such as two piers, and would incorporate renewable energy options such as tidal power generation.

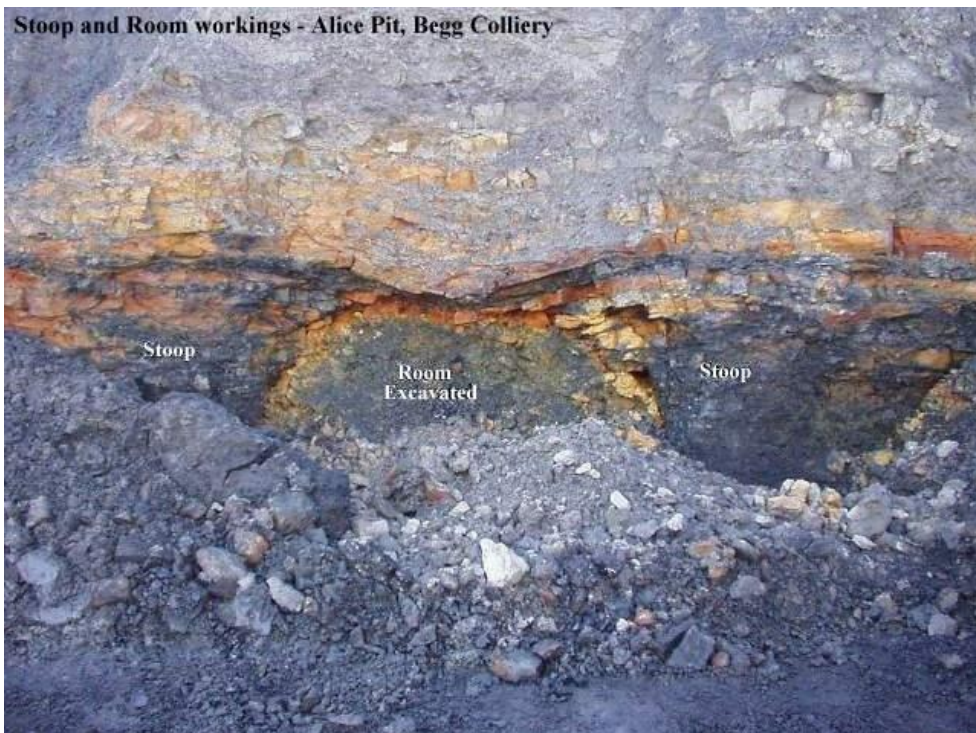
The final decision has yet to be made, but Mr Moodie said his simpler project was the preferred option based on a feasibility study, and £2 million of funding had already been allocated from the council's capital budget. In the meantime, urgent repair work is being carried out on the sea wall. Mr Moodie said, "At some sections the sea wall only has a lifespan of five years and we've had to carry out extensive repairs. These are ongoing."

## Opencast Mining at Begg Colliery

The following photographs, from March, 2003, were kindly sent to the author by Mr Ian Terris, Glenrothes, are from the opencast workings which were underway in the lands of the old Begg Colliery just north of the large Kirkcaldy shopping complex by the Chapel Level.



*The shaft of the Alice Pit*



*Stoop and room workings*





*Tunnels in the underground workings of Alice Pit, Begg Colliery*



*Also found in the Splint Coal - late August, 2003 - a wooden shovel.*

That concludes what we can refer to as volume one and it is now safe to move onto the more specific *Mining at Seafield Kirkcaldy*. In many ways this mirrors the previous story in that it is compiled from painstaking research through historical newspaper items uncovering events, articles and reports on mining at that site. It covers the earlier Seafield mines before majoring in on to what was one of East Fife's most modern and important collieries – yet planned, built and demolished in almost the blink of an eye. Although first published in 2019 - Chris reworked the contents in 2023 – and the results are included in the narrative below.

# MINING AT SEAFIELD KIRKCALDY



A compilation of historical newspaper reports, events and related articles encompassing the discovery and mining of coal at Seafield, Kirkcaldy, the site of earlier mines and then the location for one of East Fife's most modern and important collieries of the 20th century.

Researched, presented and printed by  
Chris Sparling  
Updated January 2023

## MINING AT SEAFIELD KIRKCALDY

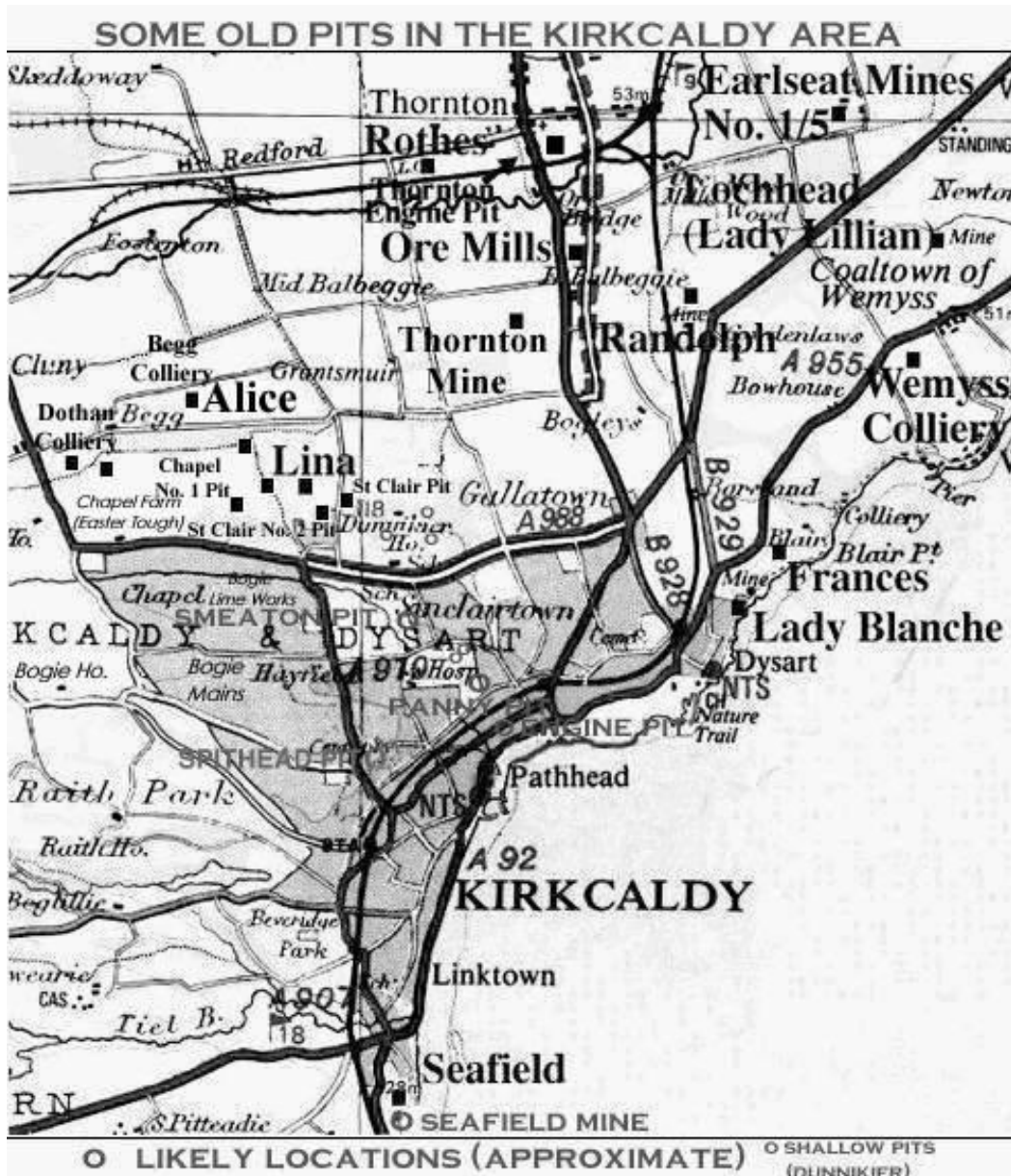
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# Early Mining at Seafield

Long before the modern giant Seafield Colliery (1954-1988) to the south of Kirkcaldy, by the shores of the River Forth, adjacent lands had been the subject of early coal mining ventures.

Mining interest, eventually leading to serious extraction of coal from the extreme south of the Kirkcaldy coalfield in the 1920s, would appear to have commenced in 1914.

It is known that the Fife Coal Company originally applied to have mines driven in an area near to Beveridge Park, on a site close to the present Balwearie secondary school. The relatively short life of the Seafield Nos. 1, 2 Mines was probably due to the fact that during the driving of these mines, several sheets of intrusive dolerite (whinstone) were encountered. These early Seafield mines were closed by the end of 1929.



**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**25 April, 1914**  
**COAL DEVELOPMENT AT**  
**KIRKCALDY**

The Provost's Committee of Kirkcaldy Town Council have had under consideration a letter from the Fife Coal Company intimating their intention to open a new coal pit at the west end of the town. The Company asked the Council for permission to run a line of railway along the foreshore to the harbour, in which case they would make arrangements for a line of steamers for coal shipment. As the Town Council are at present negotiating to acquire the rights to the foreshore in order to provide an esplanade, it was not considered advisable to sanction a railway along the shore.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**12 May, 1914**

At a meeting of Kirkcaldy Town Council last night - Provost R. C. Lockhart presiding - a minute of the Provost's Committee was submitted, in which they expressed their disapproval of an application which had been received from Fife Coal Company for permission to lay a line of railway from a coal pit which they proposed to construct at the west end of the town, their purpose being to lead the railway along the foreshore to the harbour, where the coal would be shipped. The Clerk submitted a letter from Kirkcaldy and District Trades and Labour Council expressing their objections to laying down a railway along the foreshore and to placing a pit at the west end of the town. Provost Lockhart, in moving disapproval of the Committee's recommendation, said that in the event of the coal company's application being granted and a line sanctioned from their pit to the harbour, it was expected they would ship about 700 tons of coal daily, and this would mean about £4000 annually in dues, &c., to the harbour. If the Council refused to give the coal company permission to make this railway to the harbour, the possibility was that the company would sink their shaft in the

field adjoining the Beveridge Public Park, which would destroy the amenity of the district and be a calamity to the town. He moved that the question be remitted back to the Provost's Committee to reopen negotiations with the Fife Coal Company, and that they favourably consider the proposal to construct a railway from the pit to the harbour provided it was constructed in such a manner, and the motive power was of such a type, as not seriously to affect the amenity of the foreshore. The Provost's motion was agreed to.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**4 June, 1914**

PROPOSED KIRKCALDY COAL PIT. - At a meeting of the Provost's Committee of Kirkcaldy Town Council, a letter was submitted from Mr Dodds, factor on Raith estate, intimating that a piece of ground had been feued to the Fife Coal Company for the sinking of a shaft at the Clayholes, near the Beveridge Public Park. There was a feeling among the members of the Committee that this would seriously interfere with the amenity of the park and of the villas on Balwearie Road. The Town-Clerk was instructed to supply a report as to the powers of the Town Council under the Town Planning Act, and also to communicate with the Local Government Board asking their assistance in the matter.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**18 November, 1914**

KIRKCALDY TOWN-PLANNING SCHEME.

Mr J. Walker Smith, Edinburgh, a Commissioner representing the Local Government Board, held an inquiry at Kirkcaldy yesterday in regard to a town-planning scheme proposed by the Local Authority, to include about 210 acres of ground in the vicinity of Beveridge Public Park. In their statement the Local Authority explained that, owing to its proximity to the park, the ground is specially suitable for villa residences, and there is practically no other ground close to the town available as a residential area for houses of a similar class.

The Local Authority had resolved to proceed with the town-planning scheme on account of learning of the sinking of a coal pit on ground belonging to Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, of Raith, situated to the south of Balwearie Road. The Local Authority maintains that the sinking of the pit would most seriously affect the beauty and amenity of the public park, and also, the surrounding area. The town-planning scheme would prevent the sinking of the pit on any part of the area except, perhaps, a limited area where industrial development has already begun. As representing Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, who opposed the scheme, Mr H. P. Macmillan, advocate, Edinburgh, said the point he wished to bring before the Commissioners was whether the town-planning was a proper vehicle of prohibition to the setting down of a coal mine at this point. Mr Carmichael, representing the Fife Coal Company, said they had attempted, without success, to get the Corporation to delay proceeding with the scheme. Mr Neil A. Wilkie, engineer for Fife Coal Company, said the coalfield extended across the Forth, and there would be 3000 acres. All precautions would be taken to interfere as little as possible with the amenity of the district. There would be no overhead gear, and no smoke, as they intended to have an incline, instead of a shaft, with electric haulage. After hearing the evidence the Committee visited the ground.

**"The Scotsman"**  
**22 July, 1915**

NEW COAL PIT AT KIRKCALDY. - For some time workmen have been engaged working an ingoing eye for the purpose of setting down a new coal pit at Seafield, near Kirkcaldy. This system of the ingoing eye is in preference to the ordinary sinking of a shaft. The work is making good progress, and the excavations have been carried out for a considerable distance, and engines are now being erected for the purpose of working a haulage to take the sand from the seat of operations to the surface. The new pit is to the north-west of the shore road from Kirkcaldy to Kinghorn.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**25 December, 1915**  
**FIFE COAL COMPANY'S ACTION.**  
**PROPOSED NEW PIT.**

Judgement was given in the Court of Session on Wednesday in an action in which the North British Railway Company and the Fife Coal Company, Ltd., craved declarator that Mr Alexander Birrell, of Tyrie, had no right or title to object or to prevent the North British Company letting to the Fife Coal Company 17 acres of land at Seafield, Kirkcaldy, for the purpose of the Fife Coal Company sinking a new coal pit thereon. The ground proposed to be let was acquired by the Kirkcaldy and District Railway Company in 1892, and became the property of the North British Railway Company under the North British Railway Act, 1895, amalgamating the Kirkcaldy and District Railway undertaking with the North British system. The Kirkcaldy and District undertaking was one for making *inter alia* a dock at Seafield and a railway therefrom to Auchtertool.

The dock authorised was never made. The railway was made. By the North British Railway Act, 1913, Section 41, the North British Company got power to lease lands from time to time purchased or acquired by the company adjoining or near to railways or stations belonging to them, but not immediately required for the purposes of their undertaking. The defender is proprietor of land adjoining on the west and north of the 17 acres of ground in question, being a singular successor of the Earl of Rosslyn, from whom part of the said ground was acquired. The defender objected to the North British Company granting the said lease with power to sink a pit, and contended that it was *ultra vires* of them to do so.

Lord Cullen granted decree of declaration as craved, with expenses.



**"Cowdenbeath & Lochgelly Times & Advertiser"**  
**6 March, 1918**  
**FIFE COAL MINE PROJECT**

The Court of Session had before them a petition by the North British Railway Company and the Fife Coal Company, Ltd., Leven, praying the Court to apply the judgement of the House of Lords in the action by the two Companies against the late Alexander Birrell of Tyrie, and residing at Banbeath, Leven, in which the pursuers asked declarator that the defender had no right or title to object to the pursuers letting to the Fife Coal Coy., Ltd., 17 acres of land at Seafield, Kirkcaldy, belonging to the Railway Company., for the purpose of the Fife Coal Co. sinking and working a new pit upon it, and laying down lines, siding, and other works.

**"Cowdenbeath & Lochgelly Times"**  
**16 January, 1924**

Mr John Brown, who acted as undermanager at the New Pit, Lochore, for upwards of two years, has been appointed manager of the Seafield Mines, Kirkcaldy.

Very little information has been uncovered about the management and manning of the Seafield Mines.

<b>Source Date of Information Supplied</b>
<b>Manager / Under-Manager / Men underground / Men above ground / Coal seams worked / Shaft details</b>
<b>1924 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
Mr John Brown, manager.
<b>1928 (Fife Coal Co. Ltd.)</b>
David Reid / ----- / 35 / 12 / Household & Steam Coals. Lochgelly Splint; Five Feet

Some detail of the nature of the coals worked at the Seafield Mines has been recorded and is presented here from geological reports of 1930-34.

The lowest of the intrusive whinstone sills lay below the Lochgelly Parrot Coal; the others were intruded into or above the Main Coal group, one of them forming the reef of the Long Craig, just off-shore at Kirkcaldy. In the mine, poorly bedded ash was entered at a distance of rather over half a mile from the mine-mouth and was penetrated for nearly 150 yds, pointing to the presence of an ash-filled vent located beneath the waters of the Firth of Forth about half a mile from shore. In the mine, the Dunfermline Splint Coal was inclined a little to the north of east at about 30°.

**Dunfermline Splint**

Description	Thickness
Blaes	~ 3 ft.
COAL	5 in.
Blaes	1 ft. 3 in.
Coal and Parrot	2 ft. 3 in.

A thin parrot or irony rib was frequently present in the roof of the coal in this southern part of the Kirkcaldy coalfield.

The Five Foot Coal here had a 5 in. stone parting separating an upper leaf of 1 ft. 4 in. from a lower leaf of 3 ft. 10 in., sandstone forming the roof.

Three seams of coal measuring 2 ft. 4 in., 1 ft. 3 in. and 2 ft. 1 in. thick were developed above the Five Foot Coal at levels of 4, 14 and 19 fathoms, respectively. Each of the two thicker seams was overlain by about 3 fathoms of blaes, and all consisted, in part, of dirty coal. [1 fathom = 6 feet.]

Above the position of the Glassee Coal, and within a few fathoms of the Lochgelly Parrot

Coal, the sandy succession was interrupted by a constant horizon, 3 to 4 fathoms thick, of fakes and blaes, usually with irony ribs and a thin coal near the base. This bed, which at Seafield Mine lay immediately above the 2 ft. 1 in. coal of the mine, is now identified with the "Black Metals" of the Central Coalfield.

Lying above the "Black Metals" at an average distance of 3½ fathoms was the Lochgelly Parrot Coal, the lowest seam in the Main group. The Lochgelly Splint and Parrot Coals were wrought to a limited extent below the Firth of Forth from the mines in the late 1920s.

At Seafield, the Parrot reached a known maximum of 3 ft. 8 in. and was separated from the Lochgelly Splint by about 5 ft. of faky beds containing a thin coal up to 1 ft. thick close below the Splint.

At Seafield, where the distance between the Jersey Coals and the Swallowdrum Coal was reduced to 7 ft. 6 in., the former consisted of three seams, of which only the upper one, 2 ft. 5 in. thick with a 3 in. median rib, was of workable thickness. Here, however, they were almost immediately overlain by 3 fathoms of whinstone.

The Kelty Main Coal had the following composition:

Description	Thickness
Sandstone bands	-
<b>Parrot Coal</b>	1 ft. 2 in.
<b>Coal</b>	1 ft. 6½ in.
Faky blaes	6 ft. 3 in.
Whinstone	-

In the mine, the margin of an ash-filled vent was encountered at about the point where the Rough and Little Splint Coals were expected.

## ABANDONMENT PLANS

Lessees and owners of coal mines had to submit abandonment plans, by law, whenever a coal seam, or seams, were abandoned. A single record was recorded for the Seafield No. 1 and No. 2 Mines.

Plan of Abandoned Seams for Seafield Mines	Pits or Mines designated in Plan
COAL; Five Feet; Dunfermline Splint; Lochgelly Splint; Parrot (24th December, 1929).	<b>SEAFIELD Nos. 1, 2</b>



**AN EARLY 'IN-GOING-EYE' MINE**

An 'in-going-eye' or 'in-gaun-ee' mine could be drained naturally of water only if the slopes of the coal seam and the surrounding land were favourably inclined.

# SEAFIELD COLLIERY

"The Scotsman"  
21 January, 1949

## MORE COAL FROM FEWER PITS Twenty-Five-Year Plan for Fife

Developments in the Fife and Clackmannan coalfield up to 1973 were outlined in an address to Dundee Rotary Club yesterday by Mr L. R. Milligan, depute area general manager for the Fife and Clackmannan Area of the National Coal Board, and president of the Scottish branch, National Association of Colliery Managers.

This coalfield, he said, was destined to become the major producing area in Scotland. Whereas the present daily output of roughly 27,000 tons was got by 41 operating collieries, it was expected that by 1973 an output of 42,250 tons would be obtained from 17 collieries - an increase of 56 per cent. In addition to the Rothes Colliery, two new collieries were spoken of by Mr Milligan - Westfield, a contemplated new fitting (sinking) north from Bowhill village (Central Fife Sub-Area), **and a still unnamed new fitting near Kirkcaldy (Eastern Sub-Area).**

Showing photographs of a model of the new Rothes Colliery, Mr Milligan said that Westfield would be built on the same modern lines. "An entirely new conception of a coal pit," he commented. "A great deal of attention was being paid to design and architectural beauty."

Mr Milligan said that the area of the coalfield was bounded on the north by the Ochil fault, which ran in a west to east line from Menstrie in the west to Leven in the east. There was no doubt that the coal seams were continuous to the West Lothian and Mid and East Lothian coalfields.

### RESERVES OF 5,308,000,000 TONS

In the area thus described it was estimated there remained to be worked some

5,308,000,000 tons which, of the total reserves of Scotland of just under 8,000,000,000 tons, gave some indication of the importance of the Fife and Clackmannan coalfield.

The greatest concentration of collieries and output was in the Central Fife Sub-Area, said Mr Milligan, and there the least reserves of coal were still available. Apart from the consideration of taking up output through the closure of Lanarkshire collieries, this of necessity meant that considerable development would be necessary in the Eastern and Western Sub-Areas. Dealing with the development of the West Fife Sub-Area, Mr Milligan said the twelve collieries at present operating in West Fife and Clackmannan included quite a number of small surface mines, but also the collieries at Blairhall, Valleyfield, Comrie, and Devon which, at the moment, were handling outputs in excess of 1000 tons per day. By 1973, so far as could be estimated, the number of operating collieries would be six, employing some 7250 for a daily output of 13,500 tons, or roughly double the present output. Estimated reserves of 1600 million tons would give a working life of nearly 500 years to this part of the coalfield. By 1973 it was estimated that some six collieries would be in production in the Central Fife Sub-Area as compared with the present 19. These would employ 4600 for a daily output of 7750 tons - a considerable reduction. The operating collieries at that time would be Glenraig, Kinglassie, Bowhill, Lindsay, Fordell, and Westfield. Westfield was a contemplated new fitting north from Bowhill village, which would work an area in the limestone group at considerable depth. Preliminary operations on this colliery were expected to commence during this year, and it was estimated that a daily output of 4000 tons would be available within ten years. It was hoped that, by the application of modern methods, a personnel of about 2000 would win the required output.

Mr Milligan said that as more than half of the reserves for the whole of Fife and Clackmannan Area were contained in the Eastern Sub-Area, one could anticipate that the major developments would take place in that district. The first shafts to exploit the limestone group in East Fife, commenced by the Fife Coal Company, were now progressing at Rothes Colliery.

Reorganisations of considerable magnitude were taking place at Frances, Michael, and Wellesley Collieries, the latter three being situated on the shore of the Forth at Dysart, East Wemyss, and Methil. **These four collieries, together with a proposed new fitting, probably in the neighbourhood of Dysart, would by 1973 constitute all the operating collieries in the Eastern Sub-Area.**

#### KIRKCALDY DEVELOPMENT

**Kirkcaldy, said Mr Milligan, would become the most famous mining centre in Scotland, which he did not think was ever envisaged in the past. But the reserves of coal were the true indication of how mining was to develop in Scotland.**

[Afterwards, Mr Milligan stated to a reporter that the new colliery will be within a mile of Kirkcaldy, though it has not been decided so far whether it will be on the east (Dysart) side or at Seafield (west side). He pointed out that the coal to be worked is under the Firth of Forth.] Whereas concentration of output was highly desirable for maximum efficiency in this sub-area, it was occasioned by necessity, as the workable seam lay at considerable depth - in some instances nearly 3600 feet. Expenditure necessary to sink and equip collieries to such depths involved high capital expenditure. The first essential, therefore, in such ventures was high output and productivity.

It was estimated that capital necessary to construct and equip Rothes Colliery would

not be less than £3,000,000. They might expect to produce 2000 tons a day at Rothes in six years time.

#### **"Cowdenbeath Advertiser & Kelty News"**

**13 July, 1951**

#### **Another New Fife Pit**

Another major development in mining is forecast for Fife. This in addition to the colliery at present being sunk at Glenrothes. The new scheme is also in the vicinity of Kirkcaldy, probably near Seafield, and the workings will be under the Forth. The capacity is intended to be 5000 to 6000 tons a day and will employ 3000. The announcement was made last Wednesday by Mr H. R. King, Cowdenbeath, production director of the N.C.B. in Scotland. Councillor John Sneddon, Kelty, Glenrothes Development Corporation vice-chairman, presided at the opening of a section of the housing scheme at Glenrothes. A bouquet was presented to Mrs Sneddon by the general manager of the Glenrothes Corporation. Further big developments were going on, said Mr King, at the existing pits in East Fife.

#### **"Dunfermline Press"**

**29 December, 1951**

#### **MINING DEVELOPMENTS IN WEST FIFE**

#### **Seams Under Forth**

Plans to tap the coal seams lying deep under the bed of the Firth of Forth include a new sinking in the East of Fife. This projected colliery will be sunk near the coast, and access to the seams lying under the sea will be gained by driving from the new shafts long level tunnels for locomotive haulage. This new sinking will be on the coast to the south-west of the existing collieries of Frances, Michael, and Wellesley.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**20 February, 1954**  
**Coal Board Appointments**

The following appointments have been announced by the Scottish Division of the National Coal Board:-

East Fife Area - Mr J. B. Fotheringham, B.Sc., formerly manager, Lindsay Colliery, to planning engineer in charge, Seafield project, East Fife Area.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**10 April, 1954**  
**MANY "OLD" FIFE PITS WILL**  
**CLOSE DOWN**  
**But Output Will Be Maintained by**  
**Big New Developments**

Although only seven or eight collieries in place of the existing 20 in Central and West Fife, are likely to be working beyond the next 20 years the picture regarding coal output is far from gloomy.

According to Mr George Mullin, Area General Manager of the National Coal Board, the present production of 4¼ million tons annually will be maintained and even increased.

Addressing the Dunfermline Business Club on Wednesday, when he spoke on "The Future of the Mining Industry in Central and West Fife," Mr Mullin gave a vivid picture of developments in the mining industry in the area.

Much had been said and written about the projected great developments in the Fife coalfield, said Mr Mullin. This was true, but in a limited way. The truth of the matter was that these huge projects would take place only on the outer fringes - very much in the eastern and western parts of the coalfield. There would be no very big developments in the central area.

The position was that the National Coal Board would have to move very fast to stand still. The two big schemes for the east were at

Roths and **Seafield**. Roth's, which was very near to starting production, would be one of the largest collieries in Britain, with an ultimate capacity of 6000 to 8000 tons per day. In the west, there was a new large mine at Glenochil and a new sinking at Airth, opposite Kincardine-on-Forth.

At present, there were about 20 collieries in Central and West Fife, producing about 4¼ million tons per year. The Coal Board were planning to maintain and even increase that output. It was hoped to be able to maintain a production of about 4½ million tons for 20 years.

The reason for the comparatively short expectation of life for the Central Fife coalfield, explained Mr Mullin, was that there were no upper or true coal measures there. These had been swept away during the great Ice Age. In contrast, other areas possessed both upper and lower or limestone measures.

**PITS THAT WILL CLOSE**

During the next five years, three collieries in Central Fife would close. These were the Jenny Gray, the Dora, and Lumphinnans No. 1. The position would become more difficult after 10 years. Cowdenbeath No. 7, Dundonald, Nellie, Blairenbathie and Benarty pits would close, although there was a possibility that the Nellie might remain open for a few years longer.

After 20 years, there would be an even more critical picture. The Lindsay Colliery might still be working but the Aitken Colliery would definitely be closed. The Aitken had been one of the best and most prosperous of the Fife pits, producing a daily output of 1800 tons. Geological conditions were so difficult in the neighbourhood of the Mary Colliery that it was difficult to prophecy its fate, but it was doubtful if it would survive beyond 20 years. The Minto Colliery might have a longer life. Kinglassie was another doubtful pit. Collieries definitely still working after 20 years in the Central Area would be Glenraig, which was being reconstructed, and Bowhill. Glenraig was being electrified and it was

## MINING AT SEAFIELD KIRKCALDY

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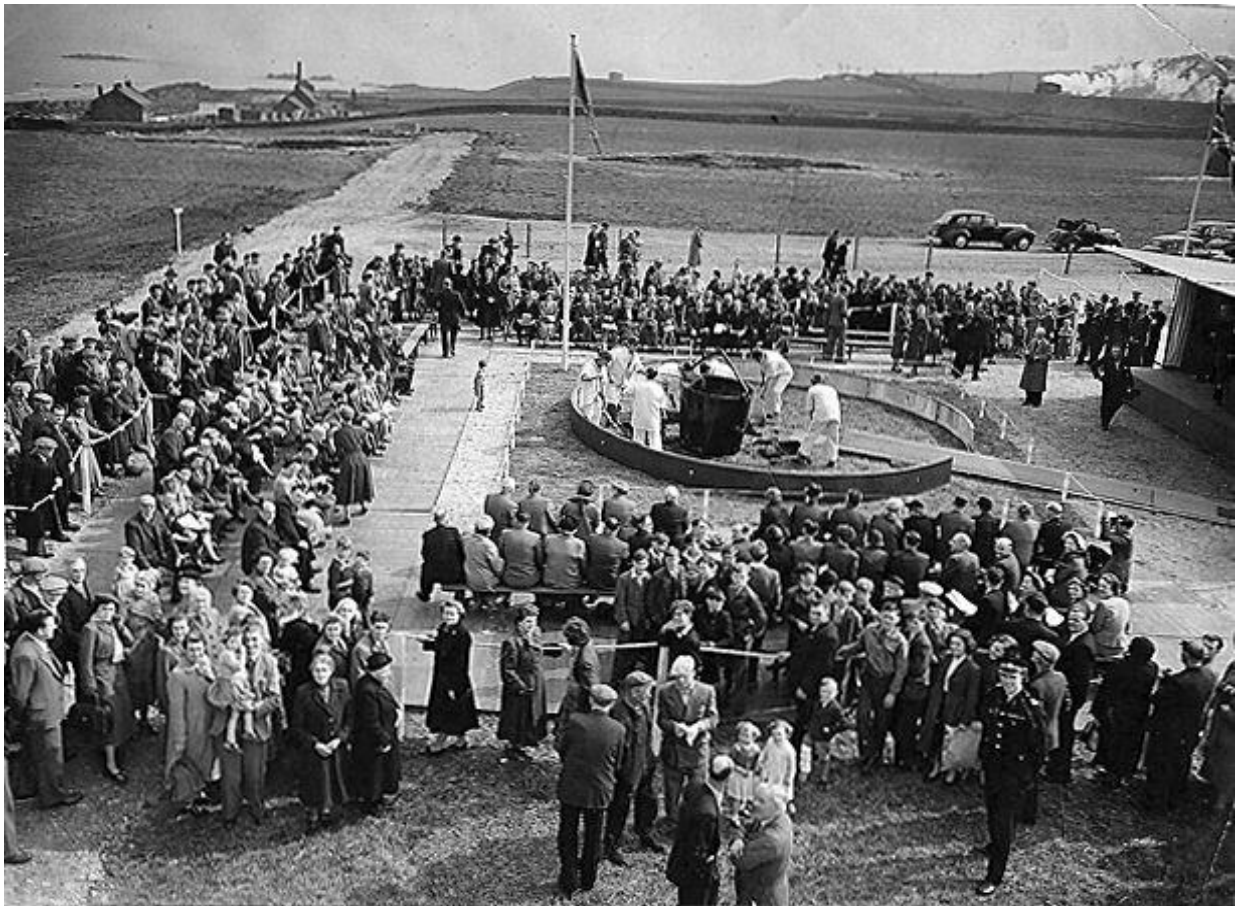
hoped that part of the change-over would take place during the summer. Bowhill Colliery had been entirely reconstructed during the past two years. Despite losses through pits closing down, the Central and West Fife Area

would still be able to maintain its present output and even increase it, through the adoption of the most up-to-date methods of coal working in its remaining and new pits.

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### *Sod cutting ceremony and official opening of Seafield Colliery*

*12 May, 1954*



**"Dunfermline Press"**

**14 May, 1955**

**Coal Boring Experiment in the Forth  
Drilling Tower Soon to Leave St  
Davids**

It is anticipated that within the next ten days the specially designed tower which has been assembled at St Davids Harbour for the National Coal Board will be floated down the Firth of Forth and finally grounded at a point over one mile offshore from the new Seafield Colliery, Kirkcaldy. The tower will be used to prove undersea coal by drilling at sea, and represents the first development of its kind by the N.C.B. It is estimated that the tower, after its "launching," will take about two hours to reach mid-stream from St Davids, and that its passage down the Forth to its position on the seabed opposite Kirkcaldy will take a further four hours. The plan to bore for coal off the coast of Fife and elsewhere has been described as one of the engineering feats of the century. Drilling will take place from the platform on top of four girder legs 170 feet high. The platform of the tower includes living quarters for up to 25 men. The cost of this revolutionary venture is expected to be about £250,000.

**"Dunfermline Press"**

**16 November, 1957**

**New Collieries to Feed Power Station**

Mr H. Walton, chief engineer of the Fife Area of the Board, told a *Dunfermline Press* representative: "The new station [Kincardine] will be powered by five generating sets which will be installed one at a time. It is hoped the first will be ready for operation in about a year. The second set is expected to go into operation in about two years. These two generators, with an output of 240,000 kilowatts, are approximately equivalent to the biggest power station in Scotland. Even the first 120,000 kilowatt set would supply enough power for the whole of Fife. We are expecting a load of about 100,000 kilowatts will be required for the whole of Fife during

this winter. Electricity is being used to bring the coal out of the ground and that coal will be used to make electricity. Eight sub-stations have been specially built to supply power for the site workings at Balgownie. A large sub-station will supply power to the mine." The electrification of collieries in the county is another part of future development. "All the collieries which have any length of life are being very quickly electrified," said Mr Walton. In many cases we are being asked to supply the electricity. The Coal Board will not generate it themselves. At the new colliery of Seafield, outside Kirkcaldy, for example, 4000 kilowatts are required which will ultimately rise to 9000 kw. When Seafield makes a maximum demand of 9000 kw, it will be using about the same amount of electricity as a town roughly the size of Dunfermline." But Seafield is only one of the collieries. Others included in the Electricity Authority's scheme are Michael, Valleyfield, Blairhall, Wellesley, and Bowhill Collieries. Mr Walton concluded: "In the next few years, the N.C.B. in Fife will require a maximum of 50,000 kilowatts, which is half the estimated load required for all of Fife this winter."

**"Dunfermline Press"**

**17 January, 1959**

At Seafield Colliery, the No. 2 shaft was completed and should be in operation soon for winding stone from the extensive drivages to be undertaken to reach the coals. Fourteen miles of tunnelling have to be carried out to reach the position of the Seafield reserves and high-speed mine driving equipment will be assembled and used to speed up this formidable undertaking. The No. 2 car hall was completed and the new fan installed.

<b>Manager / Under-Manager / Men underground / Men above ground / Status</b>
<b>1958</b>
<i>Vacant</i> / ----- / 6 / 33 / <b>Sinking.</b>
<b>1959</b>
A. Ludkin / ----- / 51 / 66 / <b>Sinking.</b>

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**9 December, 1961**  
**PIT CLOSURES WILL BRING**  
**PROBLEMS**  
**Planning Officer Outlines Effect**  
**Of Run-Down On Population**

The run-down of pits in Central Fife, which has already resulted in migrations from the area, will bring greater problems in the future. The remaining population in the area will be people of the older age group, and the prospect for young people leaving school is black.

These fears were expressed by Fife's Planning Officer, Mr M. E. Taylor, at a meeting of the County Planning Committee at Cupar yesterday. He was commenting on the annual report of the National Coal Board issued on 6th November. There are, he pointed out, 23 pits in production in Fife. "In the central area the coalfield centred upon Cowdenbeath is approaching the end of its life," said Mr Taylor, "and an early close-down of mining operations will take place at most of the pits in this area." That forecast was made following information given by the National Coal Board over the past few years. In the east of the county there were two new pits, at Rothes and Seafield, and other pits with an expected long life. In the west of the county there were collieries which had been modernised by the National Coal Board and these pits were forecast to have a long life. Mr Taylor then quoted the following information set out in the N.C.B. report:

Seafield Pit - This is a new pit where development is proceeding; Bowhill Pit - A pit where there has been considerable development. The costs are very high and the future is uncertain. (The number of employees at this pit is 1494 at present); Blairhall and Valleyfield Pits - These show some increase in output; Blairenbathie Pit - Will close as forecast before the end of 1961; Dundonald Pit (Lady Helen) - Will continue for the time being; Kinglassie - Concentration of the workings to the pit alone would seem right; Rothes Pit - It is not possible to say

with any certainty what the future of this pit might be, but the decision to abandon working on the upper level will result in a manpower reduction of 400 men. This statement of the N.C.B. goes on to say: "In Fife, because of the situation at Rothes the build-up of new capacity depends on the success of operations at Bowhill, on the pits in the west of the county (now included in the Alloa Area), and in due course at the new pit at Seafield."

**STATEMENT "AMBIGUOUS"**

Mr Taylor commented: "This statement is ambiguous and should be read carefully with the statements regarding the individual pits. "From the statement made by the N.C.B. the whole future of mining in the central area of the county is very uncertain and the pits at Bowhill and Kinglassie, which had been looked upon as long-term pits, have an uncertain future.

"The future of the mining industry in Fife obviously presents many problems, due to the contraction of the industry. Mining, together with agriculture, has been the basic industry of the county for many years and, in parts of the county, it has been the only industry." Mr Taylor then gave figures showing the contracting of the industry in Central Fife. The Lindsay Colliery employed 961 in November 1956, as against 819 in November 1961; Aitken, 1427 as against 954; Blairenbathie, 149 as against 140; Lumphinnans XI, 726 as against 387; Minto, 700 as against 717; Bowhill, 1363 as against 1495; Dundonald, 449 as against 249; Mary, 762 as against 513; Glenraig, 1212 as against 786; Nellie, 485 as against 418; Fordell, 571 as against 590; Cowdenbeath No. 7, 421 as against 18. The total reduction from 1956 to 1961 was 2140 employees, or 23 per cent. Mr Taylor added that Kinglassie had fallen in the past year from 741 employees to 727 employees.

Mr Taylor then commented: "This part of the coalfield has only a short life ahead and any further reduction in employment in the pits is likely to aggravate the present unemployment



in this area. "The pattern of the future seems to be:- A run-down of the Central Fife pits, thereby reducing the employed manpower within the relatively near future. The position at Bowhill gives rise to considerable apprehension due to the previous forecasts that this pit had a long life and had been considered to be the 'sheet anchor' for mining employment in Central Fife. "The position at Rothes is such as to cause very grave concern, having regard to development undertaken by the local authorities related to this pit development and to future schemes already planned. "The position of the pits in the east of the county seems reasonably stable at present, and this position applies to certain pits in the west of the county, although warnings have been sounded regarding the future of certain of these pits.

**"Dunfermline Press"**

**14 July, 1962**

**Pit Closures Blow To West Fife**

West Fife will be one of the worst hit areas in Scotland when the closure of 27 coal mines in the country is put into effect by the Scottish Division of the National Coal Board. This stark fact emerged on Wednesday in a statement made by Mr R. W. Parker, chairman of the Scottish Area, and contained in a review of the coal industry by the Scottish Division of the Board.

The outlook is bleak for Central and West Fife and Clackmannan where the pits threatened with closure are the Aitken, Lindsay, Nellie, Randolph, Bannockburn and Torry. These are all Class "C" pits which will be closed under this scheme. In Class "B", doubtful pits depending on productivity, there are 33, of which 12 are in Fife and Clackmannan. These are:- Bowhill, Dundonald, Fordell, Glenraig, Kinglassie, Lochhead, Lumphinnans XI, Mary, Minto, Pirnhill, Plean and Rothes. The Class "A" pits where economic working can be pursued are - Frances, Michael, Seafield, Wellesley, Blairhall, Bogside, Comrie, Dollar, Manor Powis, Polmaise 3/4, Kinneil and Valleyfield. Pits in Fife and Clackmannan classified by

the Scottish Division of the Board as pits "in which the realistic reserves still available with reasonable access to the shafts or drifts are very limited and which will be exhausted at varying times before the end of 1966" are as follows - Aitken, manpower 890, approximate year of exhaustion 1963; Lindsay, 800, 1964; Nellie, 400, 1964; Randolph, 220, 1964; Bannockburn, 310, 1963; Torry, 190, 1964. The closing down of the 27 mines would mean a loss of almost 8000 jobs and in the 33 doubtful pits in Class "B" there are 16,000 men employed. Mr John McArthur, secretary of the N.U.M. in Fife, said the situation was as bad as it could be. "What is the future for West Fife?" he asked. "Within a year or two there will be three pits - Valleyfield, Comrie and Blairhall and Bogside mine. You jump from here down to Kirkcaldy and there will be nothing working between here and Kirkcaldy where there will be Seafield, Frances, Michael and Wellesley.

**"Dunfermline Press"**

**18 January, 1964**

**Effect Of Pit Closures In Fife Area**

Work continued on the drivage of the 170-fathom Crosscut Mine at Seafield Colliery (Kirkcaldy). At the 300-fathom level, the twin Crosscut Mines are still being driven in the Millstone Grit, and the unconsolidated sandstone strata at both levels has been injected with special chemicals to seal off the water. In consequence, drivages have been slower than expected. Development of the Fife Foot Seam continued in the Limestone Group, and development of the Seven Foot seam has begun. On the surface, the formation of the materials yard was completed, and work started on the permanent buildings for the Welfare Block.

<b>1961</b>
A. Ludkin / ----- / 148 / 94 / <b>Sinking.</b>
<b>1964</b>
A. Ludkin / T. Barrie ( <i>Depute</i> ) / 220 / 102 / <b>Sinking.</b>

**"Dunfermline Press"  
5 February, 1966  
FIFE COLLIERIES' CAMPAIGN  
MOUNTS  
N.U.M. Official Condemns N.C.B.  
Plan  
As 'Brutal Butchery'**

The public campaign to save the Central-West Fife collieries from the "brutal butchery" of the National Coal Board proposals for pit closures was launched on Monday evening when a meeting of over 200 people, representing 40 organisations, was warned that the end for many of the doomed pits was closer than most people thought. The hope was expressed that the Government would treat the situation as seriously as they had regarded the threatened closure of Fairfields, the Glasgow ship-building concern. It was revealed at the meeting, held in Lochgelly Town Hall to discuss the future of the industry in Central-West Fife, that the Coal Board's proposal was that Glenraig No. 2 Colliery should close now and Glenraig No. 1 and Fordell at the end of March. But Mr William McLean, district secretary of the Fife Area of the National Union of Mineworkers, said that, because of water pumping difficulties at present experienced at Glenraig, the closure of that colliery would hasten the closure of the other pits.

**CLASS "A" PITS**

Turning to the Coal Board proposals for collieries in Fife, Mr McLean said that only four pits - Michael, Seafield, Comrie and Valleyfield - were in Class A and regarded as economic pits.

Frances and Blairhall were "B" pits and their future, which depended on future performance, was uncertain. In "C" class pits, which were regarded as uneconomic, there were Fordell, Kinglassie, Lochhead, Mary, Minto, Randolph, Glenraig, Lumphinnans and Wellesley. In those "C" pits there were 4323 miners employed and in Frances and Blairhall another 2030 miners were employed. Mr McLean said last week the Union had had meetings with the Coal Board to discuss the

future of Glenraig and next week they were due to meet to discuss the future of Fordell. "The Coal Board's proposal is that Glenraig No. 2 should be closed now, the No. 1 Colliery about the end of March, and Fordell during the same period," said Mr McLean. "Employed at these collieries are 996 miners and the Coal Board says that they are satisfied that redeployment could be effected. At the end of December, 400 jobs were available in the Fife and Alloa areas, which leaves a balance of 596 and where are they going to find jobs by the end of March?" In Glenraig Colliery, of the 680 employed, at present 130 were over the age of 56. Was the Union expected to say to these men that there were jobs available for them in Seafield or in the Alloa area and at a substantial reduction in wages? He maintained that it was the responsibility of the Government to set up alternative industry. He warned that water pumping difficulties at Glenraig, which was the deepest pit, would be found in other pits when Glenraig closed. First, it would go to one, then another, and he stressed that the closure of Glenraig would hasten the closure of other collieries in the area. "When we were discussing the future of Glenraig Colliery we were discussing the future of the whole Central-West Fife coalfield," said Mr McLean. "If the Coal Board closes Glenraig, it will be brutal butchery for miners in Central-West Fife." It was a myth to say that the same number of miners would continue to be employed in the pits. In 1961 there were 19,700 people employed in Fife pits and in 1965 this had been reduced to 11,297.

Asked about the future for surface workers, Mr McLean said that there was a higher percentage of surface workers in the older pits than at the more modern pits such as Seafield, Valleyfield and Comrie and the Union felt that this was going to be a serious problem. He reminded the conference that many surface workers were former underground workers who, for health reasons, were unable to work underground and he warned that the future prospects for surface workers appeared to be very bleak. The Coal Board was unable to say precisely the extent to which they would be redeployed.

**"Dunfermline Press"**

**14 May, 1966**

**Review Of Coal Industry**

The policy of the Scottish Division Coal Board has been to bring into production as soon as possible the potential output of the new large and reconstructed Scottish pits. According to the latest official classification published last November, in issuing their Review covering the period 1965-66 to 1970-71, the "A" pits listed in the County of Fife are as follows:- Michael, Seafield, Comrie, Valleyfield and four mines of the Longannet Group. There are two "B's" - Frances and Blairhall. The "C" pits number nine, as follows:- Wellesley, Glencraig, Kinglassie, Lochhead, Lumphinnans XI, Mary, Minto, Randolph and Fordell. The last mentioned, however, closed last month.

Two major Fife projects which fall into this category [where conditions are generally suitable for power loading] are the new large colliery at Seafield, near Kirkcaldy, and the Longannet Mines in course of construction to supply the new generating station of that name. If we take Seafield first, this is a development with very considerable potential indeed.

The Board has in recent years succeeded in proving the undersea structure of the Seafield leasehold from existing workings at Frances and Michael Collieries, supplemented by the bores put down from a special off-shore boring tower opposite Kirkcaldy, and by a seismic survey carried out simultaneously in 1952.

Shaft sinking at Seafield began in May 1954, and took three years to complete. The tunnel drivages then followed and these were organised on the most modern mine-driving principles, using high-speed equipment, and advances of up to 30 yards per week were achieved. First, the Limestone Coal seams were intersected, in 1961, and forward drivage of the main tunnels was continued eastwards undersea to intersect the True Coal Measures. Concurrently with these major mine drivages, developing roads were driven in the Five Feet Seam in the Limestone Coal

Series in order to make a start with actual coal production. The steep inclination of the Seafield coals was confirmed, the Five Feet coal lying at a gradient slightly steeper than 1 in 2. The first coalface in the Five Feet was opened out last year and has been producing coal since last August. A second face has recently started to produce coal. Water and soft sandstone delayed mine drivages, but this was resolved in the end by the injection of a special solution to seal the strata and the mines have now reached the main seams in the True Coal Measures. These are of a very good thickness and the opening up of faces in the Dysart Main, the Bowhouse and the Barncraig seams is being effected as rapidly as possible. In this connection, a 2000-foot roadway rising at 1 in 2 is being driven to contact the upper horizon mine which forms the main ventilating return. On the surface, work has been going ahead to link the Seafield output with the new generating station at Longannet. It is planned to draw a total of 5500 tons a day at Seafield and all the material make of 1-in. to 0 coal will be taken direct to Longannet power station in 32-ton railway wagons using special merry-go-round transport methods over a distance of 35 miles to Longannet. Special arrangements are being made for the rapid loading of these big wagons, involving the erection at Seafield of a 3750-ton hopper. The 1-in. to 0 coal will be conveyed to this bunker; by using high-speed discharge arrangements, a train carrying some 1000 tons of coal will be loaded inside 30 minutes. Special weighing arrangements will also be incorporated.

Coal of size above 1-in. will be fed into a heavy density preparation plant and sold to the industrial or domestic market.

**THE BUILD-UP AT SEAFIELD**

A development programme has been worked out to ensure that there will be a steady and progressive increase in Seafield's output with, of course, a corresponding intake of manpower from pits that have reached the end of their useful lives, these operations being phased very carefully to smooth the interchange of labour as in the past. Seafield is within easy and convenient distance from

## MINING AT SEAFIELD KIRKCALDY

the collieries of Central Fife, and all the modern amenities of a new colliery - baths, canteens, parking spaces, medical centre and so on - are being provided for the incoming men.

Underground arrangements are in hand to install manriding locomotive haulage to take men swiftly and effortlessly to their places, so that the necessarily rather long level mines will present no problem. In reverse, special facilities are being provided to take the heavy flow of coal from the Seafield faces back to the winding shaft.

There are at present around 750 men at Seafield, a figure that should be doubled by the end of the year. By June 1967, the strength should be around its final figure of some 2500. It will be seen, therefore, that Seafield's potential as a unit of secure and continuous employment is very high indeed and East Fife can confidently look forward to its mining future with every assurance that there will be work aplenty for every able and willing mineworker in the district.

The mammoth new generating station of the S.S.E.B. at Longannet will have a capacity at full production of some 2400 megawatts, or double the potential of their other great new station at Cockszie in the Lothians. To cope with this vast energy output, the power station will be consuming about 6,000,000 tons of coal a year, of which the Longannet Complex will provide 2½ million tons, Seafield 1½ million tons, and the balance railed in from other N.C.B. collieries adjacent or conveniently situated to supply the new power station.

The total manpower that will be required to man up the Longannet Mines is of the order of 2800 at a productivity ratio of around 75 cwts per manshift worked overall. This Scheme, taken in conjunction with development at Seafield and at other units in the County of Fife should be ample to ensure full and steady employment for the miners in this part of the Scottish Coalfield for many years ahead.

As already indicated, the market for the Longannet coal is assured, the full output

going to the new power station. On the other hand, the large coal produced at Seafield Colliery - i.e. coal of 2-in. in size - will be disposed of in the domestic market. The great bulk of the pit's output - i.e. coal under 2-in. in size - will be used by electricity stations, with a relatively small tonnage earmarked for use by local industry.

### "Coal News"

May, 1968

#### 'Teach-in' ideas to get more coal

Accurate details of any breakdown - and a wider roadway to speed-up supplies. These were two ideas given by pitmen at Scottish North Area's first coalface "teach-in" - to help get a record coal flow of 800 tons a shift. Seafield Colliery engineer, Mr Alex Drummond, told 12 pitmen from Barnraig 1 North face: "If we got precise information over the phone after a breakdown on the face, we could go in with the right equipment straight away. We wouldn't have to go to the face, find the fault, then go back to get the gear to fix it."

#### Wrong type

Recently an engineer was told that a water pipe had burst. Arriving at the face he discovered that it was a pipe on a Gullick support, and he'd brought the wrong type. So he had to go back, wasting a quarter of an hour in machine time. Leading man Mr Alex McLeod said that with a wider roadway supplies could be brought closer to the face. "This would speed up progress and help us get the 50 feet a week advance we need to hit our target."

#### Useful

Mr McLeod added that the teach-in - more are planned for the pit's other six faces - was very helpful, and most miners had some useful suggestions.

Said undermanager Mr Jim Glancy: "Better communications should lead to higher productivity."

Two and a half shears are taken off the 150-yard face every shift by an Anderton bi-directional shearer. Added Mr Glancy: "We're

aiming for three shears a shift, pushing our daily output up from 700 tons to 750 or 800 tons saleable. And our output-a-manshift must go up from 130 to over 200 cwt."

### **Amazing**

Seafield general manager, Mr David Paterson, said: "We're holding the teach-ins to let the pitmen know our targets, and what they must do to hit them. And we want to hear their ideas for more face efficiency."

Added overman Mr Jim Rae: "It's amazing what comes up once you get everyone talking about getting more coal out of the first teach-in came a couple of good ideas. And at future meetings we'll probably come up with more."

### **"Coal News" May, 1968**

#### **A TREBLE 'FIRST' IN FIRST AID**

A pit team scored a treble "first" in Scottish North Area's junior first-aid competition - and now they'll go on to the national NCB finals at Skegness this month.

Seafield Colliery scored 355 points out of 500, beating Comrie, second, and Kinneil, third. And as well as winning the team prize, they landed two individual firsts. Their captain, Jim Barber, 19, won the team captain's prize, and trainee miner Joe Proctor, 18, won the prize for the best No. 4.

Others in the team were trainee miner Ronnie Webster, 18, and apprentice engineer, Jim Wilson, 20. Said Jim Barber, a trainee electrical engineer: "We couldn't have done it without our instructor, Mr Jim Miller. He brought us right up to scratch."

### **Injured**

In the individual section team members helped, in a series of mock accidents, a boy who fell off his bike; a man burnt by an oil heater; an injured powered saw operator; and a pitman hurt by a falling beam. In the team section they had to help a man seriously injured by a locomotive.

Comrie and Kinneil tied for second place, but Comrie, with better individual performances, took the honours.

Prizes for best No. 2 and No. 3 went to Blairhall apprentice electrician, Patrick Callaghan, 17, and Manor Powis Mine oncost worker, David Evans, 19.

Bogside Mine won the Area senior competition.



### **"Dunfermline Press" 4 May, 1968 Lochore Man Killed**

A well-known Lochore man, Mr George Duncan, 39 Loch Leven Road, was fatally injured at Seafield Colliery on Wednesday morning. Mr Duncan (46) was working at the No. 1 Barncraig section of the pit about nine o'clock when a large stone from a waste section fell and killed him. Mr Duncan had worked at Bowhill, Lumphinnans No. 1 and the Mary Pit, in Lochore, from which he was transferred to Seafield on its closure in the autumn of 1966. He was employed as a power loader operator. In his younger days Mr Duncan played football with Lochore Bluebell, Lochore Welfare, Crosshill Hearts and Blairgowrie Juniors. He was also a keen golfer.

### **"Coal News" February, 1969 Dance display**

Pitmen's children showed their parents how ballroom dancing should be done at Seafield Colliery underground officials' yearly dance at Bowhill Institute.

## The Seafield Disaster - 10 May, 1973



### *The Fife Free Press*

Friday 18 May, 1973

Five miners were killed following a massive roof fall. Four others were injured and rushed to hospital, while a number had narrow escapes as the roof caved in without warning.

The disaster occurred at a new coal face 1600 feet under the Firth of Forth some three miles from the pit bottom. Of the nine miners trapped, four were brought out alive but five men perished in the fall. The names of the dead men follow:



Name	Age
Robert Henderson	59
James Holmes	53
James Comrie	49
Thomas Kilpatrick	38
Angus Guthrie	20



The Seafield seams dipped steeply (around 1 in 1.5) as did many of the coal seams in the Fife Coalfields. The men were moving the roof supports forward after the shearer had made its cut, but before the supports could be pressurised, the roof started to collapse, knocking over the supports one by one. There was no warning before the cave-in close to where twenty-two miners and officials were at the coal face. The time of the fall was shortly before seven o'clock on Thursday night, when a huge part of the roof came down, covering a stretch of 60 yards.

**"Dunfermline Press"**

**25 May, 1973**

**MINER'S BODY IS RECOVERED**

The body of 20-year-old Angus Guthrie, 73 Carden Castle Park, Cardenden, was recovered from the Dysart seam of Seafield Colliery at the weekend. He was one of five miners killed in the pit disaster caused by a roof fall on Thursday, 10th May. Three of the bodies were recovered the following day, but two were buried deep underneath the fall. Rescue teams had worked round the clock all last week to recover the bodies and young Guthrie was finally brought to the surface on Saturday.

His funeral was held to Bowhill Cemetery on Tuesday afternoon when there was a large attendance of mourners including relatives, colleagues, and representatives from the NCB and the NUM.

**"Dunfermline Press"**

**6 July, 1973**

**DONATIONS TO DISASTER FUND**

The Seafield Colliery Disaster Fund stood at £31,962.22 this week as donations from all over the country continued to arrive at the Department of the Town Chamberlain in Kirkcaldy.

**"Seafield Pit Bulletin"**

*According to Mr Peter Wishart, the whole of a later Seafield Pit Bulletin dealt with the tragic events of 10th May and the subsequent weeks following the disaster. The first article is a very special one from Mr. Paterson.*

**COLLIERY GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

As you are all aware, on the 10th May, 1973, Seafield Colliery was struck by a tragic disaster.

In D. 22, as a result of a large roof fall, five of our fellow workmates lost their lives. This was tragic for us, for the industry and for the Community as a whole but particularly hard for the relatives and close friends of these five men. The waiting must have been particularly hard for Mrs. Guthrie and Mrs. Kilpatrick.

If we can derive some comfort from the tragedy, it was the escape of Jimmy Todd, Eddie Downes, David Dickson and John McCartney. This is particularly so in the case of John, who escaped from 120 chock and made his way to the Top Road (Tail Gate) unaided despite the serious injuries he received.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking men, officials and management for their unstinting assistance during the four week period of the accident.

I must specially thank some people - those who at great risk to themselves carried out the rescue operation on Thursday night. I think the words of David Dickson sum up our feelings - "When I came out of the chocks and saw the conditions these rescuers had worked in, I thought to myself - imagine them doing this to get me out ".

I must also say a special word of thanks to those workmen, officials and management who, for four weeks, worked a 4-shift, 7-day-week in an attempt to recover Angus and Tom. They worked unceasingly in difficult and dangerous conditions to recover their workmates. The actual recovery of the bodies was not a pleasant task but they got on with the job in a typical Seafield manner.

The fact that two of their workmates had not been recovered did not deter everyone in the Colliery from carrying on with their normal work and I am sure there has never been a disaster of this kind where, on the week following, the Colliery produced 20,000 tons of coal. I am not surprised as this is what I would have expected from the team spirit which exists at Seafield. This is the spirit which, although we will never forget the accident, will make our pit the best in Scotland once again, if not the best in Britain. Even if it is never the best in Britain for output, I will always recognise it as the best for courage and determination and I am proud to be the Captain of a team that performs in this way.

I would also like to thank the Trade Unions for their help and assistance during this troublesome period. This was only further evidence of the spirit of co-operation which we have known to exist at Seafield. Everyone got on with their job in a cool, calm manner and nobody showed any sign of panic that might well have existed during this time.

On your behalf, I would like to publicly record our thanks to Jim Ritchie and Max Meharry for their unpleasant task they performed in informing the relatives of the deceased. This is not an easy task and one made more difficult by the fact that Angus and Tom were some time in being recovered.

I can assure you that no points are being missed in attempting to uncover the basic cause of the accident. There are many theories going around at the present time but, so far, nothing concrete has emerged. It would be wrong of any of us to attempt to theorise or to draw any conclusions until all the facts have been ascertained and this is what we are doing at the moment.

Thank you once again for all your efforts and assistance and I look forward to the very near future when we will see fruition of all these efforts.

DAVID T. PATERSON

#### LETTER FROM MR. J. R. COWAN, DIRECTOR

"I was deeply shocked to learn of the disaster at Seafield. I visited the Colliery on many occasions and examined the disaster site with Mr. McGahey, President, N.U.M, and was most impressed by the skills and the dedication of men and officials working in that area.

Everyone at the Colliery - men, management and Trade Unions - deserve to be congratulated on the responsible and single mindedness of attitude adopted, in the most trying circumstances.

Whatever lessons have to be learned from the Public Inquiry which will take place in August, I'm convinced the spirit I saw at Seafield Colliery over the past weeks will pay dividends in the future."



**OBITUARY**

The men killed in the disaster on 10th May in D. 22 were:-

**ROBERT HENDERSON**

Born 14/6/13, Robert resided at 42 Factory Road, Buckhaven. Bobby leaves a widow and grown-up family. "Heelplates" as he was known, came to Seafield from Wellesley Colliery when Wellesley closed. He spent his whole life in mining and gained his nick-name at Wellesley. He was on a brushing job and boasting about the excellent job he was doing. When it was discovered by his mates that the roadway girders were the small 6' x 6' size, he was banteringly told he was only erecting heelplates and the name stuck. Bobby was actually alive when rescued but died on the stretchers.

**JAMES HOLMES**

Born 27/4/20, James resided at 6 Beech Avenue, Methil. He also leaves a widow and a grown-up family, all working. Unfortunately, his oldest son, who works as a deck-hand on a Shell tanker, was unable to get home for his Dad's funeral. He was on a tanker in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

**JAMES COMRIE**

Born 26/3/24, James resided at 44 Barncraig Street, Buckhaven. James leaves a widow and two grown-up sons. A miner through and through, Jimmy was on the Management Committee of Denbeath Miners' Welfare and was Vice-President of their Bowling Club. He was, in fact, a member of the Fife Team in the Scottish Championships held at Queen's Park last year.

**ANGUS GUTHRIE**

Born 26/5/52, Angus resided with his widowed mother at 73 Carden Castle Park, Cardenden. Angus was only two weeks short of his 21st birthday. His family has a mining background and his father died eight years ago from pneumoconiosis. Angus himself was going through the Industry's Technical Training Scheme and attended Lauder College, Cowdenbeath, as a Board student. A very likeable lad, Angus was a great favourite with all his mates. He was a member of the Junior Safety Quiz Team and, in fact, the day of the disaster was his last shift that week as he was due to travel to Harrogate on Friday morning to support Seafield Quiz Team in the Regional Final. His mother, brothers and sister, had a most trying time as Angus's body was not recovered until Saturday, 19th May, some nine days after the disaster.

**THOMAS KILPATRICK**

Born 21/4/35, Thomas resided at 11 Walnut Crescent, Methil. Tom leaves a widow, Christina, and three daughters, Avril, Karen and Sandra, all at school. Tom was a keen outdoors-man and was a member of the Eden Wildflowers Club. He also had an Alsatian, Cheri. Outwith the shock of Tom's death, his widow and family had the prolonged heartbreak of waiting 4 weeks before his body was recovered. "Tom-Cat", as Tom was known, had a large circle of friends, including his team-mates on D. 22 faceline.

As each funeral took place, there was a massive turn-out from the Colliery, senior Board and Union Officials, and people from all walks of life, including the MP for Kirkcaldy, the Convenor of Fife County Council, Senior Police Officials, etc. In the Crematoriums, the services had to be relayed to huge crowds outside who could not get in. The thanks of the families and relatives of the deceased are best summed up in printing the following letters sent to the Colliery by Mrs. Christina Kilpatrick, widow of Tom.

11 Walnut Crescent

METHIL

12/6/73

Dear Mr Paterson,

Will you please convey my deepest thanks to everyone concerned in the rescue operations to recover the body of my late husband, Tom Kilpatrick.

I would especially like to thank all the members of the rescue teams who worked for so long, at the risk of their own lives, to effect the recovery.

I would like to express my thanks to the Reverend Mr. Proudfoot for his visits and words of comfort, and Mr. Max Meharry for keeping us informed of progress and many kind words and deeds during the long days of waiting.

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) MRS. CHRISTINA KILPATRICK.

Dear Mr. Paterson and Mr. Ritchie,

Will you please accept my sincere thanks for the cheque of £450 which I received from the N.C.B and N.U.M. Fatal Accident Fund.

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) MRS CHRISTINA KILPATRICK

Editors Note: the cheques from the Special Fatal Accident Fund we delivered to the dependants of all the deceased eight days after the disaster.

### THOUGHTS OF A MEMBER OF THE RECOVERY TEAM

By Max Meharry

Arriving on D. 22 face-line at 8.30 p.m., my first reaction was, "There's nobody alive in that mess of redd, rock, rubble, steel, hoses and chocks", but I stifled my fears. Hope still clings to rescuer and entombed.

Inching our way, like cats stalking a kill, careful to disturb nothing, we start the search, each nerve pinging like an Asdic receiver, as we strain eyes and ears for some sign of life in that silent Hell.

Hope is fading and flagging, muscles seem heavy when suddenly we hear a shout. There is immediate upsurge of effort. Men we thought average become supermen. Stones and rock are tossed to the side like confetti at a wedding in the team's agonised efforts to reach their mates.

Steady now, we're getting near, and suddenly we are through to the first man. As gently as a midwife delivering a baby, the rescuers free the first to be rescued. On to the stretchers with him while his lamp and check number are phoned to the surface. In a few minutes good news will be on its way to anxious and worried dependants.

Back to the mountain of collapsed face and the next cries we hear are under our feet. Is it luck or some other power that has kept the next two men from death? I don't know but somehow men are still alive and the tempo increases in the desperate struggle to get them out. The position looks hopeless but, unbelievably, we get two men out quickly and the elation of the rescuers is really something special.

Time is running out, ominous creeks come from the exposed roof far above us but something in the mind keeps you from dwelling on your own safety. As long as there's a chance, we keep on trying, ignoring what's above us. Another light is uncovered and the man is alive. Very gently the rubble is cleared from around him. The cry goes up for a knife and one is quickly passed down to cut away the man's lamp battery. Slowly we lift the body out and onto the stretchers. In a strained voice the man stammered out his thanks to the rescuers, shuddered and died. There is a stunned silence amongst the rescuers. The whole situation is completely unreal. A huge cavern, the darkness penetrated by the pencils of light from workmen, is reminiscent of an air-raid alert in wartime, with searchlights slicing the black sky.

I've never seen death before. I feel terrified but I can't tear my gaze away from that still figure on the stretcher. "Christ Almighty", he can't be dead. He was speaking to us as we freed him. But as the still face and sightless eyes were covered over by a blanket, the realisation sank in. A shocked silence, then our stillness was broken by the Undermanagers cry, "I can see another light!".

Everyone is galvanised into action. We are riding on the crest of hope. This man is speaking to us all the time. Same drill as before. Cut away his lamp, smoke mask, etc., and clear away the debris with our hands. Ever so gently he is extricated, eased from that hell-hole like a cork from a bottle. He is still speaking away. Our hearts expand with pride in achievement. We win part of this death-cheat operation. But fate was not so easily defeated. The rescued man's voice weakened, his mouth worked as he tried to form words, then a curious stillness stole over his face. His body seemed to shrink and slacken and we knew, without diagnosis, that we had lost him. I feel extremely bitter. All that effort and he slipped away from us, just like switching off a light but you can't switch a life on again.

Before I can recriminate any more, another shout informs us another light can be seen, but our hopes are dashed as word comes that the man is obviously dead. Still, we follow the same routine and eventually we get the body eased out with a reverence that would do credit to an Archbishop.

I glance around me and I'm surprised at the number of additional people that have turned up. Some obviously are from Her Majesty's Mines Inspectorate and others are senior Board Officials. I don't know how long they have been there, perhaps they've been with us all the time. Our concentration was on rescue work and nothing else.

Obvious consultations are going on and finally we are told to stop work. Conditions have deteriorated badly and the view is expressed that to stay as we are would endanger the lives of the rescuers. There is no one else alive in that mess. Reluctant though we are to leave, we face reality. No useful purpose can be served by staying where we are.

Silently, each man a prisoner of his own thoughts, we trudge out to the man-riding bogies. I feel physically exhausted, mentally-depressed and emotionally-drained. Four men out alive, three bodies recovered and two men still entombed with all hope abandoned. You read about disasters like this but they are impersonal because you are not involved. I never thought for a moment this would happen at our pit. Nature has proved yet again that she won't give up her wealth without exacting some toll in return.

The ride to the pit bottom is jolting and monotonous but eventually we arrive and climb out of the cars stiffly, the sweat dried to cold clamminess clutching my body. The cage is ready and we enter and start the ascent to the surface.

The cage arrives at the pit top and I'm stunned. It's like as if an electrical storm was taking place with soundless flashes going on incessantly. As my red-rimmed eyes blink to adjust the daylight, I realise the flashes are from the hordes of press photographers. Reporters, long-haired and pencils poised, fire rapid questions with indelicacy born from long practice. "What's it like down there?", one asks me. My reply will never appear in print, that's certain.

I feel slightly sick. We're news, not because we broke production records but because five miners died today. Our misfortunes are someone else's morning headlines. A twinge of remorse, I read the paper yesterday with no thoughts other than general interest in the misfortunes of others.

I plod mechanically through the lamp room, past the Time Office and into the baths, clutching the free meal ticket put in my hand by an overly considerate Time Office Clerk. I undress and get into the showers. I'm exhausted and sit on the floor allowing the spray to cascade on my head and over my whole body and I'm reluctant to leave the comfort of the showers. I get dried and dress slowly, slightly afraid of having nothing to do but think. I make my way from the Baths and hesitate at the door of the crowded Canteen. I'm not really hungry so I turn away and go outside to the Car Park. The whole place is crowded with strangers. In a detached way, I notice B.B.C. and S.T.V. vying with each other for information and pictures. The sun has risen above the skyline and the Forth is at high tide and as still as a mirror. I can see Cockenzie Power Station gleaming white and smoking in the distance. What a morning for Death. Five dead, four safe. There will be sad hearts in Fife today. My despondency lingers but reason finally asserts itself. By all accounts no one should have come out alive from that holocaust. Yes, that's it. My shoulders square back imperceptibly and my spirits lift. We did our best and we won, no one will deny us that. As I reach my car I feel better. Yes, we in this pit can walk tall and look the world straight in the eye."

**CONDOLENCES**

Letters and telegrams of sympathy were sent to the pit from people and organisations representing the whole strata of our society. Space does not permit us to print all the messages but here are as many as possible.

**1. THE PRIME MINISTER**

"I was very sorry indeed to learn of the tragic disaster at the Seafield Colliery. I should be grateful if you would convey my deep sympathy to the families of those who have lost their lives."

**2. MR D. EZRA, CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL COAL BOARD**

"I would be grateful if you would pass on my thanks to all those who have taken part in the rescue and recovery operations at Seafield Colliery. I have nothing but admiration for the quiet determined effort and bravery of those who have toiled for so long during this work. The tragedy was a great shock to us all but we drew some comfort and inspiration from the selfless dedication displayed at Seafield".

**3. THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND - GORDON CAMPBELL**

"I was shocked to hear of the tragedy at Seafield Colliery. everyone in Scotland will, with me, wish to convey sympathy to the relatives of the bereaved and appreciation of the efforts of the Rescue Teams."

**4. EUROPEAN COAL & STEEL COMMUNITY - P. HILLARY**

"Deeply grieved to hear of the disaster at your mine. Please accept our sincere condolences on behalf of the European Commission and myself. The Commission sympathises with the families in their misfortune."

**5. COUNT VICTOR MATUSCHA, GERMAN CONSULATE GENERAL**

"I learned with deep sorrow of the loss of lives in the Seafield Colliery and would wish to convey my sympathies to you and the relatives of the bereaved."

**6. PERSONAL VISIT BY MR HARRY GOURLAY, MP, KIRKCALDY BURGHS.**

**MINERS' UNION BRANCHES**

From Mr. & Mrs. David Bolton, Vice-President, N.U.M. Scottish Area.

From Valleyfield Branch N.U.M.

From Guy Stobbs on behalf of Ayrshire Branch.

From Castlehill Branch N.U.M.

From Sherwood Branch N.U.M. Notts. Branch.

From Cowdenbeath Branch SCEBTA " NACODS ( Scottish Area )

From COSLA ( Scottish Branch )

Kent Coalfields.

From Seaham Branch, N.U.M. Durham.

OTHER UNIONS

From Transport & General Workers - Dundee, Dunfermline and Buckhaven.

Equity ( Action Trade Union).

PROVOSTS, COUNCILS & POLITICAL PARTIES.

Fife County Council Provost Turpie on behalf of Leven.

Provost Kay on behalf of Kirkcaldy Constituency Labour Party.

Ayrshire Constituency Labour Party.

Fife Labour Group & Glenrothes L.P.

Scottish Conservative Party.

Scottish National Party.

Scottish District of the Communist Party.

From Bowhill Pipe Band.

Kirkcaldy Round Table.

McDonald, Timber Merchants, Inverness.

Electrical, Electronic and Telecommunications Union.

Scottish Old Age Pensioners Association.

Stanmills College, Belfast.

Lt. Col. C. H. MacFetridge.

Balwearie School.

Parish Church of St. Columba's, Burntisland.

St. Andrews Ambulance Corps.

Hundreds more letters and telegrams were received by the N.U.M and by Kirkcaldy Council.

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**SPECIAL MENTION**

Correctly so, the colliery as a whole has received the acclamation of the Board, Trade Union leaders, and the general public, for its principled, responsible attitude during and following the disaster. Some special thanks are due to certain groups within and without the pit and the following list is an attempt to do so.

To the Canteen Manageress and her staff who worked 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide meals and snacks.

To E. Reekie and Alexanders Bus Co., for their co-operation in providing transport at all and any hour of the day and night.

To the Pit Chaplain, Mr Proudfoot, who remained at the Colliery until the sma' hours of 11th May and who visited the families of the bereaved with condolences.

To Father Rodger and Father Saddler, of Kirkcaldy, who came to the Colliery and offered any assistance they could although none of the deceased were of their religion.

To Kirkcaldy Round Table Society for help given in a very special case.

To the Salvation Army for offers of assistance and visits paid to families of the deceased.

To the Time Office Staff for an excellent job of checking and administration which proved invaluable in ensuring the names and addresses of all involved in the disaster were absolutely correct.

To my own staff, George Blackwood, John Campbell, John Chalmers, and to Alex. Justice, Head Timekeeper, and J. Ritchie, N.U.M. delegate, who gave their time and assistance in the heart-breaking tasks necessary in the aftermath of the disaster.

To the Police for their help and offers of assistance.

To the local Trade Union Committees without whose help recovery and work-resumption would not have taken place.

To the Control Room Staff for their efficiency in the first few hours after the disaster until the Incident Room was set up.

To the Safety Quiz Team who travelled to Harrogate two days after the disaster and successfully competed, despite their own personal feelings. It should be noted they donated their prize money to the Disaster Fund.

To many, many others who offered help and services in the aftermath of the disaster, sincere thanks.

**IN ADDITION**

H.M. Inspectorate carried out a preliminary investigation at the colliery and interviewed witnesses to the disaster. All the Trade Unions were represented at the highest level at this preliminary investigation.

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Jim Todd, one of the rescued men, remembers clutching his St. Christopher medal during his period of waiting to be rescued. When he woke up in hospital, his hand was still clenched but there was nothing in it and his medal had disappeared. When he came out of hospital, his mother bought him a new one. However, the rescue workers, continuing their efforts to locate Tom Kilpatrick's body, came across the medal under tons of rubble. The medal, all scratched, has been handed back to Jim, who, in turn, presented it to his mother. Was it luck, coincidence, or something else?

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Peter Wishart recounts: "The D:22 section area in Seafield was positioned close by to a cross-cut roadway both in the two levels at Seafield, one level at 170 fathoms and the other at 300 fathoms. The X-Cut was part of the original plans to create lateral roadways to get easy access to all the viable coal.

The section was an advancing faceline heading towards the south-side from the main lateral roadway. The tailgate was on the 170 level and the main gate near the 213 fathom level. As the section was advancing, it came across a faulting which was an over-throw of 'post' coming from the pavement and unforeseen 'burnt coal' in the seam.

To try and eradicate the problem, the boring and firing into the pavement, to allow the shearer to travel, took place. The face pans over this fault, however, had to be lifted over the fault to allow easy haulage of the shearer as well, but with the fault, the shearer was cutting higher into the roof causing the roof to weaken as it was breaching the solid roof.

To allow the supports to advance, it was proving difficult for the relay bars to push the pans without them lifting into fresh air. To combat this, the pans, when being advanced, were 'stelled' with trees to sit off the pavement. When trying to advance the supports, it was proving to be almost impossible as the relay bars were in a jack-knifing position. In order to advance the supports, the relay bars were replaced by chains for the chocks to be brought forward. Once in place, wooden chock blocks and 10' boards were used to allow the chocks to be pressurised correctly onto the roof. With the culmination of the relay bars not offering proper stabilisation of the pans in relation to the chocks, and the broken roof over the chocks not being completely secured to the roof, this was a main contribution to the collapse of the chocks in the way it was found.

There was no proper support in the area of the accident, with no support over the face-line and the chocks, the shearer coming down the face taking another 'cut' caused a further load of pressure with an extra 3 ft. of open ground unsupported. With stelled tress being left on the floor along with other



wooden materials, the chocks were sitting on broken strata from the firing of the fault and the unwanted trees. This also made the supports unstable. It was all these factors that contributed to the disaster.

I believe this was the case, having being told by older men and my dad, who volunteered along with everyone to help and try and get the poor souls out of the faceline.

Many years after the accident, I was working in a newly-developed section in the 170 level. In this area, right into the furthest seam, a lot of retreat sections were developed. One particular section in the Coxtool Seam, we encountered the same geological conditions of D:22, we were heading in the same exact south direction. The section was known as S:25, the main gate was in the 170 level and the tail gate was further up a heading then into a roadway that was being developed further than the known fault. We had to bore 6-inch holes above the face-line to allow reamer channels to be placed above the advancing chocks as we came across burnt coal that literally fell onto the pans, the shearer only had to cut the pavement coal, as the face-line was falling perhaps 8 or 9 feet in advance, the roof was very weak and had to be supported as soon as possible. It proved to be unsuccessful and never produced much. All attempts to develop that area were abandoned due to the problems."

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### **"Dunfermline Press" 25 October, 1974 Forth coal probe**

The National Coal Board is to put down bore holes in the Firth of Forth, off Seafield Colliery, Kirkcaldy, to prove an extension of reserves to the south of the pit. Current developments in the area have met geological troubles with whin intrusions and faults.

The boring will be done by a drilling ship, Wimpey Sealab, owned by George Wimpey & Company. The bores will go down 1800 feet, the first time this depth will have been reached in this type of drilling. The bores will be about four miles offshore and half a mile and 1½ miles respectively to the south of current workings.

They will cost about £350,000 and are expected to yield valuable information on the geological conditions, gradients and the development of the many seams in this part of the reserves. Over the next five to six years the NCB plans to spend £1 million a year on the development of Seafield Colliery, which, as the largest single pit in Scotland, employs 2400 men.

### OPERATIONS

The Wimpey Sealab will arrive in the Firth of Forth at the end of this month and boring operations will begin at once. They will take about two months. The ship will operate in 80 feet of water. One hundred feet of the bore will be in mud, sand and boulder clay until rock is struck.

Bores were made for Seafield Colliery in the 1950s, from towers set on the sea bed. The sinking of Seafield began in May 1954 and production started in April 1965. It cost £15 million.

The Wimpey Sealab, 6000 tons, was converted for sea drilling from a bulk paper carrier.

A 23 foot x 27 foot section of the ship's hold was removed so that the drills enter the water through what marine engineers call a "Moonpool." The rig rises 108 feet above the ship's deck. To maintain stability, while drilling operations are underway, six anchors on the seabed are linked by wire hawsers to 40-ton winches on the Sealab which will be serviced by tug and helicopter. The Sealab drilled in the English Channel to help plot the course of the proposed Channel tunnel.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**14 March, 1975**  
**Record breaking miners**

Seafield Colliery mined its millionth ton of coal in just over 11 months on Wednesday. This is the fourth unit in Scotland to reach a million tons this year.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**27 October, 1978**  
**Commitment to colliery link-up**

The multi-million pound link-up under the Forth, which will lead to coal being produced from the doomed Michael Colliery, is to go ahead as planned. Seafield Colliery, Kirkcaldy, and Frances Colliery, Dysart, pits at which many Central Fife miners work, will be joined up with some 160 men transferred from the Dysart pit to Seafield. The National Coal Board have spelled out their commitment to the project which will tap the reserves of the Michael Colliery which was closed 11 years ago after a fire which caused the deaths of many men. Kirkcaldy MP, Mr Harry Gourlay, said the fears that the long-term development plans were in doubt were unfounded.

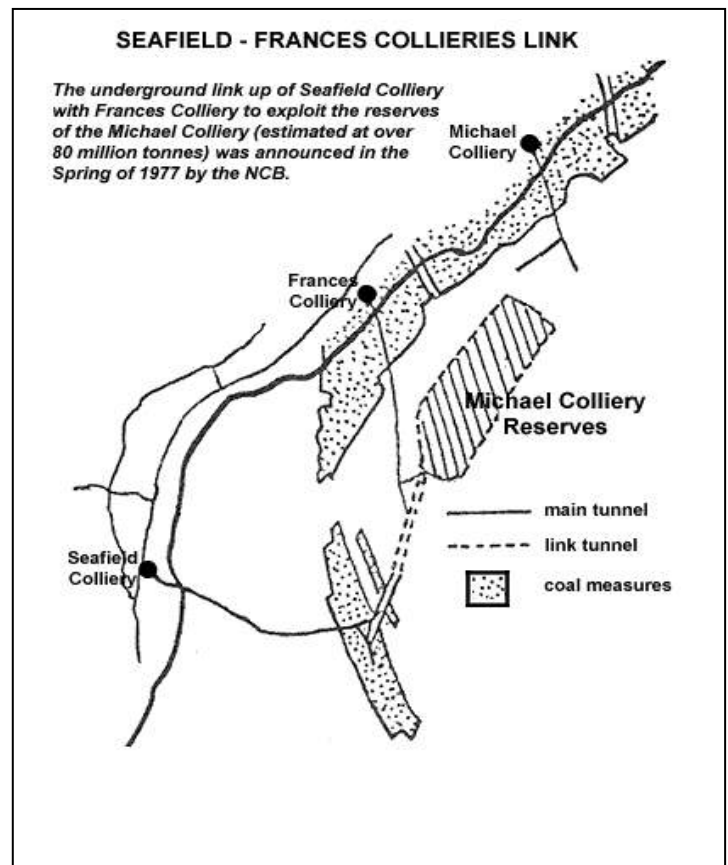
**'NO CHANGE'**

He said, "There has been no change in the NCB's plan for the link-up. "With the massive reserves of coal under the Forth, which can be reached from Seafield, it would be criminal to suggest the closure of any pit." Mr Gourlay made a tour of Seafield and saw the site underground where the drivage will be starting shortly to link-up Seafield and Frances and subsequently with the Michael reserves.

He said the best description of the project was a pit within a pit. "The excavations to accommodate the machinery and a bunker to hold about 1000 tons of coal are massive and all this is part of the £7 million scheme to link-up the Frances, Seafield and Michael reserves," he went on.

**TARGET DATE**

"The target date for the link-up of Frances and Seafield is March, 1980, and the first face at the Michael reserves should be producing coal by September of that year. "There has been no change in the Board's long-term plan for this linkage. What has changed is that there will be one mine driven from Frances instead of two. But with the improved facilities for bringing coal to the surface in Seafield, the need for a second mine is not so pressing." He concluded, "It has been generally agreed that while there had been some doubt recently regarding the future of both Frances and Seafield, the position has now been clarified to a considerable degree and it is generally accepted that if productivity and performance in the drivage keep to schedule the future can be assured."



## MINING AT SEAFIELD KIRKCALDY

**1971**

D. T. Paterson (*Manager*) : T. A. Harrison  
(*Asst.*) / J. C. Fox (*Depute*)  
J. Glancy ; J. S. Beatson; F. Rolland;  
J. Soutar; D. Wilson; J. Simpson  
(*Undermanagers*)  
2121 / 345 / Coal. Barncraig, Bowhouse,  
Dysart Main.

**1973**

D. T. Paterson (*Manager*) : T. A. Harrison  
(*Asst.*) / J. C. Fox (*Depute*)  
J. Glancy ; J. S. Beatson; F. Rolland;  
J. Soutar; D. Wilson; J. Simpson; W. Miller  
(*Undermanagers*)  
2121 / 345 / Household, industrial and steam  
coals. Barncraig, Six Foot, Bowhouse, Dysart  
Main.

**1974**

D. T. Paterson (*Manager*) : T. A. Harrison  
(*Asst.*) / J. C. Fox (*Depute*)  
J. Glancy ; J. S. Beatson; F. Rolland;  
J. Soutar; D. Wilson; J. Simpson; W. Miller  
(*Undermanagers*)  
2019 / 287 / Household, industrial and steam  
coals. Barncraig, Six Foot, Bowhouse, Dysart  
Main.

**1977**

J. N. Cairns (*Manager*) : T. A. Harrison  
(*Asst.*) / J. Soutar (*Depute*)  
J. Glancy ; F. Rolland; D. Wilson;  
J. Simpson; W. Miller (*Undermanagers*)  
R. M. Wallace (*Mechanical Engineer*) :  
W. L. Philp (*Electrical Engineer*)  
2077 / 279 / Household, industrial and steam  
coals. Barncraig, Six Foot, Chemiss,  
Bowhouse, Branxton and Dysart Main.

**1978**

J. N. Cairns (*Manager*) : J. Soutar (*Depute*)  
J. Glancy ; F. Rolland; D. Wilson;  
J. Simpson; W. Miller (*Undermanagers*)  
R. M. Wallace (*Mechanical Engineer*) :  
W. L. Philp (*Electrical Engineer*)  
2077 / 279 / Household, industrial and steam  
coals. Barncraig, Six Foot, Chemiss,  
Bowhouse, Branxton and Dysart Main.

**1979**

J. N. Cairns (*Manager*) : J. Soutar (*Depute*)  
J. Glancy ; F. Rolland; V. Wilson;  
J. Simpson; W. Miller (*Undermanagers*)  
R. M. Wallace (*Mechanical Engineer*) :  
W. L. Philp (*Electrical Engineer*)  
2077 / 279 / Household, industrial and steam  
coals. Barncraig, Six Foot, Chemiss,  
Bowhouse, Branxton and Dysart Main.

### **"Dunfermline Press"**

**26 January, 1979**

#### **The rescuers**

Castlehill Colliery have won, for the second year in succession, the national annual Mines Rescue Competition, held at Loanhead, on Saturday.

Run for the 21st year, since its inception in 1958, the inter-station competition is fought out by the four mines rescue stations in Scotland.

Twenty-five brigades started out in this contest last year, but, after a series of knockout heats, only eight teams were left in the finals on Saturday.

Cowdenbeath Mines Rescue Station had two teams in the event - Castlehill and Seafield - and Castlehill took the major award, plus the Gallery Trophy and three individual awards. Seafield took the runners-up position, with a close second place to the winning team, making it a first for the competition which has never seen the top places taken by one station - Cowdenbeath.

The Castlehill team - David Forbes (captain), Nap Smith (No. 2), David Barclay (No. 3), David Gardiner (No. 4), vice-captain Dennis Maddox (No. 5) and Robert Wilson (reserve). [*The Cowdenbeath Mines Rescue Station superintendent was Mr E. Savage.*]

**"Dunfermline Press"  
18 May, 1979  
TRAINING SIGHTS ON PIT  
RECRUITS**

The National Coal Board are to be asked to step up recruitment of young people throughout Fife and reappraise training techniques. The call for action came from Councillor William Clarke, Ballingry, who is a member of the Scottish Executive of the National Union of Mineworkers.

He told Fife Education Committee on Monday that he was concerned about the possibility of courses in mining engineering being curtailed at some of Fife's major Technical Colleges. He outlined the three methods that were most common in the recruitment of miners - straight from school; youngsters turning to mining because they were sick of being unemployed; and, lastly, ex-miners.

**UNDERGROUND SUPERVISION**

Councillor Clarke highlighted the reason why it was cheaper for the National Coal Board to recruit 18-year-olds. "They get three weeks' training," he said, "and that is followed up by three weeks' supervision underground. After that, they can be put in the firing line, such as in haulage supplies." The crunch was, said Councillor Clarke, that most of the major accidents and fatalities in mining occurred on haulage and transport work.

**ALL-ROUND TRAINING**

He told the Committee that he believed there was not a sufficient percentage of young people coming directly from school to proper training establishments. School-leavers, aged 16, he contended, would have longer all-round training, and the importance of that training, he believed, could be reflected in a decrease in the number of accidents in haulage and transport in the mines.

The mine manpower situation was exacerbated not only by the shortage of youngsters being recruited and properly trained, but the retirement age for miners was to drop to 60 this year. Said Councillor Clarke: "There has to be a re-opening of the training centres, a call for an extension of the present facilities at Comrie and Dysart. Large investments were going to be poured into the Frances and Seafield Collieries."

**MASSIVE PRESSURE**

He demanded: "Massive pressure must be put on the NCB. There are a lot of unemployed people that could be employed in mining." Councillor Henry McLeish, Chairman of the Colleges and Careers Sub-Committee, said he appreciated the support of the National Union of Miners to try to increase the number of school-leavers taking up mining as a career. There was now a massive injection of funds into Fife collieries, but yet there was no increase in the numbers of youngsters coming forward.

**'RETROGRADE STEP'**

"If the members do not increase," he said, "we may have to reappraise the education in our further education colleges, and that would be a retrograde step. If this decline does happen, we may not be able to change the situation in the future." Councillor Alan McLure endorsed Councillor Clarke's demand.

"I hope we will be able to persuade the NCB to step up recruitment. We need these skills in this country. But we will be faced with an accommodation problem within the Colleges. It would be foolish if we were successful with the NCB, only to find we were unable to cope with the numbers coming in." Chairman of the Education Committee, Councillor Tom Dair, endorsed the call for a meeting with the NCB, but warned that it would be short-sighted policy only to press for recruitment of mining apprentices. "We must aim for a good proportion of craftsmen and technicians as well," he said.



**"Fife Free Press"**  
**4 April, 1980**  
**Miner dies after roof fall.**

A 46-year-old Kirkcaldy miner, John Hutt, of 3 Muirfield Street, died last Thursday, following a roof fall at Seafield Colliery. Mr Hutt, a power loader, was working underground at the Dysart Main Seam, when the fall occurred. He was brought to the surface about 10.45 a.m. and taken to Victoria Hospital, where he died later in the day. Mr Hutt is survived by his wife, son Kenneth (20), a student at St Andrews University, and daughter, Jacqueline (17), a prefect at Kirkcaldy High School.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**5 November, 1982**  
**Longannet named in Scargill 'hit list'**

Despite the names of Longannet and Seafield being mentioned on the "hit list" of pits "revealed" by NUM President, Mr Arthur Scargill, on Tuesday, both the West Fife Complex and the Kirkcaldy pit are "safe". A National Coal Board spokesman told the *Press* yesterday (Thursday) that the Board considered the Longannet Complex and Seafield as areas of the Scottish Coalfield with a future. He said: "The performances of all pits are under constant review, that is true, but, because a pit has one bad year, it does not mean it is going to close. And, as far as the Longannet Complex and Seafield are concerned, we have just made major investments at both and that is hardly a sign that they are to close."

A leading Fife NUM official said on Wednesday that Coal Board moves to close any pits in the Region on an "alleged economic" basis would be strongly opposed. Following Tuesday's announcement of the result of the miners' ballot on pay and pit closures, Mr Scargill claimed that he had

obtained an NCB document threatening the closure of 75 pits. These pits could be closed within seven years, it was said. The document, he said, contained five pits in Scotland, but, on Wednesday, Mr William Clarke, a Fife Regional Councillor, and a member of the Scottish Executive of the NUM, made it clear that, if the Fife Coalfield were to be hit by any closures, the Union would fight all the way. Mr Clarke said that any move for early closure of Seafield Colliery, or Longannet, would be strongly resisted. These two parts of the coalfield employ over 5000 men. He went on: "We have heard nothing officially about early closures. However, any moves prematurely to end production at any of these two places I have mentioned would be fought. The Union met with the Board in May and discussed closures and it was agreed that, where pits were becoming exhausted, closures would have to take place. That is only common sense. However, at Seafield and Longannet, there is plenty of coal to be mined in the years to come, so exhaustion would be no reason for closures. The Board could only close them for what they would allege as economic reasons." He concluded, "The Union does not foresee any early closure at Seafield or Longannet, but certainly this document cannot be ignored."

1980/81
J. N. Cairns ( <i>Manager</i> ) : W. Miller ( <i>Depute</i> ) J. Glancy ; F. Rolland; V. Wilson; J. Simpson; W. Marshall ( <i>Undermanagers</i> ) R. M. Wallace ( <i>Mechanical Engineer</i> ) : W. L. Philp ( <i>Electrical Engineer</i> ) 2077 / 279 / Household, industrial and steam coals. Barncraig, Six Foot, Chemiss, Bowhouse, Branxton and Dysart Main.
1982
J. T. Mackie ( <i>Manager</i> ) : W. Miller ( <i>Depute</i> ) J. Glancy ; F. Rolland; V. Wilson; J. Simpson; W. Marshall ( <i>Undermanagers</i> ) R. M. Wallace ( <i>Mechanical Engineer</i> ) : W. L. Philp ( <i>Electrical Engineer</i> ) 2077 / 279 / Household, industrial and steam coals. Barncraig, Six Foot, Chemiss, Bowhouse, Branxton and Dysart Main.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**4 March, 1983**  
**Miners split on strike call**

Miners in West Fife collieries seemed split yesterday over Monday's strike-call. Voting at the pitheads began on Wednesday and, while there was a reported strong "Yes" vote for the strike-call at Castlehill Mine, miners elsewhere were not so keen to strike. At Bogside and Solsgirth Collieries, with the back-shift workers still to vote, the mood appeared to be 50-50.

Meanwhile, at Comrie Colliery, the men are believed to have refused to vote, opting instead for a ballot. At Seafield Pit there was a reported 2-1 vote in favour of a national ballot.

The men had been urged by the NUM's Scottish Executive to strike as from Monday, in response to South Wales miners' campaign to save the Lewis Merthyr pit, near Pontypridd.

At a special delegate meeting in Edinburgh on Tuesday, the 19 delegates voted unanimously in favour of indefinite strike action from Monday.

Those delegates voted 12-7, in December, in favour of allowing Kinneil Colliery in West Lothian to close and miners being moved to work at other pits, including those in the Longannet Complex.

Yesterday (Thursday) staff at the NUM's Scottish Headquarters in Edinburgh declined to confirm the outcome of pithead voting so far, saying that there were no NUM officials available for comment.

A meeting of the Scottish NUM Executive was due to be held last night in Edinburgh to discuss the results of the voting, and yesterday afternoon local executive member, Mr William Clarke, declined to comment in advance of the talks.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**16 March, 1984**  
**ALL-OUT BATTLE**

As the NUM's strike neared the end of the first week, both sides seemed prepared for a long siege. The National Coal Board showing no signs of acceding to miners' demands to "come back to the negotiating table," issued stern warnings about the possible serious effects of a prolonged dispute.

And the NUM began setting up communication lines between Headquarters and local strike centres to keep the estimated 160,000 striking miners abreast of events. In the Dunfermline district, centres are being set up in Miners' Clubs in several towns and villages and plans are being made for a mass rally in Dunfermline on 24th March. The NUM's Scottish Executive strike-call had an almost immediate effect on West Fife pits. The 3000 men employed at the Longannet Complex, including Castlehill and Solsgirth Collieries, showed a united front and there were no reports of men turning up for work on Monday morning.

Around 40 men did, however, turn up for the early day shift at Comrie Colliery, and a further six for the following shift. None crossed the picket line and Comrie Branch Chairman, Mr Bob Young, later blamed their turning up on a "misunderstanding."

"Some newspapers and radio reports on Sunday said Comrie would be working normally, but this wasn't the case." Mr Young added that only a minor amount of picketing would take place at West Fife pits, mainly to scrutinise the movement of coal stocks. The Scottish Executive agreed on Monday to allow the free movement of coal to hospitals, schools and old people. Said Mr Young: "Management has been co-operating by supplying lists of contractors moving coal, and we have only turned back those contractors attempting to get coal only for the ordinary household market. We have also been providing as much safety cover as the Coal Board wants. The NUM ourselves

have organised a safety cover rota. We don't want another Bogside. We want to make sure we still have pits to go back to when the strike is over. But we won't go back until the NCB agrees to sit down and negotiate with Arthur Scargill about our wages and about pit closures. It was the NCB who called off the talks."

Several examples of miners providing extra safety cover to prevent damage to mines were apparent within the first few days of the stoppage. One of the most serious incidents was at Solsgirth where an area of overheating in an old section of the mine was discovered last Thursday. Enough miners were provided over the weekend to carry out sealing-off operations. The NCB said it had been a "minor overheat." The supply of coal from existing stocks seems likely to play an increasingly important part in the dispute.

Following several reports yesterday (Thursday) that the Education Authorities were concerned that schools could be disrupted because of lack of fuel, NUM official, Mr Eric Clarke, told the *Press*: "I can give an assurance that we are liaising at all levels with the NCB to ensure supplies to all hospitals and schools. There may be some difficulties in getting supplies moved between depots, but, if any local authority, hospital, or individual has a problem, they should 'phone the NUM or the NCB. We are on the same wavelength as the NCB on this one." An NCB spokesman said supplies of coal were being moved "for the moment." He added: "We have said it could be a long and damaging dispute. We have to make sure that there is coal available for an emergency, in the event of a lengthy dispute." Both Dunfermline and Cowdenbeath Trades Councils expressed support for the National Union of Mineworkers' action at meetings this week.

A warning that striking miners will "not be thwarted by the law" and will carry out secondary picketing, if they feel it is necessary, has come from a senior Scotland NUM official.

The pledge has been given to the Fife Federation of Trades Councils by Mr John Neilson, NUM delegate at Scotland's largest pit, Seafield, Kirkcaldy. Mr Neilson told delegates: "This is going to be one of the dirtiest campaigns we have ever seen." He explained that the NUM had given permission for safety teams to be sent down the Frances and Solsgirth Mines, to battle the flare-up of recurring underground fires. This had been done, he said: "to demonstrate the Union's responsible attitude towards the safe-guarding of pits."

### **"Dunfermline Press" 23 March, 1984 Rallying support**

Miners from throughout the Scottish Coalfield will converge on Dunfermline tomorrow (Saturday) to attend the country's first major strike rally in the action which by yesterday had closed most of the British pits. The presence of the NUM Vice-President and Scottish President, Mr Mick McGahey, is sure to attract large numbers of men from Fife pits alone. The provisional programme for the rally is a march through the town, followed by a 'High Noon' mass meeting in Pittencrieff Park's Glen Pavilion. The marchers will set off from the Glen Gates around 10.30 am. They will follow a pipe band along High Street, circle the town, and return to the Park. Both Dunfermline's MPs, Mr Dick Douglas and Dr Gordon Brown are expected to speak from the platform, as will Fife Regional Convener, Councillor R. Gough, and Mr Ron Curran, a senior official of NUPE. Contingents of miners from the doomed Polmaise Colliery and Bogside Mine will also attend the rally. NUM Scottish secretary, Mr Eric Clarke, said Mr McGahey and other senior officials will attend as many meetings and rallies as possible throughout Scotland. The rally is being organised by the NUM in conjunction with Fife Federation of Trades Council, who, at a meeting earlier this week, heard complaints of miners being turned back by the Police while heading for picket duty in England.

Seafield NUM delegate, Mr John Neilson, Lochgelly, told the meeting how five cars from Fife had been turned back at Ashington. The Federation agreed to make complaints "in the strongest possible terms" to Scottish Secretary, Mr George Younger, to Shadow Scottish Secretary, Mr Donald Dewar, and to all Fife MPs.

A Dunfermline miner, Comrie Branch Chairman, Mr Bob Young, described to the *Press* how he and three companions in a car had been turned back by the Police on Sunday. "We stopped to ask for directions at a pit in Northumberland. The Police asked who we were and where we were going. When we told them, they told us to get back, or get lifted. What worries me is that it could have been anyone in that car, going to any place in Britain. To me, the Government is simply using the Police to break the miners' strike." Mr Young, who is also Chairman of the Committee of the Rights Office, Dunfermline, has spent much of the week working with ROD staff in the mining communities. He said: "We have helped hundreds of miners and their wives to understand the benefits that are available to them, and helped them fill in forms. Those miners whose wives work full or part time aren't too badly off at the moment. But, in the case of a miner whose wife doesn't work, and they have two kids, he receives £21.45 benefit for his wife and £18.30 for the children. From this is deducted £15 strike pay, which we are not receiving, and he also loses £13 child benefit."

Mr Young said food was being made available at the Miners' Institutes in High Valleyfield, Oakley and Woodmill, Dunfermline.

In Central Fife, hot food is being made available at Cowdenbeath Institute and at the Minto Club, Lochgelly, for miners and their families.

Longannet Power Station was the scene of the largest-scale NUM picketing this week. Around 80 miners gathered at the gates of the West Fife station on Tuesday morning, the numbers rising to about 200 yesterday (Thursday) morning.

The mass picket was quickly called off, however, leaving only a token force, after apparently successful talks with the Transport and General Workers Union. The talks were precipitated by events on Tuesday, when the pickets were unable to prevent the entry and exit of large numbers of contractors' lorries from as far afield as Airdrie and Ayrshire. Pickets from the Cowdenbeath-Lochgelly area have been on duty 24 hours a day in an attempt to stop trains and lorries transporting coal from Westfield opencast site to Longannet. An SSEB spokesman said on Wednesday: "between 60 and 70 pickets are outside Longannet this morning and have been speaking to lorry drivers. The power station is functioning normally."

The spokesman could not comment on the lorries arriving and leaving the station. Asked about coal stocks at Longannet, he replied: "We have ample stocks at all power stations." The NUM has set up a number of soup kitchens to keep pickets supplied with hot food, and also to help families suffering particular hardship.

1984
George M. Caldow ( <i>Manager</i> ) : W. Miller ( <i>Depute</i> )
J. Moran; V. Wilson; P. Tweed; W. Marshall ( <i>Undermanagers</i> )
Vacant ( <i>Mechanical Engineer</i> )
W. L. Philp ( <i>Electrical Engineer</i> )
2077 / 279 / Household, industrial and steam coals.
Barncraig, Six Foot, Chemiss, Bowhouse, Branxton and Dysart Main.



**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**8 June, 1984**  
**Pickets in convoy clashes**  
**Mass arrests at coal site**

Police clashed with angry miners as picket-line violence flared in Fife this week. The scene of the confrontations was the privately-owned Cartmore Opencast site, Lochgelly, where pickets gathered, in an attempt to stop lorries taking out coal. Two men - a picket and a Police Constable - were injured on Wednesday when around 150 miners tried to break through the 100-strong Police barrier. The injured miner, from Dysart, sustained a chest injury, and the Policeman suffered a back injury and they were taken by ambulance to the Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy. By the end of the day, a total of 57 pickets had been arrested, and a report is to be prepared for the Procurator-Fiscal at Dunfermline. The miners had received a tip-off that the site contractors, L. A. W. Mining Company, from Hamilton, were to move the coal, and had assembled at 6.30 am.

Mr Jock Gray, of the Lochgelly Miners' Strike Committee, told the *Press*: "We spoke to the lorry drivers, and they agreed not to cross the picket line. But a Police Inspector told them to go ahead and told us to move back. Then he counted to 60, and they started arresting pickets."

In all, 25 Yuill and Dodds lorries left the site loaded with coal. Mr Gray added: "The lorries are not covered, and it is illegal to transport uncovered coal."

The miners claimed that the coal was being taken to Ravenscraig, and one angry picket commented: "This coal should be for hospitals and schools. Instead, they are keeping a steel works going - one that's closing in two years' time. What's going to happen to our old folk and our children?" The pickets included miners from Seafield, Solsgirth, Comrie, Frances and Castlehill Collieries, and women from the Lochgelly Women's Action Committee.

There were more ugly scenes yesterday (Thursday) as lorries returned to the Cartmore opencast site and, by late afternoon there had been some 70 arrests. From early morning, pickets began gathering at the site, off the main Lochgelly-Ballingry road, believing that the lorries would return. The pickets' fears were realised when vehicles from the haulage contractors, Yuill and Dodds Ltd., arrived to continue to take coal from the site, worked by the L. A. W., Mining Company, from Hamilton.

By shortly after 9 am, there were 120 pickets at the service road leading to the site, but a large Police presence kept them from the vehicles which were able to get into the site. Inevitably, there were clashes between angry miners and Police and, by 10 am, there had been 20 arrests for what Police described as offences breaching public order. There was more aggravation shortly before noon when a convoy of five lorries left the site and headed through Lochgelly on their way west. By 1 pm, around 40 pickets had been arrested.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**15 June, 1984**  
**No secret deals, says McGahey**

A pledge that there would be no secret deals and no backdoor methods to end the strike was given on Monday by Mr Mick McGahey, the Scottish miners' leader and vice-president of the NUM. Addressing a Communist Party meeting in Lochgelly Centre Theatre, he was greeted with the chant of "Here we go" by the 400 crowd. Mr McGahey said the fight was for jobs and for the expansion of the mining industry. After fourteen weeks, plus four for Seafield and plus eight for Monktonhall, and taking into consideration the overtime ban, the miners had endured as much, if not more than their grandfathers in 1926. Mr McGahey said he wanted an end to the dispute but only on terms acceptable to the miners. They should also be thinking about miners aged 55 being allowed to retire from underground work. Referring to the Nottinghamshire "scabs" and the trouble on the picket lines, Mr McGahey said there was little or no trouble in areas which were all out.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**19 October, 1984**  
**'Mines at risk'**

Pit deputies in West Fife will respond overwhelmingly to the call for strike action on Thursday by their Trade Union, NACODS. Support for the strike locally, in a recent ballot, approached 100 per cent - and that backing looks set to bring the West Fife Coalfield to a complete standstill next week. Chairman of NACODS Scottish Executive, Mr Frank Shellon, - a branch official at Solsgirth - said this week the action was "regrettable," but Union members had been sickened by the dispute. He added that NACODS would continue to respond to genuine emergencies - situations involving fire, air and water - but he warned of potential deterioration underground.

Scottish General Secretary of NACODS, Mr Jimmy O'Connor, said on Wednesday that a number of Scottish mines could be in danger within 24 hours of the strike. Speaking at a meeting of the Scottish Executive at Hamilton, Mr O'Connor added that some pits may never re-open, with Castlehill and Seafield the two most in danger. That position was confirmed yesterday (Thursday) by the secretary of NACODS Castlehill branch, Mr John Gibb, who identified the water pumping system as the biggest danger. Asked whether the Union would treat any problems with the pumping system as an emergency, Mr Gibb said any situation would be dealt with, if or when it arose.

Meanwhile, the NCB's Scottish Area Director, Mr Albert Wheeler, claimed that a strike by NACODS would aggravate the dispute, leading to a deterioration of working conditions.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**8 February, 1985**  
**Jobs crisis in Fife coalfield**

As Kirkcaldy's Seafield-Frances complex suffered a massive 800 job losses this week,

the NUM gave assurance that there was no danger to pits in West Fife. Chairman of Dunfermline's Woodmill Strike Centre, Mr Bob Young, accused the board's Scottish area director, Mr Albert Wheeler, of intransigence in his handling of the dispute. Mr Young flatly denied that the director's claim of a rapid deterioration at the Fife pits applied to those in the west of the region - Comrie, Solsgirth and Castlehill.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**3 May, 1985**  
**Recovery cash for coalfield**

The clearest indication yet of the National Coal Board's future plans for the industry in Fife and Scotland came after a meeting with unions on Friday. Area director, Mr Albert Wheeler, announced that the flooded Polkemmet Colliery was to be abandoned, but the bad news for West Lothian was sweetened with some good news for Fife. The board plans to invest £20 million in the Scottish area this year - with a "reasonable share" coming to the pits of the Longannet Complex, Comrie Colliery and the Frances/Seafield complex, near Kirkcaldy. Fears that the Frances/Seafield complex would be abandoned were also lifted. The pits suffered badly from fire damage during the strike, and the two main production faces were lost. Two new coalfaces are to be developed at Seafield, with a promise of even more investment in future, depending on productivity.



Plate design by Iain Chalmers, Cowdenbeath.

## SEAFIELD BULLETIN

June 1985

### INTRODUCTION

"On returning to Seafield, as General Manager, I have now had time to study the colliery and its prospects. Having lost one third part of the pit during the strike we have had to drastically reconsider Seafield's future.

To this end and a very important meeting took place at Seafield on Tuesday 7th June 1985, attended by our Director and Deputy Director. Also in attendance were the union's full time officials including Mr. M. McGahey, N.U.M. President and his Secretary, Mr. E. Clarke. Local officials of the union and members of the management team were also present. Important decisions relative to Seafield were intimated to the meeting and it is right and proper that I tell my workforce, who are affected by these decisions, what the main points were.

A 5-year plan has been drawn up for Seafield but it was made clear that the results over the next two years would decide if the rest of the plan came to fruition.

There had been a slight improvement in Seafield's O.M.S. but it was still well below the national average.

We were also on the right course for cost savings but as much remains to be done.

Losses at Seafield have been horrendous and, indeed, in the present financial year we are estimating a £19m deficit.

**WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THIS POSITION WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE.**

We have to produce efficiently and safely to survive. To this end the Board propose replacement faces for L11 and D17. It was imperative that we get L15 operational by October and a new face in the Chemiss Seam shortly after. Sometime after the commencement of the new financial year, a third face, D19, would be commissioned. New faces require massive investments and unless we are able to produce in excess of 2.5 tonnes per manshift, we have no future. It was pointed out very strongly, that D51 face at the Frances, with 4-hour working day at the face, regularly produced over 2,000 tonnes per day. In that respect Seafield was not being asked to do anything spectacular - just regular and consistent achieving of our face tasks.

In a wide sphere, we must diversify our markets and move away from concentrating only power station fuel.

We need to expand our sales in the domestic and industrial markets. At present we import 300,000 tonnes for this market from England. Our aim is to double our sales in this side of the market and to this end we must be able to compete favourably with gas, electricity, oil, etc. Local authorities can play their part in the mining areas and protect jobs by converting to coal.

Again everything depends on our ability to produce at a price the customers will pay.

In the discussion that followed, no one disagreed on the main points of the meeting and Mr. McGahey, Scottish Miners President, pledged his members co-operation and commitment to make Seafield a viable proposition. This would assist the unions in their campaign to achieve an expanding industry in Scotland.

Concluding the meeting, it was evident that a future can exist for Seafield but only if we are strong enough to want it. Coal at the right price is the answer.

The only people who can lose Seafield are the men, union and management at the pit.

Similarly the only ones to save Seafield are the people at the pit - not in Green Park, not in London.

The coal is there for 100 years production - together let's go and get it out.

Continuing my policy of maximum communication, I will be arranging to meet as many men as possible on our return from the Annual Holidays."

J. SOUTER

COLLIERY GENERAL MANAGER.

## **MULTI-SHIFT PRODUCTION.**

By Max Meharry, Personnel Manager.

"Achieving the production targets as necessary to survive could be done by making more use of the dead time in our faces and major developments.

At present there is a 3-hour gap from the time the dayshift leaves until the backshift gets in. The same gap exists between backshift/nightshift and nightshift/dayshift.

This means our faces are lying dormant for 9 hours in every 24 hours. There is no other business or industry in any country in the world who would spend millions of pounds on a project then have it lying unproductive for 40% of the working day.

It is even more ridiculous in our case where we are fighting for a future for ourselves, our sons and their sons. It's like buying a pub in a busy High Street, but only opening in the morning session and closing every evening.

We must organise ourselves to continuously mine coal and drive roadways 24 hours a day every day. This will protect and create jobs.

We have approximately a 4-hour working shift and, if we changed over shifts at the face, we can achieve 6 working shifts at the coal face (i.e. 6 shifts of 4 hours duration). This could mean 5 production shifts and 1 maintenance shift every 24 hours.

The same would require to be done on our major development as well.

This policy would increase our productive capacity by over 60% and with this kind of effort the national average production figure of 2.5 tonnes per manshift would easily be overtaken and in this way consolidate our future.

It would completely transform the whole climate for Seafield and the East Fife Coalfield.

When the Director and Deputy Director go to London they would not need the begging bowl when they plead for investment for Seafield. They would be able to DEMAND money for a pit with ample reserves and a proven record of production levels, success and profitability.

Similarly the union campaign to expand our industry in Fife has more chance of success if they are able to show what the Fifers have achieved by their own efforts.

Multi-shift working will eventually be necessary as our coal faces get further away from the pit bottom and I'm sure all thinking miners appreciate this. Unless we multi-shift, you would arrive at the face for piece-time then start to make your way back to the pit bottom, and you know how silly that would be.

There is a great deal of work to be done to introduce multi-shift, transport, shift times, underground races, manpower, team members etc, but we must make a start now. If we are serious about wanting a successful pit, we will take multi-shift in our stride.

Frankly, I don't think we have any alternative."

---

**"The Glasgow Herald"**  
**2 September, 1986**  
**Miners return**

Seafield Colliery, Fife, has returned to normal after a 24-hour strike on Monday by more than 800 miners. After talks yesterday with general manager, Mr John Souter, National Union of Mineworkers delegate Mr Johnny Neilson said a further meeting would be held today. "We don't expect any more problems," he added.

**"Dunfermline Press"**  
**9 January, 1987**

**Fire raises fears over miners' jobs**

The 800 workforce at fire-ravaged Seafield Colliery - many of whom live in Dunfermline District - faced an uncertain future this week. After the disastrous fire which wiped out one of its two faces, the future of the Kirkcaldy pit is to be reassessed and British Coal has given no guarantees on future manning levels.

Miners returned to work on Tuesday after the pit was declared safe - six days after the fire broke out. Consultations between the coal board and the unions are due to begin next week, and a new plan for the colliery's future will be based on the surviving face. The NUM had hoped that the board would bring forward proposals for the development of the Frances end of the complex, which would allow entry to the Michael colliery reserves. An inquiry into the fire will start as soon as the immediate problems have been sorted out. It is not known how many men from Central and West Fife work at Seafield, but it is understood to be a fair number. Some of them had been switched to the Kirkcaldy mine when Comrie closed.

Seafield will no doubt be high on the agenda when a national organisation set up to protect the interests of coalfield communities meets in Fife for the first time on Friday. The South Yorkshire-based Coalfields Communities Campaign, launched by concerned local authorities following the long

miners' strike, will meet at the Lomond Centre, Glenrothes. It has close links with the mining trade unions and increasingly with British Coal.

**"Dunfermline Press"  
16 January, 1987  
Miners await job losses**

British Coal officials, unable to attend a meeting with unions at Seafield Colliery on Wednesday, were to have announced job losses, a union delegate revealed this week. Mr John Neilson, NUM delegate at the Kirkcaldy pit, told the *Press* that the coal board has decided there would be a reduction in manning levels following the disastrous fire at the start of the year. He said, "We are not aware of the precise figures but they will be conveyed to our members as quickly as possible." Following a meeting of British Coal officials on Monday, a meeting was arranged for Wednesday, with senior union representatives at the pit. Due to bad weather this meeting had to be cancelled.

Mr Neilson commented, "We recognise that we lost half of the pit's coal face in the fire and we expected some redundancies. The most important thing is that the pit is still working and we will now push for investment."

Mr George Bolton, a senior NUM official, refused to comment on the redundancy situation at the moment, saying that it was more important to gain a guarantee about the pit's future for the 800 workers presently in employment there. A British Coal spokesman was unavailable for comment.

1987

J. Souter (*Manager*) : J. Sorbie (*Depute*)  
J. Moran; V. Wilson; P. Tweed; W. Marshall  
(*Undermanagers*)  
J. P. Miller (*Mechanical Engineer*) :  
A. J. Thomson (*Electrical Engineer*)  
2077 / 279 / Household, industrial and steam  
coals. Barncraig, Six Foot, Chemiss,  
Bowhouse, Branxton and Dysart Main.

**February 1987  
Letter from Mr G. McAlpine,  
Director, British Coal**

*National Coal Board  
Scottish Area, Green Park, Greenend  
Edinburgh EH17 7PZ  
Telephone: 031 664 1461  
Director's Office*

*Dear Colleague,*

*With the serious fire at Seafield now sealed off, it is time to reflect on the intense activity that took place in the early days of the new year to save the entire colliery from being lost.*

*I am aware that, without the magnificent efforts of a large team working long hours both night and day, we would now be facing a much more serious position. Many of you willingly sacrificed the seasonal holiday with your family to devote your attention to the job of saving the pit. This was truly an example of all the best qualities of the Scottish mining industry.*

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank you personally for your particular contribution to the Seafield operation. Needless to say, the loss of a major coal face is a setback to the industry at a time when we are looking forward to meeting our objective of making the Scottish industry viable. But given the spirit that was shown over these vital hours at the pit, I know we have the will to overcome this loss and move forward to future success.*

*Yours Sincerely,*

*G. McAlpine  
Director*

**"Dunfermline Press"**

**10 July, 1987**

**Pitmen dig deep for a new high**

Fife pits have made a substantial contribution to a new productivity record set up by Scotland's coal workers. Scottish pitmen hit a new productivity high of 3.49 tonnes-a-manshift for the week ending 6th June, beating the previous best set up the month before, of 3.33 tonnes. The area's top performer was the C67 face at Scotland's newest colliery, Castlebridge, which headed Britain's faces of more than 209 cm. In the five weeks to 13th June, the Fife face notched up an average of 3522 tonnes a day - fifth top in Britain. Seafield's D19 came seventh in the same list, with 2292 tonnes a day. At Seafield Colliery, preparatory work is continuing on a £10m face replacement development.

1987
<p>J. Souter (<i>Manager</i>) : J. Sorbie (<i>Depute</i>)</p>
<p>J. Moran; V. Wilson; P. Tweed; W. Marshall (<i>Undermanagers</i>)</p>
<p>J. P. Miller (<i>Mechanical Engineer</i>) :</p>
<p>A. J. Thomson (<i>Electrical Engineer</i>)</p>
<p>2077 / 279</p>
<p>Household, industrial and steam coals.</p>
<p>Barncraig, Six Foot, Chemiss, Bowhouse, Branxton and Dysart Main.</p>

**"Dunfermline Press"**

**15 January, 1988**

**Miners on the move**

An unspecified number of miners from Seafield Colliery, Kirkcaldy, will be transferred on its closure to Longannet Complex. The decision on the future of the remaining miners, who have been assured that there will be no compulsory redundancies

following the closure announcement earlier this week, will be made at a meeting between British Coal and local trade unions on Monday. The 640 men employed at Seafield have already been offered redundancy terms or the possibility of transfer to another colliery.

The displaced men, who failed to meet production targets of 14,000 tonnes a week to keep their colliery open, were given a glimmer of hope in the announcement by Mr George McAlpine, British Coal's Scottish director, that £¾ million had been authorised for work to explore the possible re-opening of the neighbouring Frances Colliery.

1988 - as listed in Mines Report.
<p>J. Souter (<i>Manager</i>) : J. Sorbie (<i>Depute</i>)</p>
<p>P. Tweed; W. Marshall (<i>Undermanagers</i>) J. P. Miller (<i>Mechanical Engineer</i>) : A. J. Thomson (<i>Electrical Engineer</i>) 674 / 90</p>
<p>Household, industrial and steam coals. Dysart Main, Coronation.</p>
1988 - as reported by J. A. Forster, Depute Manager
<p>W. Kerr (<i>Manager</i>) : J. A. Forster (<i>Depute</i>)</p>
<p>P. Tweed; W. Marshall (<i>Undermanagers</i>) P. Murphy (<i>Mechanical Engineer</i>) : A. J. Thomson (<i>Electrical Engineer</i>)</p>
<p>[J. Souter, <i>Manager</i>, retired in April, 1987] [Willie Kerr appointed Seafield's final <i>Manager</i>.] [J. Sorbie, <i>Depute</i>, appointed manager, Bilston Glen, October 1987.] [J. A. Forster, undermanager, Bilston Glen, appointed <i>Depute</i>, October 1987.]</p>
<p>It is clear from the information kindly supplied by Tony Forster, HM Inspector of Mines (HSE), formerly Depute Manager at Seafield, that Mines Reports, printed some time ahead of the actual publication date, may not necessarily contain the most up-to-date information on colliery personnel.</p>

## THE END OF SEAFIELD COLLIERY

Although, in June, 1987, British Coal's Scottish area director, Mr George McAlpine, had announced that Seafield was on its way back into the black, with miners beating both Scottish and national production averages, just six months later, in January 1988, the same area director announced the closure of the colliery, claiming huge losses.

By that time the pit, which was to have employed 2500 men for 150 years, had only 640 miners and was just 34 years old.



The last visible trace of Seafield was removed in September, 1989, when the two massive winding towers, landmarks in the town and a potent symbol to all involved in mining, were demolished (see later).

### **"Dunfermline Press" 24 March, 1989 COALFIELD FIGHT GOES ON Miners' mark of sacrifice**

The "terrible but glorious year" of the miners' strike has entered mining mythology. Four years on, a major event is being mounted on 6th May to commemorate the "courage and sacrifice" of the Fife Mining Communities in the 12-month-long strike to try to protect pits, jobs and communities. The event will also provide a new focus for the ongoing fight to retain a coal mining industry in Scotland.

Originator of the idea was Mr Bert Paton, Cupar, a retired schoolteacher and ex-miner. To raise funds, he wrote a poem, illustrated by Ian McLeod, a Burntisland art teacher, and sold as a poster, with the blessing of John Neilson, the Seafield Colliery delegate, and Bobby O'Donnell, secretary of Levenmouth Trades Council.

### INITIATIVE

From that initiative a committee was formed, involving trades union officials, district councillors and interested individuals. Chairman is John Neilson and secretary, Mr Iain Chalmers, branch secretary, NUM, Frances.

A memorial plaque - to be sited at Lochore Meadows Country Park - has been designed by Ian McLeod and is being cast in bronze by Chic Laing, a retired foundryman from Burntisland.

The stone to receive it is to be prepared by students at Fife Technical College, Kirkcaldy. The event will begin with a march, with pipe and brass bands, from Lochore Institute on Saturday, 6th May. MPs, councillors and trades union representatives will join marching miners' families, whose ranks will be swelled by contingents from other parts of Scotland and England. The stone will be unveiled by retired NUM president Mick McGahey and blessed by the Rev. Hugh Ormiston, industrial chaplain at the Castlebridge Complex.

A mass meeting afterwards will be attended by Euro-MP Alex Falconer, Dunfermline East MP, Gordon Brown, Cathie Cunningham, Women's Support Group, and George Bolton, NUM Scottish president.

### ENTERTAINMENT

The rally will be followed by musical entertainment featuring rock bands and folk singer Dick Gaughan, who released an LP about the strike, has been invited to appear. As well as being a commemoration, the event is also intended to be a reunion for all those who were involved in the strike - the miners,



their wives and families, and representatives from all parts of Scotland of those who gave money and assistance to sustain the families.

### EXHIBITION

A special exhibition of mining memorabilia is being organised by the Fife museum curators; a special commemorative plate is being produced in a limited edition of 250 to mark the occasion; and a brochure on the strike, the people involved, the "victimised" miners, and the women's support groups. To fund the event, money will be raised by donations and street collections in the mining communities and appeals are already going out to trades unions and local authorities. Said a spokesman, "The event, of course, is not just a 'looking-back' exercise. Four years after the strike, the Scottish coalfield has been decimated and we are fighting desperately to retain the remaining collieries, threatened by the SSEB intention to buy foreign coal. With the music, the bands, the flags, the speakers and the unveiling ceremony, this can be an outstanding event in Scotland, leaving a permanent memento to future generations of the sacrifice and courage of their predecessors."

### 'Unforgettable'

Mr Iain Chalmers, 147 Mossbeath-side, Cowdenbeath, secretary of the organising committee, said they wanted to make the event an "unforgettable occasion."

"Not only will we commemorate the heroism of our mining communities in the most bitter strike in living memory, but we will project the fight to retain a coal-mining industry in Scotland," he said. "It will be a day of re-union - for those who shared the picket line and soup kitchen, who demonstrated and suffered together; for women who found talents they never knew they had; for children who joined in the activities, and for babies who were born in that historic year." It had been a year of sacrifice, poverty and desperation which had left its mark on all who had taken part.

"But even in that terrible time," he said, "there was a new-found community spirit and friendship - and indeed a host of humorous incidents to recall in future years. Some may want to try to forget it all, but that is impossible. It was an experience they will never forget, and they never should. Future generations will be left this permanent reminder of that terrible but glorious year in the lives of their parents. We hope this day of commemoration and re-union will be worthy of their sacrifice."

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One member of the present Benarty Heritage Preservation Group remembers Seafield's saddest day. Just two days after his election to the then Lochgelly and Cowdenbeath council, Willie Clarke had to deal with the aftermath of the Seafield Colliery disaster at Kirkcaldy which claimed the lives of seven miners after the steepest inclined coalface in Europe collapsed 2000 feet beneath the Firth of Forth.

"We were down there and standing on the face with the bodies still underneath," he recalls. "It was a terrible time."



**Seafield Colliery  
1954-1988**

## THE DEMOLITION OF THE SEAFIELD WINDING TOWERS

Following the 1984/85 strike, the Seafield miners went back to work with their heads held high but their time back underground was short. Towards the end of the strike, during which Kirkcaldy miners had almost unanimously stayed away (apart from safety workers), British Coal announced the closure of the Frances Pit and of the main production face at Seafield, both due to underground heatings which had got out of control.



*The scene underground at Seafield during the 1984/85 strike*

Five hundred jobs went at the Frances and 300 at Seafield, which limped on, until the inevitable, with management/workforce relations at an all-time low. Large crowds gathered, a safe distance away, to watch the demolition of the massive winding towers of Seafield Colliery which had a much shorter than expected life of only 34 years.



**"The Courier and Advertiser"  
24 April, 2003  
Mining disaster remembered**

Five miners who lost their lives when the roof of a Fife pit collapsed on them are set to be remembered 30 years on. The men had been working on a new seam at Kirkcaldy's Seafield Colliery on May 10, 1973, when disaster struck and they were trapped beneath tons of rubble. Now former colleagues have joined forces to create a memorial plaque in their honour which will be unveiled at the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) Club, in Glenrothes, on May 10. The unveiling will be performed by 80-year-old former Seafield miner Sandy Burnside. Also in attendance will be Scottish NUM president, Nicky Wilson, and Fife councillors Willie Aitken and Willie Clarke, both of whom were NUM officials at the Kirkcaldy Pit.

**"The Courier and Advertiser"  
May 12, 2003**

A plaque commemorating five Fife miners who lost their lives in a pit disaster 30 years ago was unveiled at the weekend. The five men died at Kirkcaldy's Seafield Colliery on May 10, 1973, while they were working on a new seam three miles out beneath the Firth of Forth. As a team of miners toiled 1600 feet underground, part of the roof suddenly gave way and nine men were buried under tons of rubble. Rescue teams battled for seven hours to reach the trapped men - sometimes digging with their bare hands and on one occasion having to flee a further roof fall - and brought four men out alive. But Robert Henderson (59) and James Comrie (49), from Buckhaven, Methil men James Holmes (53) and Thomas Kilpatrick (38), and Angus Guthrie (20), from Cardenden, perished. The tragedy rocked the tight-knit mining communities, but despite various memorials placed to commemorate every other mining disaster in Fife, their deaths have not been publicly marked until now. Members of the Fife Miners' Community Group got together and decided to mark the 30th anniversary of the disaster by placing a plaque at the CISWO (Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation) Club in Glenrothes.



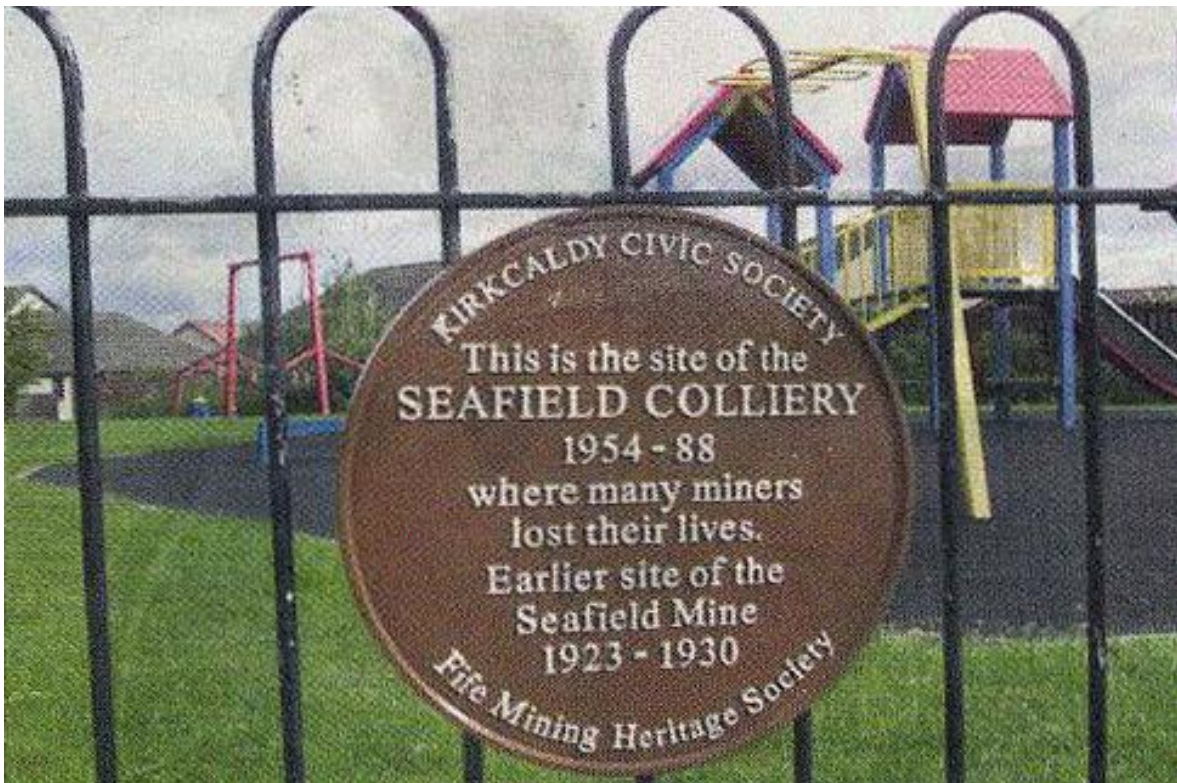
*At the ceremony were (from the left) National Union of Miners President Nicky Wilson, Dan Imrie, Councillor Willie Clarke and Sandy Burnside.*

Saturday's unveiling was performed by 80-years-old ex-miner Sandy Burnside, who was a workmate of the dead men but was on a different shift on the fateful day, while former industrial chaplain Hugh Ormiston performed the dedication ceremony.

Relatives of the men, MSPs, MPs and councillors were among those who attended the unveiling. Culture Group spokesman Dan Imrie, who worked at the Frances Pit in Dysart when the disaster happened, explained, "We decided to erect the plaque at the CISWO Club because memorials at the sites of some disasters have been vandalised. Many miners at the Seafield and other pits came from Glenrothes and a lot of them still come to the Club."

**"The Courier"**  
**29 September, 2004**

A commemorative plaque to mark the site of the old Seafield Colliery in Kirkcaldy has been unveiled. The special tribute which features in Seafield Playpark, was arranged by Kirkcaldy Civic Society and Fife Mining Heritage Society. Chairwoman of Kirkcaldy Civic Society, Ann Waters, said that because the playpark is on the site of the shafts of the colliery, it was felt the area should have some memorial to this historic industrial site of the past where so many men from Kirkcaldy, and nearby, worked.



**"Courier"**  
**11 June, 2005**  
**Pit hero Mr Willie Kerr**

A Fife man who was honoured for his bravery during a pit disaster more than 30 years ago has died at the age of 63. Willie Kerr, who came from Dundonald, spent all his working life in the mining industry. He joined the then National Coal Board in 1956 and stayed with the organisation for 40 years, before joining IMC Consultants in 1996. For many years Mr Kerr worked at the former

Seafield and Frances Collieries in Kirkcaldy, and was general manager of the joint complex when all operations finally ceased. He came to Seafield as a deputy oversman in 1967 and had been promoted to senior oversman when a roof fall at the colliery killed five miners in May, 1973. Mr Kerr, who is survived by his wife Moira and daughter Karen, was actively involved in helping to save two men trapped 1600 feet below the Firth of Forth. He was later awarded the British Empire Medal. He left Seafield for Monktonhall Colliery in 1982, but later returned as general manager.

Mr Kerr was a keen motorcyclist, refurbishing and rebuilding old racing machines. He was also an enthusiastic hill walker with several Munros to his credit.

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**The Mining Institute of Scotland Newsletter**  
**Volume 1, Issue 2, May 2010**

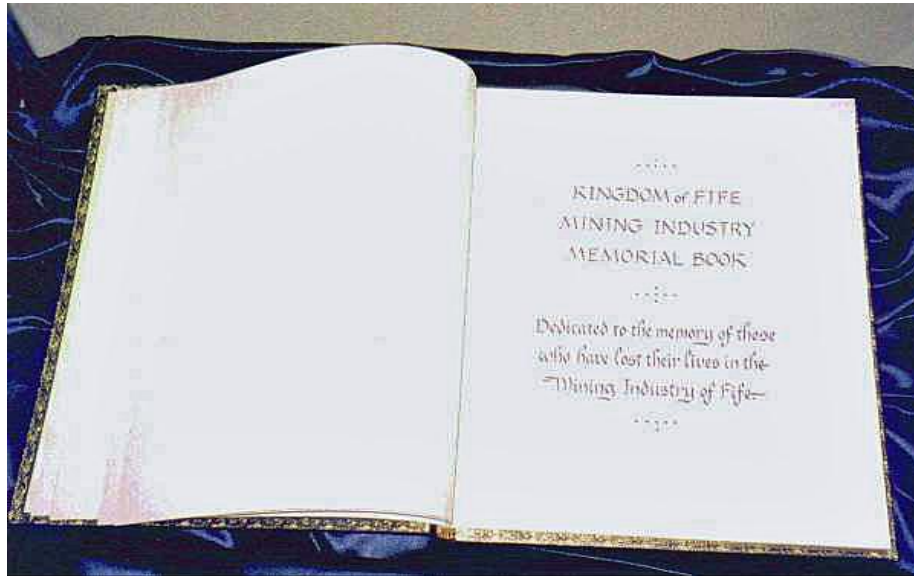
John T Mackie CEng FIMMM (1938-2010)

John was an undermanager at Barony Colliery, then Deputy Manager at Killoch Colliery before becoming Colliery Manager at Barony Colliery. Moving to Fife, John was Colliery Manager at Seafield Colliery and then a Production Manager. He then moved to HQ to be Head of Technical Services before becoming Opencast Director for Scotland. John was President of The Mining Institute of Scotland in 1987/88.

George M Caldow CEng FIMMM (1930-2010)

George was an undermanager and then Deputy Manager at Castlehill Mine. He became Colliery Manager at Comrie Colliery and then moved to Seafield Colliery. George was Senior Mining Engineer, Scottish Area, when he retired.

# Mining Deaths - Memorial Book



The Miners' Memorial Book, set up by Fife Council a number of years ago, records the deaths of miners and other pitworkers in the pits and mines of The Kingdom. This booklet does not purport to be a full historical record of all events at the Seafield Colliery as research was primarily confined to newspapers and documents from the West Fife area. Many of the incidents leading to the deaths of the miners in the following lists are likely to have been reported within the pages of the East Fife newspapers e.g. East Fife Mail, Fife Free Press.

MINER	AGE	DATE	YEAR	PIT	CAUSE
CAMPBELL, Thomas	50	28 Mar	1980	Seafield	Struck by debris
CARSON, Andrew			1973	Seafield	
CASSIDY, John	47	28 Feb	1985	Seafield	Crushed by machinery
COMRIE, James	49	10 May	1973	Seafield	Roof fall
DUNCAN, George	47	1 May	1968	Seafield	Fall of stone
GUTHRIE, Angus	20	10 May	1973	Seafield	Roof fall
HENDERSON, Robert	59	10 May	1973	Seafield	Roof fall
HOLMES, James	53	10 May	1973	Seafield	Roof fall
HUTT, John	46	27 Mar	1980	Seafield	Fall of roof
KILPATRICK, Thomas	38	10 May	1973	Seafield	Roof fall
NARDONE, Stephen Joseph	62	Apr	1972	Seafield	Killed by locomotive

2021

*A personal note.*

"The partial easing of Covid regulations permitted some 'normal' activities to resume and on 18th November 2021, I met up, in Dunfermline, with former Beath High School pals Bob Paxton, Jim Harrison and Archie Bennett, for lunch and a catch up blether. Jim's dad, Tom Harrison, and Archie's dad, John Bennett, had both been mine managers in Fife pits and in recent years I had received several pieces of mining memorabilia from both Jim and Archie. To my delight, Jim brought along some more materials and it is my great pleasure to include here two articles which featured Seafield Colliery where Jim's dad had served as assistant pit manager."

*Chris Sparling*

## SCOTTISH MINER

NOVEMBER, 1976

No. 233

# DOWN YOUR PIT

## Seafield's steep slopes

Getting coal is universally accepted as one of the most arduous, hazardous, and unenviable tasks there is. The dangers of mining are fairly well known, especially during periods of disputes in the industry.

Mechanisation of the industry, with mechanical coal cutting equipment and other modern innovations, has transformed it into a highly complex engineering process.

Seafield Colliery in Kirkcaldy, Fife, is an example of all that has changed in the industry over the decades, but here the problems of producing coal are magnified many times over.

For the coal seams at Seafield don't lie horizontally but at varying angles up to just over 45 degrees. Here miners and coal shearers traverse up and down slopes which mountain goats would balk at.

Mining horizontally is bad and dangerous enough, but climbing the underground hills at Seafield requires an endurance and capacity for which even £100 a week would be paltry reward.

### Steep

To examine the miners' lot in the steep seams of Seafield which 3½ miles under the Forth estuary, the 'Scottish Miner' went to meet the men and the conditions which prevail there.



*About to go down the pit. Left to right - George Montgomery, NUM Mechanical and Safety Engineer; assistant pit manager Mr Tom Harrison; 'Scottish Miners' Editor Jim Tait, and Stewart Crouther who is researching the next edition of the History of the Scottish Miners.*

Just as miners have to climb the slopes, so do the heavy coal cutting shearers which are hauled up and down the coal face by large chains. The strain on the haulage equipment is immense and leads to many breakdowns and lost production.

"We hold the world record for haulage breakdowns," claims pit delegate Jimmy Ritchie. Breakdowns through broken chains and haulage driving gear are regular events which inevitably cause a drop in coal production.

To obviate this Mr Ritchie contends that more faces should be opened up and production alternated between them on a daily basis. On any one day one face would be out of production while at the same time being ready to produce so that, if there is a breakdown, production can be switched to the vacant faceline., thereby maintaining overall production output.

### Results

The NUM pit committee is unanimous in its demand for the technique of retreat mining at Seafield which the say would, in the long run, give better production results, ease transportation difficulties and manriding problems.

The argument of retreat or advance will continue at Seafield, but the NUM pit committee claim that production was never higher than when the retreat method was used back in 1970.



*Seafield NUM branch officials (left to right) - back: Jimmy Ritchie, NUM pit delegate; Jim Scott, and John Rankine. Front: Frank King, treasurer; Johnny Neilson; Jimmy Jenkins; Willie Aird, chairman; and SCEBTA secretary, John Nicol.*

Another problem at the Fife pit is the thorny one of outside private contractors, and in this case it is the Cementation Company who are employed driving access roads. Mr Jimmy Ritchie states that the workers employed by this company (who are NUM members) are paid differently than those employed by the NCB. The Cementation employees get 'contract' payments for the rate of development while NCB employees doing the same job get their basic rate. The wrangle over this is also likely to continue, but the pit committee feel that until it is satisfactorily resolved harmony among the men will be difficult to maintain.

The lack of manriding facilities from the main mines to the face lines, distances can be as much as 1½ miles, is a major problem especially for older men.

These distances of course have to be walked. After a hard shift at the face the prospect of trekking back to the manriding bogeys is a daunting one. Quicker transportation would increase the time spent at the face and therefore increase production, the committee claim.

The notorious 'slope dook' is a road with a gradient of 1:3 in parts which has to be walked needlessly, states pit committee member Johnny Neilson.

For older men a walk back up the 'slope dook' can take three quarters of an hour and much daily strain to the heart.



## Water

For men working in bad water conditions (being under the Forth, millions of gallons a day seep into Seafield's workings), a special facility has been granted to get the men to the pithead as soon as possible which prevents them from standing around in wet clothes for long periods.

A £1-a-day payment is the average for those who have to work in water, but it is a perk which they would all prefer to do without. The only water which is welcome is the hot water in the pit baths after a day's work.



*'Lousing time' - Seafield miners leaving the cage at the end of their shift.*

These other hazards are common to many pits, but the uniqueness of Seafield's steep seams is the daily hazard which confronts the miners. Under horizontal mining for example falls of ground can be relatively accident free, but at Seafield it takes on bizarre proportions. One man was killed not so long ago when a large piece of stone broke away from the roof and hurtled down the seam slope scything steel pit props like matchwood and taking the miner in its careering path.

## Disaster

The Seafield disaster of May 1973, when five men were killed, highlighted the inherent dangers of steep seam mining. To prevent objects flying down hill, deflectors on pit props have been introduced which deflect the objects away from the working areas.

To investigate the problems of steep seams, a steep seams committee has been set up by the NCB which will, when it has completed its job, make recommendations for increased safety.

The committee has visited Seafield and the pit committee felt that it should have had consultations with them to find out the NUM's particular point of view on its work.

But while there are innate difficulties in steep seam mining, pit delegate Jimmy Ritchie asserts that these can be overcome and coal can be produced as efficiently as under horizontal conditions.

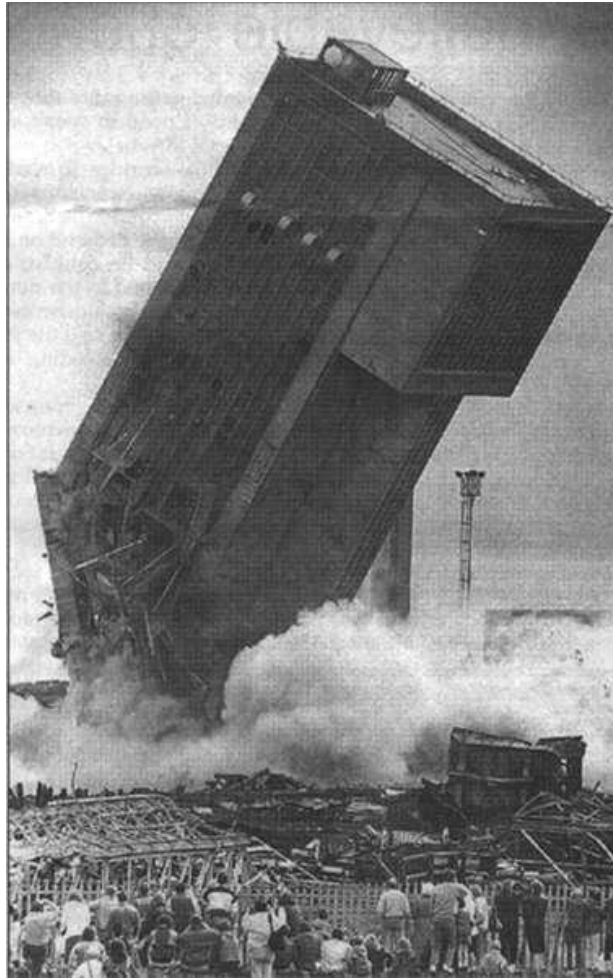
## Retirement

Before the 'Scottish Miner' left, the strong views of the NUM branch were made known on the union's claim for early retirement and the need for training facilities so that a new generation of miners can be brought into the industry to replace those who will leave. There is a clear determination at Seafield that early retirement must be conceded, if not the pit committee predict serious trouble.

The Fife Today Newsroom reported on Friday, 10 August, 2018

***Fife Nostalgia: The 'burial' of Seafield***

A loud bang, a rumble, then a cloud of dust and it was all over. It was little wonder that hearts were heavy as many of the ex-miners watched what had been their second home and the industry they had given the best years of their lives to, reduced to a pile of bricks and mortar. Understandably, emotions ran high on as crowds gathered to watch the 144 foot, 2700 tonne tower topple to the ground. They described it as the 'burial' of Seafield and that was exactly how it felt – with hundreds of mourners gathered to pay their last respects.



*The first tower comes down.*

Among them was former miner Tom Brown of the Lang Toun's Dunearn Drive, who had worked down the pit for 20 years. "Nobody wants workers like us any more," he said, "our day is past." Tom and some of his former workmates had turned up to say goodbye to the place where they spent the best years of their working lives at a time when coal mining was thriving in Fife. "I remember the times men hundreds upon hundreds of men worked in there in the days before Margaret Thatcher came to power," he said. "Now look at it – a pile of rubble."

Demolition experts used almost 60 pounds of carefully placed explosives to bring down the huge tower which fell first vertically as the four legs crumbled, then horizontally as the rest of the massive structure tumbled to the ground.

## MINING AT SEAFIELD KIRKCALDY

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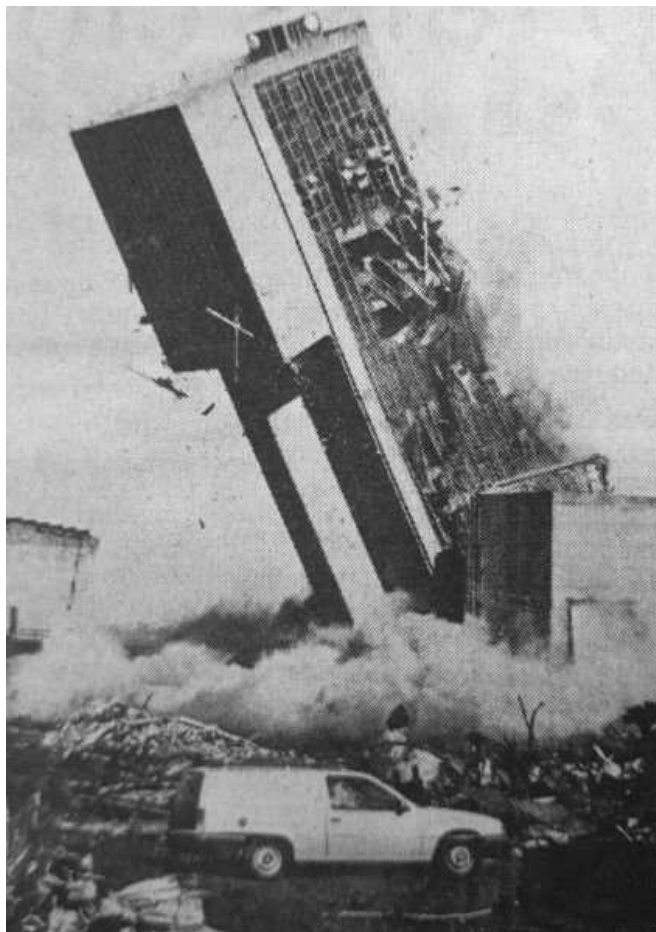
Spectators were kept well back, with a 200 metre exclusion zone around the tower, taking in a stretch of the Kirkcaldy-Burntisland coast road which was closed to traffic for 10 minutes. People flocked round the perimeter fences with cameras to catch the spectacle, although many missed the actual moment as it was over in just a few seconds.

The first notice anyone had that it was about to go was a loud bang like a gunshot. Then the legs crumpled beneath the tower as it jumped back and fell towards the road in a huge cloud of dust which moved across the road and into the fields behind.

The button was pressed by 17-year-old Karen Kerr, daughter of colliery manager William Kerr. After the demolition the crowds dispersed quickly, reflecting on the end of the Fife coal mining industry as they knew it.

Joel Sinclair of Taylor Avenue, Cowdenbeath, began working at Seafield soon after it opened in 1958. At that time he was a shot firer, working his way up to become colliery oversman before he retired in 1983. "I saw the decline of the industry right the way through, but today really brings it home," he said. "That pit was our second home and we spent most of our lives down there so it is a bit emotional to see it brought down like that. It is even worse because there are still millions of tonnes of quality coal down there and the men expected Seafield to be there for decades to come." Kirkcaldy man Alex Cameron was at Seafield from the beginning of the construction right through to completion. I felt a real sense of achievement seeing those towers going up and it was very sad to watch than coming down after all that time," he said.

The second and larger of the towers came down just a few days later, levelling one of Kirkcaldy's most famous landmarks which had stood for 35 years on the site of the former pit.



*The second tower comes down.*

SEAFIELD  
**Newsletter**  
No. 1 APRIL 1987

# We make the 4 tonne target

The future for Seafield Colliery has been given a considerable boost from the recent productivity achievement of four tonnes a manshift.

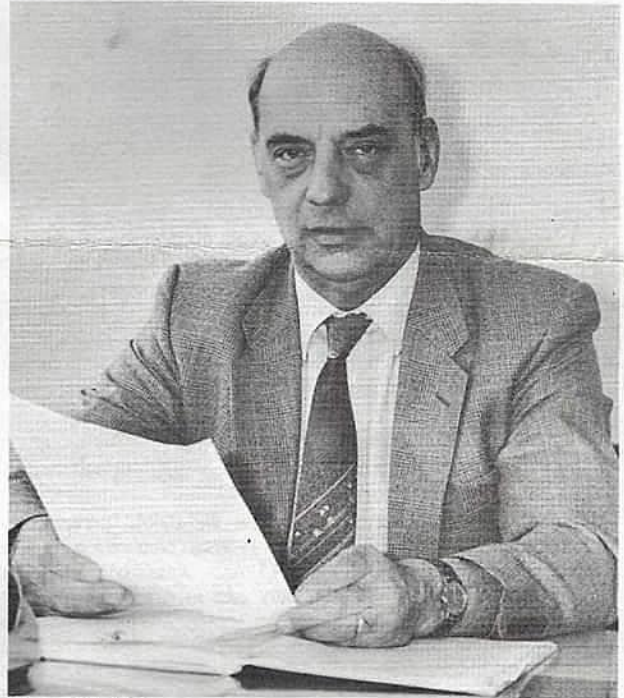
This follows the very difficult period we all faced after the New Year fire which resulted in the loss of a face. When we returned to the pit, survival targets were set for our sole remaining face and it is pleasing to see that we are now achieving them. We now have to prove that we can meet these targets on a consistent basis if we are to ensure a future for the pit.

The Technical problems on D19 which held us back for a time have now all been successfully resolved. Face operations have been simplified with the use of just a single shearer which has made the control of face operations much easier.

Seafield is and will remain a single face pit. D19 has more than two years life and what we must do is make the machinery work as hard as possible to give us good rates of production. That is the way ahead to unlock more investment for the pit. After all D19 is equipped with the most up-to-date mining technology designed to achieve the highest tonnages.

New incentives have been agreed with the face men so that we should now be able to work at the maximum and get the double result of better output and better wages. Overall our manpower has been trimmed to the correct level to ensure that we can meet our targets.

We all know how important it is to keep our pit safe and of the risk we face from the problem of spontaneous combustion. That is why we have introduced the use of nitrogen to reduce the risk of any further fires putting the pit in jeopardy. You will be able to read about this elsewhere in this new-style newsletter which we intend to



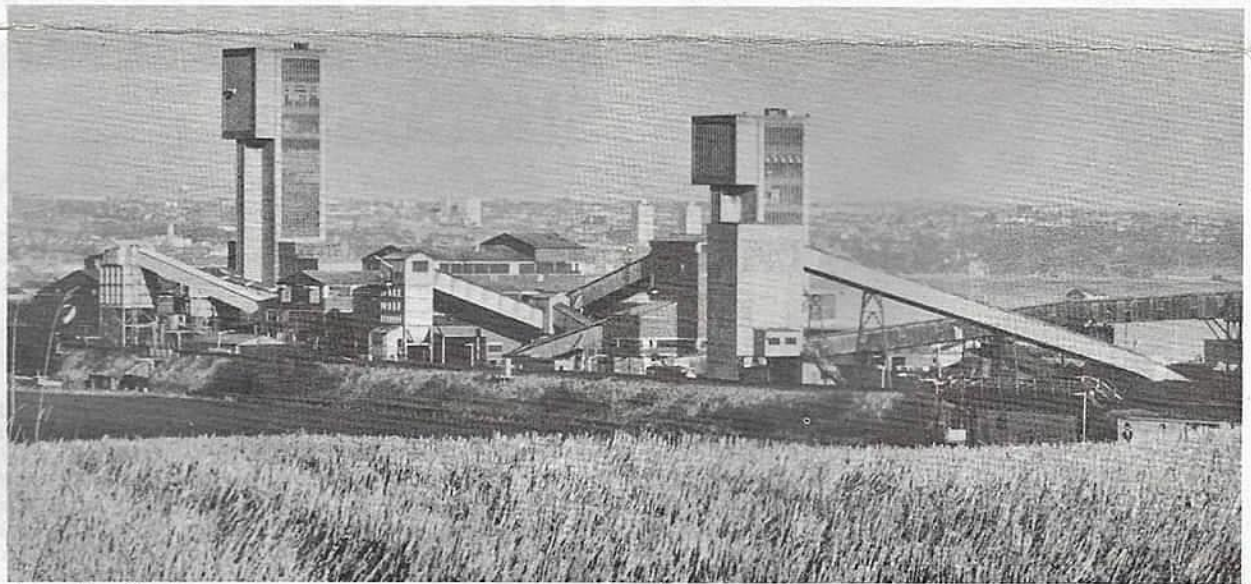
Manager John Souter

publish regularly to keep you up-to-date with everything that is going on.

We have achieved the first of our

targets. Let us keep at it and ensure a good future for everyone at Seafield.

John Souter, Manager



A general view of the colliery



*A supply of nitrogen is delivered and stored as part of the drive to prevent heatings*

## Nitrogen used to stop heatings

Now that the colliery has made such a good recovery from the fire everything possible is being done to prevent a recurrence.

Because of the ever-present risk of heatings it was decided to introduce nitrogen into the D17 faceline to cut the oxygen and thus reduce the risk in an area where a heating could occur.

"By reducing the oxygen in the

airflow we should prevent any spontaneous combustion in the D17 Area which could put our only face at risk," said manager John Souter. "We have a problem with spontaneous combustion and that's why it is important that we do everything possible to protect our coaling operation."

He stressed that the nitrogen is not a hazard to anyone working

underground. The gas is delivered by tanker to a surface tank and is taken by a series of pipes to the D17 area. Controlled quantities are released into the airflow which passes along D17.

"This has the effect of reducing the oxygen content in that area and should prevent any heatings occurring," added Mr Souter. "The nitrogen is actually passing away

from the D19 airflow and any minute quantities reaching that area will be so diluted to be totally harmless.

"Every possible step is being taken to try and ensure the future of our pit and this should remove a lot of worry."



*Alan Thomson, deputy chief electrical engineer puts a new message on the moving text machine*

## Our 40 pit safety success

A big improvement in safety standards has resulted from Seafield's involvement in the national 40-pit safety campaign.

Safety Engineer Jim Johnston said: "We have improved and we should take the credit for that, but there is still room for further improvement. We have shown a 41 per cent improvement in our safety standards."

To keep the accent on safety Mr Johnston is planning a special safety competition with appropriate prizes.

"You have to think safety all the time and keep ringing the changes. We think that there are some good ideas around and this competition will be a good way of tapping them."

A safety committee has played a big part in helping the 40-pit safety

drive by looking at all aspects of safety and making changes and recommendations where necessary.

Safety standards on manriding, tracks and walkways have all been improved and everyone in the pit is actively encouraged to be aware of his own working environment and be constantly aware of the dangers.

Let us all strive to keep that safety improvement going.



*A package of girders ready to go underground*

## Packed up for production

The huge rates of advance made possible by the heavy duty equipment on D19 face rely very heavily on good supplies of materials.

This is being helped by the pre-packing of certain materials for ease of transport to the face.

Delivered ready packaged by British Steel all the components necessary for four sets of girders are together including all the fittings such as bolts and struts. They are bound together with steel wire and sent as a single unit to the gate roads for erection as the face advances.

With a productivity rate of four tonnes a manshift now being achieved the main gate and tail gate have to advance at least 4 metres a day.

Said Deputy Manager Jim Sorbie: "It's absolutely essential that we have the supplies forward

to meet that target.

"Packaging the girders in this way is just one good example of what we can do to keep everything running. It means that handling is much more efficient and there is also a safety benefit in the sense that with fewer of the components being manhandled we have fewer laceration injuries.

"The whole package is easily handled from the pithead to the gate road. Using tackle one man can lift the package on to a bogey."

The message clearly is that the face should never wait for materials.



*Cement goes down a tonne at a time*

Also packaged for easy delivery are supplies of cement. The cement is delivered to the pit on one tonne

palates and these are transported directly to the underground transport system.

## Tidy and safe £5 safety winners

A campaign is on at Seafield to encourage pit tidiness.

Making sure that materials are neatly stacked on roadways is a key message in the campaign which aims to combine the theme of safety and productivity.

"A safe pit is an efficient pit," says Deputy Manager Jim Sorbie. "men who trip and fall as a result of material being strewn around a roadway don't make any contribution to the pit."

Mr Sorbie adds that in general tidiness it is also important to ensure that salvaged material is moved away quickly and not left lying around.

Congratulations to the inventive five who came up with ideas to make underground stretcher journeys more comfortable.

The £5 a head winners in the pit competition are D. Geer, pumpman; Gordon Good, sampler; Brian West, sampler; J. Warrender,

engineer; and J. Kelty, workman.

"We had an excellent response," said safety engineer Jim Johnston. "The five winners all submitted good drawings with their ideas and now we are examining them to see if they can be implemented."

# Follow the transport rules

The movement of heavy equipment underground to support the operations on the face means that very close attention must be paid to the Manager's Transport Rules.

Everyone must make themselves familiar with the rules so that the

equipment can be transported both safely and efficiently.

"If for any reason it is thought that any one of the rules is lacking in any way it is the duty of the workmen to come to the manager and have them revised," said

Deputy Manager Jim Sorbie. "The rules are there to be obeyed and they must be workable."

With heavier loads it is most important that proper load binders are attached and that they are securely attached to the vehicle. Wire and

hemp ropes must not be used.

Anyone working on a haulage must be authorised to do so.

"That is particularly important now that we are working with a smaller workforce," said Mr Sorbie.

## Surface control

The familiar figure of Jimmy Hay is the man who is able to keep a finger on the pulse of the pit.

Jimmy is control room operator and he can observe most of the underground operations at a glance.

He said: "We can control most of the conveyors from the surface and keep a minute by minute watch on everything that is going on. If there is a stoppage for any reason we can pick it up right away and advise officials who will take the necessary action to get moving again."

The control room also plays an important part in environmental monitoring.

"Instant readouts can pinpoint any problems," said Manager John Souter. "In fact it was a read out from the control room that first alerted us to the major fire. So more and more it is becoming the nerve centre of the pit."



Control room operator Jimmy Hay keeps in touch



The well equipped medical centre

## Now hear this

Skin and hearing care are just two important ingredients in the mix of health attention from the Seafield medical centre.

Nursing Sister Mrs Janice Balmain said: "We are very keen on general health education. We don't give lectures as such, but we do pass on advice on questions of general health because we believe prevention is easier than curing."

Where men are working in noisy areas their hearing is monitored on a regular basis to ensure there is no impairment and the Sister encourages them to use available ear protection.

"Where men are handling cement and other materials we also urge them to look after their hands and to wear gloves," added Sister Balmain. "It all helps to keep us a healthy pit."



# SCOTTISH MINER



NUM Scottish Area

No 1 (NEW SERIES) DECEMBER 1987

SCEBTA

## SAVE THE SEAFIELD!

**SCOTTISH NUM** President George Bolton has pledged that the union will pull out all the stops to ensure that Seafield survives. And already support for the NUM's campaign to retain the colliery — an integral part of the Scottish coalfield — is flooding in.

"Seafield Colliery is far too important a component of the Scottish

coal industry and Scottish economy to contemplate closure. It can and must be saved," declared Mr. Bolton.

The importance of the Seafield, he stressed, extended even beyond the 640 jobs of the men at the pit and its critical economic role in the local Fife economy.

"Seafield's importance goes far beyond the pit itself," said Mr. Bolton. "It produces a very high-quality, low-sulphur coal. Therefore, a successful Seafield is a major contributor to the economic health of the Scottish coal industry and to potential export markets in Scandinavia.

"It would also create a very powerful argument to secure the £100 million development of the linked Frances Colliery — giving a 70 to 80 year future for an extra 1,000 mining jobs."

### DUST

He went on to praise the efforts of the Seafield miners who have battled against difficult circumstances to keep production rolling.

"Our members have been fighting a fire since last Christmas. That has led to problems with dust in the atmosphere from the cement used to contain the fire.

"Fracturing roof supports in a pit



**BOLTON — no closure**

where, in 1973, five men died and four were trapped when supports collapsed, have also placed the men under mental pressure. Recently, there have also been problems with conveying systems.

"But the men have overcome these hurdles and have clawed their way back to an output of 2,000 tonnes a day. A remarkable achievement given that there are only 640 men at the pit."

Support and sympathy for the Seafield men was quick to flow in on the heels of the British Coal ultimatum and deadline of January 11 for reaching production targets.

Seafield branch chairman Jimmy Lamond said, "The men are determined to do everything possible to increase production.

"We shall be launching a campaign to save Seafield and hope to meet councillors and MPs as soon as possible."

### HARSH

Fife Labour MPs Henry McLeish and Lewis Moonie called for an extension of the deadline. Dr. Moonie described British Coal's six week period as "ridiculously short".

He was echoed by Councillor Bob

(Continued on page 2)

## WE'RE BACK!

*The Scottish Miner is back. We will be appearing in our new format 7 times a year to express the news and views of the Scottish NUM and SCEBTA.*

*We welcome readers' letters, your opinions on the current issues and branch news items.*

*Send your letters to Graham Ogilvy, Scottish Miner, NUM (Scottish Area), 5 Hillside Crescent, Edinburgh EH7 5DZ.*

# NO PIT CLOSURES



# SEAFIELD SUPPORT

(Continued from page 1)

King, Convenor of Kirkcaldy District Council who hit out at the "extremely harsh and almost unrealistic" time scale. He added: "Despite all the problems, it's not so long ago that British Coal were praising the workforce. Now they are booting them."

Mid Scotland and Fife Euro MP, Alex Falconer, was among the first to pledge "every possible support, financial, moral and physical" to resist the closure.

He told the 'Scottish Miner' that he had made representations to the Commission's energy representative and was unhappy at the direction of energy policy within the EEC.

"British Coal have ensured that

the miners of the Seafield and their families will have a grim Christmas under the shadow of possible closure," he said. "But the EEC is just as guilty. They would like to see coal mining centralised with the loss of 90,000 jobs throughout Europe. We have to tackle them on their energy policy."

Already a wide spectrum of opinion is coming behind the Seafield men, laying the foundations for the sort of broad alliance of trade unions, political parties, community groups and businessmen which can make British Coal think again.

## KNOCK-ON

Jim Brodie, secretary of Kirkcaldy Chamber of Commerce, said that the closure of Seafield would be



Photo: Alan Wylie

FALCONER — full support

disastrous. He continued, "If closure looks like becoming a reality, we will certainly be making representations to British Coal to keep the colliery open."

Adding, "We estimate £1 million a week would be lost from the Fife economy through lack of spending power from wages and the knock-on effect on transport, suppliers, shops and services."

# SCEBTA NEWS

*AS GENERAL Secretary of SCEBTA since 1983, I have seen many changes in our organisation. Owing to falling numbers through British Coal's closure programme, we have had to make many changes. These include cutting the size of our Executive Committee, moving our office from Glasgow to Edinburgh and, in general, cost saving where possible without being detrimental to the service we give members. We are now settled in our new offices, which we share with our colleagues in Scottish Area NUM; this should allow us to cut our administration costs and maintain our services.*

*In discussions with the Scottish Area Officials we decided to try to re-establish a regular Newsletter to both our respective memberships on a joint basis, and both our Executive Committees agreed to this. This is the first edition of our joint venture and we must try to ensure it can continue. Communication is vitally important in our Coalfield; it lets you the members know what is going on in other pits as well as what is happening on the national scene, and equally important we hope for a feedback from our membership on issues that are relevant. That is why I hope this venture is successful, and I am sure it will lead to greater understanding and unity in our Coalfield.*

**ANDREW CRAWFORD, General Secretary, SCEBTA**

## SCOTTISH MINER

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# ALAN WYLIE

## FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHER

(NUJ member)

Photographer to the Scottish Trade Union and Labour Movement

**For details:** Alan Wylie,  
9 Kelbourne Street,  
Glasgow G20 8PE  
Tel: 041-946 6906

## Justice for sacked men

SCOTTISH MINERS have been keeping up their campaign for justice for their victimised colleagues.

There have been many successes recently with many welcome reinstatements — but the campaign goes on. In October a sponsored cycle run from the NUM offices in Edinburgh to Cumnock — 62 miles in all — raised vital cash.

Six young miners took part. But the Rev Hugh Ormiston was first past the finishing post!

This month, on 10th December, a benefit concert for the dismissed men and their families will be held in Edinburgh. We also hear that Glasgow Trades Council is collecting for a Xmas boost for the families.

## From Russia with love

If you were one of the victimised miners who travelled to the Soviet Union on August for a family holiday as guests of the Soviet Miners — we want to hear from you.

Send letters and photos (we will return them) to:

Scottish Miner  
NUM (Scottish Area)  
5 Hillside Crescent  
Edinburgh EH7 5DZ

## FIFE PIT PLATES

THE NUM Seafield Branch has hit on a novel way to raise funds for a new banner. They are issuing a series of plates depicting Fife Collieries.

The plates will be in editions of only 200 per issue. The first of the series is, appropriately enough, "Seafield Colliery". The plates cost £10 each.

Cheques and postal orders should be made out to 'Seafield Banner' and sent to c/o Iain Chalmers, 147 Moss Side Road, Cowdenbeath, Fife.

The price is inclusive of postage.

## MICK'S MEMOIRS



Mick at his last national Annual Conference — Rothesay 1987

THE SCOTTISH MINER extends warm best wishes to past President Michael McGahey on his retirement. Michael's retiral in the summer was widely covered in the media. Praise came from a wide cross-section of society reflecting the respect he has earned in a life-time devoted to the mining industry.

Michael is keeping up his mining connections as a trustee of the Scottish Mining Museum and is currently working on his memoirs which are eagerly awaited.

# SAFETY FIRST!

by ADAM SMITH, the union's safety engineer

DESPITE the Mines and Quarries Act, Mining Regulations, Production Instructions, Officials, Safety staff, H.M. Inspectors of Mines and Workmen's Inspectors — we are still apparently unable to drastically reduce the accident rate and cut the number of 'near misses'.

Safety is the concern of everyone at the place of work and improvements can only be achieved by the collective co-operation and mutual respect of all concerned.

To cut accidents from falls of roof and coal from the coal face, we require the manager to provide support rules and adequate supplies of materials for the roof support. Officials and workmen must ensure that those support rules are complied with.

In thick coal seams liable to heavy 'flushing' and where men are expected to support the roof above the powered support canopies, it is only reasonable that workmen should

have some protection from this known hazard.

## PROTECT

There are many cases in the past of fatalities and very serious accidents from falls of coal and stone from the face of development drivages.

A system of support is required to protect persons involved with the drilling operations etc. at such work places.

## CONVEYORS

Following a serious accident involving the transport of material supplies on an armoured flexible conveyor, British Coal issued instructions to management that materials should not be transported by this method. (This does not apply to face conveyors on the face line).

This instruction was issued for the sole purpose of reducing accidents and should be strictly adhered to by all persons concerned. At the same time, every effort should be made to have adequate haulage supply



systems throughout the colliery — men should not be expected to manhandle heavy equipment and supplies for several hundred feet because a haulage system has not been timeously advanced.

In my opinion, if materials are required to be transported on a belt conveyor (if proper haulage facilities are not available) then the method of doing so should be included in the Manager's Conveyor Transport Rules.

Safety is the responsibility of everyone. Thanks to the stout fight put up by previous generations of miners, workmen have the legal right to have Workmen's Inspectors appointed. These inspectors, by diligently applying themselves at all times, can and should assist in reducing accidents.

## SCOTTISH MINERS' RELIEF FUND BENEFIT CONCERT

*Featuring*

**HORSE WE FREE KINGS SWAMP TRASH THE ALICE HOUSE**

At THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH on THURSDAY 10th DECEMBER — 7 o'clock LATE

Tickets £5

BAR

Details: Scottish Area NUM

**COMING SOON**

*... in your next issue of the Scottish Miner ...*

... Seafield update, Saville and Kerevan on the case for Scottish Coal, a look at an important new study of A.J. Cook, the legendary miners' leader ...

**... AND MUCH, MUCH MORE ...**

# SELLING SCOTTISH COAL

by ERIC CLARKE, General Secretary, NUM Scottish Area

**TOO OFTEN** trade unions are portrayed in the media as negative with few ideas of their own.

That is one thing the Scottish NUM cannot be accused of. We have taken and are taking a number of new and imaginative steps to SELL SCOTTISH COAL and find new markets.

Earlier this year we sent a delegation to Belfast to meet with the Chairman of the Electricity Board of Ireland. Top of the agenda was phase 2 of the conversion of Kilroot power station from oil to coal.

Our winning of the contract for phase 1 meant a market for over 1

million tonnes of coal a year and the securing of mining jobs in Ayrshire along with jobs in transport and related services.

Hopes are high that we will win phase 2 of Kilroot.

Another success came recently when we finally succeeded in persuading the CEBG to take the equivalent of 30,000 tonnes of coal by wire to the South. It shows that perseverance and lobbying can win.

Our next goal is to persuade the Scandinavian countries to buy Scottish coal. They are switching from nuclear and our low-sulphur coal is attractive to environmentally conscious countries.

A high-powered delegation from the STUC, MPs, NUM and Local



Photo: Alan Wylie

Councils will travel to Scandinavia shortly for discussions.

We are making the hard sell — and winning through.

## Workshops — a crucial role

by NICKY WILSON, President SCEBTA

**IN THIS** first edition of the new *Scottish Miner*, which will be a joint SCEBTA/Scottish Area NUM journal, I would like to concentrate on the Workshop situation in Scotland.

We are left with one engineering Workshop in Scotland — Cowdenbeath. In recent years Newbattle and Lugar Workshops have been closed. At Cowdenbeath the workforce has also been rundown to just over 100 men. As a Union we have opposed the closure and rundown programme on various grounds.

### HIGHLY SKILLED

The jobs lost in the Workshops were, for the most part, of a highly skilled type. So British Coal has lost a tremendous amount of experience and technological know-how, which should have been utilised and passed on through a continuation of the apprentice scheme — which has had no recruitment in Scottish Workshops since 1979. The Workshop continues to give the Scottish coalfield a good and reliable service,

and has proved essential for overcoming problems associated with mining equipment used in our pits.

### CASE STUDY

A recent case study into British Coal Workshops carried out by George Kerevan and Richard Saville pointed out the shortfalls of the programme for Workshops adopted by British Coal. These included:—

a) not allowing the Workshops to manufacture equipment that they had developed technologically, but instead passing it on to the private sector.

b) Workshops being starved of investment and having to use machine tools which are decades old.

c) managerial failures starving Scottish Workshops of spares, therefore holding up the work process.

The case study goes on to propose various ways of reversing the trend of closure and rundown in the Workshops to a situation where Cowdenbeath could be a commercially viable expanding operation.

Nationally, the NUM have set up a Workshops Advisory Body, which we as an Area are part of. Recently

they asked for submissions to be made for discussion. Cowdenbeath Branch (SCEBTA) provided us with 4 submissions, which we sent to the Advisory Body. These covered areas of training and re-training in new technology, work being given to private companies without British Coal Workshops being considered, changing the concept of Workshops from being just a breakdown service for pits to doing work for outside industries and utilising the facilities available as a skill centre where apprentices from other industries could be trained.

Our Representatives on this Advisory Body will be pressing for implementation of these points, which we feel will secure a future for Workshops, with a retention of the skills and modernisation of machinery which is required.

Workforces at our Collieries tend not to identify with our colleagues in the Workshops, but we must remember that to have efficient Collieries, we require Workshops which are able to service their needs, and therefore our Workshops are a crucial part of our Coalmining industry.



Photo: Alan Wylie

*Lochore Meadows: Heritage strengthens the case for coal*

# LEST WE FORGET

**TWENTY YEARS** after the Michael Colliery disaster claimed the lives of 7 miners at the East Wemyss pit, SCEBTA members at Cowdenbeath Workshops are planning a memorial to commemorate the tragedy and mark the grave of the four men whose bodies were sealed underground.

Harry Cunningham, SCEBTA Branch Secretary at Cowdenbeath, explains: "At present there is absolutely nothing to indicate that the disaster ever happened. We decided to write to British Coal and seek their support. They were sympathetic and ever since we have been involved in negotiations with the local council etc.

"We have agreed on a site with the Community Council and Kirkcaldy District Council have been helpful. The

site is being developed by the MSC and they are leaving an area for a suitable memorial."

## VITAL

Harry hopes that the memorial will soon be raised and that Scottish NUM past president Mick McGahey, who led the union side at the Michael enquiry, will be present to preside over the unveiling.

But he sees the monument as having a wider importance too: "We want this project to be seen in a broader context — so that people will realise that lives were given for an industry vital to Scotland's future. This is our heritage, and by teaching schoolkids and educating the public about it, we strengthen the case for a healthy coal in-

dustry in Scotland."

1987 is also the 110th anniversary of the Blantyre Disaster — Scotland's worst ever mining tragedy.

'The Blantyre Calamity', as it was known, took the lives of 207 miners when a fire-damp explosion ripped through the workings at Dixon's Collieries on October 22, 1877.

The pit was known as a 'fiery mine' and one witness at the official enquiry testified: "Had I not been long idle previous to going to the colliery, and the rent becoming due, I would not have gone down the pit."

The official enquiry found "that the Coal Mines Act 1872 was apparently not complied with". But, despite a campaign by the miners, there was no prosecution of the owners.

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MINING AT SEAFIELD KIRKCALDY  
VIEWS OF SEAFIELD COLLIERY

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## Epilogue

The above photographs bring this story to a conclusion and no matter the depth or level of exploration the reader wishes to undertake – there can be little, if anything, which is not covered within these pages.

Both detailed or superficial interest is catered for in the research, exploration and scrutiny, which Chris has brought to the subject. It is impossible other than to admire, appreciate and applaud, the dedication of both time and effort which the author has expended on these seminal works.

Although many will have an awareness of the town's connection with coal, the sheer numbers of pits and mines disclosed in these volumes is staggering and almost defies belief. The changes to the landscape which followed the demise of coal mining are also vividly shown in two particular photographs. The first is the cutting of the first sod at Seafield in 1954. A flat open landscape showing a steam engine heading towards Kinghorn, the now demolished Tyrie Bleachfield, and Seafield Tower in the distance, represents the past. The second showing the demolition of the towers signifies the dying embers of an industry about to be extinguished and replaced by a vast housing complex – the present.

The dangers faced by miners on a daily basis runs through much of the text, touching on the deaths of individuals through to the Seafield Disaster of 1973. Again, readers are strongly encouraged to visit the *Fife Pits and Memorial Book*

– a tribute and monument to the 2,406 individuals who lost their lives in the industry.

The ending can only be a huge thank you to Chris Sparling for allowing us to use these groundbreaking works – thereby creating the definitive record of mining in Kirkcaldy. A little cautionary word to round off this Object. Please keep in mind that the contents of the books are subject to copyright and Chris's permission must be sought, and obtained in writing, prior to its use.

Once again many thanks to Chris Sparling.