

Winstanley and Highfield:

Further history

Ray Winstanley

1998

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[THIS ELECTRONIC VERSION DOES NOT CONTAIN SEVERAL CHAPTERS OF THE ORIGINAL, INCLUDING: INTRODUCTION; MASSEY BROTHERS; HENRY WINSTANLEY 1644-1703; HIGHFIELD COLLIERY VILLAGE – J. ANDERSON; AND A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS. IT ALSO DOES NOT INCLUDE GRAPHICS.

PRESENTED WITH PERMISSION OF RAY'S BROTHER DEREK
AND HIS WIFE JANET, OCTOBER 4, 2009.

IN MEMORY OF RAY]

FOREWORD

This book continues the life and times of Highfield and Winstanley. The initial publication was "Founded on Coal", by Ray and Derek Winstanley. This was published in 1981 and has long been out of print. However reference copies are available and can be read in the Wigan History Shop.

Information from a wider area is included where it may be of interest or has had an influence.

[Note: "founded on Coal" can now be accessed via the Internet at <http://www.isws.illinois.edu/iswsdocs/chief/FoundedOnCoal-Winstanley.pdf> . Derek Winstanley, October 4, 2009].

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Printed and published by
Ray Winstanley*

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2. OPENCAST COAL MINING

During World War II there was a desperate need to produce minerals to sustain the war effort, and coal was no exception. This resulted in a new development in coal mining known as "outcropping", which involved extracting coal which could very easily be exposed by removing the overburden in areas where coal seams were close to the surface. Since there were many such shallow or outcropping seams, a great deal of coal could be, and was, extracted easily and at minimal cost from numerous relatively small sites.

The technology of the day limited the depth at which coal could be worked economically to about 15 metres. Coal seams and other strata are not usually horizontal in this area and dip underground from the outcrop at varying angles. Although the coal was won at low cost the method of operation was extremely damaging to the environment, especially the agricultural quality of the land.

The method of working was as follows:

Some attempt was normally made to remove the top soil using scrapers (now referred to as boxes) towed by bulldozers. This was dumped in a heap at one side of the site. Soil removal took place in all weathers and the topsoil dump often became a sea of mud. On opencast sites near Windy Harbour bulldozers frequently became bogged down, and on one occasion when one bulldozer was stuck, 4 more machines also got stuck trying to get it out. Quite clearly this was damaging to the subsequent quality of the soil.

Sub-soil and other easily removed overburden was also removed using bulldozers in a long strip about 20 metres wide along the line of the coal seam. The rest of the overburden was then removed by draglines and dumped by the side of the cut. The coal was then removed directly into road vehicles (often ex WD Bedfords and AECs) and taken to the disposal point, which, for this area, was the Pemberton Colliery site.

A second cut was then developed parallel and adjacent to the first cut. The overburden from this second cut was dumped into the void left from the first cut and so on. In many cases this resulted in a complete overturn of the strata. Several of the opencast site records show that the land was returned to agriculture the same day that re-spreading of the top soil was completed. There was no real effort made to restore the land and even today, some 50 years later, much of this land is very poor and fit only for grazing and pasture rather than ploughing for arable crops.

This was not the only environmental and ecological disaster. Many woods, trees and hedgerows were up-rooted, indiscriminately destroying wild life habitats, and when mining was completed these were replaced by stark concrete posts and barbed wire fencing. Some of these posts are still in evidence and give a clear indication of where previous "outcrop" mining took place. A prime example was the destruction of Island Dam to the west of Windy Arbour which was beautiful at any time of year and teeming with wild life. Although the area of water has been replaced it cannot and will not ever be near to its original standard.

Most of this shallow mining was carried out between 1943 and 1956 and then there was a relatively quiet period when it was thought that this type of mining was almost finished. Not so! By 1961 an area to the

west of Windy Arbour had been reworked by more modern methods and to greater depths by Tarmac Ltd. This was the site known as Tat Windy II and encompassed Island Dam. Over 500,000 tons of coal was extracted. From this time until the 1980s there was very little opencast mining activity. By then the government had decided to encourage opencast coal production in order to reduce costs to power generators. Opencast coal can be produced at about half the cost of deep mined coal, but it does cost jobs in the coal industry.

As technology has improved it has become possible to extract coal at very considerable depths. The working ratio is about 20:1 of overburden shifted to coal extracted. This then is no longer outcrop mining, and the name has changed to opencast mining.

What then has changed to allow greater depths to be reached and to be economic?

In order to achieve the efficiencies required there have been significant exploitation of technological advances in heavy plant. The draglines of today work on the same principles as 50 years ago, but they are generally larger and have a greater work capacity. This is still the most cost effective way of removing overburden which only needs to be moved from one cut and dumped into the next. The size, speed and power of face shovels has improved enormously. In the 1940s these were operated by ropes and pulleys but now are operated by hydraulics and are central to the whole opencast mining process. Although bulldozers and scrapers are still used, a major advance has been the self powered motor scraper which has a much greater carrying capacity and a much higher speed. This allows top and sub-soils to be removed much more rapidly and this material can be moved over greater distances more economically, which

is important on large sites. Yet another major advance has been the dump truck. These are very substantial vehicles from about 25 tonnes to 100 tonnes or more, and perhaps represent the greatest single advance in the development of large deep opencast sites.

Blasting has always been necessary where the local sandstone is too thick or hard for machines of the day to penetrate. This involves drilling holes in the rock at regular intervals, packing with explosive and firing the charge. Blasting requirements and techniques have changed over the years. In the 1940s the object was to remove as much rock as possible and to fragment it into relatively small lumps. This required the use of substantial amounts of high powered quarry blasting explosives. The blast when it was fired certainly achieved its objectives but was relatively inefficient. There was usually much noise and considerable air over pressure. Large quantities of rock were often thrown high into the air and in more than one instance caused damage to the roof of an adjacent property. The ground vibration, similar to an earthquake, created by the blast was often sufficient to cause structural damage to adjacent properties eg houses on Pemberton Road were damaged by blasting in Winstanley Park to the east of Springpool. Compensation was paid by the Ministry of Fuel and Power.

Recent opencast sites where blasting has been necessary include the Pemberton Colliery site and the Old Leyland Green site. Blasting techniques have change considerably due to a large extent to the high capacity face shovels now in use which can rip and lift very large masses of stone. The procedure generally used today involves drilling a regular pattern of vertical holes about 10 cms diameter. In these are placed initiating charges and the holes are then packed with a mixture of ammonium nitrate and diesel oil (ANFO). The top of the hole is packed

with clay. When the charge is fired the object is to split the rock and loosen it, expending the explosive energy within the rock and generating as little as possible air over pressure. Following an explosion it is air over pressure, as a shock wave, which rattles or breaks windows.

The seismic or vibrational effect in the surrounding strata is measured as "peak particle velocity" (ppv). On the Pemberton site the planning consent permitted up to 12 mm/sec ppv which did cause some vibration in nearby houses and at least one blast registered 17mm/sec ppv. This was said (by British Coal) not to cause structural damage to property but was certainly disconcerting to people living in property adjacent to the site when ornaments on the mantelpiece were badly shaken. It is difficult to determine in advance what the effect of ground vibration will be at any specific point since the shock waves can be subjected to destructive or constructive interference due to reflection from geological faults or changes in strata.

OPENCAST COAL PRODUCTION

The following details of opencast coal sites may not be complete and they extend geographically beyond the confines of Highfield and Winstanley.

<u>Site</u>	Dates worked	Tonnage
Barton Clough TH	1946-7	46,313
Barton Clough II	1948-50	628,239
Baxter	1945	61,598
Ben Johnson, Wheatlees, Derby. House	1951-2	183,105
Ben Johnson II & Lady Lane	1953-4	56,899

Chapel House & Home Farm II	1955-6	93,475
Chairwood	1947-53}	
Crow's Nest		
	1945-6	28,419
Drummers Fields I	1945-6	56,055
Drummers Fields II	1945-6	76,643
Garswood	1944	10,981
Gustavus Hillock	1947	65,617
Harvey House	1947-9}	
Harvey House Extension	1949 }	309,978
Hawkley Brook	1950-1}	
Highfield Farm	1943-4	
Landgate		
	1946-7	19,767
Leyland Green & Weathercock	1945-6	58,232
Lower Castle		
	1950-1	194,248
Millington		
	?	165,591
Mount Pleasant	1951-3 }	364,839
Orrett's House	1952-3 }	
Ryecroft		
	1946-8	528,034
Tan House		
	1944-6	85,909
Tan Pit Slip I	?	~900,000
Tan Pit Slip II		
TatWindy, Tatlock's Hillock	1945-6	31,920
Tat Windy, Tatlock's Hillock (king & queen)	? -46	43,904
Tat Windy II		

	1956-61	525,355
Windy Arbour II	1951-2	19,462
Winstanley I & Windy Arbour I	?-48	248,347
Winstanley II		
	1944-5	42,243
Winstanley III	1944-6	98,126
Winstanley IIIA & V	1949-51	175,013
Cranberry Lea		
Old Leyland Green		
Pemberton Colliery Site		200,000
Pony Dick		30,000
Sandyforth		
Windy Arbour Pit Site		

3. VISIT TO WINSTANLEY PARK

29 May 1983

This afternoon we went to Winstanley Park, and accompanied by Derek Hanley, took photographs of the remains of the ponds in Springpool Wood.

All the dams and ponds in Winstanley Park had been previously drained off to allow coal to be worked underneath from Summersales Colliery, without leaving pillars.

Springpool Wood is now badly overgrown. Substantial trees are growing

from what would have been the bottom of the dams, but the stonework enclosing the pools is more or less intact. Even though the weather has been wet of late there is little more than a trickle of water flowing down the "valley". There is still much potential here which could be developed with only a minimum of effort. Perhaps one day this area will once again be classed as "beautiful as anywhere in England".

The fields to the south and west of the hall, which were opencasted during the 1940s and 1950s are still badly drained and the land is poor. This is still pasture, and even so many years after opencasting, would be difficult to bring into general arable use. In those days there was little concern for land reclamation and the overburden was back filled in a haphazard manner leaving much clay, shale and stone at the surface.

A short distance from the hall, near to Mossey Croft Wood is the remains of a fountain. Although the ornamental top is missing, and some of the stone has been dislodged, all of the dressed blocks appear to be on site and could be fitted back together.

The Mossey Croft area is receiving some attention. The old dam is being cleaned out with a view to refilling with water to provide both an emergency supply to the hall, and a fish pond.

Perhaps the most surprising item still to be intact is the ice house. This is a brick lined circular chamber about 8-10 feet in diameter and perhaps about 15 feet deep in total. About 4-5 feet of this is above ground and has a domed roof. The whole is covered by earthwork, except for a passageway to a small opening at ground level. This would hold a very substantial quantity of ice, which would have lasted for many months.

Presumably the ice was obtained from the dam nearby during the winter months and packed into the ice house where it would form a solid mass.

The whole of the park is badly infested with rabbits, in spite of the shoot.

*Ray Winstanley
Tracey Winstanley*

4. Shades of Orwell

In the "Road to Wigan Pier" Orwell depicts almost all terraced housing in the mining areas as bug-infested evil smelling slums.

Although conditions in some areas were relatively primitive, the majority of houses in Highfield, Pemberton and Winstanley were at least clean, even though there were relatively large families and low incomes. Even in the late 1940s poverty was not uncommon. It is easy to recall for example a widow trying to bring up four children on virtually no income. The terraced house was rented and did not have a bathroom. The lavatory was a hole-in-the-board cess pit at the end of the back yard. However the board was always well scrubbed and was possibly cleaner than many toilet seats today.

The lighting had not been converted to electricity and still relied on towns gas. The only floor covering was a single strip of rush matting under the well scrubbed table in the living room and a pegged rug (1) in front of the shiny black-leaded Yorkshire Range fireplace. (2) In spite of this the stone flagged floors were spotless. The front and back doorsteps were neatly rubbing-stoned (3) and woe betide anyone who set foot on the front door step and marked it, especially on Saturday when it had

been carefully done for the weekend.

Although the family appeared to live essentially on jam or sugar butties (4) and chips they were always clean and as well presented as their threadbare clothes would allow. The only footwear that the children had was one pair of clogs each, but these were always polished to a high shine, showing that even under these difficult circumstances dignity and self respect were fiercely maintained.

1. This was a rug made by cutting any spare cloth (old suiting was best) into strips about 8X2 cms and threading these through the interstices in the weave of an old hessian sack, using half of a hardwood clothes peg as a tool.

2. This was a large cast iron fireplace, burning solid fuel, which could, and did, provide all facilities for cooking and baking, as well as heating. It was kept clean by polishing with "black lead" which was a graphite compound. The fire grate was large and deep and when it was filled with coal and the flue pulling strongly you would need a toasting fork at least a yard long if you were not to get burnt. Old yorkshire rangers will know what I mean.

3. Rubbing stones were usually obtained from a Rag and Bone Man!

Here we go..... It sounds painful.

What's rubbing stones? Will it do your back good? Does it affect your fertility? Was the Rag and Bone Man gay?

They were often known as donkey stones, does that help?

Were they from a donkey, or did the rag and bone man have a donkey?

Well, yes he did, to pull his cart.

Anyway, what's a rag and bone man, and why does he have rubbing stones, and a donkey, and a cart?

Did he rub his donkey with the stones, or were they ornaments, or did his donkey have problems?

Sounds rough on the donkey.

No, in exchange for junk which you wanted to get rid of, old clothes (rags), or any metal scrap (doesn't seem to have anything to do with bones) you got a number of donkey or rubbing stones.

Great, now I understand, a barter system whereby you exchange something you don't want for something the rag and bone man doesn't want, and the donkey has to do without.

Well, yes, but.....

But what?

Well, I don't have any use for the donkey's stones.

Why don't you scrape them across your doorstep like everybody else?

Because I don't live there any more.

What difference does that make?

I live on the 11th floor in a block of flats, and the donkey.... well it just can't make it.

4. *Butties*. These are synonymous with sandwiches, but yet not quite. *Butties* are a much cruder version of a sandwich. Sandwiches come carefully cut diagonally and are all tucked in. *Butties* on the other hand are much more interesting in that they are overloaded with filling and hang out on all sides. Really good *butties* are made from two slices of bread cut thick and completely filled with goodies. These slices should be left intact and not cut in half. If they have to be halved it should be

straight across and not diagonal.

5. A ROAD PLAN FOR LANCASHIRE 1949

During the 1930s plans had been drawn up in anticipation of a growth of motorised traffic but during the war years (1939-45) these had been placed on hold. In 1949 a new strategy was proposed by Lancashire County Council, but this was still largely based on the pre-war plans.

History

The road system in the UK is predominantly a legacy of past centuries and its development is somewhat haphazard. In this respect Lancashire is no different from the rest of the country.

The Romans were the first to build really significant roads. One road from the south passed through Wigan (Coccium) and continued north across the river Ribble to Lancaster and beyond. There was also one of the radial roads from Manchester which linked with the north/south road at Wigan.

From Roman times to the beginning of the middle ages there was very little road building, but during the middle ages primitive roads slowly took shape from existing tracks. The Statute of Winchester (1285) placed responsibility for road maintenance on the land owners. This was the first recorded instance of English highway legislation.

In the reign of Henry VIII the Highways Act of 1530 empowered the County Justices of the Peace to order bridges to be repaired and to raise taxes to pay for road maintenance where no person was liable. Dissolution of the monasteries had a large adverse effect on road

construction and maintenance and also repair of bridges, since the church was the largest landowner.

In 1555 a further highways act was passed which placed the responsibility for main roads onto the parishes through which the roads passed. This resulted in obligatory "Statute Labour" where inhabitants of the parish were required to work annually on the roads for a stipulated number of days without payment. Unpaid parish surveyors of the roads were appointed. This was an important and long lasting step forward for communication.

Up to this time most of the movement along the roads would have been on foot or horseback, and there would not have been a great number of wheeled vehicles. However, a further highways act of 1562 gave the County Justices power to enforce the existing legislation and increased the period of compulsory statute labour.

The demand for better communications by road grew rapidly from the early part of C17, as did the number of wheeled vehicles. This led to a rapid deterioration in roads which did not have regular maintenance. A Proclamation of 1621 forbade the use of four wheeled wagons of more than 1 ton weight.

In 1677 the Justices ordered that within 3 months every highway in Lancashire had to be in a good state of repair.

"they be made so wide that coaches, carts and carriages may well meet in all places; that all cross ditches be soughed and covered over from one side of the lane to the other; that all ditches be well scoured; that all hedges be cut and the trees lopped; that all holes and hollows be levelled; that causeways be repaired where

necessary; that causeways be made the full breadth of one yard and a quarter of round stones, not flags, and where the causeways are of flags that there be new causeways made of round stones, well paved or else gravelled, fir and sufficient for horsemen to ride on."

In 1697 a further act was passed that required all main roads to be signposted at junctions.

In 1726 Turnpike Acts were passed in respect of the roads from Warrington to Wigan, Wigan to Preston and Liverpool to Prescott. Turnpike Trusts were formed to rebuild and maintain the principal roads and in return to collect tolls from road users. This was not very effective because there was no real control on the activities of the Trusts. Turnpikes flourished throughout C18 and into mid C19. In 1771 one traveller described the very poor state of the turnpikes from Preston through Wigan to Warrington as:

"who may accidentally purpose to travel this terrible country to avoid it as they would the devil."

"they will here meet with rutts which are four feet deep and floating with mud."

...and this was in summer time!

In 1795 the Lancashire Justices by an Order of Session set the precedent for what continues today:

".....many accidents have happened.....it is recommended to owners of carriages to give directions to observe the following rule in driving, viz always to keep on the left side of the street or road."

Throughout C18 passenger transport was in demand and the numbers of

stagecoaches and private carriages increased more rapidly than did wagons for carrying goods. Towards the end of the century the heavier and bulkier goods began to be moved by barge as the canal systems developed.

The industrial revolution, brought about by harnessing steam and the sudden need for vastly increased supplies of coal to raise the steam changed the old transportation system both rapidly and in many ways, from the end of C18. There was now much more transport activity required to move coal, raw materials and finished goods, especially in Lancashire.

Road construction was dramatically improved in early C19 thanks to the efforts of people such as McAdam and Telford, but already the scene was set for a new mode of transport, the railways. As early as 1813 coal was being hauled by steam locomotive from the Orrell coalfield to the Leeds - Liverpool canal by Daglish's "Yorkshire Horse". This was followed by intensive railway construction which gave rise to long distance networks and allowed large quantities of goods to be moved relatively quickly (compared to road or canal) to various parts of the country.

By mid C19 the growth of alternative transport had a crippling effect on many of the turnpike trusts resulting in turnpikes falling into disrepair. The turnpike system was finally abolished in 1878.

The creation of County Councils and County Borough Councils by the Local Government Act of 1888 gave responsibility to the councils for the "main" roads. By the end of C19 the "main" roads in Lancashire and some of the lesser roads were kept metalled and some had stone setts.

The speed restriction on motor vehicles of 4 mph was by now holding back development until this was abolished in 1896. From this time onwards road traffic began to cover longer distances on a regular basis and the whole pattern of road use began to change.

Road development continued to gain in importance, especially after World War II with the steady decline in the use of canals and railways for carrying freight.

The introduction of the first stretch of motorway in Lancashire in 1959 - the Preston Bypass - heralded yet another exciting era. Since then the growth of the motorway network has given the north west arguably the best road communication systems in the country. It is interesting to note that although the bulk of the M6 in the Lancashire area was completed about 1963 it had been planned many years before and was shown in detail on planning maps from the late 1940s. Motorway construction was enabled by the Special Roads Bill, presented to Parliament in 1948.

Basis for planning.

Because of the heavy industry in south and south east Lancashire and the population density, a large proportion of the traffic, even in 1938, prior to world war II, was industrial and heavy in nature, and amounted to 40% of the total. The population density resulted in well developed transport services and 1/3 of all the local authority controlled transport undertakings in the country were in Lancashire in 1938.

A considerable amount of industrial traffic was to and from the major ports of Liverpool and Manchester. To the year ending 30 June 1948 the amount of cargo moved to or from the port of Liverpool by long

distance road transport amounted to nearly 2.5 million tons.

During the summer and at weekends there was a great deal of traffic on the routes to the costal resorts, especially Blackpool and Southport, which was where the concept of route 24 originated. This road, although now changed in style and to some extent alignment is basically the now proposed route 225 which is causing much local controversy.

In the late 1940s the main north - south routes were the A6 and the A49, which passes through Wigan. Wigan was always a traffic bottleneck until the M6 motorway was opened in 1963. The only new road of appreciable length to be constructed in the area since the turnpike period was the East Lancashire Road (A580).

A Ministry of Transport Memorandum of 1937 stated that:

"where an existing road carries, or a proposed road is expected to carry, 400 vehicles at the peak hour, dual carriageways will be desirable."

There seems to have been a considerable shortfall in implementing this recommendation!

Even in 1938 this would have resulted in 434 miles of road being converted to dual carriageway. In 1939 the total length of dual carriageway roads in the county was 19 miles. This must have seemed an insuperable task at the time, but with the present traffic situation it would have been of great benefit to us now.

In designing a long term road plan for Lancashire in 1949 several assumptions had to be made:

1. With the exception of a limited number of national routes

(motorways) the road programme would be cash limited.

2. The proposed road programme would be completed in 30 years ie by 1979. It was assumed that by then the number of drivers would be declining and that air transport would have an appreciable effect on road transport.
3. The volume of traffic in the country as a whole would peak in about 1969 and would be about double the 1938 volume. In 1939 there was 1 motor vehicle to every 15 persons.

Assumption (1) was correct, but assumptions (2) and (3) were a long way short of the mark. Given 40 years or so of hindsight it would be easy now to be critical but these were the best predictions of the day. Probably the biggest failure resulted from the radical change in conditions before and after world war II which clouded the long term vision. Although this was a 1949 plan, much of the data used was pre-war.

6. GREATER WIGAN

As has been mentioned previously, Pemberton had its own administration separate from Wigan. By 1904 the possibility of a merger between Pemberton and Wigan had been under discussion for about a year. The general scenario seems to have been that Wigan were very keen on the merger but Pemberton were not interested.

On 6 May 1904 an extraordinary meeting of Pemberton district council was convened in the council offices in Tunstall Lane to give further

consideration to the amalgamation with Wigan. A parliamentary committee had already considered the question and there had been a great deal of opposition from Pemberton. As a result Wigan had now offered better terms:

1. Pemberton should have 2d tram fares on all 3 routes from the Pemberton boundary to the Market Place in Wigan. These routes were Ormskirk Road, Warrington Road and Poolstock Lane. Also these 2d rides should be in 1d stages and Pemberton Council should decide where the break should be, and where they should begin and end.
2. Pemberton should have public baths. The old Lamberhead tramshed should be converted to public baths to serve Lamberhead Green. There should be an open air baths between Worsley Mesnes and Newtown, and possibly a further baths near Hawkley Hall.
3. Pemberton should have a branch library.
4. Only a resident of Pemberton could become an Alderman representing Pemberton Ward.
5. Pemberton should have a fair number of police according to the number of inhabitants.
6. Pemberton should have a fire station erected as near to May Mill as possible. It was also suggested that the council yard by the office in Tunstall Lane would be a suitable place to keep the appliance.
7. This related to the Pemberton electric lighting system. In Wigan,

electric light was sold at 4d for shops and dwellings, 5d for churches and offices and 3d for public houses (it is not clear whether or not the units were KWH). In Pemberton electric lighting was cheaper and it was thought that it would be forced up to the Wigan price. The Wigan representative said that the Pemberton Electric Station was a losing concern and they had no right to keep it going out of the rates. There was no agreement, but a compromise was reached. Wigan would hold the price of electricity to Pemberton for a period of two years. By that time Wigan might be able to reduce their price to balance out the difference.

8. Wigan proposed to cover the cost of all expenses incurred by the Pemberton Council and dissident rate payers in promoting opposition to the amalgamation.

Pemberton Council finally agreed to the amalgamation even though they didn't want the public baths.

The Pemberton Electric Works was situated off Billinge Road behind the council yard mentioned above. It later became a rope making works and then was taken over by Lord and Sharman for manufacture of footwear. Footwear manufacture ceased in 1982. It then lay empty for some time and about 1990 was converted into small industrial units.

7. WINSTANLEY PARK CRICKET CLUB

The club was formed in 1878, during the lifetime of Meyrick Bankes II, and the ground is situated in the north west corner of Winstanley Park.

The men who formed the club were mostly employees of the estate, gardeners, gamekeepers, joiners, stable hands and the like, who fortunately felt the need of other sporting entertainment than wrestling, whippet racing or pigeon fancying, which were some of the more common pastimes of the day.

At first, only friendly games were played but on 20 April 1907 the club became a founder member of the West Lancashire league, then called the Wigan and District Cricket League. Winstanley won the Salter Cup in 1910 and after the Great War was reformed and won the Salter Cup Again in 1931 and the Farnworth Cup in 1935.

During the second world war the only games to be played on the ground were by members of the RAF who were billeted on the estate. At the end of the war the club was again revived, and after much back breaking work on the ground it was made fit for cricket again. Winstanley won the Salter Cup again in 1951, 1952 and 1955.

As a result of differences in the West Lancashire League in 1962 Winstanley, along with seven other division 1 clubs resigned from the league and formed the West Lancs Cricket Association. Winstanley enjoyed immediate success by winning the division 1 championship in 1963, the Rathbone Cup in 1963 and 1964, and the Baxter Cup in 1964.

Lord Winstanley of Winstanley is a patron of the club and attended the centenary celebration in 1978.

The club has been looking to the future with a view to finding a new ground which would not have the development limitations of the present

ground, picturesque though it may be.

8. SNIPPETS FROM WIGAN OBSERVER

These are odd items which relate to the area and were found when searching for other material.

Any American readers should note that dates are given as day/month/year.

WO 4/6/1935

The skeleton of a man who had been missing for 7 years had been found in Gee's Wood by a gamekeeper. It was identified as the remains of William Cheetham, a 75 year old retired colliery contractor of Park Road Billinge. Near to the skeleton was rotted clothing, a razor, 2 sovereigns, a half crown, a florin, 2 shilling pieces, and a blackthorn walking stick.

WO 14/1/1936

Billinge and Winstanley Colliery Company Ltd. was registered as a private company on 9 January 1936. The capital was £5,000 in £1 shares. The objects were to carry on the business of colliery proprietors, coal and iron masters, smelters, engineers etc. The registered office was Billinge Lane Colliery, Newton Road, Billinge.

Note:

Donald Anderson comments that this colliery was being worked in 1930. It was a "day eye" in the yard seam which outcropped in the old Billinge Lane Pit surface area. (RW)

WO 27/3/1909

A wall letter box has been erected at Windy Arbour. The box will be cleared at 6.50pm on weekdays. No collection on Sunday.

Note:

The letter box is now outside the gates of Billinge Lodge on Pemberton Road. Prior to that it was mounted in brick immediately behind the current position of the stocks. (RW)

WO 22/8/1914

Mr G.H.Bankes offered the British Red Cross Society accomodation for wounded soldiers or sailors at Winstanley Hall. If required he will have the hall fitted out for hospital purposes. He has also offered to do the same with his Scottish seat, Balconie Castle. Mrs Bankes is doing all she can to bring forward the arrangements for the wounded.

WO 31/5/1919

Billinge Hospital finally closed as a military hospital on 29 May 1919. On the 16th a special tea was provided in the wards. On the 17th there was a charabanc outing for staff and patients to Blackpool. On the 19th there was a farewell tea gathering. Over 5,000 patients had passed through with a remarkable record of only 7 deaths, and 5 of these were due to a flu epidemic.

WO8/5/1954

Billinge Council passed a resolution to object to the Ministry of Fuel and Power regarding opencast mining.

Note:

It didn't have much effect then, and seems to have little effect now. (RW)

WO 5/8/1903

Winstanley and District Floral and Horticultural Society held their 14th annual exhibition in Winstanley Park as usual. There were also sports and racing etc. Between 4,000 and 5,000 people attended.

WO 25/8/1928

An old water mill was discovered buried in the garden of Gantley Farm, Billinge. (Smethurst Road)

WO 3/4/1915

Ed. Dierden, a farmer of Jameson's Farm (now Cherry Tree Farm - RW) and Richard Dierden were summoned for taking coal belonging to Windy Arbour Colliery Co. The farm has been tenanted by Dierden's for 62 years.

WO 24/7/1934

Windy Arbour Colliery. Breaches of Coal Mines Act 1911. 28 men were employed at that time. Failure to provide adequate ventilation. Working 90 yards deep. A high percentage of gas was found (7% methane). Explosives and detonators have been left about the mine.

9(i). ARMY IN WINSTANLEY PARK DURING THE GREAT WAR

Mr Tom Johnson of Langley Farm is probably the only living person in this area who has a good knowledge of the situation at the time.

During the Great War (world war I) units of the army were stationed in Winstanley Park.

According to Tom Johnson there were Royal Engineers and 16th and 17th Batallions R.A. - who went to Gallipoli.

According to Kings Regiment DHQ in Manchester the 6th Batallion of the Manchester Regiment were there. It appears to have been a training and transit camp, as well as the hall being used for the wounded.

Tom Johnson used to take milk across every morning. Most of the men were in tents. The horse lines were in the fields between Lea Wood and Pemberton Road. Each morning the horse droppings had to be cleaned up and disposed of by taking them to Johnson's farm midden. This was seen as a very low grade job and usually had to be done by people who were on a charge for some infringement of the regulations. It was almost inevitably the same people, and had become a prized occupation. It is said that one soldier even pulled a lieutenant off his horse so that he would be put on a charge. Of course there was a reason. When these men went over to the farm they got a decent meal and a few pints of beer, which Johnson's always kept in a barrel at the farm.

Bread was brought in by the cartload and was often distributed by throwing it off the carts into the tents - or somewhere near the tents. When the weather was bad, the bread would often fall into the puddles or into the mud.

Meat was also brought in by the cartload, and again hygiene was somewhat lacking. Tom remembers watching a cook hacking up lumps of meat on a rotting tree stump.

This same cook was known to prepare a dixie full of sausages and then empty them onto an old sack spread on the floor. Not only that, he then rubbed round the inside of the dixie with a handfull of grass (and don't forget there were horses about) and then filled the dixie and brewed tea. As can be imagined, the tea was a foul greasy mess.

Drinking water for the horses and for washing the men was provided in a trough about 15 feet in length.

There are photographs still available of the soldiers off duty outside Pony Dick Inn.

There is a large chip of stone missing from one of the gateposts at Wigan Lodge. It is said that this damage was caused by the wheel of a gun carriage which was being drawn into the park.

9(ii). RAF AT WINSTANLEY HALL DURING WORLD WAR II

Although this is more recent I have been unable to find out the exact reason why they were there. They were mainly WAFFs and it is said that they were simply billeted there and travelled daily to Haydock etc. I have made extensive inquiries through official channels but have not received one constructive piece of information. One can only speculate that there was more going on than met the eye, and it has been suggested that there was an association with cyphers, which in turn may have been

associated with the radio equipment on Billinge Hill.

10. PONY DICK AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

This small area to the south west of Wigan on the A571 road from Wigan to St. Helens is sufficiently interesting to be treated as a separate microcosm. It takes only a few seconds to drive through this area and many people do so every day without realising that its history is quite detailed.

Less than a mile to the north and east the area was dominated by major coal mines and cotton mills, but to the south and west Winstanley Hall and Estate have had a major influence on the land development. At Pony Dick there was an almost abrupt change from industrial to rural surroundings.

The area known as Winstanley is rather unusual in that it has maintained its identity for many hundreds of years without being a township or even a village until the 1960s. Billimge and Winstanley were once one manor and a subordinate unit to the Barony of Newton in Makerfield both before and after the conquest. By 1212 the manor had been divided into 3 equal portions. Winstanley was held by Roger de Winstanley and rated as an oxgang and a third. In 1252 it was held by Adam de Winstanley. This situation continued until 1921 when Winstanley was formally amalgamated with Billinge and became known as Billinge and Winstanley.

How then has a sparsely populated rural area managed to survive unchanged for so long? The key lies with Winstanley Hall. The name Winstanley originates in this area and it was the Winstanley's of Winstanley who built the original part of the present Hall in 1555-

1562, and had lived in a much older moated hall or homestead nearby for some 300 years or more prior to that. There is now no evidence of the older homestead but 3 sides of the moat still exist. This is up to 10m wide.

In 1595 the hall and estate were sold to James Bankes, and since then it has remained with the Bankes family. The extent of the manor at the time of sale was given as:

- 50 messuages [of land]
- 16 tofts and cottages
- 50 barns
- 5 water corn mills
- 2 dovecotes
- 50 gardens
- 50 orchards
- 200 acres of land [probably statute acres]
- 100 acres of meadow
- 300 acres of parture
- 20 acres of wood
- 300 acres of furze and heath
- 100 acres of moor
- 100 acres of turbury

There is also a record of June 1611 when James Bankes of Winstanley bought land from James Winstanley of Blackleyhurst.

Although extensive structural alterations were made to the Hall in late C18 the basic plan of the traditional tudor home remained. Meyrick Bankes I and his son Meyrick II also carried out major additions and modifications to the hall in the early and mid C19. They also owned a white pony called Dick who was very well known to the local population.

Dick died in 1841 at the grand old age of 36 and was buried in the animal sanctuary near to the hall. The area known as Pony Dick gets its name from this pony, as did the inn which once stood a few yards to the north of where Smithy Brook passes under the road. This is where Ribbesford Road now joins Billinge Road.

There is some suggestion that this building was originally two cottages. When it was decided to convert these to an inn, an old lady who lived in one of the cottages refused to move out and barricaded the doors. She was eventually smoked out by placing sods on top of the chimney. It is not clear which was the original name given to the inn, but it may have been the "Waggon and Horses" and later the "Horse and Jockey" and the "Bay Horse". Sometime, probably in mid C19, it was changed to the "Favourite Pony Inn", and later became known as the "Favourite Pony Dick Inn".

In about 1830 William Starkey came from Cheshire to work on the Winstanley estate. He became responsible for the horses and stables and would presumably have had charge of Dick, the white pony. By 1837 William Starkey was in charge of the inn, and it could well have been due to him that the name was changed to The Favourite Pony Inn, because of his association with the pony Dick. The Starkey family continued as landlords of the inn until it lost its licence in 1924, and continued to live there until it was demolished in the mid 1950s.

In 1951 Bankes' were forced to sell much of their land and property in the area to pay death duties. The old inn was shown in the auction catalogue as lot 101, a detached cottage known as Pony Dick Cottage. Let to Mr J Starkey at a rent of 4s per week, landlord paying rates. The cottage is brick built with the elevations cement rendered and has a

stone flagged roof. It contains; sitting room; living room; kitchen; back kitchen; pantry; store room; 3 bedrooms; box room; one large room formerly used as a club room; outside wash house and WC. Rateable value £10.

The Starkey's served meals at the inn (as an inn they would have to) and the upstairs club room was used as a meeting place for several organisations. They also appear to have run a funeral club and may have had some interest in a funeral business run by a Thomas Winstanley.

During the strikes of 1921 and 1926 it was one of the many soup kitchens which were set up to provide food for the most needy members of the community. During the first world war, soldiers who were stationed in Winstanley Park often called in for liquid sustenance.

From about 1890 August bank holiday (then the first Monday in August) would have been good for trade at the inn as this was the day when the Winstanley Floral and Horticultural Society held their annual show in Winstanley Park. On the 5 August 1901 the 12th annual show attracted about 5,000 people. Attractions included punch and judy, a ventriloquist, circus type acts, brass bands and sporting events. A similar number attended the 14th show in 1903.

The inn was owned by Bankes', but was occupied by the Starkey family for about 120 years. Joseph and Alice Starkey, direct descendants of the original William Starkey, continued to live on Billinge Road almost opposite the site of the inn until their deaths in the 1980s. An old family bible, a rent book from 1837 and artefacts from the inn are still retained in the family.

James Starkey (born 1869) was the son of the landlord of the Favourite Pony Dick Inn. When James was 14 years of age he left school and became apprentice to James Hesketh, a wheelright and carriage builder of Wallgate, Wigan, where he was taught the skills not only of woodworking but also those of a smith and a painter. When he finished his apprenticeship, part of the garden by the inn was converted to a yard and workshops and he started his own business. He made gigs, governors cars, lorries, top carts, bread vans, butchers vans and milk floats as well as other smaller items such as troughs and barrows.

There was no power laid on to the workshops so everything had to be hand made. When he made a cart, the only part which he did not make himself was the nave at the centre of the wheel. He had many pieces of well seasoned oak which he sent out to another firm to be turned to the correct shape and size for the job in hand. The nave was then fitted with a special cast iron bush. The nave then had to be drilled by hand and then chiselled out to form the rectangular recesses to take the inner ends of the spokes. Rough cut lengths of oak were shaped using hand tools not only to the correct dimensions for the spokes but also to give a contoured or bevelled finish which would look more attractive when it was painted and lined. The outer part of the wheel was made in sections, known locally as fellies. These were made from ash, shaped to the diameter of the wheel, and drilled to accept the outer ends of the spokes. A special jig was used to assemble the wheel. When the fellies had been fitted to the spokes they were dowelled and then the joints between the fellies were also dowelled to form a rigid wheel.

The rim of the wheel was made from long plates of steel, or more usually in those days, of wrought iron. For a big wheel about 5 feet (1.5m) in diameter the plates would be up to 6 inches (15 cm) wide and about

3/4 inch (1.9 cm) thick. This was too thick to bend by hand and a special machine was used to bend the plate into a ring. This was a hand operated machine and it often took the strength of 2 men to achieve the bend on the thicker plates. Once the ring had been formed it was joined in the smithy. It was heated to cause it to expand and hammered onto the wheel. On cooling it contracted to form a tyre and also helped to hold the wheel together.

The rest of the cart was made with as much care from the best oak and ash and was then painted with red lead primer and preservative. Up to 7 coats of paint and varnish would be applied before it was finished, each coat being rubbed down before the next was applied. This gave a very durable and attractive finish.

Painting was not as easy as it is today. Before the job could start the paint had to be made by hand from powdered pigments, oils and pastes. Considering the amount of poisonous lead based pigments used it must have been a very hazardous procedure, although the effects may not have been understood. Only the varnish was bought in ready for use.

It is difficult to imagine how much time and effort would go into making a farm cart which was so well made that it might still be in use 50 years later (and never had a change of tyres), but for this he might charge about £24. His wage from the business in about 1894 was about £1-15s-0d per week. By the 1920's he was an employer and was paying one of his men £4-0s-0d per week, which was a very high wage at the time.

In 1904 the excise licenses and duties for carriages was as follows:
Armorial bearings on carriages £2-2s-0d. Otherwise worn or used £1-

1s-Od.

Four wheeled carriages for 2 or more horses or mules or mechanical power £2-2s-Od.

Four wheeled carriages for one horse or mule £1-1s-Od.

Carriages with less than 4 wheels 15s-Od.

Hackney carriages 15s-Od.

Exceptions: wagon, cart or other such vehicle used solely for conveying goods in course of trade, and inscribed with name, address and business of person keeping same, in letters of not less than 1 inch high.

The previous census showed that nationally there were many wheelrights and relatively, they must have been as busy then as tyre change specialists are today.

Wheelrights:

Employers -

2,893 male.

4 females single.

69 females married or widowed.

Self employed -

3,767 male.

0 female single.

3 female married or widowed.

Working for employers -

22,005 male.

2 females single.

1 female married or widowed.

More than a hundred years ago Billinge road, which was then officially

known as Rylance Mill Lane, was locally known as " th'owd cut" and was little more than a dirt track extending from Ormskirk Road to Pony Dick. At that time Pemberton Road would have been little better. By 1900 Billinge Road was paved with setts but only the left side of Pemberton Road near the top of Well Brow and Slacky Brow were paved.

Within living memory there were trees growing on either side of the road on Well Brow. The trees hung over the road forming an arch, and this was also the home of a colony of bats. The increase in traffic and opencast coal mining operations were probably responsible for the disappearance of the bats in the 1950's.

The brook which passes under the road at Pony Dick has for many years been known as Smithy Brook, but at one time was known as Turner's Brook, and in C16 as Salter's Brook. It has neither grace nor magnitude, being polluted by industrial effluent from Lamberhead Industrial Estate and stained yellow by ochre from mine workings. This has not always been so. In days gone by trout could be caught here. This brook which rises in Longshaw and empties into the river Douglas was for hundreds of years the dividing line between Pemberton, later Wigan Borough, and Winstanley. This boundary is still marked as a vertical score on the bridge beneath the engraving "RYLANCE MILL BRIDGE". This is not strictly correct and should read "RYLAND'S". There are also two small rectangular patches of cement which cover the words Pemberton and Winstanley. This obliteration was carried out during world war II when signposts were being removed, and has never been restored.

When steam traction vehicles came into use this brook was a regular stopping place to fill up with water. After steam vehicles, The first Wigan

Corporation bus bearing the destination "Pony Dick" arrived in 1926. The terminus was later extended to New Houses and then to Windy Arbour but a few buses continued to turn round at Pony Dick until about 1954. These were usually timed to pick up miners, or cotton workers from May Mill. Thanks to the generosity of the manager of Greater Manchester Passenger Transport, Wigan, there is an unusual end to this story. The last Wigan Corporation bus, that is, the last bus to retain the cherry and white livery, fleet number 57 and registered number HEK 705, was taken out of service in November 1981. A few days after this I was allowed to insert a Pony Dick destination in the front slot with the original route number 19, and travel on this bus to Pony Dick, New Houses and Windy Arbour. Naturally I took photographs at each of the three stops. This bus was also built locally by Massey Brothers in their Enfield Street works.

This route from Wigan to Windy Arbour was also unusual in that it was one of the very few routes where Corporation and Ribble bus tickets were interchangeable. The Ribble service was very infrequent and was from Wigan to Crawford. the route number was 323.

The small field at a lower level than the road and bounded by the brook and the road never seems to have had any formal use except for grazing. It has been known as bottom field or pony field, which would be reasonable if pony Dick grazed there. However prize fights have been held there in the past, and the field has also been used for May Queen events with maypole dancing.

Near to the road are three Ordnance Survey spot levels. The mark is a horizontal bar above a vertical arrow. These are marked on OS maps as heights above ordnance datum. One is on the Hall Lane side of the bridge

at Pony Dick and is 176 feet.

The second is on the wall below the bus stop on Well Brow. The third is on a stone at the back of 373 Billinge Road and is 201.6 feet. This row of houses known as Highfield View was built on the site of a previous thatched house known as Copperas House, which also gave its name to the Copperas or Croppers House fault which cuts through this area and is important when considering underground mining.

Highfield View was built on land purchased from Blundell's by a George Holland who was reputed to have made his money by selling shot powder to the miners at high prices. They became known as Holland's or Powder Houses.

From behind 373 Billinge Road there is an old footpath leading to Pemberton. When the Wigan to Liverpool railway was constructed in 1848 the Heyes Bridge would have been built to accommodate this path. The bridge is off Merton Road and links to the industrial estate.

About 50 metres to the west of Highfield View was a group of cottages in roughly a "T" shaped configuration known as Summersales cottages. These were originally one building - Sumner's Hall, or earlier still Somerscales. Early records indicate that there was a building there before 1466, but the original building may have been demolished some time later. In late C18 this was owned by a widow Plumb (or Plumbe) from Pemberton. She died in 1796 and was buried on the 25 April at Wigan Parish Church. It is not clear but it seems to have taken some time to sort out her estate. In 1817 the Somersales estate was transferred to a James Basnett. (He was probably a cousin and an executor of the estate). In 1818 the Somersales estate was acquired by Meyrick Bankes for £2,500 including all rights except coal mining, which belonged to the

Bridgewater Estates. It was in 1954, only a year after electricity had first been installed, that the cottages were finally demolished.

Before the properties, along what is now Sandpiper Road, there was evidence of a small but old quarry at the end of Celandine Close. This was known as Sarah Plumb's Delf. It was filled with waste material excavated when the foundations of the houses were under construction.

The original entrance to Summersales Colliery was from Pony Dick, and running along what was the old Winstanley Colliery line, roughly parallel to the brook. The unadopted road from the side of 373 Billinge Road to the small industrial area was originally a path to Summersales Cottages but was enlarged when Summersales Colliery opened. This path is very old. It continues down through the lower industrial area, skirts the building which was the pit baths and continues close to Winstanley Estate wall (See "A" below). From here the line of the Winstanley Colliery railway can be made out parallel to, and immediately to the right of the footpath for about 50 metres. Before crossing the brook the path branches to left and right. The right fork continues to the level crossing over the railway line (the path was there before the railway) and on to either Brook Lane or to the industrial estate near to the Triangle Valve works. The left fork crosses the brook by the footbridge and continues along the wall side either to Brook Lane, to the right, or eventually to Winstanley Road, to the left.

Another footpath starts at Pony Dick just before and to the right of the gateposts marking the entrance to Winstanley Estate. Follow the wall to the right and at the bottom, just before the bend in the wall, look carefully at the structure of the wall. There is a "straight bit" about 6-8m long which was originally part of the back wall of the old corn mill.

After crossing the brook the footpath follows the old Winstanley Colliery line to the boundary of Summersales Colliery. At this point the path now goes to the left of the wall. The proper line is keep to the right of the wall and to the left of the buildings. At this point look for a concrete structure about the size of a domestic garage, set partially into the banking. This was one of the drifts or entrances to Summersales Colliery. It is completely sealed and it is impossible to enter the old workings. This was identified as the "upcast" drift. The terms "upcast" and "downcast" in mining refer to the direction of the ventilation air flow. Air for ventilation is circulated by pulling air out of the mine, which draws fresh air in at another ventilation point. The air was pulled out using a high capacity fan which was situated near to this drift. Just after the old pit buildings this footpath joins the one mentioned above (see "A" above).

It should be noted that there is no public access to any part of Winstanley Estate or to Winstanley Hall.

Another small "hall" was Rainford Hall or Rainford House, which was a half timbered building and stood in the fields by what is now Holmes House Avenue. It was built in 1665 and demolished in 1967. Until 1860 this belonged to the Bridgewater Trustees. The last occupant was Mr J Shaw, who continued to live nearby.

The early approach to Winstanley Hall from Pony Dick was from where Wigan Lodge now stands, the drive following the line of Lea Wood to the south side of the hall. This is shown on the 1770 map of Winstanley Estate. By 1790 the Hall Lane had been constructed to pass to the north side of the delf (quarry) and eventually to the new front of the hall when it was built by Meyrick Bankes I in 1817.

The wall which surrounds the estate, locally known as the "long wall" was built about 1880 and was said to have cost £1 per yard. Meyrick Bankes II supervised the construction. Farmers who could not pay their rent often used to work off the debt by carting stone from the quarry to the site.

The buildings just to the north of Hall Lane were Birchtree farm and Hall Lane cottages. These have both been renovated recently to a high standard. The old farm house, like so many buildings in the area had been added to and modified at various times in the past, and consists of a hotch potch mixture of hand made brick and local stone. Before renovation the kitchen contained an excellent example of a working Yorkshire Range fireplace.

An old sough, constructed in 1750 to drain the mine workings in the New Covert area to the west passes under the adjacent barn and outfalls into Smithy Brook just below the old sluice from the dam. This still serves as a drain today.

The Hall Lane cottages consisted of two attached buildings. The larger one was two storey with oak beams and wattle and daub interior walls and was built from local stone. The smaller cottage was little more than a hovel. These are very old buildings but it has not been possible to date them. It is said that these were once a schoolroom and a schoolmaster's house. If so they would have been similar to the Winstanley school at Gorsey Hill off Winstanley Road. These cottages were derelict for more than 20 years from 1961. In 1979 a sample of paint was removed from one of the ground floor window frames. This consisted of not less than 52 paint layers - all white. The pigment in the earlier layers was white lead. These cottages have since been renovated extensively by Jim and

Hilary Waring to become one very attractive house, which is now a listed building.

During some of the many landscaping operations carried out in Winstanley Park two dams were constructed in this area. One was near to Lea Wood, and not surprisingly was called Lea Dam. This was fed by the stream which ran through Springpool Wood. This has long since been drained and trees planted over it. The other was between Birchtree Farm and the "long wall", restricting the flow of Smithy Brook. This was originally known as the Fish Pond which gives a fair indication that Smithy Brook was clean and capable of supporting fish.

In 1921 the fishing rights for this pond had been leased to the Pack Horse angling society and good fishing was lost when vandals damaged the sluice gate. It was said that carp weighing more than 6 lbs had been caught there, but this may have been yet another fisherman's tale.

From the early 1940s this pond was contaminated and gradually filled up with thick yellow ochre sludge which was precipitated from water pumped from Summersales Colliery. Eventually the whole patch was covered with colliery waste, leaving just a narrow channel for the brook.

Lea wood was probably part of the original woodland which existed all over this area centuries ago, even though it has been partially replanted and landscaped at various times. During the past 30 years or so there have been considerable numbers of trees planted on the estate, many of these between Lea Wood and Hall Lane. These, and the trees planted near to Springpool are mainly deciduous. Large stands of conifers which were planted around Island Dam at Windy Arbour were blown down in gales during the past few years.

Blundell's Wood and Bye Pit Wood, which once extended from Pony Dick past the back of May Mill to Lady Lane, has had a more chequered history. The wood was despoiled in the 1920s, again about 40 years later and again in the 1980s. On each occasion the reason was coal near to the surface.

During the strikes of 1921 and 1926, many out of work miners, who knew where various coal seams outcropped, began to dig for their own coal. One such area was the field behind the Railway Hotel at Pemberton Station, and another was Blundell's Wood, where coal seams are very near to the surface. Permission to get this coal was obtained from Bankes' and soon there were many miners working there, each with his own little pit. Each hole was jealously guarded and many of the miners' wives and children were also brought in to help. Many of the trees were cut down to make pit props and incidentally, mangle rollers.

If a miner could get more coal than was required to heat his own home then the residue could be sold. Further small enterprises sprang up transporting this coal to its final destination. In these times of severe hardship, when soup kitchens were essential, there was considerable friction between those who had a little and those who had nothing. One such group went to Pony Dick to "sort out" the miners. The miners, who were ready for them, won the day.

Bankes', who owned Blundell's Wood asked the miners to send some coal to the Hall. The miners refused and so not surprisingly permission to get coal was withdrawn. By this time very few trees were left standing and the wood was full of holes and mounds of waste. About 40 years later, when shrubs and trees were again well established the wood was spoiled

by the mining operations of the Pony Dick drift mine.

Later, it was subsidence caused by these workings which resulted in opencast mining at the Pony Dick site to make the field between Blundell' Wood and Holmes House Avenue safe.

The oldest recorded building at Pony Dick was the corn mill. It was almost certainly the presence of this mill which resulted in the small community in this otherwise relatively uninhabited area. The mill was known as Ryland's Mill (not Rylance as is inscribed on the bridge), and Billinge road was known as Ryland's Mill Lane.

It is possible that Rylands Mill, Birchtree Farm and Hall Lane Cottages date from late C16 or even earlier.

Records show that in 1667 the Mill toll was £19-12s-1d and in 1670 the toll was £28-10s-11d. This would have been a considerable sum, indicating that the mill was a thriving business.

Incidentally, at this time there were about 67 tenants in Winstanley, Billinge and Orrell paying rent to the Bankes' of whom 16 were Winstanley's.

Ryland's Mill was demolished in 1927 but had been derelict for some years.

Although there is a small brook which runs alongside the Hall Lane from the "figure 8" ponds in Winstanley Park to what was the mill pond, this would not have provided sufficient water to power the mill. To maintain an adequate supply a channel was constructed sometime before 1770

from Smithy Brook (or Turner's Brook as it was then called) at a point nearly opposite the Summersales Colliery compressor house to the mill pond. Parts of this can still be discerned. There was also a sluice and an overflow from the mill pond into Smithy Brook, by the side of the mill. The mill wheel was probably overshot and the water from this ran underground to outfall into the brook near the road bridge. This outfall can still be seen.

Beside the mill was another building which was the drying kiln. This consisted of a store room where the corn could be stored awaiting drying, and the kiln. This had a perforated terra cotta floor on which the corn was spread, and a fire under it to provide the heat.

Sam Fouracre, whose family were millers there for many years remembers the buildings, but not operational. It is thought that the mill wheel, grind stones and some of the old oak gears may still be buried on the site.

Although grain would be ground for flour, the presence of an undressed "roller" millstone embedded in the side of the drive near to the farm entrance suggests that rolled oats for porridge were also milled.

The mill and the kiln were both built of local stone. Part of one wall of the mill can still be seen as this was incorporated into the wall which surrounds the estate when it was constructed about 1880.

A door lintel from the mill had the inscription:

1803 phoenix park

Ellis Ambrose

William Bennett miller

The stone over the furnace in the kiln read:

Luke Taylor Dryster 1797

Presumably these dates related to renovations or alterations.

Between the bridge and the mill was a very small one roomed cottage which was no more than a hovel and at one time had been a weighbridge office. To some of the older people in the community it was known as Mary Green's cottage. Mary Green lived there alone and was very poor. She was allowed to live there rent free but was expected to open and close the Hall Lane gates when required. Soon after she died the cottage was demolished. It is said that Mary Green's funeral was the last time that the old custom of taking spiced ale to local people at the funeral of an old inhabitant was observed.

Across the drive was another unusual brick built cottage. The upstairs windows were at the level of the drive just before the entrance to the farm. Entrance was from lower ground on the opposite side.

On a 1770 map two buildings are shown facing Pemberton Road between the drive and Wigan Lodge. By 1849 these had been demolished and there is no record of what these buildings were.

A well grown holly hedge adjacent to Wigan Lodge was set on fire by sparks from one of the Winstanley Colliery locomotives and this was replaced by a wall in 1909. Wigan Lodge and its associated walls are listed buildings.

In this area the building materials do not necessarily indicate the age of a building. Although the local stone was readily available, clay/shale suitable for brick making was also to hand. Old hand made bricks can be seen in

many of the buildings and a mixture of brick and stone is not uncommon. Although many roofs are slated, flagstone roofing is also quite common.

When the old Pemberton Colliery site was opencasted, British Coal also agreed to opencast the field to the east of Pemberton Road between Blundell's Wood and Holmes House Avenue. The contractors were Budge Ltd. Some years previously there had been a shallow drift mine on the edge of Blundell's Wood, near Pony Dick, known as Pony Dick Colliery. The drifts ran approximately parallel to Pemberton Road from the wood to beyond Holmes House Avenue. As years went by the shallow underground roadways collapsed and so did the surface of the field. This was clearly in an unsafe condition and opencasting was the only way to remedy the situation. Although this is only a very small area for opencasting, some 30,000 tons of coal were recovered. This presumably more than covered the cost of the operation. Opencasting was completed in 1987.

During the opencasting operation the coal seam was excavated under what would originally have been part of Blundell's Wood. In some places small voids in the coal were exposed. Although this surprised British Coal and the contractors, anyone who knew of the excavations during the strikes mentioned earlier would not have been surprised to find the filled in remains of the holes dug by the striking miners.

Deeper underground there was extensive mining in the area from for example: Blundell's Top and Bottom Venture Pits, Mill Pit, Tan Pits, Summersales Colliery, and Bankes' number 1 and 2 pits, Wood Pit, Cat Bank Pit. The list is not exhaustive.

When the Hall was requisitioned Bankes' were given two weeks to move out. Apparently they refused, but were restricted to a small part of the Hall. The family spent much of the war away from Winstanley. Parts of the Hall were vandalised during the occupation.

At this time several Nissen huts and air raid shelters were constructed near to, and to the west of the Hall. Only the brick and concrete bases now remain, and these are mainly overgrown. When the war finished in 1945 these buildings were vacated and then stood empty for some time. Just after the war there was a drastic housing shortage, and in August 1946 20 homeless families took over the Nissen huts which belonged to the Ministry of Fuel and Power. Because this was ministry property Bankes' could not take any action. Furniture was brought in by motor lorry, by cart and by hand. The camp was equipped with a wash house with ordinary washing facilities, 10 large baths, 16 showers, and facilities for hot water. Each hut had a lavatory, electric power and running water. One hut had a telephone.

The squatters stayed for about a year. It was a severe winter. When they were eventually evicted, bulldozers were brought in and the buildings were demolished.

11. THE SITE OF PEMBERTON COLLIERIES

Following the final closure of the main pits at Blundell's Pemberton Collieries in 1946, recoverable materials such as structural steel and railway lines were gradually removed leaving a very large spoil heap and a total area of about 100 acres of dereliction and blue/grey colliery waste. If from that time until the present day the site had been allowed

to lie undisturbed, much, if not all of the land would now be fully colonised and naturalised and perhaps the only areas where vegetation would not have grown would have been on the steep sides of the spoil heaps.

Although coal mining waste is very acid it can be colonised after standing for a few years by trees such as silver birch and later oak and by lower growing plants such as bramble, gorse, bracken and willow herb. Following this initial colonisation and a few years leaf fall to provide some nutriment and humus, a much wider variety of plants will grow.

However, on the Pemberton site there was to be no peace. In the late 1940s when the first opencast mining was being carried out less than a mile away, this area was ear marked for the construction of a coal screening plant and for the build up of a massive coal dump which was part of the national fuel stockpile. Large areas of the site were bulldozed flat as a base for the coal dump and thus preventing any plants from gaining a foothold. This phase of opencast mining in the area continued until 1954, and one of the last opencast mine sites was itself part of this colliery site, which again meant further land upheaval.

A few years later excavators were once again on site, this time to extract the red shale from the centre of the spoil heap for hardcore. This material was produced by the spontaneous combustion of parts of the interior of the spoil heap, which at that stage contained a significant amount of waste coal. When the M6 motorway was under construction in 1962-3 there was a large increase in red shale extraction for hardcore. No attempt was made to reclaim any of this devastated area and as time went by the screening plant mentioned above, also fell into disuse and decay, adding yet more dereliction in the form of rusted steel

girders and corrugated iron sheets.

That finally seemed to be the end and perhaps nothing more could be done to make the area any worse - but not so. In the 1970s a large pipeline carrying natural gas was laid through one part of the site. A few years later large areas were once again bulldozed around when a coal extraction plant was brought on site to wash the last bits of coal from the old colliery waste.

The local residents, who for many years had looked out of their windows and seen nothing but dereliction, were by now quite used to the upheaval and to the eyesore which ruined any semblance of a view, but this did not mean that they were happy about it. Surely, now that every last ounce of extractable material had been removed the local authority would effect some form of restoration under a derelict land grant and finally, after well over a hundred years of industrialisation leave an area which was at least green and clean.

How wrong they were!

The ownership of the land was fragmented and the National Coal Board owned part of it which looked, and at that time was, quite ominous. Further enquiries revealed that the NCB had earmarked the site for potential coal extraction by opencast mining at some time in the future and that reclamation could not take place for a number of years. Public meetings were organised by EPOC (a local environmental group) and Wigan Civic Trust to find out what the local residents really felt about the situation. Everyone was so disillusioned that there was almost unanimous agreement that the NCB Opencast Executive should be approached with the request that they should carry out the opencast

mining forthwith, providing that when the work was completed they would leave the area green and clean.

When NCBOE heard of this request they were pleasantly and more than a little surprised since no-one, anywhere in the country had ever before asked for opencast mining to be carried out. The usual stance taken by local residents is direct opposition to such proposals. Such was the strength of feeling at Pemberton regarding the dereliction that even 2 years of opencast mining was preferable to nothing being done.

Eventually, after some opposition from Wigan MBC, the opencast mining programme was agreed. This was to extract 178,000 tonnes of coal over a 2 year period and to leave the site in a suitable condition for the proposed after-use, which included a mixture of housing, light industry, playing fields and public open space. At last there appeared to be a genuine move to provide a long term and acceptable solution.

Work commenced in June 1985. The contractors, (Budge) and the NCBOE were optimistic that the job could be done with a minimum of disruption. This was especially important considering that virtually the whole of the site boundary was fronted by residential property.

The site was worked in east/west parallel cuts approximately 30m wide, from the south to the north boundary of the site. Two seams known as the "yard" and the "rams" were extracted over most of the site area. The dip was approximately east to west. The maximum depth of working was about 38m at the western high wall face. The southern part of the site which contained the remains of the large spoil heap was not worked, but much of the old colliery waste was buried in the back filling operation, to make room for playing fields.

A geological fault was encountered parallel to the railway and this formed the northern boundary of the proposed excavations. In the north west corner, near to Foundry Lane a further small area was excavated and this yielded over 20,000 tonnes of coal, bringing the total to over 200,000 tonnes.

By autumn 1987 the work was completed and by the following summer the site was green and clean. However it had been agreed that part of the after-care would include drainage, extensive tree planting, provision of 6 sports pitches and restoration of the footpaths. As this is written in June 1992 none of this work has been done. British Coal need not come back here to extoll the virtues of their after-care programme, and Wigan MBC also have to carry part of the blame for not enforcing the restoration work.

Apart from the development of light industry and housing this must be the end of the story, or is it? The proposed link road from the M6 at Orrell to the M61 (Route 225) was scheduled to run through part of the site adjacent to the railway line and then along the old Pemberton loop line to Poolstock. The proposed line of this road has again been changed and it will now bisect the site, resulting in yet more upheaval.

12. NEW LIFE FOR DEAD LANDS

Extract from a 1963 publication.

The forward, by Keith Joseph, Minister of Housing and Local Governmnet

says:

"Wherever possible derelict land should be reclaimed. Apart from mining and other mineral extraction this also includes urban obsolescence. There is no reason why we should put up with dereliction. Local authorities must do more about it."

[As far as the Pemberton Colliery site was concerned Wigan MBC were certainly slow to comply, and the site is still not fully restored. - RW]

In England and Wales there are about 150,000 acres of derelict land - land which has been so damaged by industrial and other development that it is not capable of full use without special treatment. It includes disused mineral workings which may be dry or filled with water: abandoned industrial plant or buildings: hollows and water filled flashes caused by subsidence from underground mining: colliery spoil heaps.

The distribution is not uniform throughout the country. There is a marked concentration in places associated with the industrial revolution, in particular coal mining and heavy industrial areas. It is frequently linked with areas producing large quantities of industrial waste eg coal, iron, chemicals, potteries, and china clay. Some districts have as much as a quarter of their land area derelict.

"Desolate unkempt land may not only be a symptom of obsolescence, it may also be the cause of it, for by its appearance it deters new development, particularly industrial development."

Of the 150,000 acres which are derelict - 60,000 acres are spoil heaps, 60,000 acres are excavations or holes in the ground, 30,000 acres are of other types. 100,000 acres of this could be reclaimed or improved.

Before the war (WW II) waste reclamation was slow and costly and relied on armies of men with picks and shovels. During the war and since the development of bulldozers and scrapers the earth moving process has been revolutionised. The cost of earth moving has declined dramatically and it is now possible to contemplate operations which were unthinkable previously. There has also been much progress in the technique of "making soil".

Since the war, planning control has helped to minimise the growth of dereliction. Planning powers have also made it easier to control the disposal of waste materials. Some waste materials from spoil heaps can be re-used for road construction. (red shale)

13. COAL - A NATIONAL OVERVIEW

The following figures are quoted in Coal News June 1987:

Total coal mined in 1986-7

Deep mines		87.8 million tonnes
Opencast sites	13.3	
Licensed mines and tip washings	2.3	

Total		103.4

At 13.3MT, opencast coal production was the lowest for 7 years, but profits were £243M and the profit per tonne was £18.24.

Cost per Giga Joule:

deep mining	£1.60
opencast	£1.02

British Coal sales for 1986-7:

power stations	79.5 million tonnes
coke ovens	4.5
industry	8.7
domestic	5.8
other markets	2.9
exports	2.2

total	103.6

British Coal stocks at year end 9.9

Coal imports during the year,
largely coking coal. 10.1

Coal is the biggest single energy source, representing 33.7% of total energy consumption.

What then are the alternatives?

In 1986 a review of energy policy was produced by one of the Civil Service unions (IPCS). This gives an interesting indication of the position of sources of energy other than fossil fuels.

Nuclear.

At the end of 1985 there were 38 nuclear reactors in UK with 4 under construction and 1 planned. The output represented 19.8% of the total power generated.

Geothermal aquifers.

Power could be produced in some parts of UK. It is technically feasible now, but is not yet cost effective. The estimated likely contribution by the year 2025 is 0.25 Million tonnes of coal equivalent (Mtce)/yr. Categorised as promising but uncertain.

Geothermal from hot dry rocks.

This would need to be linked to local heating and power schemes. It requires a large initial capital investment and is not yet cost effective.

Hydro-power.

Most of the available sites are in use and the overall contribution is small.

Active solar heating.

This is feasible and the technology exists, but it provides minimum heating when maximum is required ie in winter. It is not yet cost effective. The estimated contribution by 2025 is 0.1 Mtce/yr, and is considered to be a long shot.

Passive solar heating.

This relies on good building design and is being developed. It is economically attractive. The estimated contribution by 2025 is 2 Mtce/yr in the domestic sector.

Photo-voltaic power.

Grossly inefficient and poor cost effectiveness.

Tidal energy.

This is technically feasible now but has a high capital cost and a long lead

time. The Severn Barrage would be cost effective with an estimated output of 13,000 GWhrs/yr. As a comparison a 2,000 MW coal powered station produces about 13,000 GWh/yr and consumes about 5M tonnes of coal.

Wind energy - onshore.

Some machines are already installed. There are technical difficulties which are being investigated. The estimated contribution by 2025 is 1.6 Mtce/yr.

Wind energy - offshore.

Less economically attractive than land based machines and is not likely to be used extensively in the foreseeable future.

Wave energy.

This is not yet a proven technology, especially for large machines. Economically this is the least attractive of the alternative technologies.

Bio-fuels. Direct combustion of dry waste.

This is quite attractive economically and environmentally. The economic potential at 1985 energy prices is 5 Mtce/yr. The estimated contribution by 2025 is 8 Mtce/yr.

Bio-fuels. Gaseous fuels from wet waste.

This produces impure methane and is economically attractive. The estimated contribution by 2025 is 1.6 Mtce/yr.

From evidence given at the Sizewell B public inquiry by the Department of Energy the estimated UK primary energy demands are:

1980 about 345 Mtce/yr

2010 about 400 Mtce/yr

14. Extracts from a notebook of Ralph Winstanley who came from the Winstanley/Pemberton area and became steward of the Haigh Estate in 1699.

The following information was provided by Donald Anderson.

"I was married to my wife Ellen att Upholland by Mr Burchall on Tuesday ye 7th August 1705."

(Ellen was born in 1680 and Ralph in 1667)

"My great grandmother Elizabeth Winstanley died Saturday ye 7th April 1677, being about 90 years of age."

(She was therefore born in 1587 when the Winstanley's still owned the manor of Winstanley)

"My grandmother Margaret Winstanley died Friday betwixt 8 and 9 o'th clock ye 30 October 1702. Buried att Wigan on Monday 2nd November. Baptised ye 18th October 1618 being 84 years of age."

"My dear father Thomas Winstanley was born ye 23rd February Anno Dom 1639 and departed this life on Monday ye 2nd day of May about 10 att night and was buried on Thursday the 5th of ye same month Anno Dom 1709 being 69 years of age ye 23rd February before."

"My dear mother Mary Winstanley was born on ye 17th day of March 1636 and departed this life on Tuesday ye 12th October 1708 and was buried on ye 14th of ye same month she being 72 years of age and wife to my father 42 years the 4th of ye same month ye Lord was pleased to take her."

"Uncle Raphe Winstanley died in London, Tuesday 10th April 1677 being 27 years of age."

"My little daughter Mary was born Saturday morning ye 27th July 1706 and was baptised Wednesday ye 16th August."

"My dear little Thomas was born on Tuesday ye 4th of September about 11 o'th clock in ye forenoon and died ye 22nd day of November following about 11 o'th clock in ye forenoon being Saturday Anno Dom 1707."

A further entry reads:

"My dear son Thomas died on Saturday about 11 o'th clock and was buried on Sunday following ye 23rd November Anno Dom 1707 being 11 weeks old ye Thursday before."

"My daughter Susanna Winstanley was born on Monday ye 7th of February about half an hour after 7 in ye morning and was baptised on Saturday ye 12th of ye same month Anno Dom 1708/9."

"My little daughter Margrett Winstanley was born on Sunday about half an hour after 10 o'th clock being ye 11th day of March 1710 and was baptised on Saturday ye 17th of ye same month."

"My dear little Margrett died on Sunday in ye evening near 7 o'th clock and was buried on Tuesday ye 6th day of November 1711 being 34 weeks old. She died of ye smallpox."

"An account of what it cost me in burying my dear little Margrett this
November ye 6th 1711.

	s	d
Imps. 20 quarts of ale and 5 quarts of beer		
from my brother Michael	8	8
4 lb rolls from Mr Hunt	4	0
1/2 oz cloves. 1/2 oz cinnamon and qr oz nutmeg	1	7
4 lb sugar at 5d	1	8
Flannel suit	2	0
Church dues	2	4
Church banns	2	3
Manchetts		5
Given Mary forth		6
Given Jerry Bamber		3
	£1	-3 - 8

(The spices were to make spiced ale which was traditionally served at funerals. The bread was presumably a number of rolls each of 4 lbs weight, which was one of the standard weights for bread.)

"My little daughter Elizabeth Winstanley was born on Thursday ye 10th of July about 11 o'th clock at night and was baptised on Thursday ye 12th of ye same month Anno Dom 1712."

"My little daughter Elizabeth Winstanley died on Thursday about 3 o'th clock in ye morning and was buried on Friday following being ye 19th day of February 1713-1714. She was very ill of Chist Cough for near 4 months before ye Lord took her."

15. SNIPPETS OF INFORMATION FROM BANKES RECORDS

AT PRESTON RECORD OFFICE

Winstanley Manorial Court records.

Various documents from circa 1660-1790. These are mainly hand-written single sheets and are difficult to read. There is not much information and there are no court records later than C18.

16 April 1666. 57 tenants in Winstanley (not Billinge) of which 6 were Winstanley's.

Rylands mill and Moor mill both operational in 1667.

Rylands mill toll £22-9-9d (£22.49)

Moor mill toll £19-12-1d (£19.60) (Moor mill was in the dip near to the Station Hotel at Orrell.)

23 May 1738.

The Court Baron or halmott of Robert Bankes Esquire.....in and for the said manour the twenty third day of May in the eleventh year of the reign of King George the Second and in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and thirty eight. Before the suitors of the said court.

Follows what appears to be a list of tenants. 77 names listed, but 17 marked dead.

The jurors to inquire for themselves and the Lord of the Manor aforsaid.

All are listed as gentlemen:

Robert Atherton

Randle Claro?

William Darbyshire

James Atherton

Thomas Mathor

Robert Winstanley the younger

John Gaskell

Robert Waring

John Martlew

William Marsh

Abraham Fairclough
Ralph Farrar.

Richard Waring

Changes of tenancies.

Various fines for not maintaining hedges and ditches 10/-d or £1
(Expensive for that time - RW).

Fines for not maintaining buildings. 3 fines of £1-19-0d each (£1.95).

Bankes account book 1770.

Paid Hugh Bullock for one years newspaper due 25 December last £1-
16-6d (£1.82)

Received from James Winstanley one years rent on Riland Mill £10-10-
0d (£10.50)

15 February 1779 paid John Naylor the expenses of a court dinner held
on the 9th Instant at his house, the White Bear Inn in Winstanley for the
manor of Winstanley. (This was almost certainly at Windy Arbour cross
roads-RW).

June 1781. Servant's wages.

Butler. Peter Lloyd. £18-15-0d (£18.75) per threequarter year.

Under butler. James Harrison.

Coachman. James Unsworth. £10-0-0d pa.

Postilion. James Hurst. £4-4-0d ((£4.20. (£1-1shilling =1guinea. many
financial transactions were in guineas. RW))

Groom. Henry Hewitt. £8-8-0d pa

Gardener. Randle Leigh. £25-0-0d pa.

Game keeper. William hickison (or Nickison). £10-0-0d pa
(presumably Nicholson-RW)

Laundress. Ann Rylands to Dec. 31 1780 then Ann Roberts. £6-0-0d
pa.

Chambermaid. Ann Mills. £5-5-0d pa.

Housekeeper. Susanna Robinson. £16-16-0d pa.

Cook. Ciciley Unsworth £7-7-0d pa.

Scullery maid. Elizabeth Hewitt. £4-0-0d pa.

1795 Wm Fouracre. Footman. £12-0-0d pa.

Bankes account book for 1798.

Rents received vary from £1-0-6d to £40-0-0d.

Paid to the Hon. and Rev. George Bridgeman for the tythe of Winstanley
township 1797 £123-0-0d.

Paid for a newspaper 6d (2.5p)

Paid £1-1-0d (£1.05) to John Boydell for catching moles.

Paid John Fearnley £13-18-10d (£13.94) for 2 pieces of fustian.

Paid Dr Cowling £82-13-9d (£82.69) for his bill for medicine for
1795-1796-1797.

Paid James Foster and Co. for getting slutch out of mote behind the
garden £2-0-0d. (This was the moat which surrounded the original
house before Winstanley Hall was built - RW).

A list of persons who are liable to serve as militia in the township of
Winstanley for the year 1798.

1 William Fouracre. Footman.	28	Thos. Marsh. Weaver.
2 James Unsworth. Coachman.	29	Wm. Winstanley. Weaver.

3 John Hurst. Groom.	30 Robert Rylance. --
4 Thos. Tasker. Tanner.	31 Henry Maudsley. --
5 Edmond Taylor. Tanner.	32 Robert Taylor. Naylor.
6 Wm. Moyers. Blacksmith.	33 Thos. Pinnington. --
7 John Moyers. --	34 Wm. Hurst Snr. --
8 Wm. Cadman. --	35 Wm. Hurst Jnr. --
9 Henry Baker. Miller.	36 John Harrison. --
10 Thos. Bullar. Husbandman.	37 Wm. Webb. --
11 John Wiswell. --	38 James Hurst. --
12 Wm Wiswell. --	39 Wm. Unsworth. --
13 Richard Rimmer. --	40 John Unsworth. --
14 James Heald. --	41 Abraham Unsworth. -
15 Wm. Huvet. --	42 Thos. Boulton. --
16 James Barry. --	43 James Frodsham. -
17 John Ellison. --	44 Robert Winstanley --
18 Thos. Ellison. --	45 Henry Morris. --
19 Henry Birch --	46 James Gaskell. Weaver
20 Wm. Tasker. --	47 Henry Fairhurst. Collier
21 John Alker. --	48 John Winstanley. Naylor
22 James Winstanley	49 Thos. Gore. Delfman.
Leighs son . Weaver.	50 James Gore. Weaver.
23 John Dean. Weaver.	51 John Hamer. --
24 John Cunliff. Joiner.	52 Chas. Worthington. --
25 Peter Hitchen jnr. Carpenter.	53 Thos. Daniel. --
26 Henry Fairhurst. Weaver.	54 James Winstanley
27 Henry Barton. Weaver.	Lawrence son. Weaver.

16. LORD AND SHARMAN LTD.

Following the demise of the Pemberton Electric Works and then the rope making works, in Campbell Street just off Tunstall Lane, the premises were occupied by Lord and Sharman Limited.

Lord and Sharman Limited was registered as a limited company on 8 December 1920. The share capital was £10,000 in £1 shares. The directors were:

John Thomas Lord of Southport, Ernest Sharman of Southport and Albert Lord of Ormskirk Road, Pemberton, Wigan.

The objects of the company were:

To carry on business as boot, shoe, clog, slipper and sock manufacturers and dealers, leather merchants and manufacturers, leather dressers, tanners, dealers in hides, skins, and other material, manufacturers of and dealers in rubber goods and any branch or subsidiary business commonly carried on in connection therewith.

The premises were completely gutted by fire in November 1931, which resulted in a temporary move to Soho Street, Newtown (Hurst's Jam Works) until rebuilding was complete.

In 1958, 500 people were employed.

The company was taken over by Harry H Payne in 1968 and sold to George Ward Footwear in 1971. A year later in 1972 it became part of the Ward White Footwear Group.

In July 1981 180-190 people were employed.

At the time of writing, 22 October 1982, the number employed is 97.

Production is due to cease in early November and redundancy notices have already been sent out. Only two people will have their jobs transferred, the Managing Director and the buyer. All other jobs will be lost.

This is the only shoe manufacturer in Wigan although one other place produces slippers.

The current minimum union wage is £65 per week. For w.e. 8/10/82 the maximum wage earned was £127 and the lowest £67.53. All on piecework.

Some machines are old. The oldest is thought to be of 1926 vintage. Cliff Grundy has worked here for 44 years and remembers that the machine was here when he started. All the machines are rented and this 1926 machine still costs £14.03 per month. A much more modern toe laster costs £198.85 per month. The total rental cost of equipment is £15-20,000 per year. The majority of stitching machines are Singer. They last for about 20 years.

The general manager, Peter Marsden, says that Wigan people are very dogmatic. He also says that there have been some recent problems and that staff have been unsettled due to the threat of redundancy. Now that the redundancy notices have been finalised production is better than ever. Quote "Production is now better than ever. We aren't breaking any records but I only get 1.5% rejects".

Several of the jobs require considerable skill. Skins as bought in are ready dyed to appropriate colour but the colour varies from skin to skin. The skins are from half of the animal and are irregular in shape. They can

have many flaws caused by the animal scratching against wire, insect penetration through the skin and brand marks. The quality of the leather varies not only from skin to skin but also across a single skin. Texture and thickness vary from spine to belly and from neck to rump. It requires skill and experience which parts can be used for various parts of the shoe and how to obtain maximum use from the skin. Cutting the leather is known as "clicking" because when it was done by hand using a sharp knife there was an audible click from the knife blade as it was flicked at the end of a cut. This process has been replaced by machine stamping.

The building has since been converted into small industrial units.

Apparently there was one character employed who would only work for four days per week. When asked why he worked four days he replied "Cos I can't manage on three".

17. SOME DETAILS OF SOME OF THE OPENCAST SITES

Ryecroft

Coaling commenced 1/4/46

Coaling completed 4/8/48

Backfilling completed 26/8/49

Total area worked 637,050 sq yds

Total coal extracted 528,034 tons

Some old workings encountered.

Seams worked: Wigan seams - 2ft. 4ft. 9ft. 5ft.

Barton Clough II

Total area requisitioned 52.2 acres

Total area worked 12.92 acres
Date requisitioned 22/2/46
Coaling commenced 13/12/48
Coaling completed 31/3/50
Returned to agriculture 17/4/54
Total coal extracted 628,239 tons
Seams worked: Ravine
Overburden: soft sandstone, boulder clay, grey shale,
black shale.

Lower Castle

Total area requisitioned 100.75 acres
Total area worked 25.785 acres
Date requisitioned 21/12/49
Coaling commenced 19/5/50
Coaling completed 26/11/51
Resoiling completed 10/5/52
Returned to agriculture 16/5/52
Total coal extracted 194,248 tons
No old workings uncovered
Seams worked: Flaggy Delf, King, Queen, Ravine, Orrell
Yard.

Crows Nest

Total area requisitioned 36.7 acres
Total area worked 4.69 acres
Date requisitioned 9/6/45
Coaling commenced 13/7/45
Coaling completed 8/4/46
Returned to agriculture 26/6/47

Total coal extracted 28,419 tons
 No old workings uncovered.
 Seams worked: Top King, Bottom King, Queen.
 Overburden: Drift, hard black shale with soft grey shale partings.

Chapel House and Home Farm II

Total area requisitioned 38.424 acres
 Total area worked 14.59 acres
 Date requisitioned 26/11/54
 Coaling commenced 11/2/55
 Coaling completed 2/10/56
 Resoiling completed 1/5/58
 Returned to agriculture 1/5/58
 Total coal extracted 93,475 tons
 No old workings encountered.
 Seams worked: Flaggy Delf, King, Queen.
 Overburden: Soil, clay, sandstone, dark grey shale, black shale.

Ben Johnson II and Lady Lane

Total area requisitioned 55.266 acres
 Total area worked 17.47 acres

	BJ II	Lady Lane
Date requisitioned	18/2/53	8/8/53
Coaling commenced	30/3/53	21/9/53
Coaling completed	22/9/53	21/4/54
Resoiling completed	31/5/54	25/6/54

Returned to agriculture 31/5/54 25/6/54
 Total coal extracted 56,899 tons
 No old workings recorded.
 Seams worked: Wilcox Tops, Pemberton Yard.
 Overburden: Soil, lt brown boulder clay, lt grey shale
 (distorted), dk shale (distorted), brown sandstone,
 grey sandstone.

Harvey House, Harvey House extension, Hawkley Brook

Total area requisitioned 129.894 acres
 Total area worked 42.365 acres
 Date requisitioned 3/11/47 6/1/48
 29/12/49
 Coaling commenced 11/12/47
 10/1/49 4/5/50
 Coaling completed 5/1/49
 4/11/49
 14/2/51
 Resoiling completed ? ?
 ?
 Returned to agriculture 6/7/49 5/8/50
 -/10/51
 Total coal extracted 309,978 tons
 Voids due to old workings: Ince 4ft tops - 4549 cu yds. Ince 4ft
 bottoms - 132,836 cu yds.
 Seams worked: Ince New, Ince Yard, Bulldog, Ince 4ft tops,
 Ince 4ft bottoms, 1 lower un-named seam.

Tat Windy II

Total area requisitioned 125.2 acres

Total area worked ?
 Date requisitioned 11/7/56
 Coaling commenced 29.9.56
 Coaling completed 30/6/61
 Total coal extracted 525,355 tons

No old workings shown on plans.

Seams worked: Sir John - 1ft 3inches
 Flaggy delf - 1ft 5 inches and 2ft 1inches.
 King tops - 1ft 11inches
 King bottoms - 1ft 11.5inches
 Queen - 1ft 4inches

Overburden: 30 acres of woods and water.
 Majority of remainder previously opencasted and under restoration. Soil, clay, grey shale.

Winstanley I and Windy Arbour

(Cheshire acres)

From	To	Seam	Area extracted	Av. thickness	Tonnage
?31/12/45		W.9ft	2.0416	7.5ft	49,000
		W.4ft	4.3316	5.25	72,771
		W.9ft	1.2846	7.5	30,833
		W.2ft	0.38303	2.0	2,451
		W.9ft	0.39441	6.3	7,929

Windy Arbour

1/1/46-31/12/46

W.9ft	1.25639	7.5	30,152
W.4ft	0.80505	5.1	13,138
W.9ft	0.18131	7.5	4,351

1/1/47-25/6/47

W.9ft	880sq yds	5.08	1,396
-------	-----------	------	-------

W.4ft 12,430sq yds 4.22 16,427
 W.2ft 23,200sq yds 1.57 11,340

22/6/47 15/9/47

W.4ft 4,794sq yds 5.68 8,559

Total coal extracted 248,347 (certified), 238,634 (weighbridge) tons.

Maximum depth worked 70.57ft.

Back filling completed 20/4/48

Chairwood, Mount Pleasant, Orrett's House

Total area requisitioned 62.389 acres

Total area worked 50.91 acres

	Chairwood	Mt Pleasant House	Orrett's
Date requisitioned		1/6/47	
		9/9/50	
		24/11/53	
Coaling commenced		30/6/47	
		5/11/51	
		31/12/53	
Coaling completed		23/1/53	
		23/12/53	
		23/4/53	
Resoiling completed		30/7/53	
		31/5/54	?
Returned to agriculture		30/7/53	31/5/54 ?
Total coal extracted	364,839 tons		
No old workings recorded.			
Seams worked:	Sir John, Flaggy Delf, King, Queen, Ravine, Arley.		
Overburden:	Light soil. Good medium quality		

agricultural land. Sand, shales, sandstones.

Winstanley IIIA and V

Total area requisitioned 138.380 acres

Total area worked 25.10 acres

Date requisitioned ?

Coaling commenced 1/4/49

Coaling completed 28/5/51

Resoiling completed 11/10/51

Returned to agriculture 11/10/51

Total coal extracted 175,013 tons

No old workings recorded.

Seams worked: Wigan 5ft. Wigan 4ft. Wigan 2ft. Ravine.

Overburden: Drift, sandstones and shale.

Ben Johnson, Wheatlees, Derbyshire House

Total area requisitioned 100.448 acres

Total area worked 34.110 acres

Ben J.

Wheatlees Derbs.

Ho.

Date requisitioned

4/9/51

6/12/50 4/9/51

Coaling commenced

25/10/51

20/2/51

21/12/51

Coaling completed

13/6/52

26/2/52

20/8/52

Resoiling completed

18/9/52

26/7/52 ?

Returned to agriculture 18/9/52 28/8/52 ?
 Total coal extracted 183,105 tons
 Total old working voids in coal seams: Ince 4ft bottoms - 108,403 cu
 yds
 Ince 7ft - 47,072 cu yds
 Seams worked: Ince 4ft tops. Ince 4ft bottoms. Ince 7ft.
 Numerous small pillars of coal extracted.
 Overburden: Medium quality agricultural land.
 Clay, shale, fireclay.

Millington, Barton Clough III, Orrell Yard

Total area requisitioned 79.936 acres

Total area worked 23.22 acres

	Millington	BC III Orrell Yd.
Date requisitioned		12/1/53
		18/9/53
		13/4/54
Coaling commenced		26/1/53
		13/10/53
		23/7/54
Coaling completed		24/9/53
		20/7/54
		10/1/55

Returned to agriculture 2/6/54

Seams worked: Ravine Ravine Orrell Yard

18. REMINISCENCES OF FARMING

In the 1940's and probably for a very long time before that the farms around Pony Dick area were relatively small , about 30-60 acres. The biggest farm in Winstanley was Turner's at Windy Arbour taking in Windy Arbour Farm, Crows Nest and Hill House. At present this is about 150 acres. The small farms were not mechanised and relied entirely on horse power and manual handling. The only exception was the thresher which came round once or twice a year to the local farms. This was driven by Billy Berry and at about this time was still powered by a steam traction engine. Turners were probably the first farm in the area to have their own tractor and use it to power other machines. They certainly had a David Brown tractor in 1950/1 which had power take-off. Earlier tractors such as the old Fordson did not have this facility.

Most of the farming was mixed, typically long stalk wheat, oats, occasionally barley, hay, potatoes, swedes (for winter cattle fodder), pigs, hens, dairy cows and a few ducks, but rarely beef cattle. Most of the wheat grew to about 3 ft high and having a thick stalk this could withstand reasonably bad weather. However oats used to be laid flat by strong winds and rain and became very difficult to mow. Binders were used almost universally at this time, combines only being used some years later. The binders, usually drawn by 2 horses, cut the corn and tied it into sheaves which then had to be stacked together manually in groups of 6 or 8, depending on the cereal, to dry out before being taken to the barn for storage until such a time as it was threshed. Hay was cut by horse drawn machine and left in the field to dry. It was carted in to the barn loose and was not baled in the fields.

The bales of hay or straw produced by the baler attached to the thresher were larger than those produced by pick-up balers and weighed 80-100lbs. These were bound with wire rather than string and old bale wire

was used as a general means of fastening anything together which fell apart. At this time Highfield Farm and many of the implements seemed to be more or less kept together with bale wire.

Manure was loaded onto the carts manually, taken to the field and then spread along the drills ready to sow the potatoes. The potatoes were sown manually into the drills. In October it was also a labour intensive time potato picking. The potatoes and swedes were stored in "clamps" which were long trenches about 3ft deep and 6ft wide. They were covered with straw and then the withered tops from the potato plants and finally with about 6-9 inches of soil. This prevented frost damage.

Cows were milked by hand. Milk was sold direct from the farm by the pint or quart. It was not TB tested at this time.

Many of the farms kept a few ducks but these were easy prey for the foxes. There was a regular annual fox shoot in Winstanley Park.

Where the fields had been subjected to opencast coal mining the land was barely fit for grazing cattle and was no use at all for arable crops.

Crops were rotated on an annual basis taking year 1 as the year when manure was applied, the crops were: (1) potatoes, (2) wheat, (3) oats, (4) hay, (5) fallow/pasture. The order of gathering in crops was: (1) hay, (2) oats, (3) wheat, (4) second crop hay, (5) potatoes.

19. VENTURE LODGE

The Venture Lodge was a properly constructed pit reservoir. It originally served the Bottom Venture Pit and was located where the Venture public house now stands. It was about 50yds long x 20yds wide. It was surrounded by a vertically boarded wooden fence about 5ft high. The sides of the lodge were stone and sloped into the water at a steep angle which made it rather dangerous since it was easy to slip down the sides and into the water, which was quite deep in places. Several children were drowned there over a period of years. It was always taboo to me and I had numerous hidings from my father whenever he found that I had been over the fence. Bullrushes grew near the edges and swans moor hens and ducks frequently nested there. The lodge was drained and filled in 1970.

In the field next to the lodge was a large iron bucket-like container which was used as a drinking water point for the horses and cows. It was about 3ft in diameter and about 4ft deep and had large lugs or eyes attached to the rim. This may well have been the sinking hoppit previously used at the New Venture Pit. [See also Jim Parkinson's thoughts on New Venture Pit]

In the severe winter of 1962-3 the lodge was frozen over to a thickness of 8-9 inches, which made it safe for skating. Lit by the street lights along one side it made an ideal ice rink and I skated there on many nights after work. As far as I can recall that was the last time that ice on the lodge was thick enough to skate in safety. During that same winter Wrightington Fish Ponds were also frozen to a similar thickness and as well as skating, cars were driven round on the ice.

It must have been about 1960 when mercury vapour street lighting was installed along Billinge Road at Highfield. Previous to that there were

only old gas lamps. These were not automatic and the lamp lighter used to walk along each evening with his lighting pole, lighting the lamps which were serviceable. Many were damaged or had burnt out mantles so the lighting was decidedly patchy. Mercury vapour lamps (greenish) were later replaced by sodium lamps (yellow). At this time smog was common and this reduced visibility to less than 5 yards. All traffic was brought to a stop and even pedestrians who thought they knew where they were going got lost. The sodium lamps were supposed to provide light which penetrated fog or smog more effectively but the difference was barely noticeable.

20. COAL SEAMS AT WINSTANLEY COLLIERY, LEYLAND GREEN PIT SHAFT

Seam	coal thickness	depth to bottom of seam			
Coal	1ft 6ins	10ft 6ins			
Coal	6	14	0		
Coal	1 6				
Dirt		3	6		
coal		2	6		
dirt			8		
coal		2	0	76	2
Hoo cannell		2	6		
coal		2	0		
dirt		3	3		

coal	2	6		
dirt	6	0		
coa	1	6	129	5
dirty coal	1	0	143	5
Ravine mine-				
coal		10		
soft earth	1	4		
coal with bass	4	4		
soft earth		4		
coal	1	2	244	0
coal		2	263	9
Yard mine-				
coal tops	2	0		
dirt	1	6		
coal		6		
dirt	4	5		
coal		6		
dirt	2	4		
bass		4		
coal	4	4	365	0
coal		1	395	5
coal		8		
soft earth	1	1		
coal		1	467	0

coal		10		
soft bass	1	3		
coal		8	501	1
Orrell 5ft mine-				
coal		10		
dirt		8		
coal	2	10	546	7
coal		3	550	5
coal		2	560	7
coal		4		
warrant	3	7		
coal		1	590	10
Orrell 4ft mine-				
Coal	3	1	729	5
bottom of shaft			744	5

21. SUMMERSALES COLLIERY

During the late 1930's Pemberton Collieries entered into agreements with GH Bankes of Winstanley Hall to open a new pit in the Summersales to mine coal under Winstanley Estate between the Tinker Hole and Cropper's House faults. The agreements were dated 12 November 1937

and 1 November 1938.

Extracts from lease.

The land is situate in the township of Winstanley.

Initial access to the pit area would be via the old Winstanley Colliery mineral line from Pony Dick.

The original lease was for 30 years from 12 November 1937.

Payment to GH Bankes was to be £65 per foot thick per cheshire acre (10,240 sq yds) in the 9ft mine and £10 per cheshire acre annual rent.

The lessees shall be at liberty to leave unworked any part or parts of the Wigan 9ft mine which may be fairly and properly and consistently with the covenants and provisions herin contained, it be left ungotten for the support of buildings or of any existing pit or shaft or as without any neglect default or mismanagement on the part of the lessees it may be necessary to leave unworked as a permanent barrier against dangerous accumulation of water or as a protection against possible fire or any coal left ungotten shall not be paid for.

All land used to be substantially fenced.

The lessees will pay compensation for any surface damage and will indemnify Bankes.

If re-letting becomes possible then re-letting shall not be on more favourable terms to the terms offered to the lessees.

If lessees "abandon in" any coal and make due allowances for payments,

this coal can be got during the term of the lease but not afterwards.
The lease shall cease and become void when any coal in the Wigan 9ft is abandoned.

....and will also at the expiration or sooner determination of the said term deliver up to the lessor all the premises comprised in this lease in as good a state and condition as the nature of the case will admit.....

.... and also will within 12 calendar months after the expiration or sooner determination of the said term at their own expense fill up and level any shaft and fill up and adequately secure the entrance of any drift from the surface sunk or driven within the lands or any extension shown on the plan.

Operations.

The pit was started as a drift mine in 1938. The 2 drifts were driven about 50yds towards Highfield View in the banking in the pit surface lower area. These drifts turned right towards Pony Dick and then turned right again to access the coal under Winstanley Estate. Later a shaft was sunk from the top surface working area to intersect these drifts. This shaft was only 17.8yds deep, which must surely be a record for shallow shafts. The cages passed one another at about ground level. The screens and landsale were also part of this structure which was typical of 1940's pit architecture - an exposed steel girder framework, infilled with brick. The compressor house in the lower pit area is in the same style and still exists.

The coal seams worked were Wigan 5ft., Wigan 4ft., Wigan 9ft., and a small amount of Orrell 4ft. Coal was not removed under Winstanley Hall.

Three faults running NE/SW divided the colliery take into 2 areas . The top area was bounded to the east by the Cropper's (or Coppers) House Fault, downthrowing west by 190yds. and on the west by Lea Wood Fault, downthrowing west 40yds. The bottom area was bounded on the east by the Lea Wood Fault and on the west by the Tinker Hole Fault downthrowing east by 290yds.

On 3 September 1938 there was an inrush of water in the Wigan 9ft seam close to the face of a dip roadway. Ahead of the roadway was an old pit known as Park Pit which had been sunk by Bankes many years earlier and abandoned, although no official abandonment plans exist. There was a small amount of Wigan 4ft coal worked from this single shaft. The inrush of water occurred through breaks in the roof and was probably from the Wigan 4ft from Park Pit. There was no direct connection to old workings and the inrush was about 190ft from the surface. After this event the water level in Park Pit continued to fall.

The pit was nationalised in 1947.

Wigan 5ft mine.

Only the bottom area was worked (this area relates to the area of the pit and not the top or bottom of the coal seam). The top area was worked entirely by opencast methods. Access to this seam was by a cross measures drift through the Lea Wood fault from the top area of the Wigan 4ft. Working in the Wigan 5ft was by pillar and stall. It was abandoned in October 1965 as exhausted.

Wigan 4ft mine.

Access to this seam was by cross measures drift from Wigan 9ft. Working was by pillar and stall and it was abandoned on 15 September 1961.

Wigan 9ft mine (or Trencherbone)

A dirt band of 3ft to 4ft thick splits the seam into two sections, known as the 9ft tops and the 9ft bottoms. These two sections were worked separately, in the main by pillar and stall methods.

Orrell 4ft (or Arley).

Only a relatively small area of this seam was worked. Access to the seam was by cross measures drift through the Tinker Hole fault from the bottom area of the Wigan 9ft. Working was by longwall methods. Workings of the old Clarkes colliery bounded the area to the west and a barrier was maintained against these workings. Holes were bored at intervals into this barrier to check the position.

A pit head baths was opened in 1952. Prior to that miners had to go home "in the black".

Underground water.

There is no doubt that Summersales was a very wet pit. Numerous local miners will testify to that and many miners refused to work in these sort of conditions. Stories are told of rats being caught and tied to pieces of wood, with their legs free and then pushed off to race across the areas of water. Apparently many bets were lost and won on which rat would get to the other side first. In the Wigan 4ft and 9ft mines the make of water was reasonably constant. In the Wigan 5ft, due to the proximity of opencast workings and the outcrop of the seam, the water made depended on rainfall. This varied from 20 to 400 gallons per minute.

Water from various areas of the pit was pumped into lodges underground and then pumped to the surface to outfall into Smithy Brook. For the week ending 19 March 1966, just before the pit closed,

the water pumped was as follows:

from bottom Wigan 4ft lodge
2,148,000 galls.

from top Wigan 4ft lodge
1,003,000

from Wigan 5ft and make in top Wigan 9ft
1,449,000

pumped to surface
4,600,000

This represents over 20,000 tons per week. About 4 tons of water was pumped for every ton of coal raised.

Clarke's Colliery workings in the Arley seam were known to be waterlogged, the level of water being measured at Clarke's number 5 shaft. The Orrell 5ft seam, 66yds above the Arley was known to have been worked and that these workings were probably waterlogged. It was noticeable that there was an increase in the make of water in the Arley seam whenever a fault was intersected.

Upon closure of the colliery the drifts were stowed and the shaft filled. A drainage pipe was left through the stowing of number 1 drift so that water would be able to flow if it rose to a level of 187ft above ordnance datum. Now (1992), water flows from this drain almost all the year round, indicating that the workings are completely waterlogged. Although the water from this drain appears to be fairly clear, it does contain a relatively high concentration of dissolved iron. When this water is exposed to air and to water in the brook of a higher pH, the iron is precipitated out as ochre, which gives the brook the characteristic orange/yellow colour. As long as mine water flows into the brook it will

be impossible to get rid of this staining.

Connections to other collieries.

A tunnel driven from Pemberton Colliery to Summersales Colliery Wigan 9ft seam intersected old workings from Venture Pit. A water dam, built in this tunnel, isolated Summersales from these other collieries.

Workings in the Wigan 5ft seam intersected an old drainage sough.

There was no other connection to workings from any other colliery.

The pit closed in 1966.

For more details see *Blundell's Collieries 1776-1966*. By Donald Anderson.

Application to reopen the colliery.

In 1987 a small company known as Highfield Minerals Ltd made an application to reopen Summersales Colliery. This eventually went to public inquiry in October 1988. The main issue was whether or not Summersales was still a colliery, although it had been closed for over 20 years. The result was that the inspector rejected Highfield Minerals application, to the great relief of local residents.

At the inquiry evidence was presented by a local environmental group EPOC, in support of the residents. The main thrust of the inquiry revolved largely around whether or not what remained could still be called a colliery and therefore be re-opened.

Public inquiry held in Wigan. October 1988. [The appendices are not included - RW]

Department of the Environment at Bristol informed us that anything

which had changed significantly from the time when Summersales Colliery was operational to now, would be relevant to the inquiry. The evidence is based on this information.

1. Introduction

We are not opposed to coal mining in principle, as shown by the fact that we urged British Coal to opencast both the Pemberton and Pony Dick sites which are in the immediate vicinity. We also accept that coal can only be mined where coal is. However, in the case of the Highfield Minerals proposals we are not in any way convinced that the need for the coal, if there is a need, can be justified when balanced against other factors. We also consider that mining at Summersales was finished in 1966 and not suspended.

2. Shaft, drift and workings

Very soon after the closure of Summersales Colliery in 1966 the shaft was filled and both drifts and other parts of the underground roadways were solidly packed, using a pneumatic stower, for a distance in excess of 200m, which is very considerable. The winders and screening plant, which formed a substantial and expensive brick building was dismantled and removed.

Had there been any intention to re-open and re-work this colliery then:

a) the building housing the winders and screens would have been retained.

b) The shaft would not have been filled, but may have been capped. Only about a quarter of a mile away the Blundell's New Venture Pit shaft is capped but not filled.

c) The drifts would have been sealed at the entrances only and would not have been back-filled to such an extent.

d) Any application to build property in what is now Ribbesford Road, on top of the main roadways of the pit, would not have been permitted. This is confirmed in reverse by British Coal not permitting Highfield Minerals to use the underground roadways which are under property and hence the need for a new drift, which was not part of the original mining operation.

e) the workings would have been kept dry.

3. Pit baths

The pit baths were constructed in 1952, much later than other buildings relevant to this inquiry and consequently were not part of the early mining operation. It is probable that the cost of these baths was met at least partially, and possibly wholly, by the Miners Welfare. They were built for a specific purpose and up to the pit closure were never used for any other purpose.

4. Mining surveys

In this area, because of the extent of previous coal mining, it is normal procedure to obtain a mining survey report when any property changes hands. One such report states:

"Some coal remains unworked in this locality although the possibility of future working is considered unlikely."

There are also two letters held by Wigan MBC, which we were not in a position to copy, but which are considered relevant.

i) From HL Tate of the National Coal Board to Mr J Bankes of Winstanley Hall, dated 16 August 1966 with reference to:

"question of the Board surrendering its interest in Summersales Colliery Site as soon as possible."

ii) From ER Hassall of the National Coal Board to Wigan Council, dated

14 May 1968:

"The NCB has no present plan for future coal mining in this area."

Clearly there is no intention that any further operation of Summersales Colliery was, or is, contemplated as far as British Coal is concerned. This gives credence to the view that the mining operation at Summersales is finished and not suspended, as proposed by Highfield Minerals Ltd.

5. Greater Manchester Minerals Plan

In the plan, Summersales is not marked as an area of potential mineral extraction and therefore indicates that there was no intention to re-work the pit. Also, according to the Minerals Plan conditions, any area not so designated should be presumed against.

6. Disposal of spoil

The original disposal of spoil from Summersales Colliery was largely to Pemberton Collieries tip. that area has recently been opencasted and reclaimed and can no longer be used for that purpose. It is now difficult to find any site locally where this type of waste could be deposited in such a way as to be environmentally acceptable. A great deal of time and effort has been spent in the Wigan area in recent years to remove the environmental scars left by previous mining operations. This again must constitute a change from the original procedures.

7. Water

For part of the year, usually during the winter months, water discharges spontaneously from the drain left in number 1 adit. highfield minerals quote the maximum flow rate of 100 gallons per minute, or 144,000 gallons per day. In relation to any other pits in the area this flow is very small and would not provide significant help to any other pit. On the

other hand Highfield Minerals are accepting, by this statement that de-watering of Summersales would affect a much wider area and would not be restricted to the mine only. This indicates that subsidence could occur over a much wider area.

During last winter we measured the pH of this water on several occasions and found it to be between 5.9 and 6.1. This pH level is to be expected from workings which have been effectively sealed for many years since the environment and water in the flooded workings will be oxygen deficient.

If these workings are re-opened and de-watered the pH can be expected to fall to a level equivalent to that which was prevalent during previous operation of the colliery. This is caused partially by chemical and partly by bacteriological action, mainly on iron pyrites, which results in the production of sulphuric acid and a pH as low as 1 could be expected. This acid solution could also have a high concentration of iron, which, without treatment, would be precipitated as ochre into streams and rivers as the pH is modified by contact with air and natural stream water. This high corrosive acid concentration and its effect on pumps and pipe ranges is substantiated by a letter from Roy Carlyon who worked as an engineer at Summersales.

The last recorded weekly discharge of water from Summersales Colliery was in March 1966 when 4.6 million gallons was pumped into Smithy Brook. The amount of water made in this pit depended at least partially on rainfall and in the winter months considerably more than this was pumped; more than 10 million gallons per week on occasions.

At that time the large pumps at Pemberton Collieries to the east were

operating daily to reduce the water table over a wide area. Water was being pumped continuously from Windy Arbour and Baxter Pits to the south and south east and from the pumping station at Tueson House to the north west. All of these are now closed. As a result, the make of water at Summersales is likely to be much greater than previously encountered. This is shown by the fact that the number 1 adit drain at Summersales has only discharged water during the past few years since these pumps were withdrawn. Also added to this would be the extra water which would have to be pumped to remove the existing water in the flooded workings, which would increase even further the volume of solution discharged into Smithy Brook.

This leaves two alternatives:

a) Direct discharge of sediment laden dilute sulphuric acid into the brook, which is a tributary of the River Douglas. When Summersales Colliery was originally operating the River Douglas was a heavily polluted river and discharges of this type had little further effect on pollution. Since then the Douglas has been cleaned up and fish have been introduced. Massive discharges of this type into this river would not now be tolerated by the water authorities.

b) provide settling ponds to remove some of the suspended solids and a water treatment plant to neutralise the acid and precipitate some of the iron. to cope with the large volumes of effluent very large quantities of lime or caustic soda would have to be added and this would lead to large quantities of sludge. To neutralise 5 million gallons of this solution at pH1 would require 112 tons of limestone dust and this would produce 172 tons of waste sludge as hydrated calcium sulphate. Any proposed settling pond in the vicinity of the pit would not have sufficient capacity to hold residues for the projected 15 years or more of the operation of this mine.

Consequently the ponds would have to be dug out frequently, the sludge removed and dumped elsewhere, presumably destroying another environment. Any new structure to house a treatment plant, or bunkers for the water treatment chemicals would presumably require planning permission.

Because of the current need to control discharges into streams and rivers this constitutes a significant change from the original operation.

The claim by Highfield Minerals that the drain from number 1 adit indicates an intention to continue operations can not be considered viable. Not 100m from the Summersales Colliery site there is a drain from old mine workings in the New Covert area of Winstanley Estate which discharges spontaneously into Smithy Brook. Surely this would not indicate an intention to reactivate these workings, which were abandoned over 200 years ago.

8. Need for the mineral

We suggest that the need for the mineral has changed significantly in the past 22 years in general and in the past 2 to 3 years in particular. When Summersales Colliery was operating there was a relatively high demand for house coal and a considerable amount was sold to domestic consumers. Over the intervening years there has been a major change to other fuels, especially gas. Highfield Minerals have quoted the extractable reserves at Summersales in the Wigan 9 feet as 0.5 million tons of high quality coal. This is grossly over optimistic since only the top part of the seam is of good quality, the remainder being very inferior material or dirt. The domestic market has shrunk to a fraction of its former tonnage and recently the CEGB has said that it will not pay more than £1 per Gigajoule, which is considerably less than 2 to 3 years ago. In view of this

we are of the opinion that there is no need for this coal at the present time.

9. Listed buildings

There are 3 listed buildings which could be affected by this operation.

i) Winstanley Hall and associated outbuildings (grade 2*).

These were probably listed before 1966. There is currently a proposal to convert the hall to accommodation for older people, which is welcomed. One wing of the hall is in danger and has been shored up with wooden buttresses for many years. This damage was caused by opencast mining operations in and under Winstanley Estate. Although it is accepted that a pillar of coal is left to support the hall, this clearly has not been sufficient and any further underground mining in the immediate vicinity could have disastrous consequences on the structure of these important buildings. A field just to the north and within 100m of the hall has subsided quite badly and may be continuing to do so. This is before any of the old workings are de-watered and before the remaining supporting pillars of coal are removed.

ii) Hall Lane Cottage and the associated barn, Winstanley Estate (both grade 2).

These were listed in 1987 ie they were not listed when the original mining was in progress. There has already been mining under these buildings and any de-watering of old workings could pose a very real threat of subsidence and structural damage. These buildings are also very close to the proposed mine site. The location of the proposed settling pond is immediately adjacent to the site boundary. Any mining operation or part thereof would be a serious threat to the environment of these listed buildings.

The proposed new drift passes through the old Mill Pit shaft support pillar and under Smithy Brook, near to the outfall of the old drainage sough which still drains water from the disused workings in the New Covert area of Winstanley Estate. Any subsidence here could cause an obstruction or blockage of the sough near its outfall into Smithy Brook. This could cause an upwelling of water via the shaft, which is under the listed barn, into the listed building. Although the sough is driven through rock, this rock is fissured and could be easily adversely affected by subsidence.

iii) Wigan Lodge, Pemberton Road, Winstanley.

This building, with the associated gates and wall is thought to have been listed in 1962. The lodge is built virtually on Copperas (or Croppers) House fault, which forms a natural boundary to the underground workings and any property built on, or very near to, a major fault is vulnerable. Although the proposed workings would not be directly under this building, they would be very close. Any de-watering operation, or removal of pillars of coal to one side of the fault could easily cause movement or subsidence which would seriously affect the structure.

10) New property built since 1966

During the original operation of Summersales Colliery the properties nearest to the pit were Summersales Cottages. These have since been demolished and are therefore discounted. The next nearest properties were those forming a ribbon development along Billinge Road. The nearest of these was about 250m from the part of the colliery which Highfield Minerals now propose to use.

Since then a large, high density housing estate has been built between

Billinge Road and the pit area. The back gardens of some of these properties would now be separated from the proposed development by less than 2m. This represents a very considerable change from when the colliery was originally operational.

Other parts of the housing estate have been developed directly above the original workings. These are in Ribbesford Road and adjacent cul-de-sacs.

In the area between the old Summersales Colliery and the Copperas House fault to the east, on both sides of Billinge Road, hundreds of houses have been built since 1966 when the pit closed. In this area the Wigan 4 feet and Wigan 6 feet coal seams outcrop. As a result, as well as the deeper seams which have been worked there, there are many old, ancient and uncharted shallow workings. Any of these which are still intact will be flooded. In order to de-water Summersales, these workings would also have to be de-watered. This area has been prone to subsidence in the past (see numbers 373, 381, and 383, Billinge Road). Any pull down on the water table now would affect 400 or more properties which were not present during the original mining operation. This is a very great worry and causes much concern to local residents.

Subsidence would also be probable in the general area of the old Highfield Farm opencast site (mined 1943). This is now the Merton Road/Kinlet Road area. A report prepared by Mr Sword [for Blundells ca 1938 - RW] demonstrates that this area is de-watered via Summersales Colliery since the puddled clay face to form a barrier was never put in place because of the cost.

11) Access

Although the original access road still exists, there has been a significant

change of conditions due to the housing development already referred to. The access road now passes through the housing estate. The housing is relatively high density and tends to attract first time buyers and families with young children. There is a great danger if heavy lorries loaded with coal or other materials are allowed to pass through this development.

The other service road from the colliery to the main road at Pony Dick (the old mineral line) was never a made up road and was never used to transport coal. In the early days of the colliery coal was taken underground directly to Pemberton Colliery, some distance away. Later, coal was brought up the shaft and taken from the site on the upper access road. Access or egress onto Billinge Road from the old mineral line is dangerous.

12) Gas main

At the Billinge Road end of the main access road to the colliery there is a major high pressure gas main under the road which was not present during the original mining operation, and therefore is a significant change. The possibility of heavy lorries running over this main for 15 years or more might eventually cause a fracture followed by a very serious explosion.

13) 132KV power line

Above the southernmost part of the original workings there is now a major power line supported on steel towers. Any subsidence in this area could disrupt power supplies to the whole of the Wigan area.

14) Footpaths

In the Summersales area there are two footpaths. These are old and long established and are shown on the earliest OS map of the area published

about 1849. During the life of the colliery these footpaths were not blocked or obstructed by the colliery and public right of way was maintained. This is substantiated by relevant statements [not included - RW]

Examination of the Highfield Minerals proposals does not indicate that these public rights of way will be retained as they will both come within the proposed site area.

We would also object most strongly to these footpaths being diverted. Any proposed diversion could only be very near to the brook and this would then mean that the footpaths would be within Winstanley Estate. This would create a precedent since Bankes' have never allowed public right of way on the estate.

15) Employment

It is easy for Highfield Minerals to claim that they might create a number of jobs eventually. It is doubtful if there are any miners, who necessarily have to be British Coal trained, who live in the immediate locality, are at present unemployed, are actively seeking work and have experience of pillar and stall working. If this is the case then there is no advantage to the immediate community, even if jobs were to be created.

Set against this optimistic scenario for job creation there is the strong possibility that a number of long established and otherwise secure jobs would be lost at Breck Castings if mining were allowed to proceed at Summersales.

16) Original lease

Finally we would draw your attention to two points in the original lease

for Summersales:

i) 8(i) in the lease: "If lessees 'abandon in' any coal and make due allowances for payments this coal can be got during the term of the lease but not afterwards." The lease terminated over 20 years ago.

ii) "The lease shall become void when any coal in the 9 feet is abandoned."

22. COAL PICKING

Coal picking, or raking through the pit dirt for the small pieces of coal which were discarded with the waste for many years provided essential fuel for people on the dole, or receiving incomes which were so low that they could not afford to buy coal. Some of this coal was sometimes sold to supplement the family income. Even in the 1940's it was not unusual for one or more children from large families to be kept away from school on occasions to help with coal picking. I remember one family who lined up the children each morning to allocate duties for the day - "You two stay at home and help your mother with the washing. You two help your dad with the coal picking and the rest of you go to school".

Up to a few years ago, many years after the closure of Pemberton Collieries an occasional coal picker could still be seen on the old dirt tip. In 1991 coal was being picked on the Quaker House Colliery spoil heap. It was a very dirty occupation and so coal pickers normally wore old clothes. These seemed to be rarely washed and eventually degenerated to a muddy grey, the same colour as the pit dirt. The tools consisted of a small hand pick, a bucket, an old shovel, a sack and a riddle to screen out the fine fraction, leaving the larger pieces to be hand sorted. The

bucket was used to collect small quantities of coal which were eventually transferred to the sack. This "occupation" was not restricted to men, and women would often use a sack cloth apron or "brat" to collect the coal initially, instead of a bucket. I suppose this was not much different to potato picking on the farms, but potato picking was an honorable job!

Many ingenious contraptions were devised to transport the filled sacks of coal from the dirt tip. Perhaps the most common was what can be loosely described as a bicycle. This usually consisted of an old frame with wheels, but no tyres. The wheels could be of different sizes and could have spokes missing. Apart from handlebars it was devoid of seat, pedals, cranks, chain or brakes. The sacks of coal were placed one within the triangle of the frame below the crossbar and one on the crossbar. It was quite an experience to be sat on the bridge at Pony Dick and suddenly see and hear one of these top heavy contraptions containing two hundredweight of coal hurtling down Well Brow at speeds up to 30 miles per hour, with the coal picker perched on top, frantically trying to steer. There were numerous calamities caused by either not taking the bend and crashing into the bridge, or failing to negotiate the stretch of road immediately after the bridge which was still paved with stone setts at that time.

During the heyday of opencast mining in Winstanley in the 1940's and 1950's the vast majority of the coal was transported from Winstanley along Pemberton and Billinge Roads to be screened on the old Pemberton Colliery site. A large quantity of the coal was also stored there as part of the national coal stock. The lorries used were mainly ex WD vehicles such as Bedfords and AEC's operated by numerous contractors. The sides of these vehicles were often built up two to three feet (greedy boards) above the original design level in order to carry more coal per load, since the

contractors were paid on tonnage carried. The drivers were paid on the number of trips made and this led to grossly overloaded and also unstable lorries being driven at high speeds between Winstanley and Foundry Lane. At every bump, pothole and bend coal was shed from these lorries. Coal was everywhere along the roads, ground to a black dust under the wheels and blocking the drains. At times it was dangerous to stand at the bus stop at Pony Dick. As the overloaded lorries sped down Well Brow and rounded the bend large amounts of coal showered from the loads, some of the lumps being bigger than footballs. To the people living nearby this was a godsend. Many coal bunkers were kept topped up from this roadside coal.

Although these lorries were fast moving on the downhill run they were generally not very well maintained and consequently travelled relatively slowly on the uphill return journey. Many of the miners working at Windy Arbour and Baxter pits travelled to work on bicycles and very often hitched a lift up the hill by holding on to the tailgate of the lorries. In the event of one of them stopping quickly the cyclist would inevitably crash into the back.

When times were hard and when coal was used almost exclusively as a fuel, even if some people could not afford to buy it it was nearly always possible to obtain at least some coal by one means or another to provide some heating. With the advent of smokeless zones and the mandatory change to other forms of fuel in some cases, there is nothing that a person in the equivalent position can do today when faced with a bill for more than £100 for natural gas.

23. ACCIDENTS AT BAXTER PIT

[These were abstracted mainly from old reports in the local press.]

A common cause of accidents and fatalities in the mines was undercutting unsupported coal at the face. One such incident occurred on July 14th 1859 in the 5ft mine at Winstanley Collieries Baxter Pit, owned by Meyrick Bankes. All working in this pit was by pillar and stall methods.

A Pemberton collier, Henry Derbyshire was working in this mine with his brother. At that time the coal was "got twice" ie in two parts, because there was a 1.5inch seam of dirt in the middle of the coal. They had got the bottom coal to about 3yds under and the prop had been removed. Henry was still getting bottom coal when the top coal fell, hitting him on the back of the head and killing him instantly. He was a single man aged 22 and the inquest, held before CE Driffield, the Coroner, at the Pack Horse Hotel, Lamberhead Green recorded a verdict of accidental death.

There were many such accidents at that time which gave no particular cause for concern, other than to the family of the deceased, but explosions when many men were killed did receive more publicity.

A methane explosion occurred at Baxter Pit on the morning of August 2nd 1860. On that day 37 men were employed down the pit. At about 10am Thomas Nicholson, who superintended the colliery at that time was informed of an explosion underground. [This would not necessarily be obvious to a person on the surface.] The 21 men who were working nearest to the shaft were brought to the surface with only minor injuries,

but 8 more men were found in poor condition, mainly suffering from severe burns.

It should be noted that these men would have to be carried manually, or by stretcher, out of the pit and then be transported by horse drawn carriage over bumpy roads to any medical establishment. This movement to a man in such a condition, who probably had large areas of exposed raw flesh, must have caused excruciating pain and great additional shock to his system.

It was 2 hours later before any more news was received at the pit head. Seven bodies were eventually recovered and brought to the surface. The conditions were appalling and the body of the last man, known to be Joseph Heaton, could not be recovered.

The men killed in the mine were:

Richard Ashcroft from Pemberton.

Thomas Ashcroft from Orrell.

John Barton (junior) from Orrell.

Thomas Sharples from Winstanley.

Abraham Birchall from Winstanley.

Joseph Heaton from Winstanley.

William Birchall from Winstanley.

Josiah Barton from Orrell.

Soon after this 4 more men died from their injuries:

John Parkinson.

James Dean.

Hugh Sharples.

Thomas Hurst - aged 13 years. A pony driver.

On the 15th another man, William Barker, also died, bringing the total to 13.

At least one pony was injured by burning.

The explosion occurred in the 5ft mine. At the time of the explosion candles and lamps were in use.

Baxter pit was not noted for being gassy, especially since it was worked so slowly.

24. DANGERS OF WORKING IN PIT SHAFTS

[This is taken mainly from a report in Wigan Observer 15 Sept. 1923]

Some indication of the appalling conditions experienced by men working in mine shafts is given in a report of an accident which occurred in September 1923 in the Engine Pit at Pemberton Collieries.

This was a pumping pit and was particularly wet because it was unlined and was sunk through an aquifer. Even though some form of protective clothing was provided any men working in this shaft would be soaked by the time they had finished their stint. Over a period of years this type of work could be very debilitating.

Because of the amount of equipment installed in this shaft, the pipe ranges and buntons etc. there was very little space left to move up or down and working conditions were cramped. This also meant that there was no possibility of using a conventional cage. The only way in which men could be raised or lowered was in a small hoppet, usually made

from a wooden barrel cut in half. There was no space for a direct drop and the men would be continually be manouvering the hoppet around obstacles. This was especially difficult when large pieces of equipment had to be raised or lowered in the shaft.

In this particular incident three men were involved. They were Aaron Heaton of Campbell Street Pemberton, Frank Highton of Mabel Street Pemberton and James Huxley, also of Pemberton. They had descended the shaft in a hoppet to a distance of 21yds to a scaffolding for the purpose of putting in some rainwater pipes. [According to Donald Anderson they were taking out the 16 inch square pump spear rods which Major Blundell had said Highfield Rugby Club could have for supporting the new stand.] The scaffolding consisted of a permanent bar across the shaft with two other bars crossing and with two planks resting across the end of the big bar and one on the smaller bars.

Frank Highton said that they had tested the scaffolding before using it and that it seemed sound. Although safety belts were available, none of the men had taken one down with him as they felt that in the very restricted space it would be difficult to work wearing a belt. In the event the scaffolding suddenly collapsed without warning and the men fell down the shaft which was said to be 140yds deep. [190yds according to Donald Anderson]

James Huxley was caught up on some pipes a short distance below the scaffold and by clinging to these saved his life, although he suffered a fractured thigh. Frank Highton fell about 15yds further. He hit some pipes and was thrown into the mouthing of the Pemberton Yard Mine. Although suffering from shock he was unhurt. The third man, Aaron Heaton fell a distance of 80yds and was killed by striking some pipes.

The Coroner, Mr J Hopwood Sayer, returned a verdict of accidental death. The Inspector of Mines, Mr AE Nicholson and Mr Cook, the colliery manager, were also present.

It was said that tramps used to sleep on the boiler lagging of New pit. In the mornings the workmen woke up the tramps by throwing a bucket of water over them. One tramp was known as "medal Jack" because he always wore a set of medals on his jacket.

When the Baxter site was being landscaped bedding blocks from New pit were uncovered. These were placed at strategic points in Baxter Park to be used as seats. Near to New pit shaft there are still some old stone railway sleepers embedded in the footpath and mostly covered with dead leaves. This shaft is not filled and should be avoided.

Leyland Green pit, near Quaker House, was sunk in 1897 to a depth of 243yds to the Orrell 4ft mine. The main area worked was from about Simms Lane Ends to beyond Island Dam, near Windy Arbour. The Ravine and Yard mines were abandoned in August 1923, the reason given was unprofitable. The Orrell 4ft and 5ft mines were abandoned as exhausted on 13 March 1925 and 25 July 1925 respectively. Coal drawing finished on 24 July 1927.

The pit chimney was 150ft high and was demolished in October 1932.

This site has been partially opencasted but coal extraction is not yet complete (January 1995).

25. BANKES' WINSTANLEY COLLIERIES

[Donald Anderson has covered the workings of these pits in previous publications]

Although there were about 40 million tons of coal under Winstanley Estate, Bankes' never got to grips with mining it on a large scale. Much of the coal was mined through leases to other operators such as Blundell's, Bankes' taking rent and royalties. However Bankes' did sink some pits but these were relatively small and were worked only slowly. When the Winstanley pits were sunk it was not intended to work any seams other than Orrell 4ft and 5ft. The shafts were constructed to a finished diameter of 10ft.

Numbers 1 and 2 pits, later known as "old burgy" or "old 4ft" were sunk at the top of Well Brow on the West side of Pemberton Road. No official abandonment plans exist. Both pits worked the Orrell 4ft and 5ft seams and were sunk before 1834. The Orrell 4ft seam was at 199yds in number 2 pit. The pits were connected underground and were to the east of the Copperas House fault. Both pits were disused by about 1910.

Baxters, or number 3 pit was the next to be sunk in 1834 to a depth of 232yds to the Orrell 4ft. This was situated near to what is now Beech Walk. It derived its name from the master sinker, who, it is said was an Irishman and who also worked on the construction of the LYR rail tunnel at UpHolland.

The seams worked and depths at Baxter pit shaft were: King at 11yds, Ravine at 60yds, Yard at 98yds, Orrell 5ft at 170yds and orrell 5ft at

232yds. All working was by pillar and stall method. Notice of abandonment of the Orrell 5ft and Yard mines was dated January 1896 and signed by ER Davies, agent and manager. Final abandonment was dated 12 August 1960 "probably for economic reasons".

In 1939 the workforce was 20 face workers, 11 surface workers and 8 others.

After the pit closed the brow was used to screen coal from Pony Dick drift mine. Later the drifts were backfilled and in 1982 the remains of the headgear was demolished and the shaft was filled and capped. The pit area and spoil heap were landscaped to become Baxter Park. A stone cairn, made from some of the shaft lining stones, now marks the position of the shaft.

Number 4 pit, or Mountain pit, or Windy Arbour pit, was sunk in 1838 to a depth of 224yds to the Orrell 4ft mine. The original pit buildings were said to be architecturally attractive because the pit was very near to one of the main entrances to Winstanley Hall.

In 1934 28 men were employed.

In 1939 the workforce was 37 face workers, 18 surface workers and 8 others.

The pit finished in 1979 and the headgear was finally demolished on 18 May 1983. Just before closure it was the oldest working pit in Lancashire. The pit surface area was eventually opencasted and reclamation was completed in 1984.

Number 5 pit, or New pit was sunk in 1856 to a depth of 262yds to

the Orrell 4ft mine. Because it was sunk through a gravel bed the top 44yds had to be lined with cast iron tubbing. This pit was to the south of Baxter pit and just behind the Baxter pit spoil heap near to Glead Wood. Records for this pit are incomplete and there are no official abandonment plans. The dip of the strata is from Baxter pit to New pit at 1 in 10.

26. WINSTANLEY TITHES AND TENANTS 1838

Winstanley is not less than 1866 acres. The estimated quantity which is now cultivated is:

	acres	rods	perches
arable land	561	1	18
meadow	380	3	12
pasture	741	3	26
woodland	76	0	27
waste land, ponds, pools	42	1	0
roads	21	0	25
homesteads, yards, gardens, orchards with sites of dwellings and outbuildings	42	1	0
total	18660	8	

There is not within the township any Glebe land or general common land.

Meyrick Bankes	£184-15-8d	16740	27	
Billinge Chapel			36	
Sir John Gerrard	£ 11-3-6d	92	3	35
Trustees Duke Bridgewater	£ 7-9-10d	63	0	15

total tithe £203-9-0d

Winstanley Park is given as 232a-3r-12p but various parts within the park are listed separately.

The tithe map (St Helens library) shows all fields and buildings numbered. A list of many of the tenants is given below. It may not be complete. Also some of my descriptions of locations of properties are approximate. Some roads have changed significantly and some properties no longer exist.

168-9 Ralph Cartledge Near Billinge Church
 84 Wm Penny Lower Castle
 79 James Fairbrother Millington House
 289 Wm Daniel Opp. UpHolland College. Winstanley Rd.
 308 Wm Gee Between New House Farm and Longshaw
 307 John Laithwaite Between New House Farm and Longshaw
 400 Molly Cadman
 385 Abram Fairclough
 319 Robert Ashall Longshaw
 318 Wm Ashall Longshaw
 294 Thos Tebay New House Farm. Winstanley Rd.
 455 Wm Bone
 462 Wm Darbyshire
 463 Ed Taylor
 454 Thos Tasker
 452 Thos Singleton
 450 Joseph Simpkin
 167 Geo Barton Near Billinge Church

174 John Nicholson Birch Tree Farm. Pony Dick
 172, 172a, 5, 4, 1, 2 Sam Forracre. Farm and Mill, Pony Dick
 406 Wm Wilson Langley Farm. New Houses
 300 Thos Fairhurst Between Farrar's Farm and Longshaw
 258 Wm Hitchen Off Winstanley Rd. Nr "old School". Probably
 Woodbine Cott.
 263,264 James Hurlbutt Farrar's Farm. Winstanley Rd.
 236,237 Wm Nicholson Off Winstanley Rd.
 247 Wm Danee
 18 John Nixon Jamieson's Farm (Cherry Tree Farm) off
 Pemberton Rd.

Joseph Fairclough Sandiforth Farm off Winstanley Rd nr Windy Arbour
 330 John Crank Pierpoint Cottage. Windy Arbour
 61 Robert Ellison Windy Arbour Farm
 115 Francis Wiswell Farm opposite Upper Castle
 73 Thos Lyon Crows Nest Farm
 148 Geo Farrimond Between Simm's Rd Ends and Billinge Church
 353 Geo Ackers Nr Island Dam
 346 Wm Halliwell Nr Island Dam
 381 Geo Barton Upper Castle
 405 John Moyers
 158,159 Thos Wiswell Newton Rd
 170 Agnes Moyers Nr Billinge Church

AMALGAMATION OF BILLINGE AND WINSTANLEY

Billinge Council minutes 8 March 1921

Mr R Alker Resigned as long standing Overseer of Winstanley. Messrs W Robinson and John Smith were appointed Overseers for Winstanley. It was resolved that the seal be affixed to the Overseers Documents as above.

Amalgamation of the three civil parishes (of Billinge and Winstanley). This must have been explored some years previously.

Resolved that this council are of the opinion that the three civil parishes comprising the Billinge Urban District be made into one civil parish.

Special meeting 10 March 1921.

Resolved - That a vote of congratulation be passed to GH Bankes Esq of Winstanley Hall on his appointment as High Sheriff of the County of Lancaster.

10 May 1921.

The Chairman reported that the meeting held in Winstanley on 15 April did not come to a decision. Adjourned to June meeting.

9 August 1921.

The Clerk reported on the result of the Winstanley ratepayers meeting. Resolved - Lancashire County Council be petitioned to make an order to form the three civil parishes into one called the Parish of Billinge and Winstanley.

27. JIM PARKINSON: BLUNDELL'S "NEW VENTURE" PIT, and other memories.

This is Jim Parkinson's version written circa 1981. [Typed as it was

supplied - RW]

See also "Founded on Coal" - R&D Winstanley 1981.

New Venture Pit

Blundell's New Venture Pit was also known as New Pit or Coronation Pit. This pit was in sinking just before I left Highfield School. On our way home from school many times we came that way to watch the carpenters making the new headframe in the field near Smethurst Farm in Smethurst Lane. Bill Green was the farmer at that time. My brother-in-law, Peter Lowe was in charge under Jim Anderson who was the foreman carpenter.

Now before this large headframe was erected a small headframe was in use for the actual sinking operations with a steam engine inside a timber engine house and a fan for ventilation was placed near this engine house to extract any fumes and foul air from the explosions used to blast the rock etc. and a clever way was used for this purpose, timber battens being fixed to the shaft sides and tongued and grooved boards nailed to these battens. [This separated off part of the shaft vertically so that ventilation could be achieved - RW] By now I had commenced as an apprentice carpenter at the Pemberton Colliery about May 1913 and I was often sent to the New Pit with messages as there was no telephone from the main colliery at that time. A large general workshop was built to accommodate the blacksmiths, bricklayers, carpenters, fitters, electricians and the sinkers, a large fireplace was built in the middle and the sinkers dried out their clothes on wooden racks all around this fire. The blacksmiths had their own fire. Earlier of course the boiler and chimney had been built to raise the steam for the sinking engine and a small generator to supply the fan, lighting etc. with electrical power.

The building of the large new winding engine house was also in progress. Another feature of this new pit was that the shaft was lined with special made blocks (not bricks) made at the colliery brickworks in moulds, of fire clay and shale. They were slightly curved and the size was about 15x12x6 inches thick. There are still some of these blocks as you go into the back entrance to the Highfield Gardens bowling greens being used as kerbs to flower beds etc.

The large new headframe was erected over the smaller one without stopping the progress of the sinking work in any way. The sketch (sketch 1) is a rough layout of the surface buildings at this period about 1913.

It was very important that no debris was allowed to fall down the shaft as perhaps about 8-10 men were at work on the sinking operation and it was usual to have 2 hoppits, one being filled as the other was being brought to the surface. The hoppits were all metal and the trunnions or pivoting points were below the centre to allow the hoppit to swing over to empty. The hoppit was held in upright position by strong hinged catches. (sketch 2)

I would suggest there seems to be some confusion about the water breaking in the workings [compared to my report taken from other sources - RW] as to my knowledge the hoppit was still in use even when the sinking was completed to ride the men and debris, as the tunnelling was in progress. No guides or cages were in operation at this time and any sump water was dealt with by the hoppit. Later, when the water did break in the men would rush to the shaft for the hoppit to be brought to the surface. [There was a massive inrush of water at this pit which was never controlled - RW]

At quite a later date two special cylinder shaped tanks were made at Houghs the boiler makers at Newtown (sketch 3) and were in use until the New Pit was abandoned. Old Jack Ashcroft being one winder and Tom Brooks the other. [These were to remove water - RW]

On one occasion some of the colliery officials were lowered down the shaft. They would be standing on the edge of the tank, holding on by the chains and stopping at the water level. By some error on the part of Jack Ashcroft, the winder, instead of hoisting he lowered them into the water but he at once realised his mistake and reversed, bringing them to the surface, wet through and very frightened but otherwise none the worse, but from then old Jack was never allowed to wind again and this seemed to hasten his death as I knew him personally, his son Jack married my sister and young Jack also became a winding engine man at the Wigan Junction and Clock Face Collieries. I would suggest that the water tanks were not in use as I have mentioned earlier any men getting into these tanks would certainly have been drowned if they had been in use.

Another point of interest about the New Venture Pit was getting all the materials, chiefly from the main colliery, as the then Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company would not allow any loads over 2 tons to pass over Heyes Bridge. Nearly all the materials had to be hauled via Foundry Lane, Billinge Road, Enfield Street and Smethurst Lane. Only an odd light load going by horse and lorry went over Heyes Bridge. So it was decided to buy a steam wagon. I believe it was a second hand Sentinal wagon which was making regular trips from the colliery to the new pit. This made a terrible noise and smoke up Enfield Street but no-one seemed to bother as this new pit would find more work later. I well remember the driver, Jack Fairhurst, he was a character. He came from the Newtown or Wigan area. He was a well built man and knew all the

swear words which he used often to coax his steam wagon along and more so if things went wrong, which was very often. He really was a fitter's labourer and he had a fair knowledge of engines but the hardest haul was about from the Enfield Inn to Ormskirk Road end of Enfield Street and he was often stuck, waiting to get more steam up.

Just in passing, the chargehand sinker on one shift was Jack Foster who lived near us at Rose Hill, Ormskirk Road, whose sons later did a lot of tunnelling at the main colliery and on the other shift the chargehand was Harry Morris who lived in Ellesmere Road near the old St. Cuthbert's RC Church. Harry never seemed free from the effects of drink although he was a reliable worker.

To me these were very happy days, something fresh happening every day and I was interested in my job under the capable guidance of Jim Anderson and many other good craftsmen employed at the colliery at that time. I might add that about once a month after the New Pit was really abandoned, Jim Anderson and I went up to measure the water level in the shaft. We took off a small wood door which was bolted to the brickwork around the shaft and lowered a piece of timber about 18x9x3 inches which was stapled to a coil of wire and when we felt the timber hit the water we tied a piece of string to the wire and carefully hoisted the timber float to the surface and then measured the depth. I am afraid I cannot recall the depth.

Pipe from the Venture Lodge

Coming now to the heavy cast iron pipe which was about 9 inches diameter and ran underground from the Venture Lodge. A valve chamber for this pipe was under the footpath covered over with heavy wooden doors about the middle of the fencing on the Billinge Road side

of the lodge. The pipe did make away towards the May Mill, whether direct or indirect I am not sure as I never heard or saw anything done with regard to this pipe, and whether it was "Teed" off to supply the May Mill again I do not know. I understand that Mr Donald Anderson has an old map showing this pipe ending in an old brick building opposite the May Mill offices. I well remember the old brick building but whether this was a valve house is difficult to say but it continued to cross Foundry Lane and went under the large timber wagon repair shop which held 6 wagons, opposite the Foundry Gates as the floor of this wagon shop was floored with old wagon headstocks, sole bars etc. that had been taken from wagons under repair at some time, and under these was a duct about 3ft deep and 3ft wide and this large pipe in the duct which headed towards the coke works. At times we lifted these covering timbers to throw down spadefuls of lime as it was infested with rats. The pipes had bolted flanges and I would suggest that when the pipes were laid, tarred hemp or spun yarn would be used for jointing as wood wedges could not be inserted on the underside in any case. Whether anyone has ever seen this pipe only in the Venture Lodge valve chamber or under the wagon shop in living memory unless in the making of the cricket field or the church graveyard, I do not know.

Speaking of the church graveyard, I made the moulds for the coping on the 9 inch wall that runs parallel with Foundry Lane. The copings again being made at the colliery brickworks near what you call the twenty steps (the bridge over the wagon tracks near Pemberton Station). I think this was the section of the copings when completed again designed by Jim Anderson.

Coming back to the Venture Lodge I have been informed by Mr Donald Anderson that a pipe ran from what we always called the Strawberry

Lodge, which he says was the Top Venture Pit Lodge [confusing! The pits were Top Venture, Bottom Venture and New Venture - RW] before the railway was constructed, to feed the Venture Lodge and no doubt the railway company would have to alter this pipe to suit the new conditions. Many times I have been to replace broken fence boards and repair the doors over the valve chamber when I was an apprentice carpenter.

Highfield School

Now regarding Mr Williams who was the headmaster at Highfield Boys School when I started to go there in 1905 it is remarkable that he lived at Bolton and did not go home until weekend, lodging with Mrs Anders who lived near us on Rose Hill, Ormskirk Road, Pemberton. Later Mrs Anders' son Billy became my teacher along with Mr GH Millard - George Henry as we always called him. Billy Anders and a teacher from the Girls School, Miss Young, became very friendly and later Billy joined the forces in the 1914-18 war and coming home on leave became very ill and died suddenly. Miss Young remained Miss Young until her death.

Prince Pit guide rods.

I remember an unusual happening at Prince Pit at the colliery. The cage guide rods in the shaft had to be replaced. Guide rods had an almost indefinite life and it was most unusual for one to be replaced. Since there were 2 cages there were 8 guide rods. They were all replaced because they originally stopped at an artificial pit bottom which was not the bottom of the shaft. There were various other underground shafts with their own headgear and winding engines - all underground. Power was by steam piped down from the surface. Coal was wound via some of these shafts up to the winding bottom of Prince Pit. It was decided to reorganise and take the Prince Pit winding bottom to the bottom of the shaft which meant longer guide rods for the cages. Weighs of 2.5 tons

were suspended from the bottom of each guide rod. Getting the rods out was difficult and was even more difficult because Prince Pit was the upcast and therefore was totally enclosed at the pit head.

When one of the old rods was finally uncoupled it was clamped to the side of the cage and slowly lifted until the top end could be cleared from the headframe and then attached to the works loco - Prince. This was the largest and most powerful of their locos at the time (0-6-0) but because of its size and configuration had difficulty in negotiating some of the tight bends and could only operate in certain parts of the colliery. The loco then gradually pulled the rod clear. By this time the loco was under the twenty steps bridge, hundreds of yards from the pit shaft.

Mining accident

My brother was killed in the Bye Pit, he was 12 years old and got wrapped round an underground winding drum in 1895. My father left the pit after that, even though it was difficult to get another job.

The winder's brush

One day some shaftsmen at the colliery were waiting for a pit to be cleared so that they could examine the shaft. While they were waiting, they and the signaller or "knocker on" as he was called, were sitting by the winding engine. On this particular day the winder had been given a new hand brush to keep his engine clean. There was nothing special about the brush except that it was his, and it was new.

When the pit was clear he lowered the shaft inspection team down the shaft for a regular inspection and for this job the men were lowered down the shaft standing on top of the cage. At some stage he realised that his new brush was missing and that one of these three must have it.

He was annoyed!

After the inspection he was bringing up the men who were then in the top deck of the cage. He stopped the cage just sufficiently short of the deck so that the men could see out but couldn't get out. Now Prince pit was the upcast shaft and the headframe was totally enclosed at this point and because of the proximity of the massive fan this was an extremely draughty, noisy and uncomfortable position to be in. After some time he locked the engine and sauntered over to the cage and shouted to the men,

"Tha bloody well stops theer 'til ah get mi brush back."

In no time at all he had his brush back, but it cost him his job.

Jim Parkinson, 605 Ormskirk Road, Pemberton.

28. DONALD ANDERSON: CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF WINSTANLEY

Donald Anderson.

Written December 1985.

For as long as I can remember I have been fascinated by old or historic buildings. Whether they were cottages, mansions, churches or cathedrals, and by antique furniture, and I have always had a love for the countryside. The view from my bedroom window across Summersales and Winstanley Park, with Birch Tree Farm in the foreground and Winstanley Hall with its high tower and tall chimneys near the crest of the hill, was beautiful.

The great clump of trees at the delph, [quarry - RW] a similar group round the Hall and the ancient Lea Wood curving slightly up the rising ground, with all the other woods and the stately single trees dotted here and there, combined to make a wonderful view.

As small boys we played in the woods at the Rylance Mill end of the park and got to know the trees that were easy to climb, and those that weren't. I can point them out now.

Albert Melling whose mother was a Fouracre from Rylance Mill Farm was one of my best friends and it was through the Fouracres that we got to know the park intimately.

Down the steps through a gap in the park wall at the old miller's cottage lived George Fouracre and his wife and their 4 sons, Sam (whose reminiscences are recorded) Jim (the clever one), George and Fred.

George senior and his brothers William and Sam farmed as a partnership Rylance Mill Farm, Birch Tree or Harrison's, Summersales Farm and Farrar's Farm. The first three were merged into one farm. At one time the main business at Rylance Mill Farm was corn milling, the Fouracres being millers there for upwards of 100 years. There were only three fields attached to it in the old days - the Scattercroft (the field across the road from Wigan Lodge), the Mill dam field and Dam slack and the Holy Ash or Holy Oak (the small field at a lower level between Billinge Road and Blundell's Wood).

Uncle William as he was known lived at Birchtree Farmhouse with his 6 daughters - Lilly, Ethel, Alice, Sally, Lena and Gladys. Lilly was a good

seamstress and made clothes for Mrs Bankes and Joyce for many years. Uncle Sam the other brother lived at Farrar's Farm adjacent to Winstanley College. He had 3 sons - Billy, Albert and Sam and 5 daughters. We saw the boys when they came down through the park to Rylance Mill.

Sometimes we used to walk through the park and the gardens in the opposite direction and past the cricket field and the old school to Uncle Sam's. Once when my brother, a little sturdy lad, was following the plough with Sam he said "Eh lad, ast buy thee a gowd waatch yet".

We lived in a house adjacent to Highfield Farm which belonged to Major Cuthbert Blundell, the Principal owner of Pemberton Collieries. Ted Ackers farmed it. His wife was another Fouracre. They had a son George, four or five years older than I was. He often allowed me to ride back from the fields on the horses Bonnie, Flower and Duke. Many a time I have chatted to him in the shippon whilst he has been milking by the light of an oil lamp. The milk I took home was always warm - no pasteurisation in those days. Every spring, old Mrs Lea, who lived next door to us, who was a Johnson from Harvey House Farm, cut the potato sets for Ted Ackers. She used to sit there in the barn with the great barn doors wide open, wearing a rough wraprin (sackcloth) apron, cutting away. Mrs Ackers gave me 2d a week for going every day under a flight of stone stairs, leading to the hayloft over the loosebox, to collect eggs for her. The steps were supported by two brick walls, forming an enclosed space. A very small hole through the brickwork was the only way in or out. That is where the hens got in and out and where I had to do the same, although the hole seemed only large enough for a hen. Once inside in the pitch darkness there was a terrific screeching and flapping of wings whilst I groped around for the eggs. The farmhouse was the third

one there - my father, as an apprentice at the colliery, worked on the building of it. It always seemed a lovely comfortable house to me and it was most pleasant to sit in the kitchen by lamplight on a winter's evening, just talking.

Billy Starkey was another friend of mine. His father Sam and his uncle James had the wheelright's business at Pony Dick. They had the reputation of making some of the smartest and finest traps, governess carts, gigs, various farm carts, lorries etc. in south Lancashire. Like most village carpenters they made coffins at one time. My father as a small boy had watched James Starkey making a coffin for a little girl of the Alker family of Holmes House Farm, who had been scalded to death.

James and Sam had a brother Joe who kept the "Favourite Pony Dick" public house. This was a free house and belonged to Winstanley Estate. Unlike his brothers Joe seemed prone to idleness and drink, which probably had something to do with the pub losing its licence in 1924. It had been a pub since about 1830 but originally was known as the "Horse and Jockey". It was an old fashioned place with low ceilings and beams and an ornate polished or "grained" wooden bar with beer mugs hanging round. These were mostly white with blue bands. In the tap room there were two or three oil paintings, grimy with years and years of tobacco smoke, mostly from clay pipes. One I particularly remember was of Wigan market place, depicting the town hall and the parish church. It was either late 18th or early 19th century.

On the kitchen mantelpiece there stood a collection of 16-20 old brass candlesticks of different sizes but arranged so that the taller ones were at the ends of the shelf and the smallest in the middle.

Another of my boyhood friends was Billy Winstanley of Fir Tree Cottage in Old Lane, off Hall Lane. This was a very ancient cottage with stone mullioned windows, iron casements and original leaded lights. In the kitchen they had a Wigan made grandfather clock. I can almost hear its slow tick now as we played with Billy's Hornby train set. He was lucky to have such an expensive toy. I didn't have one although my father earned more than twice as much as his father.

Tom Winstanley grew the best roses in the district in his large garden. His privy had an open midden. Tom used to clean this out every Saturday and put the "night soil" on the rose beds in the garden.

Next to Winstanley's was another low ancient cottage with mullioned windows and leaded lights. I remember people saying it had been a dame school many years before. Old John Derbyshire lived there.

The field between Winstanley's and the Hall Lane we knew as "Betty's Meadow" but we had no idea who Betty was.

There was also a small quarry outside the park wall along the mineral railway, in the Summersale, known as Sarah Plumbe's delf. We couldn't imagine who Sarah Plumbe could be, although I have learnt since, and similarly with Betty of the Meadow - it seems her name was Harrison. Betty's meadow and some land round about was part of Birch Tree, or Harrison's, Farm, Betty being the tenant. According to William Fouracre Sarah Plumbe lived in the middle house of Summersales Cottages, where my grandfather lived 50 years ago. [See Pony Dick and surrounding area - RW]

When I was a small boy "Old Sam of All" was still living at Ryland's Mill

Farm. His wife was always referred to as Grandma Fouracre. In the scullery near the back door of the house there stood a lovely old Lancashire spindleback chair of the "earback" variety.

At the top of the gable of the high barn there was a small hole through the stonework with a box behind where owls regularly nested. [Barn owls also nested at Tom Johnson's Langley Farm - RW]

Old Sam was the last miller at Ryland's Mill. I can see him now with his grey beard peering at me over the wall at the mill. All the machinery of the mill was intact then. It was of very ancient vintage - wooden cogs and wooden spur wheels bound with wrought iron straps. The waterwheel itself, about 12ft. diameter was still in place and the dam sluice which controlled the flow of water.

The drying kiln was a separate building near the mill. There were two floors: the drying room with its perforated tiled floor and underneath the large hot air ducts, large enough for us to crawl through. The stone lintel over the fireplace bore the inscription "Luke Taylor Dryster 1792". On the lintel of the door of the mill there were two or three inscriptions. One read "Ellis Ambrose Miller 1805" and another "Phoenix Park". I have come across the name Ellis Ambrose in connection with Finch Mill at Appley Bridge and other mills.

At Wigan Lodge, on Well Brow, lived Jack Rigby, known as Peg's Jack, foreman at the estate workshops at the Straw Yard, and Miss Smith, formerly a servant at the Hall. It was all very respectable even though there was only one bedroom - she was his housekeeper! They often had terrific rows and being naughty, we sometime used to listen outside. She used to threaten him with the words "I shall tell Mr Bankes". We never

discovered what the dread secret was, unless he had been pinching things.

The old ones used to say that when a labourers wage was 30 shillings that Bankes's men got one pound and "plunder", the plunder generally being worth more than a pound.

In those days there were no road or street lights in Winstanley or Billinge even.

The only house lit by electricity was the Hall itself. The cable from the power station at Pemberton was exposed where it crossed the stream valley in the New Covert. The only other exception was Wigan Corporation's Nicholson Pit pumping station at Tueson House.

All the cottages and farmhouses in Winstanley depended solely on oil lamps for lighting until the early 1930's when a cable was laid to Windy Arbour Colliery.

Most of the families in the 200 year old New Houses had lived in them since they were built - Hitchens, Heatons, Spencers, Sharples, Pigots, Taylors, Marsh's etc. with a few who came in the middle of the last century, like the Fairleys.

Tommy Johnson was another schoolfriend of mine. His father Harry farmed Langley House. Harry was a little cross-eyed and sometimes had difficulty shooting.

Further on towards Billinge there were the well-made white painted entrance gates at "Big Stone". The drive from here led past Pear Tree

cottage, Cropper's House and the estate workshops, otherwise known as the Strawyard. Cropper's House, built in the 18th century, was then the home of James Cropper the well known Quaker merchant who was also a prominent Slave trade abolitionist. He had married the daughter of Thomas Winstanley, another Quaker of Sandiforth Farm. One of this Winstanley family was Camden Professor of History at Cambridge University early in the 18th century. These Winstanley's and other local Quakers had a meeting house on the site of our Quaker House Colliery in Winstanley Road.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries Cropper's House was the residence of the manager of Winstanley Collieries. George Holland, a relation of my grandmother Mary J Winstanley, lived there in the middle of the 19th century. My grandmother used to go there to play with George Holland's children. He was colliery manager for Squire Meyrick Bankes. In my younger days Staveleys, Wainrights and Potters lived at Cropper's House, all colliery managers. I remember the two Staveley girls dressed in grey school clothes being driven down Well Brow by a man we knew as Billy Duck, in a smart governess cart pulled by a white horse. His proper name was Hardacre.

Cropper's House was a very commodious house with large reception rooms, a large kitchen, back kitchen and pantry.

Harry Birks, the estate joiner, lived in the stone built Pear Tree Cottage, which looked older than Cropper's House. Often on a Saturday night, Harry, rather worse for drink, would wend his way home singing Annie Laurie or some other song, at the top of his voice.

The estate workshops comprised a large old building with stables and

shops, now demolished, and another newer red brick building housing a sawmill and blacksmiths, carpenters painters and plumbers shops. The machinery was driven by a single engine with a 10 ft. diameter flywheel, steam being supplied from a Cornish type boiler. This building is now the residence of Mr George Fairhurst, another old friend of mine.

A little further up the hill at the bottom of Slacky Brow a narrow road between well-clipped hedges led off to Jameson's Farm where the Dierden's lived. They had quite a lot of antique furniture. On the wall was a portrait of John Wesley, who, Miss Dierden said, was a great friend of her ancestor. A few years ago Herbert Dierden gave this portrait to Wesley's Chapel in London. Miss Dierden had a fantastic collection of jewellery and antique watches.

Old Ted Dierden, a tall man with a beard, John and Horace Cornelius Harold - we always gave the latter his full names. Like Harry Birks, old Ted often staggered up Well Brow after imbibing too freely at the Pony Dick pub. Dierdens were often referred to as "afternoon farmers" - they were not celebrated for their industry.

Another member of the family was old Sophia who lived in the top house of the bottom row at New Houses. She was rather eccentric, keeping hens and ducks in the house. You would often see hens on top of the piano.

At the top of Slacky Brow there was a magnificent row of beech trees said to have been planted to commemorate the Battle of Trafalgar. These trees, together with many others of the best trees in Winstanley, were cut down by the opencast executive (Ministry of Power) towards the end of the second world war. Hill House Farm, worked by Alf Smith and his

father, intrigued us as there was an old notice in the wood which said "Beware of spring guns". We often looked for these spring guns but never found them. Alf Smith married Alice Fouracre when she worked at Winstanley Hall gardens.

Beyond Hill House Farm there was Billinge Lodge and Windy Arbour Farm at the crossroads where the stone posts of the old stocks stood. The stone forming the roof of the window at Billinge Lodge weighed over a ton. Charlie Hughes, woodman on the estate lived at this lodge and Jimmy Turner farmed at Windy Arbour. His son John, then a curly headed boy, and his grandsons still farm it.

Going towards Billinge one came to the beautiful Island Dam, seven acres of water with islands obviously set out by a landscape gardener. The old Victorian-Tudor style boathouse built of ashlar stonework was still there and the Dam Lodge, a similarly built stone house with mullioned windows and small panes, was occupied by Mr and Mrs Jim Downham. Jim worked on the estate. A gate at the side of the lodge opened onto a path which led to Island House where Mr Farrimond, gamekeeper at the Billinge end of the estate, lived. There was a cluster of buildings and pens adjoining Island House where Mr Farrimond bred pheasants. Scores and scores of mallard nested on the dam and the islands and it was part of Mr Farrimond's job to look after these. In June there was always a wonderful show of rhododendrons along the edge of the dam, plenty rabbits, pheasants etc. feeding near the wood, ready to scurry back into cover if disturbed.

I got to know the estate very well as the Fouracres and Johnsons farmed land in the park. When Fouracres were haymaking or getting corn in I went with their boys or their cousin Albert Melling to watch the men

working or to help take the "baggin" (food) and buttermilk, sometimes riding home on one of the horses or on the lorry.

There were two spinster aunts at Rylance Mill Farm - Polly and Alice, who prepared the baggin. Polly was a good looking woman with sandy hair, Alice was small and wore glasses. They were extremely nice to us children. We often went in the Lea Wood and the New Covert. Lea Wood was an ancient valley woodland with a kitchen range built into one of the stone walls. We were told that the soldiers put it there during the first world war.

The New Covert as its name implies, was planted as a game preserve in the 19th century.

We also played a lot in Blundell's Wood. I remember an old oak tree (still there) from which my grandmother said a man hanged himself This wood was mostly cut down by colliers during the 1921 strike when they were getting coal from a seam outcrop there.

During the 1926 strike when my father's apprentices were fencing fields in the park to accommodate the 300 pit ponies from Pemberton Colliery, Mr Bankes used to chat with my father and told him that if he had it to do again he "would be damned" before he would allow them (colliers) to do such damage.

At the age of eight in 1920 I joined Highfield Church choir. Arthur Harris was the organist and choirmaster. He was the son of Robert Harris the head gardener at Winstanley Hall. We often went to the garden house where Mrs Harris, a native of Buckinghamshire and a former servant at the Hall, gave us a good supper. The gardens and all the lawns, drives and grounds near the Hall were kept in an immaculate

condition by Robert Harris.

Every Christmas we gave a carol concert at the Hall which took up a full evening. We gathered in the servants hall where there was a lot of merriment between the older boys and the maids. One night a rather buxom laundry maid sat too near the end of a form which tipped up and dropped her on the floor.

I remember being very interested in a blackboard on which the servants rules were painted in gold lettering. These rules included the amount of ale and beer they were given with dinner and supper.

At the appropriate time we were escorted by the butler down the long stone flagged passage which was festooned near the ceiling with the heads of many animals shot by Mr Bankes in Africa and other places. We went past the bell indicator and on to the bottom of the main staircase where there were two white sculptured figures we called Adam and Eve. The carpets here had a thick pile. We finally arrived either in the front hall or in the drawing room. I remember a large glass chandelier with hundreds of lustres, a gramophone cabinet on legs (then a novelty), a harp and the painting of Meyrick Bankes receiving his tenants, on the left hand wall. I remember noting the cornice moulds ornamented with stork emblems. We sang a number of carols while Mr and Mrs Bankes and their daughter Joyce and their guests (there always seemed to be quite a number of these) listened appreciatively - we were the best church choir in Wigan area then.

After being given a pound note by Mr Bankes - notes had not long before replaced gold sovereigns (and this was equal to £40 in today's currency) we retired to the kitchen and the servants hall where a hot pot supper

was ready for us and mugs of hot cocoa.

A few years later one of my best friends was Andrew Frazer, pantry boy at the Hall. At that time I was an apprentice surveyor at Pemberton Collieries. When we went underground to survey a face or district we were allowed to go home after we had finished the job. This meant that I came up the pit and went home soon after 2pm two or three times a week, and I often met Andrew at the Lea Dam in the Park, for a swim. I was rather envious of him because he seemed to have so much time off and got £30 a year.

I started my apprenticeship on 7/- a week (£18.20 per year) and ended it on 17/- a week (£44.20 per year) at the age of 21. In addition Andrew received a blue serge suit every year as well as a livery suit. I seem to remember that the livery was brown or maroon with gold braid and gold buttons. He said that his duty was to wait on the butler at 8 o'clock for his breakfast then assist the butler and footman with the family and guests breakfast (he said there were often guests staying there). After that he cleaned the silver, or such silver as was in use. He also cleaned all the shoes and boots. After that he seems to have had most of the day off until dinner in the evening, when he had to assist again.

Mr Grocott, the butler, was an extremely nice man. Such a gentleman that when one of us kicked a football that accidentally hit him in the face, he apologised for getting in the way. We were more used to a clout on the head for anything like that.

Besides Mr Grocott there were, in the early days, two footmen, although during the 1930's there was only one - Eddie Macdonald. Andrew's

ambition was to become a footman and then a butler. I have often wondered since if he ever became a butler. He left Winstanley to become footman to Lord Blythswood. Being in service was in the family - his brother was footman to the Earl of Mar and Kellie. Andrew wrote to me from Blythswood House in Scotland to say he was travelling to London with Lord Blythswood's staff and could he see me at Wigan station. I went to the station from the colliery but the train thundered through Wigan at about 60 miles per hour. I saw him waving from an open window and that was the last I saw of him.

There were always house parties for the Grand National, the Waterloo Cup, the Chester Cup and some of the main events at Haydock Park. Quite often there were functions in the Park attended by hundreds of local people. I remember a large gathering in the Park for the peace celebrations in 1919. It was a gorgeous day. Two Royal Flying Corps biplanes came over. Everything in the Park looked so nice. All the windows in the farm buildings and in the courtyard were painted white and the doors grey with black ironwork. the stone of the mullioned windows of the house itself were painted "stone colour" and the sashes white. Wooden fences (joiner made) were painted grey with black iron strapwork. The wire fencing on both sides of the Hall Lane (drive) with the light iron stanchions was kept in immaculate condition, as were all the other iron fences.

A regular function every July was Highfield Sunday School "field treat". Orrell St. Luke's also had theirs at their end of the Park. If the weather was fine it was all so very enjoyable. There were races for the "scholars" as they called the children. My father's men from Pemberton Colliery fenced the racecourse and marked it out. They also erected the stalls and marquee. One of the local brass bands played music both for dancing and

just to give pleasure to listeners. At least, it sounded good to us at our age.

In the spring there was daffodil day when hundreds of people came and thousands of daffodils were picked and sold for charity. At one time there was also the Billinge and Winstanley Agricultural and Horticultural Show. Mr and Mrs Bankes nearly always put in an appearance at these functions.

The drives in the Park, which had been made by Meyrick Bankes II, were original type dry "Macadam" of what looked like blast furnace slag with a topcoat of fine white limestone chippings. There was a main front drive and a back drive to and past the Hall. These joined together near the top end of Lea Wood. After about 80 yards there was a branch to the left to Wigan Lodge about a mile in length. Off this a branch took you to the Straw Yard, Cropper's House and Pemberton Road through the "Big Stone" drive with its painted wooden gates. On the right of this drive, near to where it branched off the main drive to Billinge Lodge a small ornamental joiner-made gate led into Spring Pool. The pool or dam was pear shaped in plan with the narrow part towards Windy Arbour. A lovely ornamental wooden arched bridge, similar to those shown on willow pattern plates, crossed the pool where it became narrow and there were footpaths on each side of the pool leading to it. These continued up into the wood. A high clipped rhododendron hedge surrounded the pool with alcoves in each side in which well made wooden seats were placed. Further up the wood a waterfall was fed by a higher but smaller dam and there was even a third small dam further up still.

To go back to the junction of the drives - the one straight up to Billinge Lodge ran parallel to Spring Pool Wood which was on the left of it, but

on the right, half way to Billinge Lodge, there was a magnificent stand of beeches.

Returning to the junction again, near where there were two well proportioned and ornamental wooden gates across the drive, another branch led up the hill to Park House and the estate office. This drive cut through a circular plantation of pine trees. Ground rents and farm rents were paid on, (if I remember rightly) Lady Day every year at the estate office. Mr Punchard, a rather grand fellow, controlled everything. He finished rather suddenly, rumour having it that some money was missing, but this may have been malicious gossip.

Quite a few tragedies had occurred on the estate from the time of Mr Shortrede, the agent under Meyrick Bankes. He was having an affair with Mrs Atherton, wife of the foreman mason, who lived at Pear Tree Cottage near the Straw Yard. Mrs Shortrede heard about this and drowned herself in the well at Park House, the estate agent's residence, long since demolished. Upon hearing about this Mrs Atherton hanged herself in the Straw Yard. Shortrede attended Billinge Church on the following Sunday, when Canon Howard St. George castigated him from the pulpit, after which he went home to Park House and shot himself in the privy. Mr Hall, a later agent, fell or jumped down the estate stone delf off Hall Lane.

Watson the building manager drowned himself in the canal. Watson at the time seems to have been seconded to Wrightington Hall estate where Eleanor Gerard Dicconson, sister of Mr G H Bankes lived. She had married the Hon. Robert Gerard Dicconson, brother of Lord Gerard of Garswood Hall, Ashton. "Bobby" Gerard was a hunting fanatic who laid farms waste to plant fox coverts. He hunted both the fox and the stag

and besides fox hounds had twelve couples of stag hounds. Within ten years of taking over the estate he had bankrupted it. The trustees appointed a firm of London estate agents to try to salvage it. It was probably at this time that Watson was sent there, as the workshops were to exactly the same design as those at Winstanley. Members of my wife's family were employed at Wrightington Hall as gamekeepers and I have a letter about them from a land surveyor sent up to look after the estate by the London firm, saying how he liked them and other local people at Wrightington. He also describes Bobby Gerard as a bad landlord.

After that diversion we return to the junction of the drives. The drive to the twin Up Holland lodges went off to the right leaving Mossy Croft Wood on its right and Camp Hill planted with fir trees on its left. After about half a mile there were gate piers, curved stone walls and double ornamental double gates. A tiny stone built lodge known as Job's Lodge stood close by. This was originally the entrance into the Park off the ancient highway before Winstanley Road was constructed. This latter was known as "the MacAdam". From Job's Lodge the drive followed the ancient road for two or three hundred yards and then turned left to the Up Holland twin lodges. The Bankes and Holmes crests, the stork and griffin, surmounted the iron fence piers. The estate club, built by Mr Bankes in 1907, was near the lodges. Further towards Orrell from the Up Holland Lodges a narrow road led off Winstanley Road to the right where there was a cluster of cottages near the Park wall. These cottages and the old Winstanley School, with its gothic style window, sat astride the ancient road. A path from these cottages led to a wicket gate in the Park wall, giving access to the Winstanley Park Cricket Field. This was made originally by Meyrick Bankes principally for estate workers and tenants.

The Fairclough's from the old cottages just mentioned, most of whom were tall men and worked either on the estate or at Winstanley Collieries, were very good cricketers.

Wood Cottage and the pheasantries, where our inveterate enemy, Mr Humphries, the head keeper lived, has already been mentioned, but outside the Park wall near the railway bridge crossing to Brook Lane, stood Arches Lodge, a very attractive stone built lodge which had been erected when a viaduct over the valley there carried Clarke's colliery railway on which Lancashire's first locomotive ran in 1813.

The delf in Hall Lane has been mentioned. This was an estate quarry in the Wigan 5 foot rock, a hard yellow sandstone with ironstone staining which makes it rather attractive. The Elizabethan portion of the Hall seems to be of this stone; most of the rest certainly is. So were most of the other eatate buildings, including the Park wall.

I have heard old people say that when the Park wall was being built young Meyrick Bankes spent much time supervising the work. They also said it cost a pound a yard to build - this may have been guesswork or it may have been the contractor's rate. More than one contractor was employed as at different points there are distinct changes in both the building style and the copings.

Some stonework that may have come from another quarry, with closer grained, higher quality stone, could be that used in building Wigan Lodge and its gateway and the gateway at the entrance to Hall Lane, now the main drive.

As youngsters we were told that Squire Bankes had an estate in

Scotland, another in Yorkshire, one at Southworth with Croft near Winwick and a town house in Eaton Square, London; besides the sporting estate he rented in Iceland.

At Joyce Bankes's coming of age in 1925 it was said that 90 farm tenants attended the party at Winstanley.

A fine open carriage was used until the early 1920's. I well remember seeing Mrs Bankes and Joyce in this. Mr Jackson was the coachman, he had a cockade in his hard hat. On the doors of the carriage was the Bankes coat of arms. Two white or grey horses were pulling it if my memory serves me right.

Besides horse drawn vehicles there was a pre-first world war Daimler. This was a very large car with lots of brass on it and huge carbide lamps and two long horns. Mr Bankes once drove from Land's End to John O'Groats in it, quite a feat in those early days of the motor car. During the 1930's there was a beautiful Delage and other cars. They were all in perfect condition - the chauffeur having to clean and polish them after every drive. they all had the coat of arms on the doors, but only small.

Like Sam, I remember the visit of Princess Louise to Winstanley Hall when I was about 9 years old. we children stood in our front garden waving flags as she rode past in Bankes's Daimler. My father had put up a flag pole and we had a large Union Jack on that. Princess Louise did not wave; -she bowed or inclined her head and smiled as she slowly went past. The flag on the flag pole on top of the tower at the Hall was flying of course, as indeed it always did when the Bankes's were in residence. I think the year Princess Louise came was the year that Mr Bankes was High Sheriff of Lancashire.

Princess Louise was the elder daughter of Edward VII. She was Duchess of Fife by marriage and Princess Royal.

The tall trees of Fouracre's Wood at Pony Dick had been for time out of mind a nesting place for crows or rooks.

In spring every year Mr Humphries, the keeper, Mr Eastham the estate agent and others, gathered in the wood to shoot the crows. Those crows were fond of eating eggs, especially those of the larger variety, such as pheasants, wild duck and partridge and were very destructive as far as game rearing was concerned. It intrigued us to see how high the crows used to fly to get beyond the range of the 12 bores. It almost seemed that they could see the shot at its full range, falling back away from them. However I remember Mr Humphries shooting with a single barrelled gun - the barrel was octagonal in shape and I have learnt since that this was probably a rook rifle. These were similar to a 0.22 but slightly larger in bore, the cartridge being charged with black powder. When he hit a crow it came plummeting down on us with a terrific bump. The idea behind the shoot was to kill the fledglings when they were on the edge of the nests ready to try to fly. With this in mind the day for the shoot had to be carefully chosen. They always seemed to come in the evening.

As boys we did many things frowned upon now such as collecting birds eggs. This was known as "bridneeing". I had about 30 eggs from the tiny golden crested wren to the large pheasant egg. We were often in trouble with the keepers and especially Mr Humphries.

I was once putting my hand in a dunnock's nest up a tree in the New

Covert, when Albert Melling, who was with me and on the ground, shouted "owd Humphrey". I turned to look from my precarious perch and there he was pointing his 12 bore at me. I let go of the branch and more or less fell down the tree and although I was hurt, he didn't catch me.

Another time near the Lea Dam I had just stumbled across a pheasant's nest and was counting the eggs, light olive with dark brown blotches on the end. I had just decided there were 14, but I wasn't going to touch them, as I knew it was a serious thing to do, when a heavy hand grabbed me and I was given a beating with a thick ash stick of the bone breaking variety. It didn't cure us, as he nearly caught us again near the Hall, but he couldn't run fast enough. Nemesis caught up when I got another crack with a stick whilst I was peacefully watching Winstanley Park cricket team three weeks later.

Another time in the Belt Plantation I had three unblown eggs under my cap when we saw two men nearby who we thought were keepers. We ran to get over the wall into Slacky Brow and in my hurry to climb over the wall I caught my head on the projecting coping stone, breaking the eggs which ran down my face.

Some old tales of Winstanley.

When the Bishop of Chester came to Wigan Parish Church to conduct the Confirmation Service, the girls of Winstanley rode down the incline to Wigan Pier in a colliery wagon thoroughly swept and fitted out with clean wooden seats. The boys of Winstanley had to walk.

When I was a small boy an old man, Mr Southworth, lived in Highfield View, the long row of houses in Billinge Road near the Venture Pub. This

row of houses was built by George Holland, Meyrick Bankes' Colliery manager. [He bought the land from Blundell's - RW]. They were known formerly as Holland's Houses or The Powder Houses, as it was said that they were built out of the profit George Holland made in selling gunpowder to the colliers. Before they were built an old thatched whitewashed cottage, occupied by Billy Baybutt, stood near the Winstanley end of them. [Copperas House - RW]

To go back to Mr Southworth, he was valet to Mr Meyrick Bankes, known to everyone as th'owd Squire. It was said that the Squire, when business was pressing, sometimes travelled to Liverpool in his gig with Southworth, where they stayed at his office in Old Hall Street, sleeping on mattresses on the stone floor.

It was in Liverpool, when he was dressed in his usual Winstanley garb, more or less like a tramp, in old patched clothes, originally black but green with age and using string for bootlaces, that he went into a clock makers to order a turret clock. When he introduced himself as Mr Bankes of Winstanley quite understandably the manager of the shop refused to believe him and, it was said, they had to send for his bank manager.

My grandmother, as a girl, saw him coming back from Scotland quite a number of times. She said that two men on a seat at the upper back part of the coach had to blow post horns all the way from Highfield House (where "Torney" Fred Taylor the Blundell's solicitor lived) to Winstanley Hall, to warn the servants to have everything ready for him.

Mr Ben Miller who was an underground deputy at Pemberton Colliery, told me that when he started at Winstanley Colliery as a boy, the Squire was pushed around the workings on a wooden tram by a dataller named

John. The Squire used to rest his head on John's shoulder and on being pushed up a brow one day, he said to John "Am I lying heavy on you John?" Although he was nearly dropping he replied "Oh no mester no".

Mr Bankes often went to the pits at half past five in a morning to see the colliers down and talk to them, and in this way everyone knew "th'owd Squire". He often called for breakfast at one of his cottage tenants later.

He obviously knew his workmen as he had a rhyme about his woodmen - where the sun shines hot and the wind blows not, there you will find my men.

It was said that ten thousand people lined the route of his funeral at Upholland. The vault there was sealed up there for the last time by Mr Atherton the estate mason and grandfather of Mr Frank Atherton, foreman bricklayer at Pemberton Colliery in the 1920's.

We have seen that Winstanley produced a Camden Professor of history at Cambridge and it is not surprising that there were many other "characters" in Winstanley. Mr Arthur Pigot, who would have been over a hundred now, told me about his grandfather Moses Daniels, born and brought up at the New Houses. He became a blacksmith at Bankes' Nos 1 and 2 pits, otherwise known as "th'owd Burgy" or th'owd 4ft.". He probably had an IQ of 140-160, as every Wednesday night the masters of Billinge, Senely Green, Park Lane, Goose Green and Lamberhead Green schools used to gather at his cottage. All the furniture and the pegged rugs were removed into a corner and Moses would give them all a lesson in higher mathematics by means of chalk on the stone flags of the floor. This went on for many years. It was the reverse of Goldsmiths

schoolmaster of the Deserted Village as it was a wonder that Moses Daniels' head "carried all he knew".

Meyrick Bankes tried to persuade him to work for him in the estate office but he preferred his job as a blacksmith.

Mr Pigot informed me that his grandfather went "on the spree" now and again. His wife always knew when he was going, (which was always on a Friday) and would say "thar't for gooin again art tha". He would reply that he was going to speak with wise men for a week and that he would like one of his sons to go for him to the Machine Inn at Pemberton on the following Saturday. During the week Moses would go round many of the pubs in the district holding forth in the taprooms and sleeping in the stables or other outbuildings.

Paul Green was another clever boy from New Houses. He worked in the estate office. His son George who again lived to a great age, showed me his diary. This mentions the day that they got word at the pits that "th'owd Squire" had died. No work was done at the pits the following day.

A final tale is about the Hitchens who have lived in the New Houses for many generations. More than a hundred years ago the head of the family paid a regular nightly visit to the "Favourite Pony Dick" taproom. He always came back home at exactly ten minutes to eleven, but had several wayward teenage sons who were not always as prompt at coming home as he was. One night Father Hitchen announced that from that night the door would be barred at 11 pm and anyone who came home afterwards would have to shout his name before being let in. The following day the Hitchen lads made it up to put the clock forward twenty minutes and

stay at home. That night father arrived back, as was his wont at ten minutes to eleven and the door was barred. He shook the door and made a commotion shouting "oppen this bloody dooer" and was told that Mr Hitchen had said that no person was to be allowed in after 11 o'clock and that it was now ten minutes past eleven with the grandfather clock that Mr Hitchen said was never wrong. Again there was a terrific commotion and the voice from inside the kitchen said that Mr Hitchen had given orders that anyone arriving after 11 had to shout his name aloud. Eventually (it was raining hard outside) a voice in a low key said "Thomas Hitchen." The voice from inside the kitchen said "yo'll ha tae sheaut up, ah cawn't hear yo". This was repeated until they got their father to bawl out his name. By this time all the older boys had made a dash upstairs, leaving it to the youngest to unbar the door. He did this and with great agility bounded up the stairs and got into bed with all the others. The result of all this has never been related.

29. GEORGE JEPSON: Interviews

September 1980.

Transcribed September 1983.

Where were you born?

I was born at 223 Billinge Road and then we moved to 219, in Cornish Row. The houses were built soon after the colliery started. They were built by Col. Blundell for the miners. All Queen street too. All the same type houses.

How long did you live there?

Well, 1915 we left. My mother bought the shop on the bridge. [opposite Pemberton Station - RW]

Which was that?

That as Owen Davies left. The first one here going down on the left.

Is that the one furthest from Enfield Street?

Yes.

What sort of shop was that?

A grocers; mixed; sweets; cooked meats; tobacco; even rubbing stones and chalk.

What other shops were there then?

When we went there a chap named Roby took over next door as a green grocers and when he finished Arthur Dickinson took it as a grocery. Then next door was little Billy Fairhurst - butcher, clogger. Then after that it was Bill Dierden and his daughter Susan, it was a sweet shop. After that there was a newsagent's shop, and the last one was the Outdoor License. Old Billy Fairhurst's son Arthur had it. Eventually his brother Joe owned the building and he got Arthur out and he took it, as well as the butcher's shop. [Butcher's shop in Enfield St. opposite the post office - RW]

What do you remember about the time when you lived in Cornish Row?

Well, I remember a chinese woman coming and two youngsters and they had their feet wrapped up tight, like you've seen it in China in the olden days, and they were begging. Where they were going I don't know, and where they had come from I don't know, perhaps they had walked it from Liverpool.

Then there was a chap who used to come with a big brown bear on a chain wi a stick and he used to have it dancing.

And then there was three German lads with melodians and one had a cornet and they were playing and begging in the back yards.

And then there was that mine shaft in our back garden, the Brickcroft shaft. It sunk a foot and showed the brickwork.

That was actually in your back garden?

Yes. In the back garden at 219. I asked Don Anderson about that and he said it was the Brickcroft Pit. That told me about the "Brickcroft" where that present pit heap is. [directly facing Cornish Row, across the railway line - RW.] We used to say "come on we'll go and play on the brickcroft." There were two lodges there across the line, but across the line opposite Southern Street there was a shallow square pond. This would probably have been for the boilers and winding engine at the Brickcroft Pit. I should imagine that.

Would that have been before the Railway went through?

Yes. Before the railway.

So we had the Brickcroft Pit on one side and the lodge on the other?

Yes.

And the houses round about Southern Street wouldn't have been built?

I shouldn't imagine so.

On that land running parallel [to the road - RW] towards Little Lane there was a spring and my grandmother used to bucket water and that was the means of supply before they had taps.

Billinge Road then was an old cart road. There was no macadam and all potholes and had hedges all the way down on both sides.

When we come to Tunstall Lane from that photograph you showed me the field on the left was built on in 1912 by Clough and Gaskell. They built all of those houses.

What is now the Slipper Works [Lord and Sharman - RW] was the old Pemberton electric works. There were two vertical engines in there, and two chaps who worked shifts operating them. They used to cart coal from Pemberton Colliery and old Billy Fairhurst's son-in-law who married his daughter Lil, he was the carter. That was his job, carting slack down, and when he was married he wore a tall hat and frock coat.

Was that the source of electric for the Pemberton area?

Yes.

When was the place built?

I don't know when it was built but when there was amalgamation [of Pemberton with Wigan in 1904 - RW] they would probably do away with that then, but when it was running it was in the late teens. I will go as far as to say 1919 because there was a young fellow working shifts, his name was Douglas and he was courting a girl named Evelyn Deakin from Lower Ince, and I used to see her going as she used to go a courting there when he was on nights.

Did it go out of use as an electric works?

Yes. It went into a straw works, I think, where they made ropes, before it became the slipper factory.

You said there used to be another pub near the corner of Tunstall Lane where the Hare and Hounds is.

The only other pub was just over the railway bridge into Little Lane. That was the Castle Inn. Joseph Parkes was the landlord. His daughter was Tom Hughes's wife. There were two sons, Teddy and Sam. Another son, Joe. Sam's wife now lives in the row with the post office [in Enfield Street - RW]

Near the Hare and Hounds was the other pub?

Yes, and right across the way was the old Wood Farm. I think it was Wood Farm and the earliest tenant I remember his name was Shaw. He was a little old chap with a goatee beard, and it was a building which

came right onto the road with a gate. As you came near towards Little Lane there was part of the building which was part of his house, and I think they left that eventually. But at the frontage of that little part there was iron rails set in stone copings and to get in they used to go round these rails and in through a gate and into the farm yard.

I suppose that the stone houses down Billinge Road would be there then.

Oh yes, Ashcroft's built those out of the delf. They were called Ashcroft's Houses.

Ashcroft's delf was the one which was filled in.

That's it. Polly Ashcroft was a schoolteacher here and she married Bob Clark, no, Billy Clark. The Clark family lived in Little Lane over the old Union Bridge, just past the West End Oil Company. There was a big house there - there were two - and Clarks lived in one and were supposed to be pretty well off.

Anna [or Hannah - RW] Clark used to come to church and she used to pick Mrs Crawford up who lived at 227 Billinge Road. She had a draper's shop there. She was somebody. They used to go to church with their veils, and tuck their skirts up, you know, like trollopy skirts.

A bit lower down we have the hospital.

Billinge Road Hospital.

When would that have been built?

I couldn't tell you when that was built. It was used generally with those with consumption. [TB - RW] When you were walking past they were coughing their hearts out.

What about the corner where Trevor Jones's garage is?

There was a White Lion pub there and there is a stone row there yet. Peter Lowe was the landlord and he had a deaf and dumb son, as well as his other sons. One of his sons kept that pub at the top of Pemberton, just past Pow Hillock, at the back. [The Dog and Partridge, known even today as Jem Lowes - RW]

In the right hand side was the Delf [or Delph - RW] Inn. To approach it there was iron rails and you went down some stone steps to get in as the land was low lying from Billinge Road, which was higher. It was adjoining a row of houses. The next one was the toffee shop. George Taylor's wife's parents or grandparents used to keep it.

Was there still any evidence of the colliery line here and in Victoria Street?

The Union Line came from Norley Hall Collieries and they used to drag the coal up past Little Lane and they used to pick the Bryn Hall up for the main line to Liverpool.

Every night Pemberton Colliery coal and perhaps coal from other collieries, used to be shunted on that Union Line to get a start. There would be a big engine at the front and a big engine at the back, waiting, and they would start whistling. Then they would start. As soon as the first engine got to the bridge where we lived on top it used to shake the

foundations. It was slipping. Sometimes they would have to send for another loco, and many a time they had to run back for a fresh start. Sometimes two or three times, but once they got past the other side of the Summersale they were getting more level. When they got to Orrell or Upholland the back engine would leave as they would then be going down to Liverpool.

You moved to Pemberton Station in 1915?

Yes.

Had you started work then?

I started work when I was 13 years of age at Pemberton Colliery. The engineer was Mr Stevenson. I remember going and him and the second engineer, Bill Leyland took me down to the bottom of the Bye Pit steps and they said to wait here in the morning and someone will come and pick you up. So, I hadn't been there 12 months and Dick Taylor, who lived in the old houses up here [New Houses - RW] was a shaft inspector, and he used to put lags on the winding drums, and if there was any stret in the winding rope, for the sake of the winder, who used to work to a pointer. This finger used to go round and there were markings on the drum. Sometimes it would vary, so Dick Taylor and perhaps Tom Kerfoot would be sent for to put a lag on, or perhaps take a lag off to make it perfect, so that it [the cage - RW] would land perfect on the decks.

One Saturday morning Dick Taylor had come to examine the winding rope. He used to throw a piece of spun yarn round. He used to stand on a plank. It was fenced round by the side of the shaft. The winder would

start winding slowly to see if there were any flaws in the winding rope, or strands broken. This particular morning he said to me "Do you want to come with me?" I said "Aye, I'll come." I didn't know what I was in for.

We got on top of the cage. There were four chains cornerwise to the cage. He said "get hold of that chain," so I did. I was 13 at the time and we went down 500 yards. He was casting his eye over the shaft walls, examining the shaft. I could easily have fainted and fallen. I was terrified. Then we went across the Queen Pit and came up the King Pit the same way. The Queen Pit had angle iron and slides. The King Pit was rope slides. [guides for the cages - RW] So that was an experience and I was only 13.

Can we just clarify the position over the old mill. May Mill.

The buildings, when you went through Foundry yard from Foundry Lane. The first building after the engineer's office, there was a big turntable where a wagon or loco could be run on to turn it. And then there were two big doors and that was the wagon building shop and repair. It was all one long building. After that there was what they called the bottom fitting shop. There were machines turning and drilling and a big grinding stone. A bit further was the joiner's shop. Jim Anderson was the boss over wagon works and building, and such like, and all the joiners. At the other end there were wooden steps up onto the top deck and the top fitting shop. That was mostly bench work. That was the old mill because all of the windows were of the old type with little panes. That was the old original mill. [before May Mill - RW]

When the first part of May Mill was built, did you say that there were two fires there?

I don't remember the first fire but it was talked about and had been a big fire. The centre part was new brickwork so it must have been in that part.

Was it after the first fire when the mill was rebuilt?

Probably.

It wasn't absolutely gutted, it was just one section. I remember being took and we stood in Ackers's field. [where Woodbrook Drive is now - RW] Her and me [his mother - RW] and we watched the old horse fire brigade and they were pushing square bales of cotton out of this top room, and it was falling. That would be about 1905-6 near enough. I think it was the blow room if I remember right.

By 1905 the front part of the mill had been built. Was the fire in the front part or the old part?

It was in the middle in the new part.

Then we come to Clapgate Lane, don't we? All the dant water, after the dant had settled in the dant holes was piped down to Clapgate Lane and it used to come out just past where the Union Line went over a bridge just past Pemberton Colliery tip, and that black water used to run in Pony Dick Brook [Smithy Brook - RW] which went further on right through Worsley Mesnes. Sometimes they would come on and complain about all the black water because it was full of dant.

When did you move from Pemberton Station to here? [Billinge Rd near

Pony Dick]

I moved first into a house adjoining the shop in what was known as Skittle Alley. I was glad to get away from that place. Then I went down Billinge Road, opposite the two old white houses. I lived next to Dick Tomlinson. They are condemned now and Tomlinson's had that as a bit of a shop. I went down there when I was about 31 or 32 I should think and through the mining fault underneath, plaster used to be dropping in the night time and there were cracks. So we went down to the housing place at Wigan and asked for a council house, but we couldn't get one. No chance at all. Fortunately I got a house at the top of Enfield Street, on the right. In the street higher up than the chip shop. I was only there three months and Joe Cobley came and asked me did I want this. So that was in the 1930's.

Have you been here ever since?

Yes.

How do you remember Well Brow? As far back as you can remember.

There was nothing. Just at the bottom here there was those big trees. Just past the brook was a stone wall and these big trees, but many were cut down during the miner's strike. When they were looking for coal they chopped the trees down. But it was pretty rough and going up on the left hand side, all that land, it was slimy because all the water from the sinks in the old houses at the top of Well Brow used to be piped to the top of the brow, then it would run empty down this land which made it slimy. It had to find its own way to the brook. Soapy slime. That land was always full of broom and nobody ever walked on it. Just at the top of the brow was the old ovens. [coke ovens associated

with Bankes's nos. 1 and 2 pits - RW] I should say about six feet diameter brick, but there was no cones on.

You don't remember these being used?

Oh no.

At that time the railway line would come down Well Brow, wouldn't it?

It used to come from behind Tom Johnson's. [Langley Farm - RW] There was a weighing machine there. There was a joint. There was a big loco shed there too. I think Tom Johnson still uses that. Well, just at the end of the loco shed there was the weighing machine. That's where the lines met, coming from the collieries, and this branch line came behind Pony Dick. The other line used to go through Goose Green. There used to be a chap in a cabin there [Clapgate Lane junction - RW] You had to go up some steps and when a train of wagons was coming to go to Wigan Pier to the canal boats, he used to go in the main road with a red flag and stop the traffic until the engine and train had gone past.

So you remember engines running up and down there?

Oh yes.

Can you remember the names of any of them?

No, but Tom Hitchen drove one. Little Harry was one of the oldest engines and I think Eleanor was another. There was about three, I think.

Did these belong to Winstanley Collieries?

Winstanley Collieries.

Mostly they would be in that loco shed near Tom Johnson's. Then they used to lower the full wagons down here and push them onto the main line and I remember when I was a lad my father taking me to the joining on the main line. [Winstanley Colliery Sidings in the Summersale - RW] At Either side of the line was a swing gate [level crossing - RW] and I stood on the rails watching what we called the American-a-devil. It was the first mechanical excavator driven by steam and it had a scoop just like a great big potato scoop. It used to dig into the banking and swing round and put it in a wagon, as they were making an extra line or sidings.

An extra line on the Winstanley sidings?

Yes, but on t'other side of the line.

That's where the water tower used to be.

Yes, exactly.

What do you recall of the pits on Well Brow?

We used to go up there but by that time I think the pits had finished - no they hadn't. The lamp rooms were near the road and behind was were they chopped all the proven for the pit ponies.

The big shaft was behind Tom Hughes's bungalow, on that heap. It was a big wooden headgear. Then the one near Kerfoots, [opposite Holmes House Avenue - RW] that was eventually used as a water dip. They used to come and test the depth of water before they filled it in. When they

were working the one at the top of the brow was known as furnace pit. That was the upcast when they had a furnace at the bottom of the pit to draw the foul air out of the workings.

That must have been a bit dodgy.

Well, that top pit slipped because it had only been baulked half way down from the mouthing and it rotted and it all went down. It took a great width and they had to fill it in again.

Shaws were the last at Rainford Cottage?

Yes.

Who do you remember before that?

Well, Richardson's. It was made into two then. There was father, mother and brothers lived in one part.

The Richardsons who lived at Summersales?

Yes.

There was a chap named Martindale lived in a part for a while, and married someone called Lowe from Wildes Houses, she was the eldest daughter. This Martindale came from Half Way House, near Rylances' furniture shop, in that row.

Then Billy Richardson moved to Summersales Cottages. Richard, his brother, went next to Kearsley's Farm. [Holmes House Farm - RW] There was another brother who lived at Pemberton.

I remember the sports which were held in Winstanley Park. It was always a big sports day on August Monday. There were big marquees and bands playing. Sportsmen - runners and bike riders - used to come. They used to exhibit all the trophies in the outdoor licence at Pemberton Station. [at the corner of Enfield St. - RW] My father was on the committee. Also the prizes - silver bowls, barometers etc. There used to be a lot of gambling in those days, and secretly. An old gardener who worked at Celanese [George worked there also - RW] told me he was a noted sprinter and lived at Ashton, and he ran under an assumed name. All his pals and himself were backing [betting - RW] but he didn't go back for his prize otherwise they would have found him out. So they just won the money and were satisfied with the money.

When would that be?

When I was a boy. The chap who was in charge of the operation was George Monks. His daughter lived in the old houses - Mrs Devonport. Old George Monks was a bank manager. There was a bank before Union Bridge on Ormskirk Road. He used to wear a straw hat. We used to go to their house down Billinge Road, before the hospital. We used to go for the programmes. They were a penny each and we used to get a penny for selling a dozen. [sell 144 and get 5p - RW]

Was there an arrangement to hold the Lancashire Agricultural Show in Winstanley Park?

I think there was but I forget.

What were your first impressions when you first went down Pemberton Collieries?

Well, you weren't really frightened because everything was so well set out. Even the stables for the ponies - they were beautiful, and the ponies were well looked after. Sometimes if you had been working on a job in the far end and it was finishing time, you could meet a pony running back to the stables on its own. It had left its lad driver and it had its iron shafts, and in the dark, but it knew where it was going.

Could they find their own way?

Yes. They could find their own way.

They were well looked after. The water carts used to be sent down full of water for them, and boxes full of proven. [provender - RW] Manure used to be carted back up.

What sort of wage did you get when you first started?

[1 shilling (1s)=5p. 10/6d=10 shillings and 6 pence. 12d=1s - RW]

My wage was about 8/0d per week and I think it went up then to 10/6d. I got half a sovereign and a sixpence and when I took that home to my mother, she gave me the 6d. I didn't always get that 6d. Sometimes it was 2d or something like that you see.

How did people go on who were off sick for any length of time?

Miners?

Yes.

Well, at the pay office you was herded like sheep. All the miners coming out of the pit - hot mines, and it was in the depth of winter. It was perhaps snowing or raining or blowing. They would muffle their coats up and they would stand on the road, and they had to go in this little office, and they went round and round and round, like partitioned off with rails you might say, till they came to the pay office window. Well there you'd have to wait until the money went in the office, and also Colin Ashurst and some of the office staff. There was two lots of offices you see. Pay offices. You would have to wait and then they would give you your money on a pay ticket. Stamp it. Sometimes some of the miners, when they got their pay, had been paid short. Well, they would go across to the underlooker "I'm a day short" or "half a turn short." He might say "Ah well, can't do nowt about it, you'll have to leave it till next week."

Well money was tight in those days and if a chap had a family it was very difficult. If a chap had took ill or something like that, the miners, the miners union would or the representative of the union would have to get permission to have a collection for this chap. They would put a big red hankercher down in these pay offices and they would write up on a board "a collection for so-and-so who has been off work through sickness for 14 or 20 weeks," or whatever it was and they would be throwing pennies or some would throw a little threepenny piece [silver 3d piece - RW] and some might throw a sixpenny piece on, and that's how it went by.

They would perhaps organise a concert at the Queens [cinema, Pemberton - RW] and sell tickets at 6d for such a chap who would never work again. That's how it was. It was really poverty stricken in those days.

It couldn't have been so good during the strikes.

It was very bad during the strikes. I know that in the 1921 strike I wasn't so bad because we lived in the shop then and I used to get free cigarettes and pocket money just the same. Although a lot of the customers were running debts on, but it couldn't be avoided. They were trusted customers. The more poor they were the more honest they were.

In your early days at Pemberton Collieries, who were the managers then?

Mr Douglas was the general manager. Old Burgess was the under-manager to Mr Millward before Tom Cooke. He [Millward-RW] wasn't a good practical man. More theory I think, and he got sacked. Mr Douglas sacked him and Joe Ollerton who lived in the Slate Houses. [Highfield Houses opposite the top of Foundry Lane - RW]

He was a contractor and he had been working and had been getting money for work as hadn't been done. They were found out and both sacked.

Who else was there as management then?

Mr Cooke came after Millward, from St. Helens.

How long did you stay at Pemberton Collieries?

I left in 1938. I went to Appley Bridge. [about 25years - RW] Billy Winstanley, who had served his time [apprenticeship - RW] at the colliery in the fitting shop was sent down the pit. He was a clever young fellow, very studious. He used to go to Tech. and nights too. He got his AMI... Engineering you know, and even then he went into the

draughtsmen's office. Teddy Gaskell was the draughtsman then, but Billy Winstanley was a bit too clever and they got him pushed out - not enough work - and he was sent down the pit. They told him "If there's any engines wants fettling you must go and do it, but if there's no engines wants fettling you must get a pick and spade like everybody else and do a bit of datalling."

This was a lad who had his Higher Nationals. Eventually he got a job at Gallagher's at Wigan, putting some machinery in. When that job finished he was told he couldn't be kept on. He got a job at Manchester. A big engineering company at Old Trafford. Through me and Billy always being friendly at the colliery, and he knew that I had been sent down the pit too, because I gave Jimmy Maloney a belter under the jaw and knocked him on his back, I had to go and face Owen Davies. He Said "I'll not sack you but I'll find you another job." I finished up downt' pit.

Anyway, Billy Winstanley's father told me to have a day off and go and see Billy at Appley Bridge. Thursday it was. So I went. I just got there when Billy Winstanley was coming out of his office. He heard my footsteps. He said "Come in here George." He opened a draw and took a book out and said "Put your name there. Now you've signed on. You start here tomorrow. Go back and tell them at the colliery that you've finished." I said "Right" and I never looked back afterwards. Billy Winstanley was my best friend.

How long were you there?

10 years, 1938-1948. I went through all the war jobs because when war broke out they got a lot of war jobs.

There is a pipe bridge across the canal which me and my assistant, who eventually became a pipe fitter, built it on the canal side - the riggers, the joiners and the lot. They borrowed a canal boat on Sunday morning

and planked it across. Ainscoughs came with a whats-its-name and picked it up. Tom Hitchen and the joiner had put telegraph poles up with cross members in. It was picked up and slipped through and then slipped back again to rest. At the same time they put hawsers underneath it to keep it [can't understand - RW]. Then after it was fixed we had to work across to a new varnish plant and then into the works. There was 6,000 feet of two inch pipe in that job alone, besides additional we put in a 4 inch slush pipe and a 2.5 inch water pipe and a cable pipe. It was in the depths of winter 1941. One of the coldest winters on record. We used to crawl across it over the canal to save walking round, and slide down the post.

Talking about pipes, wasn't there a pipe down from the Venture Lodge?

Yes, and that came cornerwise across the Rec [cricket field - RW] to the May Mill pad. [path - RW] Where the hedges run down the side of the cricket field it was a path. It had been a wagon road at one time from the Raspberry Pit on the other side of the railway line. Those pipes were put down from the Venture when they were short of water in the brook. They used to open a valve on the Venture to let it flow. The pipes used to slip into each other. The joints were made with wooden wedges - by driving dry wooden wedges in - and when they were wet of course they sealed. They were cast iron pipes all the way down to the lodge.

Will they still be there?

Yes, I think they will.

Do you remember much about the Venture Pits?

Only that my mother used to tell me that when she was a girl she used

to go with her playmate and they used to take the banksman's lunch. His food. It was a hopper, more like a basket that used to come up, she said, with coal in, onto ground level. It was a wooden structure [the headgear - RW] and a flat winding rope about 3 to 4 wide and about 3/4 inch thick, plaited winding rope. That's how she used to describe it to me. I remember the winding rope being nailed on the fencing behind Highfield View on that triangle field, to keep the cows in. [I also remember that about late 1940's - RW]

New Pit at the top of the Heyes.

[The shaft still exists adjacent to Triangle Valve works - RW]

Aye. My two brothers went down working. Mr Gullick was a contractor then and they went a working for him and they went down drilling and they didn't like it because it was too wet for them, and they asked to go back to the colliery.

Shortly after, it was flooded. They tried to control the water. It came up to 16 yards from the surface. They were dropping the hoppit in, lifting it, emptying it, and it went in that Brook from Billy Green's farmland. That brook used to come through Enfield Mill Lodge and then underneath Enfield Street. It used to come out by the Labour Club but the club wasn't there then. It used to run in the brook to Tunstall Lane at the bottom of Highfield rugby field, and Jimmy Hitchen's pen [allotment - RW] and under Tunstall Lane and they used to call it Buggy Brook. There were some old houses off Tunstall Lane which went down and an iron rail fence. If you looked down you could see the water running towards the delf. They used to throw all their old mattresses and old bedsteads in. That water went underground again, I think, into Newtown Park. I think it did.

They used to have a swannery in Newtown Park. Two swans. Some of the

kids had thrown at a swan and hit it on the neck. It killed it. They always say that when a swan loses its mate it dies of a broken heart.. I remember seeing a nest.

How long were they pumping at New Pit?

They were pumping months, thinking they would overcome it, then they gave it up. There was a winding engine and the winder's name was Jack Ashcroft.

Did they not actually produce any coal there?

No. Them chaps prayed when the water broke in. They all scuttered to the hoppit and all managed to get up. [the shaft - RW] Ashcroft was the winder there, and Millward and somebody else were lowered down in this hoppit to see where the water was. Ashcroft, he took them too far down and ducked them and then lifted them up. They sacked him straight away.

Do you remember the opencast behind Highfield View?

Yes.

They went through some old workings there.

Yes. The old Venture workings.

Were they quite shallow?

Yes.

Did you actually go into these workings?

No. I didn't even see them. Of the coal that was lifted out, plenty of Highfield Viewers got some of that coal. I think they found a wooden spade too, what was used in those days.

I've heard that said.

So you didn't see the workings?

No.

They must have been shallow?

I don't think they realised how deep that shaft was. That was the top mine, it could have been a lot deeper. Nobody knows. I don't think Donald Anderson knows.

There have been several shafts near to that site at various times.

I believe so. It was said there was one in the middle of the road and another just across. I don't know.

12 October 1980.

George had done some thinking and was one step ahead!

There was a slaughter house adjoining the station goods yard.
[Pemberton Station - RW] There were two brothers, Richard and Joe,

shared in the killing. We as kids used to go up to the pasture field, between the then electric works, now the slipper factory, and Queen Street back gardens. We used to drive the sheep from the field through a passage between Cornish Row and the two old white houses, then to the yard through two big gates. The butchers would then come and prod the sheep to select the best, then drag them to the trestle, pushing two legs through the spokes and a small rope in the sheep's mouth holding its head back. Then the stab. It was pitiful to hear them bleating. Sometimes they would slaughter a cow by tying a rope round its head then two or three persons would hold its head down to ground level and the rope was pulled through an iron ring in the wall. Generally it was brother Joe who used the pickaxe. A hollow round pin about six inches long and an axe part on the other side. He would strike in the centre forehead. The cow would drop unconscious then they would cut its main artery.

I remember one Christmas they had bought a prize heifer for Christmas beef. It was on show in front of the shop, two doors from the present hairdressing shop opposite Queen Street. It was a beautiful animal. Everyone was sorry about it being slaughtered. I watched it being taken away to be killed.

In those days the meat from cows and sheep was on show in front of the shop window. [outside the shop - RW] There was a sliding rail across the front into the shop. There wasn't many motor cars in those days, mostly horse traffic, and in dry weather the droppings would dry out and be blown on to the meat. Also dust. So you see, it wasn't hygiene in those days.

Joe Fairhurst had a shop [butcher's - RW] in Enfield Street, and his son Tom took it over afterwards, retiring through ill-health.

When I was about five years of age I remember my father taking me to see the "American-a-Devil" [see earlier interview - RW] On the Pingot side there was a railway locomotive stationary. [Winstanley Colliery Sidings - RW] It was used for pumping water from the old pit shaft to water tanks overhead, which was used for locomotives when short of water.

Further on towards the Pingot there were about 3 or 4 brick low terraced houses. The first one was a toffee shop, generally used by people on walks. We used to call the thoroughfare the Arches as in the 1880's, pits in the Estate [Winstanley Park - RW] sent coal wagons over the railway line to Gathurst to canal boats, for loading, for shipping to Liverpool.

The stationary loco, which pit was it pumping out of?

There was an old shaft there. It is still visible as you go across the level crossing, on the left. Where the brook comes through.

Now we come to the Orange Parades.

On July 12 they would arrive at Pemberton Station [from Liverpool - RW] during the morning, and we in school, which is now the nursery, could hear the various bands start up. Sailor bands with flutes, some with concertinas, brass bands, melodian bands, pipe bands and the drums banging away.

The procession would be continuing up Enfield Street, Ormskirk Road and on to Abbey Lakes. There they would be in the grounds having their lunches, and beer of course, until it was time to get organised for the return march.

The seniors ?? and the bandsmen were often tipsy. It was comical to see

the trombones a few yards in front, blowing their brains out, regardless of not being in line. The bands' drummers made a practice of bursting their big drums.

When Chief Constable Paye got the Wigan job he had the procession stopped, under the pretence that it interfered with the traffic. Of course Paye was a Roman Catholic.

When did they start coming to Pemberton?

What I am recollecting would be when I was in standard 4. That was when I was about 9. [about 1909 - RW]

Was that when they first started coming?

Well, that was the first that I recollect.

When was it stopped?

When Paye came on the scene.

Did the locals and shopkeepers make much profit out of it when they came past?

No. They never stopped. They went straight to Abbey Lakes. It was mostly a drinking session. It was not like it is now at Southport where the shops do reap a benefit.

Did they have special trains laid on?

Oh yes. There was trains coming in continually and they got off in the sidings in the railway yard. Then they could get organised and march off.

We were talking about the cricket field near the present Ravine Club near the top of Tunstall Lane. I remember a cricket hut and it was mostly used by shop employees on Wednesday afternoons. [half day closing on Wednesday - RW] The club was Pemberton Wednesday, or it was Pemberton Wednesday League.

There was also a cricket field behind the present Highfield Gardens, with a hut, later used by Richard Prescott, who had wagonettes. He had a large shed. I remember my father saying that he went under a wagonette, found the centre, and lifted it with his back off its four wheels, all for a bet.

Another incident involving the electric trams. The terminus was Pemberton where they changed the overhead arm to the back of the tram for the return journey. On one occasion the driver was being too smart and hadn't applied the brakes properly. As the driver went round to the back it moved off, gradually gathering speed down Pemberton, Rose Hill, Spring Bank and to Newtown where it ran off the track into a bay-windowed house owned by a family named Tennant.

On another occasion a runaway tram ran into Anthony O'Malley's shop at the top of Tunstall Lane. It smashed the shop front. Oranges, apples, toffee, all over the street.

Did Massey's build electric trams?

No. I don't know who built those. After Massey's were established as builders, then they started body building. It was in later years.

There were tram lines went to Massey's.

Yes, but only at the top side. They took that over when they started making buses, but after the trams stopped. It was the old tramshed for Pemberton. The tramlines might still be there in Smethurst Street, covered over with tarmac.

[some reiteration of sports days in Winstanley Park - RW]

Whereabouts in the Park were the sports held?

As you went through where Florrie Silcock lives [Wigan Lodge - RW] you went straight up. I would say about 300 yards up. There was a wood on the right and a wood on the left. Of course George Bankes used to come. I remember him when the band was playing. They used to sit playing for dancing. He went in between, having a do at conducting. Of course they could play without him.

Now, the Half Way House picture house. [cinema - RW] It was built by a Pemberton coal merchant named Wadsworth. It had a concrete floor with wooden seat forms with back boards. The pictures were silent and were advertised as "animated pictures." It was so cold in winter that people used to take a brick or an oven shelf - heated - to put their feet on. There was a piano and an organ. Man. Aspey, a local parcel carrier from the station yard was the player. He judged the music to his own liking. If there was sadness he would jump to the organ and play mournful music. Sometimes the hankies would come out to wipe the tears then he would perhaps jump back to the piano for a galloping tune accordingly.

Do you know when it was built?

I can't just place it but we used to go as schoolboys, before the first world war.

Afterwards he sold it to, I think, a needle company. They might have owned the Queens too. Then they had a manager. Then Wadsworth started as an egg merchant and went round selling eggs. He had a trap with boxes of eggs.

The Queens was built later. There was a Central Hall across the way first. That was the first one and underneath it was the billiard hall. There was a sign at the front "animated pictures." That was the first picture place, even before the Half Way House.

I remember me and John Black, when Black's had the Railway Hotel, we used to get a penny each for sweeping the pub yard up, and my father used to give me a penny. That meant a penny to go to the picture place and we used to call at a shop and get some of that thick spanish, or something. That was for kids, Saturday afternoon generally.

Now shall we talk about the colliery. When the colliery was supposed to be a non-profitable affair it was decided to close down gradually. There was a reserve fund of £75,000 which old Col. Blundell said was for the maimed miners pensions and miners widows. However, none of them received a penny. It was shared out among the long serving staff. Some received £4,500 and various others smaller sums. One staff man who had only been employed as underlooker for two months received £200. He came from St. Helens where Mr. Cook came from. This dividing up caused a lot of bitterness. Of course when Mr Gullick bought the colliery for £33,000 he gradually closed it down and sold all the metal as scrap.

Headgears, winding engines, wagon rails, everything. But he opened Summersales Colliery. I was sent from the old colliery to install pipelines from a pump down the drift to the surface. I had a man named Bill Bulpit assisting. Due to top water we were wet down to our socks after the first hour. I used to carry my shirt and undervest over my arm to go home. That finished me with colliery work.

Mr. and Mrs. Gullick were two lovely people. My brothers Harry and Thomas worked for him for a short time when he had the machinery on contract. In fact they went down the New Pit when they were opening up - the pit eye, drilling - they went drilling but went back to the old colliery before the shaft was flooded from some old workings off Smethurst Lane. Mr William Massey told me that he remembered it said that in the olden days there had been a shaft behind Lambton Street. Had the New shaft been sunk nearer the top of Pemberton, no doubt they would have missed the flooding.

The first Chief Constable I remember was chief Hardy. He wasn't a six footer but a stocky five foot ten. He resided in the red brick house next to the Local Board in Tunstall Lane. He had two sons, Maurice and George. Maurice I think was a bank clerk. George I met up with in the fitting shop at Appley Bridge lino works. Mrs Hardy used to wear a veil. That was then someone of distinction. There was also a Hannah Clark of Little Lane who also wore a veil, and also Mrs Crawford and Mrs Berry. All good church people.

I often think of when I started work part time, 8am - 12 when I was 12 years of age. I started with Mrs Margaret Turner from Windy Harbour - Maggie, of course. I used to wait at Pony Dick. The first customer was Miss Ashurst who resided with her brother Jim, nickname "waddle" that

was according to his walk. She had a small jug on the step, next door to James Starkey. That's where Joe Starkey lives now. She had two and a half pennyworth of cream and one morning she complained about too much milk in the cream. What Maggie said was very uncomplimentary. We finished at Archie Carruthers' butcher's shop at the Saddle. That was the last serve, opposite the Saddle Inn. Sometimes her young son John would come with her, standing in the front of the float. Sundays of course Mr James Turner would come with a horse called Tommy. The War Office took it for the war effort. The weekday horse was called Sergeant. My wage was 6d per morning, 3/6d per week. I took that job on when Alf Swift gave it up to start work. I liked to go to the farm on Saturday mornings after finishing and remember Mrs Turner making butter. Turning a big wooden barrel with a handle. It used to turn over, revolving, making butter.

You wanted to know about the tennis courts. The tennis courts on the recreation field at Highfield. There were several courts laid down where the present cricket huts are, and lower down towards May Mill. The players were mostly outsiders who were a clique. One young man who was employed at the colliery joined with them, that was Harry Walker. There was a matter of snobbery. I don't know why, and as a few years went by they seemed to drop off. The courts became derelict and were finally destroyed.

When the cricket pitch first opened Mr George Ashurst had the honour of opening the batting. I was hit in the throat by a fast ball from Jack Aldridge, chemist apprentice. That finished my cricket.

Highfield Club, opposite Pemberton Station, which was run with the contributions of the colliery employees, 2d per week stopped from your

wage. Some employees didn't know where the club was - those living in Wigan etc. Several of the snobs were also members but would only associate with their own clique. However in time it all went flop.

Regarding the pit brow girls. They were hard working girls, using spades at each shift, loading dirt onto the screen belts. They were black faced and had a uniform which I understand was suggested and designed by Mrs Douglas. On one occasion a few went down to London to the House of Commons and met the MP. Polly Gee is one of the oldest.

As regards the field days at Highfield Church, which were of course the Sermons. The procession would walk on the Saturday at 2pm. Up Enfield Street, down Rose Hill, Spring Bank, turning up Billinge Road and a stop at Pemberton Hospital to sing a hymn. Then to the schools for tea. The older members of course went in the school while the children walked down to Mr Douglas's gardens down Foundry Lane [colliery manager's house - RW] where we used to sit on the lawn. Mrs Douglas would come out of the house with a big white enamel jug, filling our cups with tea. Of course we also had cakes etc. and then we would walk in procession to Winstanley Park through the entrance on Well Brow. There we had racing and a band would play to entertain for dancing. The following Sunday would be the procession. The same route with four bands. As the leaders turned into Rose Hill the last in the procession would be entering Enfield Street from the Billinge Road end.

The Pony Dick brook passed the bottom of Mr Douglas's to the waterfall in the brook. It was beautiful. When Mr and Mrs Douglas left Foundry Lane they bought Bispham Hall. Mr Douglas sometimes came to the colliery on horseback, sometimes in the governess cart, driven by James Lythgoe, my brother in law. Mr Douglas left Bispham Hall when he

bought Parbold Hall.

Mr and Mrs Gullick came to live in the Foundry Lane house.

Now we come to the factory girls going to Taylor's factory at the top of Miry Lane in the late 1880's and early 1900's. My mother and other local girls used to wait for the Billinge girls so they could walk together down Billinge Road, over the Twenty Steps, which was an iron bridge over the railway line which came from Norley Collieries and Higginbottom's Collieries. It seems that one girl was tackled in the swing gate on the other side of the bridge, so she hit him with her drinking can. So they all walked together afterwards. The Billinge girls would have to leave home at 4.30am so as to start work at 6.00am, a distance of 4.5 miles. Those were the days, with a food basket and can, in all weathers, rain or snow.

One brakesman at Pemberton Collieries, Bill Ashton, who resided in those old stone cottages where you turn off to go to Billinge Hospital. There is a farm on the corner opposite. He used to walk every day, there and back to and from the colliery. Sometimes if anyone was off ill they would send him home in the governess trap to get him back to work all night and next day. Then he would walk it home. He used to call at our shop first to fill his basket with groceries before setting off for home. He was getting on in years, then probably about 50. He would be running about all day, that chap, lifting chains and hooking up wagons and jumping on the wagons up and down the colliery sidings, and then if someone was off ill they would run him off home in the governess trap and get him back with food, and he would be on all night and all next day.

One day I went with my mother to an afternoon meeting at a small shop in Wallgate. That's where Timberlake's Garage is. There was a row

of old shops there. They went up in two or three steps, and one was occupied by this woman, sister Dorothy, who belonged to the Queens Hall. After a hymn or two and a prayer, afternoon tea. My mother used to go to the Queens Hall in those days and we used to have to go too - walk it there and back. However, this Wednesday afternoon we went and as we got near the top of Miry Lane the paper boys were coming down, this was 1908, and they were shouting "8 hours for the miners". I remember my mother saying about the election that Col. Blundell was against the miners 8 hours. When he was beaten, coming out of the voting booth, some miners wives spat at him. It was said that that incident broke his heart.

The miners in those days never saw daylight until Saturday afternoons in the winter months as they were going to work as early as 4.30am to catch the first winding down at 6.00am, so that they were entitled to catch the first winding up the pit at 6.00pm. We as kids used to wait for them coming home so we could ask them if they had anything left in their tommy tins. Food tins. Sometimes we would get a treacle butty or a jam butty.

In those days if a miner gave a back answer he was penalised - come and see me tomorrow afternoon. He would have to have a day off without pay to go and meet the underlooker. They used to wait in Foundry Lane. There could be two or three men about 30 yards apart, waiting for their respective undermanagers. I know one man, I was there when it happened, and when he said "Oh, I've come fot see you" the undermanager said "I've not time to bother with you now, come and see me this afternoon." He, the miner, would have to go home and come back again in the afternoon. He would be put on night shift. That was his penalty for giving a back answer. That was what some called heartbreak

colliery.

At that time, how well were the miners' families eating?

Well you see, food was cheap and my father used to have beef or a chop or steak with an egg, to come home to. I remember one time when he came home and started cutting into his steak and he could hardly cut it. So what he did was stick his fork in it and took it straight back to the butcher's shop.

So even though people were hard up they were still eating reasonably well.

They were eating reasonably well because we could get oranges at 4 a penny, and a pair of kippers at 1d. If there was a small kipper the shopkeeper would throw it out for the cat. But now you pay 80-90p for a pair of kippers.

How much was meat?

I couldn't say. My father was a back-overman, that was like head fireman. Next to the underlooker, you might say. His wage then was 18/0d [90p] per week and he liked his beer, and beer was 2d per pint then. I have known it when instead of going to work he called at the Blundell Arms - his name was Dagnall who kept it then - and he had been there from 6 o'clock in the morning and they threw him out at 11 o'clock at night, shutting up time. If he came home drunk there would be trouble and he would put 13/0d on the mantelpiece, after he had paid his shot off on Friday out of his 18/0d. That caused more trouble, but that was a general thing.

Was Friday pay day?

Friday was pay day.

Now the strikes. The first strike, 1921. The first world war ended in 1919, as you know. My wages were paid per day, as all other work people were. I was receiving 17/5d per day and working overtime, which brought my weekly earnings to approximately 6 guineas per week. [£6.30 - RW] I was then in charge of the coal washing machinery at the old washery. In 1921 when the miners strike happened in May, the Germans, it being a bankrupt country, it was arranged that they paid this country with coal instead of money. Baldwin was Prime Minister and a man named Cook was miners leader. So this was the opportunity of the government to smash the high wages of the miners. When the strike was over, the miners beaten of course, my wage dropped to 8/6d per day, and it had to be reviewed in 12 months time - everybody's. Then the day wage dropped to 7/9d per day. This went on until the next war with short time, 3 working days, 3 dole. Sometimes, to make you more hard up 2 working days and 4 dole, so 3 days work was £1/1/3d and 3 days dole was 14/0d. Those were bitter days. However in 1938 I moved to Appley Bridge Lino Works thanks to a good friend, Bill Winstanley, who had become the chief engineer, whose father was Tom Winstanley, the assistant engineer at the colliery. I doubled my wages straight away and was sent to Chorley and Heapy works on jobs for the war effort. In 1935 for 5 days the wage at the colliery was £2/1/3d.

The second strike was 1926. A 6 months affair. During that time I resided with my parents at 285-287 Billinge Road. The property recently demolished near Pemberton Station. There were a few men still working at the colliery and were known as "knobsticks" who sometimes related to staff men. This caused a lot of bitterness and this gradually

brought miners and their wives to Pemberton Station area, waiting for the knobsticks to come home and to try to shame them. As bitterness increased police were brought in to control the crowds. The crowds increased until one day a train of extra police arrived at Pemberton Station from Warrington and were lined up by the then railway boards, opposite Enfield Street. They were all over 6 feet tall. The Chief Constable Paye came along and ordered the police to drive one section of the crowd towards Highfield Church, leaving Foundry Lane clear. Then other police drove another section up Enfield Street. I could see that something was bound to happen so I pushed my way through the crowd. I was near the Railway Hotel when a policeman put his arm under my chin and said "get back". I said "I'm going home". He said "Where do you live?" I said "In that top shop there". He said "Come on, get across quick". I went home and my father was in the kitchen. I said "Come on upstairs, there's going to be trouble". So we went upstairs and opened the bottom sash window and looked down towards the station. The Chief was leaning on his stick. I well remember seeing him with his brown kid gloves.

He then called to the police to line up. Draw your batons and then charge. The police struck several people and there was a stampede to get out of the way. So that put a stop to mass crowds. There were police walking in pairs afterwards until all was quiet.

Next morning I was talking with five or six other men by the station entrance when a taxi drew up. It was the Chief Constable Paye. He came with repentance money. He handed a 10/- note, one of the old brown 10/- notes, to Tommy Marsh, who lived in Enfield Street, and said "Go and have a drink". He was never respected after that incident. The strike ended in October 1926. That charge was October 12th 1926 at Pemberton Station. That's how I recollect it.

There are not many left who were there and actually saw it.

No.

It is still talked about by the old people.

The hard up days, but like I say, when you used to see that hadkerchief on the floor when you were collecting your wages, that was real poverty. In fact we used to have bits of concerts. I remember one at the Queens, and you bought a threepenny ticket in aid of Dick Tomlinson. That was his son Frank that had the big warehouse at Hindley. My mother used to give him jam butties. His father was supposed to have slipped coming down off the pit brow. Down the steps and it was slippery. He had hurt his back so he couldn't get [to work - RW]. They used to have draws [raffles - RW] and concerts. In later years I went living next to that man [Dick Tomlinson - RW]. He had a big pen [allotment - RW] going along the line side where Hillary Drive is now and I used to go like helping because it was supposed he couldn't bend. One day he wanted this railway sleeper moving and I said "I can't lift that" so what he did was bent down, picked it up and carried it to where he wanted it. He were a big chap.

A lot of Staffordshire people came to the colliery you know. They started a little toffee shop and a bit of grocery and they used to keep their bacon and ham in the sideboard cupboard.

How Frank [Tomlinson - RW] started off in business, there was a chap lived in the same row, I just forget his name but he was an underlooker and he said to Frank one day "Frank", them being poor, "Why don't you go round selling aprons and stockings, get yer bike out. I'll lend you £50

to start off", and he did. He never looked back. That's how he started. During the war he was buying all sorts of rubbish. Slippers with cardboard soles for children. He was getting paid for them. It was on tick, you see. Eventually he got a van, and then several vans and then built a warehouse at Hindley.

He married Livsey's daughter from down Newtown near the Bethel Church. They were Bethel people. But so how poor he was he used to go out, him and his wife, and they used to go to Wigan and come back tipsey, and they only drank wine.

But Frank Tomlinson used to put little bits of things in this shop window in Billinge Road, where his sister Nellie used to look after the shop, such as socks and she would put a card in the window - Sox 9d a pair.

Along Billinge Road and Enfield Street in particular there were lots of shops which have disappeared now. Could they all make a profit?

Yes.

There was one place opposite station yard, the first postmaster, his name was Taberner. He had his leg cut off. He had been run over by a wagon at the colliery. He used to work at the colliery in the offices. He had crutches. After his tea he used to sit in the post office and we used to go with our pennies and start a bank book. When we got 12 we used to draw it out. When you went in he would say gruffly "Close that door". Anyway, when he finished with it [the post office - RW] his family still lived in it, you know, Ernest Taberner who was a sidesman, that was his dad.

There was a chap and his wife and his daughter, I think she was an adopted daughter, and they lived in about the third house before you

turn to the slipper factory in Billinge Road, coming this way. Their name was Pennington and during the war when people used to be sending food parcels to their sons in the trenches, she would weigh them, take the money and re-address them to her own boyfriend. She was found out. Then she framed a break-in, pinched money. When detectives went they knew straight away that it was an inside job because she had broke the window and knocked the glass outwards. So they had her. They lost the post office job and it came to Billy Middlehurst in Enfield Street. They were a good family.

When was the post office moved from there to Enfield Street?

It would be during the back part of the first world war.

30. SAM FOURACRE: Reminiscences of Rylance Mill Farm, about the period when he worked at Winstanley Hall gardens during the 1920's.

Taken down by D Anderson.

5 September 1983.

Employees at Winstanley Hall.

At the Hall itself the following were employed:

Butler	Mr Grocott.
Footmen	Edward Macdonald and another.
Pantry boy	Andrew Fraser.
Housekeeper	Miss Wilson and then Miss Cunningham.
Governess	Miss Greaves.
Cook	Mrs Parker.

Kitchen maid Gladys Benbow. She had to prepare all the vegetables, wash up etc.

Lady's maid Jenny Daw. When she became old and infirm Mrs Bankes had a lift installed at the Hall and looked after her when she was ill.

Parlour maid? Apart from her normal duties she waited on at table with the footman.

Head housemaid Hannah ?

The front doorstep was scrubbed daily and the front hall floor and furniture were also dusted and polished every day. The long flagged passage past the Butler's pantry and kitchen to the back door was scrubbed at regular intervals.

Housemaids ? Two.

Linen maid ? One. All the linen was kept downstairs adjacent to the servant's hall.

Scullery maid ? One.

Laundry maid Previously there had been two or three of these but in my day the laundry was sent to Grove Laundry at Upholland.

Coachman/groom Mr Jackson.

Chauffeur Mr Bloomfield then Mr Parker.

Odd man Isaac Hasleden from Upholland Lodges.

He looked after fires including kitchen fires and central heating and cleaned windows.

[Much of this information was supplied by Mrs Parker, formerly cook at Winstanley Hall.]

Mr Jackson at one time lived in a room under the clock in the courtyard. He used to grumble about the clock chimes playing a tune at midnight and wakening him, but generally he had had enough beer at Pony Dick Inn to send him to sleep again. Before that he and his family had lived in the

groom's quarters over the stables. He had three sons.

Tom Moore (lived near "old school") looked after the two cows, poultry etc. and carted coal from Winstanley Colliery.

Men servants who wore liveries included the butler, the footmen, the grooms, coachman and in later times the chauffeur. Housemaids wore white caps and white aprons. On shooting days the beaters wore long red and cream smocks.

Robert Harris was the head gardener. He died in the early 1920's and was succeeded by Mr Kydd, a small man with a beard, and when he left Mr Daw came from Haigh Hall to take up the position. Before he went to Haigh Hall Mr Daw had worked for a considerable time as gardener at the Elms, Wigan Lane, the home of Mr Woodcock, the banker.

Besides Mr Harris there were the following employees in the gardens:

1.Sam Fouracre. Mr Fouracre took the place of old Jem Whittle who left after 52 years service. He must have worked there in old Meyrick Bankes' days.

2.George Humphries.

3.Charlie Hughes joined the staff after being demobbed at the end of the last war (World War I). Charlie had also fought in the Boer War and was awarded the Africa Star.

4.Alice Fouracre. Daughter of William of Birch Tree Farm.

5.Sarah Heaton from the cottage near the "old school". (Winstanley Road)

6. Maggie Pennington.

7. Hilda Gaskell.

8. Some time after Mr Fouracre started at the gardens Harold Humphries, son of William Humphries of Woodbine Cottage (Winstanley Road) started work there.

Gardens and plants.

During Mr Fouracre's early days all of the produce from the gardens was used at the Hall. Before Bankes's came back from Scotland, generally in November, Robert Harris had to see that plants and flowers were taken up to the Hall from the gardens. He also had to see to the watering of them. When the family left the Hall for London, or anywhere else, the plants were taken back to the gardens.

In the gardens there were three greenhouses at the west end of the north wall (which was built by William Bankes in the late 18th century as a flued wall) and in these were grown nectarines and peaches - four trees in each house.

The next house (going east towards the gardeners house) was a fernery. After that were four vineries. In these vineries was a lemon tree, a citron tree and an orange tree.

There were approximately 12 vines. The middle vinery produced Muscat grapes; camellias and other beautiful flowers grew on the walls. Some of the vines were known as "Alencons".

The fourth vinery had a fig tree growing on the wall.

Near the head gardener's house stood the apricot house. Apricots must have been grown in it earlier but in Mr Fouracre's time it was mainly used for the production of tomatoes.

The carnation house was in two parts - one for mature plants and one for propagation and growing tomatoes.

Another greenhouse was known as "the pit". It was always kept very hot - over 70 degrees F. The principal fruit grown in this house was pineapple - one part young ones coming up and the other part fully grown. The pineapple plants were in big pots and were set in tannery waste. Melons were also grown in this house.

A small area was sown with mustard and cress each week - about 3ft by 1ft.

The stoking arrangement for this house was very awkward. The fire hole was down six steps and the gardener had to hold the flap door open with one hand whilst he stoked up with the other. It was very awkward.

Mrs Bankes's greenhouse. Orchids and other flowers, palms etc. were grown in this. It was heated by a separate fire.

The chief source of heating was by means of two large Robin Hood boilers. These heated all the greenhouses except "the pit" and Mrs Bankes's.

Coal was carted from the mineral railway sidings, near the weighbridge

north of Baxter's Pit, to the gardens and the Hall by Tom Moore or Bob Bamber, the estate carters. Tom Banks and Hudson were the weigh clerks at Baxter's Pit.

Near the head gardener's house and along the east side of the gardens there was a beautiful herbaceous border. From here a path led through a shrubbery to the "Lady's Garden" in Mossy Croft.

The main part of the garden was divided by paths into six separate plots. There were many apple, pear and logan Berry trees. Strawberries, raspberries, black currants, gooseberries and other kinds of fruit were grown.

Sea-kale was grown in pots - in the mushroom place to force it. New potatoes were produced for the Grand National house party every year by growing them in the greenhouse - one in each pot. Strawberries were also produced for the Grand National.

From the herbaceous border previously mentioned a path led through a shrubbery with well kept grass verges and with a grove of magnificent beech trees along one side of it, past the sunken fence up to Mossy Croft Wood. Here there was a summer house - a rotating one.

In Mossy Croft Wood the old ice house (a deep domed structure) was on the left of the path. This path led past the pond to the Lady's Garden.

The Lady's Garden was planted twice a year with geraniums, wallflowers etc., and these were all brought up from the gardens in wheelbarrows.

There was a greenhouse in which ferns, palms etc. were grown. The boiler

and fireplace were outside the garden.

There were two "monkey trees" one much older and larger than the other. There were also two large and old cypress trees. Besides the above there was the "American Garden" at the side of Mossy Croft where there were many tulip trees. This was in between the Lady's Garden and the stone cistern that fed father neptune's fountain. Another area known as Joyce's garden in Mossy Croft had to be looked after.

All the sides and verges of the drives on either side of the Hall, from the "circle" to the "white gate", had to be kept mown and absolutely immaculate in appearance. The distance from the "circle" to the "white gate" was about 660 yards. We had a pony named Patience to pull the mower. Beside this there was a riding pony for Joyce Bankes called Polly.

Orders for fruit and vegetables were given by the butler and the cook, every day. Flowers were taken up to the Hall from the gardens daily.

The bell over the scullery door was rung at 1pm, 4.30pm and at other times for staff meals. Outside the back door was an ancient well 6 or 7 feet in diameter. (still exists). A hand pump clamped to the wall at the bottom of the back door steps was used in connection with it.

The kitchen at the Hall was a huge room with a lovely floor of red tiles. A table ran down the middle, almost the full length of the room. The cooking range was an old fashioned large cast iron one.

Central heating - the boiler for this was in the stone building between the laundry and the servants hall. In old days this was the brew-house.

There were three woodmen based at the estate workshops or strawyard as it was known, who cut down trees required for seasoning for the joiners for use as fencing and firewood etc., and they also kept the main drive tidy and in good order. In Mr Fouracre's time these were John Robinson, Jimmy Spence and Humphrey Ashall. The latter used to keep Hall Lane sides cut with a scythe and also the sides and hedges of the wagon line from Pony Dick to Bankes's Sidings on the main line railway.

There were also the following at the strawyard:

Blacksmith	Dick Mawdsley
Painter	Tommy Milady
Plumber	Wm. Fairclough
Assistant plumber	? boy
Carter	Bob Bamber
Sawyer	Jack Rigby
Bricksetter	J Peel
Bricksetter's labourer	Harry Heyes (very big and strong)
Carpenters	Harry Birks Levi Gaskell Joe Heaton
General labourer	Wm. Hooton.

When Arthur Pigot from New Houses started work in the 1890's he was employed as a nailmaker at the strawyard.

Note by Donald Anderson:

A new workshop was built in 1906. There was a small Cornish boiler which raised steam to 85 lb per sq inch.

The horizontal engine had a single cylinder 12 in. diameter x 2 ft. stroke

with cut off valve and a Pickering governor. The belt pulley flywheel was 10 ft. in diameter, 14 inches wide and weighed 2.5 tons. The split pulley was 25 in. diameter x 12 in. wide.

Gamekeepers.

<i>In the park</i>	<i>Mr Humphries senior</i>
	<i>Arthur Humphries</i>
	<i>Harry Humphries</i>

<i>At the Billinge- Island Dam end</i>	<i>Mr Farrimond.</i>
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Information from Miss Farrimond, Billinge Lodge.

"When my father was gamekeeper there were always several hundred wild duck on the Island Dam. My father kept the numbers up by breeding. He also bred pheasants and there were many hares on the fields. Every year there were about six shoots at that end of the estate and always one on New Years Day. I remember Sir John Thursby, Major Pennyfather, Admiral Sir Berkley Milne, Colonel Anderson, Lord Trenchard and others being there."

At the Estate Office:

<i>Estate Agent</i>	<i>CB Punchard</i>
<i>Asst. Estate Agent</i>	<i>George Eastham Snr.</i>
<i>Clerk</i>	<i>Gilbert Eastham</i>
	<i>George Eastham Jnr.</i>

Pheasant rearing and shooting.

I don't know much about the rearing of pheasants. They had a lot of pens

in the field in front of Wood Cottage, at the bottom end where the moat is. The keepers used to go round to farmers for broody hens and collected pheasant eggs from nests in the woods.

On shooting days there were sometimes up to a dozen guns and we had to go beating, but after the shoot we went back to the Hall and had dinner in the servant's hall. If it was November and the Squire had just returned from Scotland and had brought a deer back with him, we had potato hash with large portions of venison in it. It was very good. We were each given a pint bottle of Worthington ale to drink. At one of the last shoots I went to just before the war Canon Hunter-Rodwell, Rector of Wigan and Colonel Clark of Orrell Nunnery, took part.

For hanging the pheasants there were rows of hooks in a long room up some stairs at the tithe barn. There were also hooks for this purpose in a game larder near the laundry where they also stored empty bottles. I remember seeing pheasant skeletons in there. There were large ventilation holes in this building so that it was the same temperature as outside.

Mr Bankes used to go fishing in Scotland but he also rented an estate in Iceland for salmon fishing. Colonel Clark of the Nunnery Orrell, who used to accompany him, said there wasn't a worm in the ground in Iceland.

Deer in the Park.

I remember seeing a herd of 20 to 30, but how many more were in the Park altogether I can't say. They were different colours. They used to eat the bark on the trees in winter and we had to cover the potato hogs with thorns as they would try to scratch the soil off to get at them. During hard winters they often came to the house for food.

[Note by Donald Anderson: Rylance Mill Farmhouse was inside the Park wall.]

When part of the Park was ploughed up during the first world war to grow arable crops the deer destroyed the potato crop east of Lea Wood. All except 2 were then shot, the venison being sent to Billinge Hospital and other hospitals for the wounded soldiers.

The bear cages.

They were attached to a stone building known as the old workshop between Wood Cottage and the gardens. The cages were at the rear of the building at the gardens end. They were about 3 yds wide and 6 yds long and of very strong iron bar construction.

House parties.

There always seemed to be someone staying at the Hall and on special local occasions such as the Grand National and the Waterloo Cup as many as 20 people stayed there and all the rooms would be full.

On Grand National day everyone asked which horse the Squire tipped to win the race.

Mr Jackson the groom was a betting man and often went to Haydock races with the local postman.

Every Christmas the Squire gave a party for all the servants, gardeners, keepers and Strawyard (estate workshops) workers. It was always very nice for us. I well remember one of these parties when I was quite young. It was held in the main dining room, a very large room. The table seemed to be

the full length of the room and all the silver was set out on it, with a huge log fire burning in the great fireplace. There were two extra butlers from Wigan. The walls were covered in portraits and other paintings in oils. The Squire went round filling up all the glasses with claret. I didn't know who all the family guests were but I did know Major Pennyfather and his family who were always present on these occasions. One of the guests was Mrs Blackwell. Her husband was from the well known Crosse and Blackwell food manufacturers firm and had been killed in the war. She was a very elegant slim person all in black. After the dinner and drinks, we went up into the long room where we were entertained by professional entertainers.

Other odd notes.

The fine holly hedge at the side of Wigan Lodge was set alight in hot dry weather by a spark from the Winstanley Colliery locomotive. The present ashlar wall of a whitish sandstone was built in its place in 1909.

Mrs Bankes always had Scotch collie dogs and they also had a peacock and a peahen at the Hall. One was of a golden colour.

Princess Louise came to the Hall in 1921 and slept in the great old four poster bed. She came to open the YMCA at Orrell. Mrs Bankes escorted her through the district.

When the staff went to Scotland to Balconie Castle half went by car and half went by train. They generally stayed there from July to October.

After Mrs Joyce Bankes's children were born, the kitchen staff rushed up to Balconie first to have meals ready for the children. Only Hannah the

head housemaid was left at Winstanley Hall. The odd job man and Mr Jackson, who had graduated from living under the clock to the lodge at the courtyard gates, were always available, as were the estate workmen and gardeners.

Balconie Castle, the servants said, was more comfortable than Winstanley. The gardens at Balconie were very beautiful. Mr Nicols, the head gardener, was extremely good at his job. Miss Cree was the head housemaid and was always at Balconie. The butler was an Irishman. A piper played the pipes every morning in front of the house.

A head nurse and nurserymaid were engaged to look after the children in the 1930's. Nurse Fraser, a hospital trained nurse came as head nurse about the time the war broke out.

I have a recollection of Mr Bankes planting rhododendrons of various colours between the delf and the circle. Quite a number were also planted on the edge of the New Covert.

I also remember the weirs being constructed at the bottom (Summersales) dam or fishpond.

31. A VISIT TO PARKSIDE COLLIERY

Friday the 13th is a black day at any time, but never more so than on Friday 13th November 1992 when I visited Parkside Colliery. Apart from being literally black underground there was also the dark cloud of threatened and imminent closure hanging over the complete colliery complex. Only a few men were working and this gave an air of uneasy

and unsettling quietness in all the surface areas and offices. No coal was being mined or processed and so the washery was also quiet.

What I felt was so emotive that I have difficulty in putting it into words. It was neither any one thing that was said or not said, nor was it any one action or inaction.

To anyone like myself who has not worked in the coal mining industry an underground visit to a colliery is an unforgettable experience, but having been to Parkside on two previous occasions the difference on this visit was quite remarkable. Previously, the team work and camaraderie which exists underground were factors which most impressed me. On this visit the aura of closure was so pervasive that it was present in everything which was said or done. It was almost as if it was something which was leaking into the ventilation system and was being carried all round the pit.

The lamp charging racks were virtually full which indicated that only a few men were underground. I went underground with Graham Carr who was employed at Parkside and is still the colliery photographer, and Steve Rigby the colliery planning officer. While we were waiting in the lamp room the few people there were talking mainly about jobs, or the lack of them. Word had gone round that one person who they knew had managed to find a job. There was the general feeling that nobody wants a second hand pit man.

We left the cage at number 2 horizon and travelled by manrider for over 3 kilometres, mainly down hill, to the Ince 6 feet working area. Small groups of men who were carrying out essential maintenance were trying to be cheerful but without much success. The whole atmosphere was not of bitterness, but of great sadness. Everybody had worked extremely hard

and had done everything they were asked to do to boost productivity, only to see their efforts come to such a sudden stop. On the newly developed S35 face, which had cost several million pounds to equip, the 160 Dowty hydraulic roof supports were silently doing their job side by side along the face and into the black infinity beyond the light provided by our cap lamps. The picks on the Anderson shearer were still bright and ready to cut, but with little prospect of moving again - ever!

The silent power of the hydraulic chocks was awesome in that although the face had been static for over a week there was no creaking or twisting. There were no splinters shattering from the roof and no coal spalling from the face. Everything was utterly silent. It was a frozen picture in time which I will never forget. The only sense of movement was the gentle flow of air along the face, but even this was wrong in that it was not hot and laden with coal dust as it would be on a normal working shift.

Diesel powered Eimco Free Steering Vehicles (FSVs), various Dosco and Anderson road heading machines, an Eimco side dump loader, pumps, transformers, switchgear, haulage engines and other very high cost equipment, as well as the hundreds of chocks are all doomed to be sealed in where they lie - for ever!

It was almost as if the equipment was waiting for an opportunity to get to the pit bottom in the vain hope of being taken to the surface in the cage to continue their useful lives somewhere else. The roof supports continuing to do their job to give the cutter a chance to break free from the face. Road headers which had already escaped from the depths of the drivages with their booms partially raised and waiting to move. An Eimco loader furtively hiding in a stopped off roadway, waiting for the opportunity to rumble off on its tracks. Three FSVs huddled together in

the garage, afraid to move alone. An invalid roof support which could no longer take its place on the face, leaning in a roadway, waiting for help which will never come.

32. CYNHEIDRE COLLIERY – SOUTH WALES

On 9 July 1982 I paid a brief visit to Cynheidre Colliery and spoke to the General Manager, Mr VK Jones.

Cynheidre is a sister pit to Parkside in that it was sunk at about the same time; ie it is a relatively new pit, and the twin towers and winders are very similar.

Cynheidre is an anthracite mine and the output is sold mainly to the domestic market. A small amount is exported. The whisky industry also takes a small amount. The coal is transported to the customer half by road and half by rail.

The main pit with numbers 1 and 2 shafts is linked to an older part 2.5 miles away (Number 3, Pontyberem) with major faults in between. One or more of the shafts was possibly sunk by Tysons.

Mr Jones said that the accident rate for the colliery is better than average for the area at 83 per 100,000 man shifts compared to 116 in the rest of the area.

There are serious geological problems and many faults. The coal thickness varies in one seam from 3 feet to over 20 feet. In the main seam, known locally as "Big Seam" a cut of approximately 6 feet 6 inches is normally

taken using longwall methods and disc shearers. It might be possible to recover some of the remaining coal where the seam is thicker than this using pillar and stall methods. Further difficulties are caused by hard sandstone intrusions which tend to cause sparks when hit by the cutter picks.

Exceptional geological pressures are prevalent in the area and there are occasional outbursts of methane under high pressure and coal dust. This can be as much as 1,000,000 cubic feet of methane. This limits the type of machinery which can be used and also limits development of the mine. Although the gas is tapped as far as possible it is not sold because the supply is not constant [unlike Parkside - RW]. The most serious problem associated with the methane outbursts is not so much the danger of explosion but suffocation due to lack of oxygen. To combat this, banks of outlets for low pressure clean compressed air at 15 psi are situated at frequent intervals along the roadways. These are simple but very effective. A quick release valve allows the air to flow out through a plastic tube. The miner removes his helmet, feeds the air into it and breathes into the helmet. After one of these outbursts the rescue party found 10 men all taking turns to breathe from one of the valves ie it has been proved to save lives.

As in many mines, underground water is a problem and 600hp pumps remove from 10 to 15 million gallons per week from the workings. Several faces had to be abandoned because of faults. Although numerous boreholes have been sunk this only gives an overall picture and most of the smaller faults remain uncharted. Because of these difficulties the pit is uneconomic and if the production was anything except anthracite it would probably be closed even though it is a modern pit. A critical limiting factor at any pit is the amount of coal which can be wound up

the shaft(s) to the surface, but the balanced winders are not being used to maximum capacity. Number 1 shaft (downcast) has the capacity for 2 cages but at present only 1 is used. A double decker cage can hold 8 minecars containing 16 tons of coal. [presumably this could be converted to a skip to improve winding capacity - RW]. All main winding is on dc electricity supply which requires substantial ac/dc converters.

A second seam known as the "Pumpquart Seam" is being developed. This involves a £3.2 million investment which should improve profitability providing the geological conditions are not too severe. The average dip of the seams is 1 in 4 and these are being worked at 3,000 feet depth.

[The PS should come as no surprise. The colliery is long since closed. 1995 - RW]

We have now come a long way both in time and scale from the Winstanley Collieries but it helps to bring deep mining into perspective.

33. CEMENTS

It has already been mentioned that buildings in this area are often constructed in a mixture of hand made brick and/or local stone. In the same context, mortars and cements are also interesting.

The use of cements in buildings is not met with below a relatively advanced stage of civilisation. The earlier structures are composed of earth, sometimes raised in the form of walls or domes by ramming successive layers or of stone blocks set one above the other without the aid of any cementing material, as in prehistoric megalithic structures.

The simplest brickwork is found in the walls of ancient Egyptian buildings. The bricks are dried in the sun, without baking and each course is covered with a layer of moist mud (used to make the bricks) with or without the addition of chopped straw. The drying of this layer makes the wall a solid mass of dry clay. Such a mode of construction is only possible in a rainless climate as the unburned material shows little resistance to water. It has persisted through the ages, notably in Kuwait on the Persian Gulf. Burnt bricks and alabaster slabs were employed by the Babylonians and Assyrians and were cemented together with bitumen.

In the massive masonry constructions of the Egyptians is found the present day system of uniting blocks of masonry with a mortar consisting of a mixture of sand with a cementitious material. The typical Egyptian mortar was made from burnt impure gypsum which usually contained some calcium carbonate. Mortar has been produced by more or less the same process from early times to the present day by slaking the lime and mixing with sand.

A gradual decline in the quality of the mortar used in buildings set in after Roman times and continued to the middle ages. After C14 excellent mortar is found.

In more modern times the most important advance in the knowledge of cements was due to investigations carried out by John Smeaton on being called to erect a new lighthouse in 1756 on the Eddystone Rock, after the previous building there was destroyed by fire. He studied various lime mixtures and discovered that those which gave the best results as mortars contained a considerable proportion of clay matter. This was the first documented occasion on which the properties of hydraulic lime were

recognised.

Portland cement became more important by mid C19. Its name came from the similarity in colour to Portland stone when set.

Concrete is not new and was used extensively by the Romans. The present condition of some of their buildings is sufficient to demonstrate the excellence of this material.

Natural cements are materials formed by calcining a naturally occurring mixture of or calcareous and argillaceous substances at a temperature below that at which sintering takes place.

The whole underground complex of a pit is a dynamic living entity. As well as what men do, the roadways, headings, faces, coal seams and adjacent strata have their own being. They move, split, close up, twist, break, fracture. They have the power to destroy all of man's efforts if left to their own devices. Heavy steel arches are bent as if they are no more than cardboard. The floor creeps upwards and closes the roadways.

When the roadways are stopped off and the shafts are filled the pit will continue to live for some considerable time. Time itself will be the only witness as roadways and machines are crushed and buried, but there will be no human there to record its death throes.

The epitaph for Parkside Colliery is deep underground in a message chalked on a newly constructed arch by one of the miners. It simply said

"WE HONESTLY TRIED OUR BEST".

R.I.P

November 1994.

On 6 October 1994 the towers at Parkside were demolished. The shafts are filled. Most of the surface buildings have gone. This is not only the death of a pit but the end of deep mining on the Lancashire coalfield.

34. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Acre. A measure of land area. 1 statute acre = 4,840 square yards. Other definitions of an acre exist eg Cheshire acre = 10,200 sq yds.[this was often used in coal mining leases]

Bovate.or oxgang. One eighth part of a ploughland or carucate.

Carucate. In the Danelaw an area of ploughland assessed for taxation. As much land as an 8 ox plough team could maintain in cultivation. Between 160-180 acres.

Common law. The law of the king's courts as distinct from local courts, because it was common over the whole country. Also distinct from statute law.

Common land. Manorial land held in severalty but subject to common rights for part of the year.

Common - rights of. The rights enjoyed by householders living within the manorial system in virtue of the messuage they held. It included grazing rights for cattle and/or sheep.

Copyhold. A form of tenure for land held by a tenant from the lord of the manor, originally in return for agricultural services (labouring), but since Tudor times for money payments. Tenure of such land could be transferred only by its surrender to the lord and by admission by him of the new tenant, who might be the heir of the old one (or not!). Each admission was recorded in the manor court rolls and a copy of the entry given to the new tenant for whom it fulfilled the function of a title deed. Hence the name copyhold. This form of tenure was made commutable to freehold by an act of 1841 but was not finally abolished until 1 January 1926.

Correction - House of. A type of county gaol for rogues, vagrants, unmarried mothers and parents who had left their children chargeable to the parish. From 1697 certain paupers could be sent there for whipping and 3 weeks hard labour.

Croft. Land adjoining a house, often enclosed.

Cottager or Cottar. The tenant of a cottage, with or without a small piece of land. A Cottar's land was probably insufficient to support him so he would work on the land of others for a wage (usually very low).

Currency. Pounds, shillings and pence expressed as £ -/-s/-d were English currency until 1971. £1=20 shillings = 240 pence. 1 guinea = 21 shillings. 1 crown = 5 shillings.

Curtilage. A plot of land near a house, often a vegetable garden.

Demesne. Those parts of the land and rights of a manor that the lord retained for himself as distinct from those used by his tenants. What now may be called the "home farm".

Enclosed In relation to land. Surrounded by a fence or hedge. Under the manorial system it was very important whether a plot of land was, or was entitled to be, enclosed.

Fallow land. Land uncultivated (in that year) but possibly used for grazing.

Fealty. The oral oath of allegiance to the king under the feudal system from every new tenant on his entry into occupation of land.

Fee simple. A freehold estate in land which passed at death to the common law heir.

Field. Arable land as distinct from meadow or pasture.

Feoffment. The oldest form of the alienation (transfer) of land from one person to another.

Freehold. Originally land held on non-servile tenure, either for life or in fee simple or fee tail. It could be held either by knight service or in socage. Freeholders enjoyed security of tenure in perpetuity under

common law.

Furlong. A piece of land formed by several parallel strips (selions) 220 yards long lying in the open arable fields of a manor.

Gallon. A liquid measure equal to 8 pints or 4 quarts. [approx 4.5 litres]

Glebe. The land held by a beneficed clergyman.

Goad. A linear measure of 6 yards. Another term for rod, pole or perch.

Halmot. Another term for the manor court.

Journeyman. A day wage labourer. The work had nothing to do with travelling, but he might travel outside his own parish to find the work.

Leasehold. A tenure for a term of years, for life, for up to 3 lives, or at the will of the landlord.

Manchet. Best quality wheaten bread.

Mark. An amount of money worth worth 13 shillings and 4 pence, but never minted as a coin.

Meadow. An area where grass was grown for a hay crop and then used as pasture until the following spring.

Message. or Mese. A dwelling house with the ground around it and any outbuildings.

Mile. In early times a variable distance which in early C16 averaged 2140yds. The standard mile of 1760yds was established in 1593.

Muniment. A title deed or evidence of rights or privileges.

Pint. A unit of liquid measure equal to 20 fluid ounces. "A pint of water weighs a pound and a quarter." [A US pint = 16 fl oz and therefore weighs 1 pound]

Reeve. The foreman of the villeins, and later the copyholders, of a manor.

Socage. A form of fuedal tenure in which the land was held in return for a money rent. Although no knight service was required the tenant still had to do fealty to the king.

Toft. A plot of land on which a building formerly stood. In a manor it had manorial rights of common attached to it.

Turbary. The right of a manorial villein or copyholder to cut turf or other fuel on the land held in common.

Waste. The land of a manor not devoted to arable, meadow or woods.

