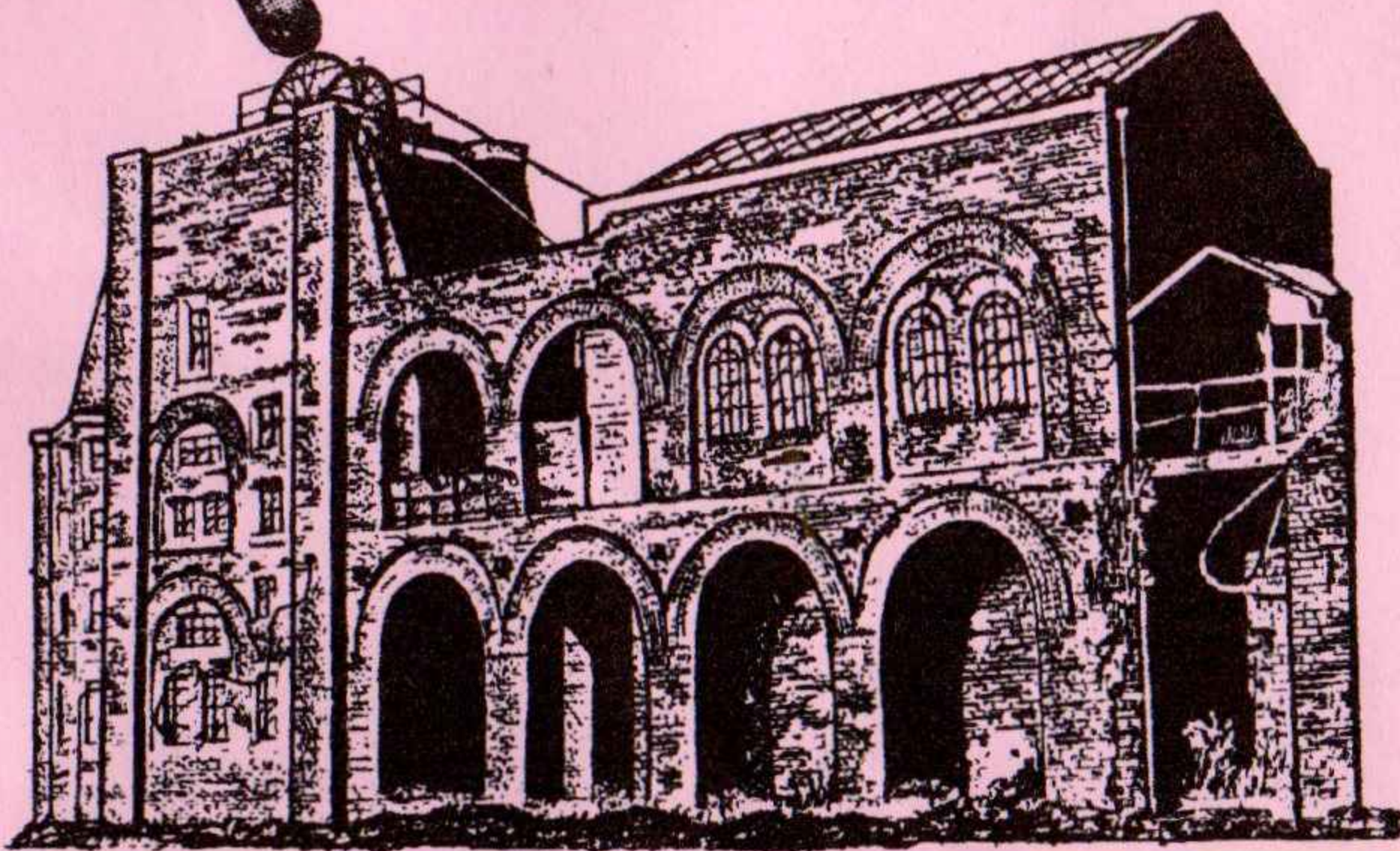
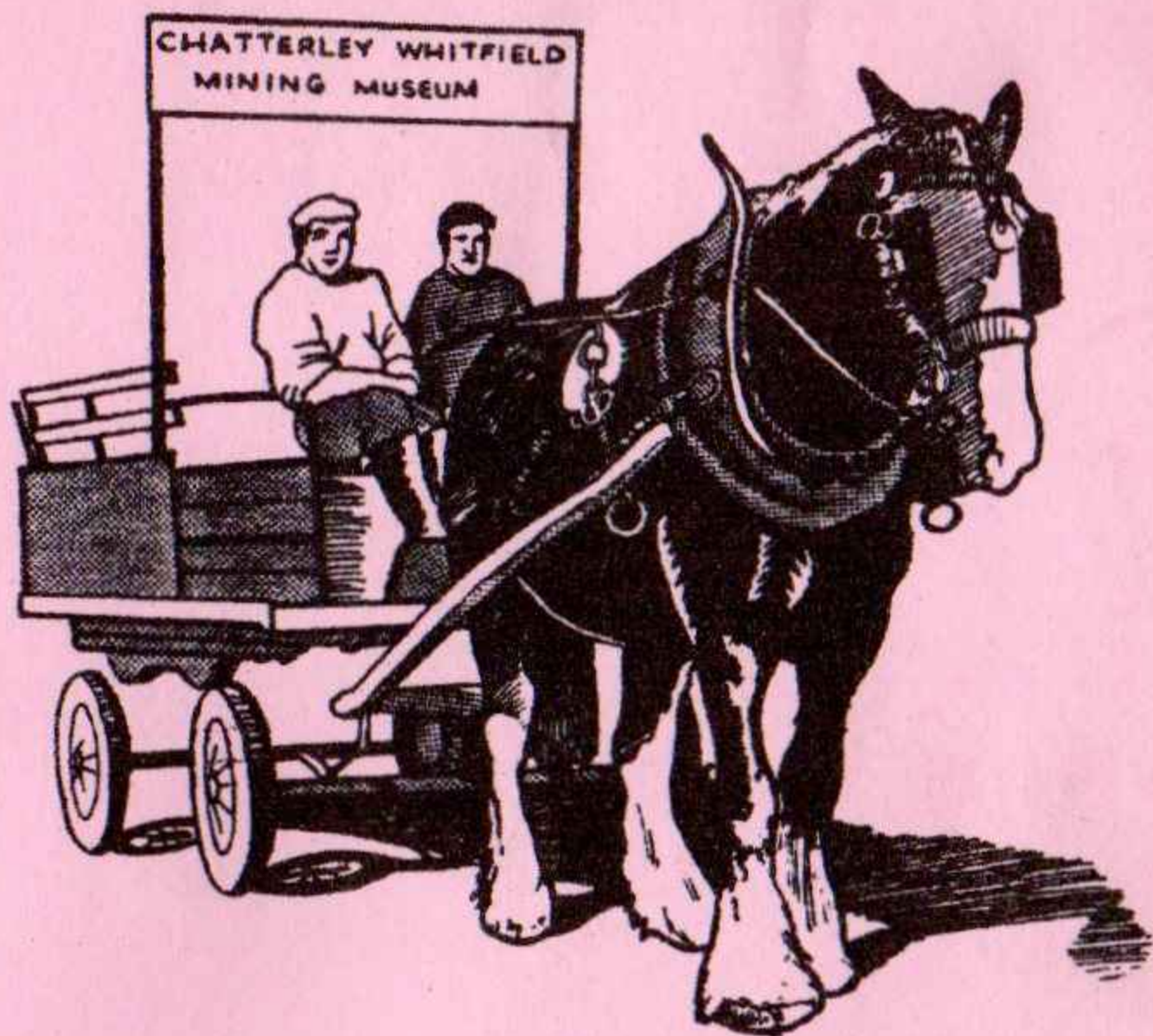


● PIT POETRY ●

AN ANTHOLOGY OF MINING POEMS COMPILED
BY CHATTERLEY WHITFIELD MINING MUSEUM



Chatterley Whitfield Pit Poetry Anthology

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INTRODUCTION

Some time ago, an appeal was put out via the local Press for the public to send in to Chatterley Whitfield any examples of Mining Poetry. The response was overwhelming; and the following anthology represents a selection from that which was received – some current, some handed down in families, some from veteran miners, some light hearted, some particularly touching – all the efforts of amateur poets.

The illustrations for the work have been provided by members of the Laing/Whitfield Employment Training Scheme, who are temporarily based at Chatterley Whitfield – again these people are not professional artists; but I'm sure you will agree that their efforts compliment the verses beautifully.

As you read through the anthology, you will see that, although the poems share a common theme – Mining – the style of each author varies dramatically, and we have done our best to reproduce the authors' original intentions regarding use of capital letters and layout.

I hope you will enjoy this insight into Mining – past and present.

[The Curator?]

B.K.

AT CHATTERLEY WHITFIELD MINING MUSEUM

In helmet, lamp and laden belt, awaiting
Your turn to descend; notice the 'book of honour'
(Twenty-four names on the first page alone;
in all, almost two hundred).

Follow your guide,
The cramped cage shuts behind you; drop. From here
You need your lamp. (This mine's not dirty now,
So you'll not need the shift's end pit-head bath –
But when this mine was living, dirt was Life.)

Switch off your lamps for a moment: feel the real dark.
This is how it will be for you, one day. . .

Imagine the low seams now; and nine year-old
Children, raking coal. Imagine the sweat, the
Coal-dust in your mouthy, bound for your lungs;
And think of the bastards with soft hands and brains
Who'll tell you it is nothing special to work
Like this – doubled up in darkness, through youth to age. . .
(Confront these smooth excrescences, and ask them:
Would you do it? For gold? For how much gold?)

Here were canaries, ponies; but don't be soothed –
Here too were silicosis, fire-damp, death.
Beneath your feet are men who died in harness,
Beside their harnessed ponies, undiscovered.

And this is how it has been for some; long dead
Or long discarded – or long sick or crippled,
Or dying of what once they called their living –
Since history began,

These few yards deep
You have been near the heart of the Grown-up world –
But you need not go down again tomorrow;
Your next time underground may be your last . . .
Driving away, imagine this mine alive:
Its brave and tragic history; repeated
Over and over, under other names;
Stone throws away, wherever coal is found.

Though never asked, miners know: Cenotaphs
Don't tell it all: the difference between
Death in this mine and death in war is trumpets . . .

Eric Millward



THE LUCKY ONES

The Morning shift had started,
The cage was on its way;
Hurling into darkness,
Away from the light of day.

With Davy lamp and Powder-can,
We'd walk a mile or more;
Up jigs as steep as mountain sides,
And Dips with water and more.

We'd laugh and joke and often spoke
What we'd do if we won the pools.
We'd have a real sunshine soak
And tell the Boss what to do with the tools.

But the pools wasn't won,
And we soldiered on, lucky to reach sixty five.
For many are crippled and more have passed on:
We're lucky, we're alive!

B. W. Cross



The First Day

I remember my brother held my hand and led
 Me slowly up the street.
 Though dark and cold, the sky tinged with red,
 Joining the sombre silent figures we meet
 Boots and clogs with their rhythmic sound
 Echoing in the morning;
 Arousing the sleeping for their daily round,
 And another new day dawning.

The pit head-gear a silhouette against the sky;
 Like a hangman's gibbet; eerie, cruel.
 Perhaps an omen for those to die,
 Who take the coal for the fire fuel.
 The lamp-house shining bright,
 And on the bank, the lamps lit.
 Like fire flies glittering at night;
 Converging slowly to the pit.

In the cage, men conversing
 And looking at me; small and scared.
 A nudge, a laugh, a bit of cursing.
 "It be a year this very dee, Ted,
 When rope broke". I heard a bell.
 The cage plummeted; fell:
 Into the abyss – Oh God! Amen.

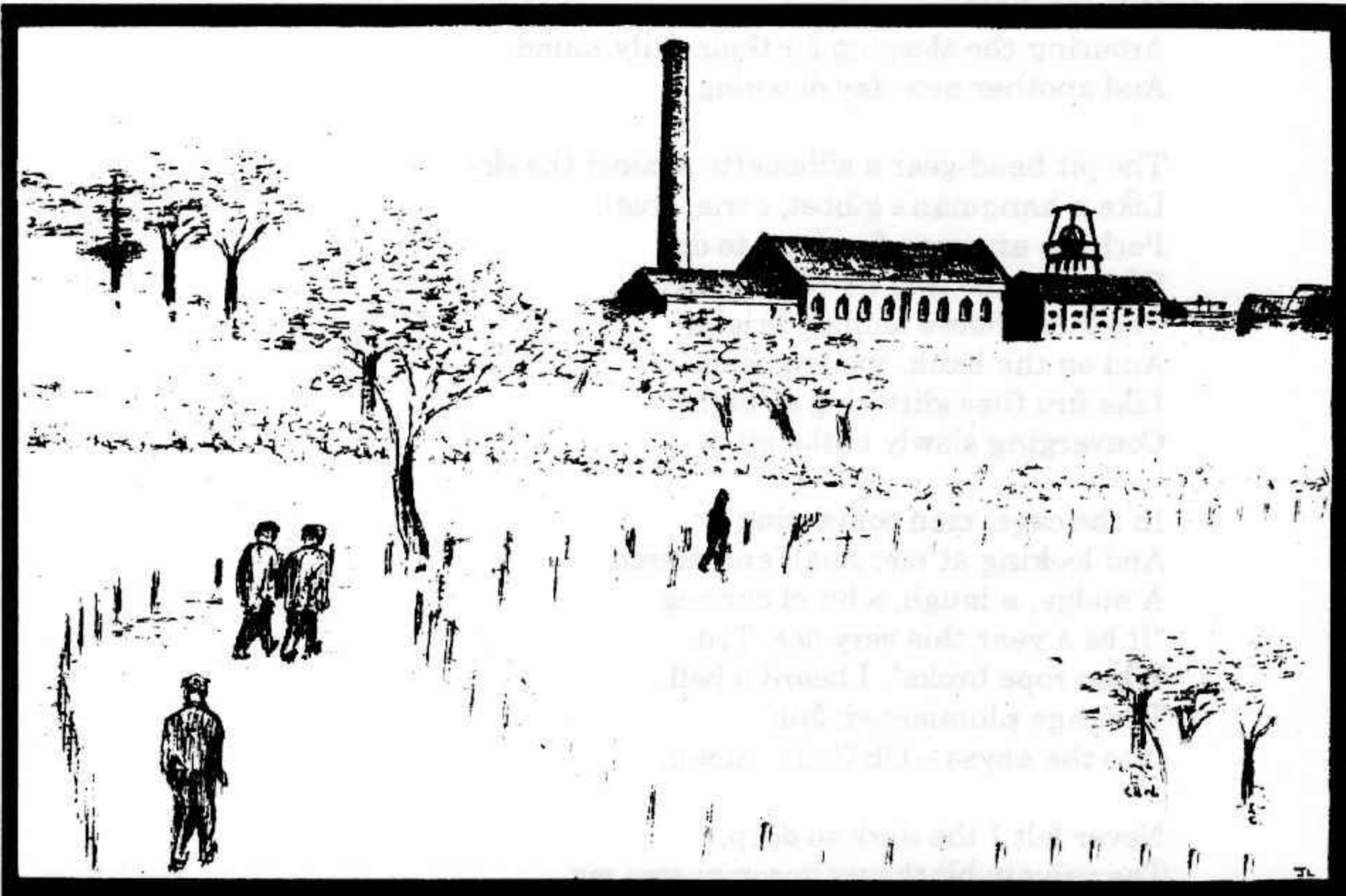
Never felt I the dark so deep,
 The velvety blackness encompasses me.
 Hear the timbers above me creak,
 As I toil and sweat so eagerly.
 My hands are sore, my muscles ache.
 Oh, to rest while I pray.
 No water left my thirst to slake,
 Let there be an end to this odious day.

The shift is o'er, we make our way,
 Half a league or so to the shaft.
 The cage lifts off to the light of day,
 And soon, I'm walking so erect,
 Breathing air that is clean and pure.
 Walking homewards tired and wan,
 I lift the latch, open the door,
 Mother waiting, smiling, "My little man".

Fred Leigh

The Mill

I remember my father told me that
the story of the mill
though dark and cold, but the light
during the winter when the snow
falls and drifts with their rhythmic
sound.



As I walk and sweat
my hands are wet
On a road white
The water is up
but there is no end to the snow

The mill is over, we have
left a house on the
The rope is off to the
And now I'm walking
breathing air that is
Walking towards the
I off the path upon the
Mother waiting, smiling, 'My little man'

Part II

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DARKNESS

It is early, and the collier trundles,
 Strangely urgent, to his place of work.
 The dawn has not yet wakened from the night,
 But the grey clay smell is in his nostrils.

He tramps the rutted road with downward stare;
 From dark to dark, and often back to dark.
 Ahead, the pit lies deep in misty pall;
 And he listens for the early thrush's call.

As the collier, slow, to the cage gate dawdles,
 He muses keenly on the air's sweet strain;
 He sideways turns his head to hear the strain,
 For the grey clay smell is in his nostrils.

The banksman's eyes, softly teasing,
 Are met in the bantering collier's lore.
 But he listens for the early thrush's call;
 And listens still, with the cage's fall.

Down . . . to stumble the rock-strewn roads and gates:
 Undulating, bursting, ever lower.
 To never quite forget that little filament,
 Which separates him from the darkest night.

Down . . . to the creaking, crackling, sombre black
 Of longwall faces; of daily new places, where
 Earth's own darkness lies intimate and cold,
 And sweating effort brings its own reward.

Down . . . to take by stealth the long-lain legacy.
 To prick yet not to wake the sleeping giant.
 Advancing by degrees his dark terrain.
 Retreating, but to take by stealth again.

Down . . . to ponder the power of a grey clay clod.
 To bear out the truth in a miner's nod.
 To dwell in thought on a long-lost face, or
 Hear the echoes of a pony's whinny.

Down to the dank dark; to the daytime dark;
 Where winters' days merge into winters' nights.
 Where miners have forever lived in thrall –
 Where early-morning thrushes never call.

B. King

DAVE'S

The door has the you work from the right
The door has the you work from the right
The door has the you work from the right



Down ... to take by ... the long ...
The pick ... out to ...
Advancing ...
Retreating ...

Down ... to ...
To ...
The ...
Here ...

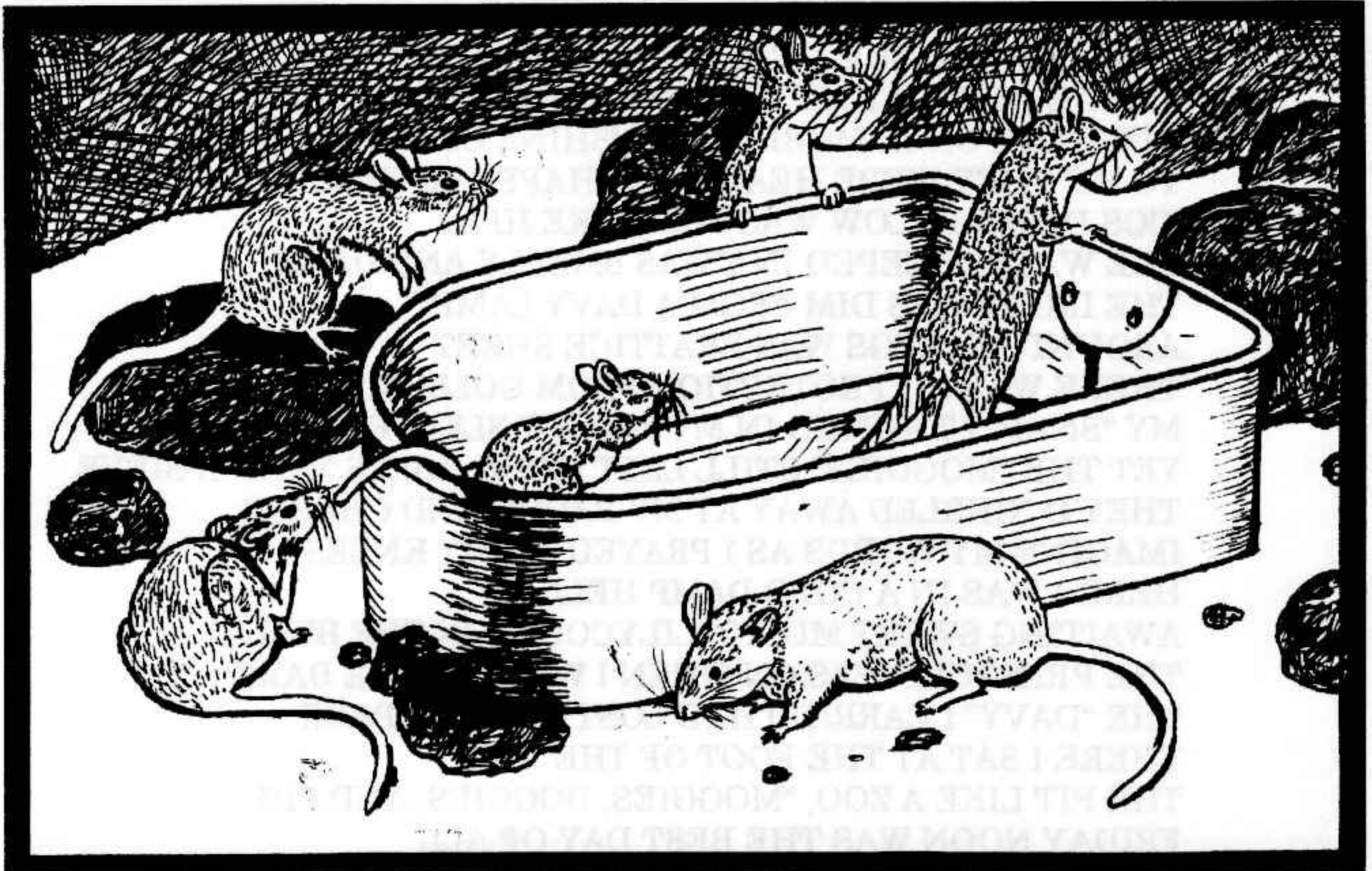
Down to the dark ...
Where ...
What ...

in ...


OLD MINER'S MEMORIES

THE HEATHER WAS PURPLE THE FIELDS WERE GREEN
 THE PIT WHEELS WHIRLED I WAS JUST FOURTEEN
 MY TROUSERS WERE PATCHED MY PIT BOOTS ODD
 I DESCENDED THE MINE WITH A PRAYER TO GOD
 THAT EVERY DAY HE WOULD KEEP ME FROM PAIN
 GUIDE ME ONCE MORE TO SUNSHINE OR RAIN
 TO ME THEY WERE HEAVEN I'M HAPPY TO TELL
 'COS DOWN BELOW WAS JUST LIKE HELL
 THE WATER SEEPED IN T'WAS SMELLY AND DANK
 THE LIGHT WAS DIM FROM A DAVY LAMP
 AROUND MY LEGS WAS BRATTICE SHEET
 THERE WAS NO PROTECTION FROM COLD CRAMPED FEET
 MY "SNAP" I TWISTED IN MY JACKET SLEEVE
 YET THE "MOGGIES" STILL LEFT MORE HOLES THAN A SIEVE
 THEY'D NIBBLED AWAY AT MY BACON AND CHEESE
 IMAGINE MY WORDS AS I PRAYED ON MY KNEES
 HERE I WAS IN A COLD DAMP HELL
 AWAITING SWEET MUSIC "LILYCOCK" ON THE BELL
 THE PRESSURE WAS ON WHEN I WENT IN THE DARK
 THE "DAVY" I CARRIED HAD LOST ALL ITS SPARK
 THERE I SAT AT THE FOOT OF THE "JIG"
 THE PIT LIKE A ZOO, "MOGGIES, DOGGIES, AND PIG"
 FRIDAY NOON WAS THE BEST DAY OF ALL
 FOR A HARD WEEKS WORK THE PAY PACKET SMALL
 THEY WERE THE DAYS OF THE HAMMER AND WEDGE
 A TWIG IN OUR MOUTH PICKED FROM A HEDGE
 DOWN BLACK CHEEKS HAVE BEEN RIVERS OF WHITE
 MADE BY TEARS LIKE RAIN IN THE NIGHT
 YES THEY WERE THE TEARS WHEN MY YOUNG HEART WAS HURT
 WHEN I PUT ON MY KNEE PADS AND TOOK OFF MY SHIRT
 THERE WAS NEVER NO TIME FOR A DOZE OR A NAP
 ONLY TIME FOR "MOGGIES" TO EAT ALL MY "SNAP"
 I HOPE THEY ENJOYED IT MY BACON AND CHEESE
 THEY'D PAID THEIR SUBSCRIPTIONS "MOGGIES" UNION FEES

Jack Pagett



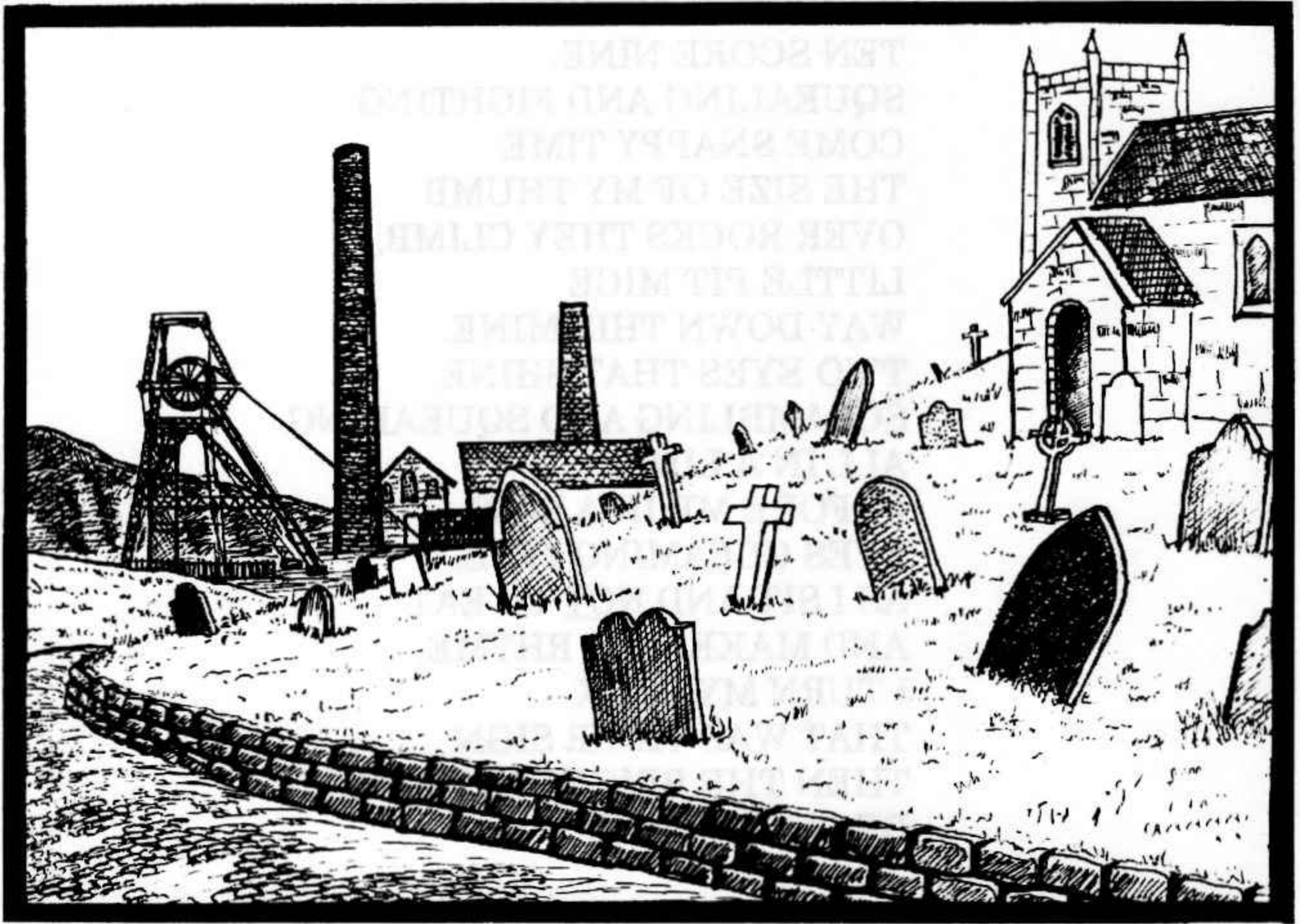
PIT MICE



BREEDING ACCUMULATING
TEN SCORE NINE,
SQUEALING AND FIGHTING
COME SNAPPY TIME
THE SIZE OF MY THUMB
OVER ROCKS THEY CLIMB,
LITTLE PIT MICE
WAY DOWN THIS MINE.
TWO EYES THAT SHINE,
SCRAMBLING AND SQUEAKING
ALL IN A LINE,
BEFORE ME IN A ROW
EYES GLEAMING FINE,
AS I SIT AND NOT TO EAT
AND MAKE THIS RHYME,
I TURN MY BACK
THAT WAS THEIR SIGN
THEN THE BRIGHT EYED MICE
BEGAN TO DINE.

Ernest Jones

PITMICE



THE PRICE OF COAL

The sun shines down on a mining town
As men appear from two miles down
They shield their eyes to ease the pain
Another shift is done again

Young men are old before their time
They should be really in their prime
Their bodies maimed or scarred with blue
Full of the fragments of the coal they hew.

Pit wives have seen the gloom and pain
Of human flesh that sweats like rain
The slag heaps loom, and leer and taunt
What now the price the coal we've bought

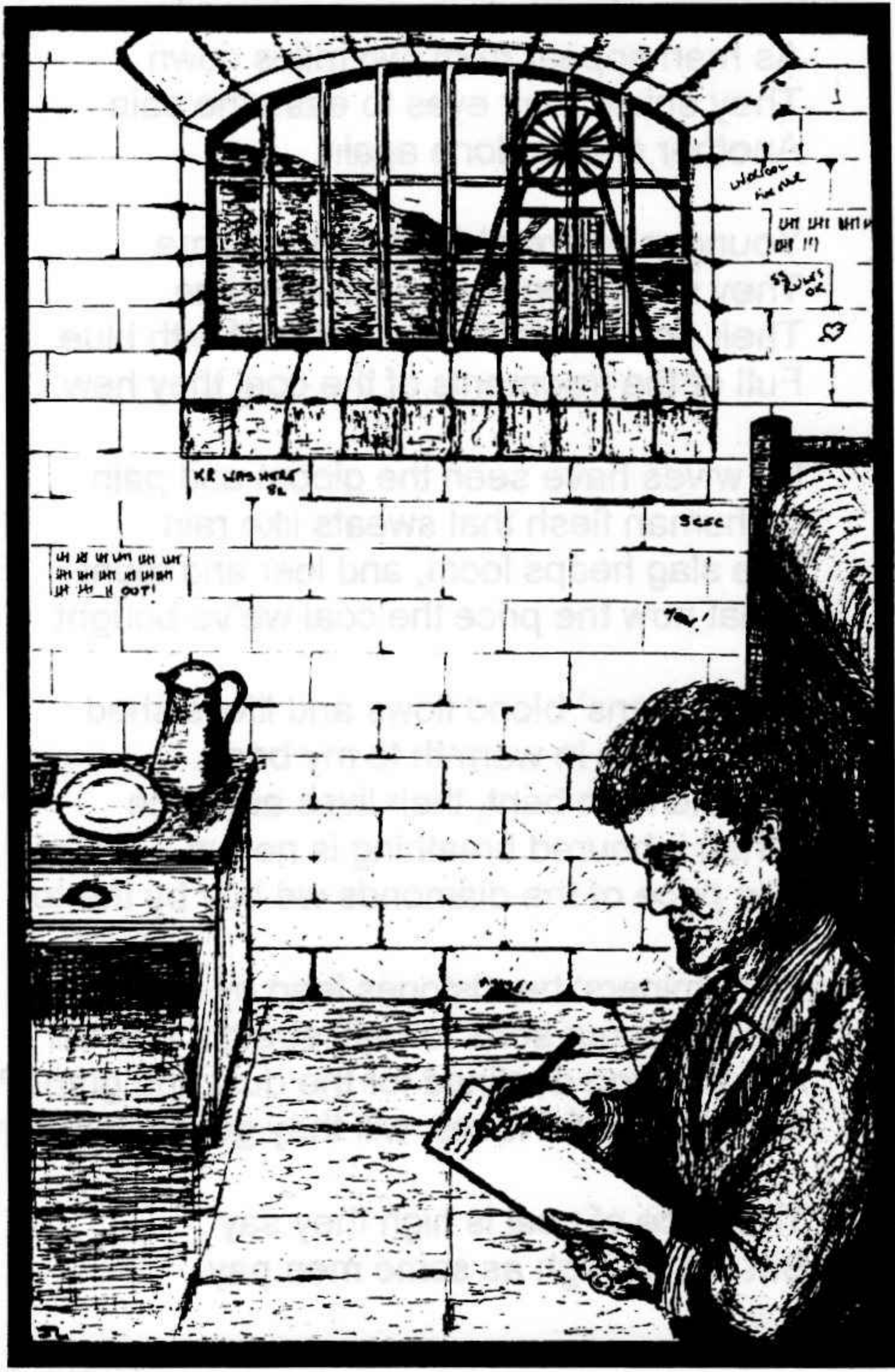
When mens' blood flows and life is shed
So I can go in warmth to my bed
The old men bent, their lives are done
When laboured breathing is no fun
The price of the diamonds we buy by the ton

Here miners' headstones lean by the wall
We teach our sons to walk straight and tall
Are they too destined for the dust and grime?
Sweet youthful faces, will they go down the mine?

The price of coal is high they say
But not as high as some men pay

Doreen McCue

THE PRICE OF COAL



PAYING THE PRICE

I joined the fight in the coalfields . . .
'Cos I believed it an honourable fight.
I listened to the arguments put up by both sides –
And thought our union was right.

We came out without having a ballot,
And for this some did not agree.
But what gives us the right to ballot another man's job?
This certainly makes sense to me.

Each day I would stand on the picket line,
Like the others I'd scream and shout
At the men who were passing in buses and cars;
At the men who were selling us out.

As the strike got longer, the anger grew
The shouting turned to violence,
Months of living on nothing . . .
We couldn't just stand in silence.

We hoped and prayed for a settlement
But it was further away than ever,
But one night in a van, with five other men,
I thought up something not too clever.

I decided to take my anger out,
On a coach firm the coalboard had on hire
To stop the buses running the miners to work,
We simply set them on fire

We know what we did was wrong,
Although the right reasons were there
But the judge wouldn't listen to reason,
But when has justice been fair?

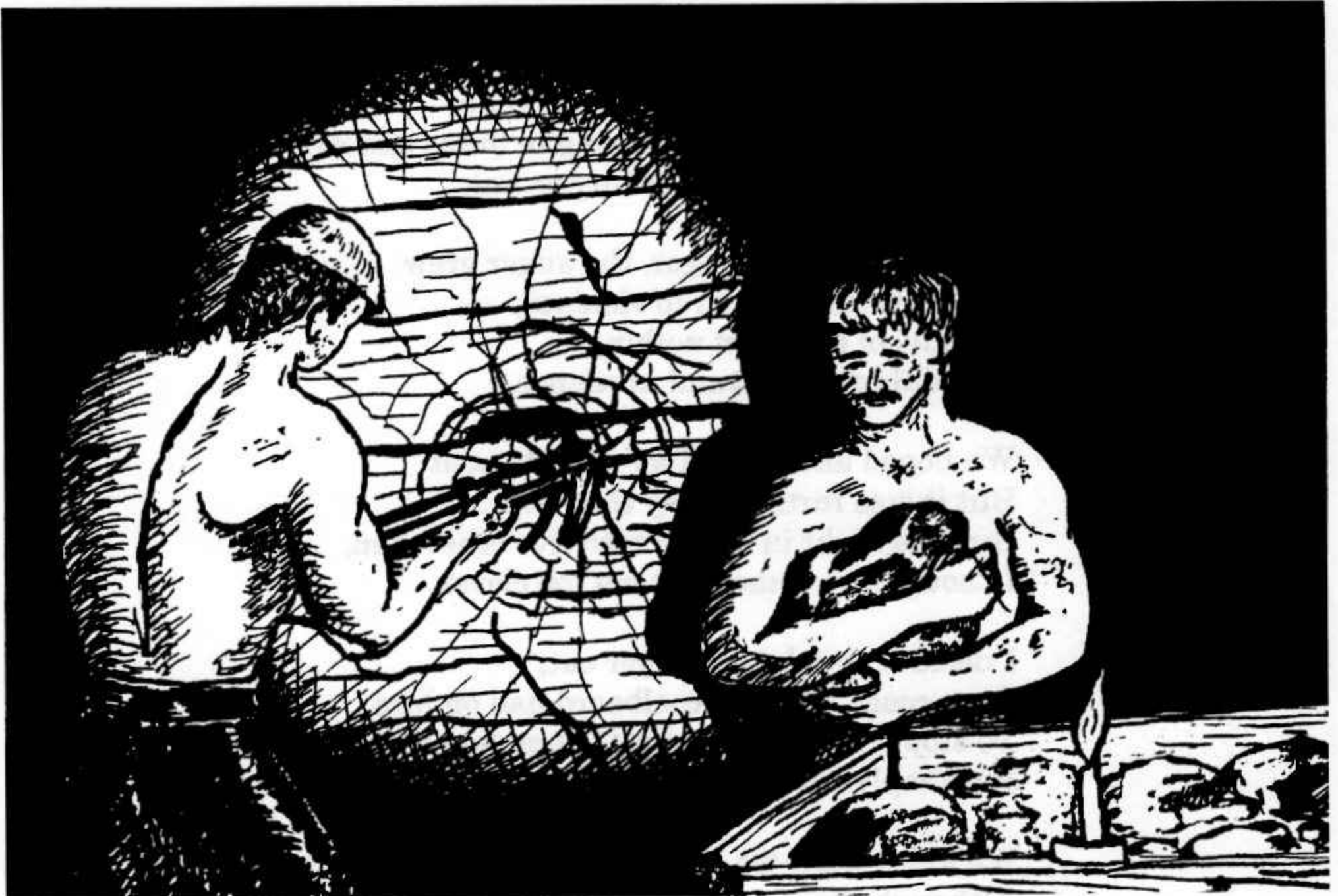
I'll never regret being on strike.
To have fought on a picket line.
But by God I'll never forget it,
Two years jail is a bloody long time.

Michael Jones

WATER-DRINKING

I joined the line at the water-drinking
I followed it in the morning light
I listened to the arguments put up by both sides
And thought our cause was right

We came out without having a ballot
And the vote was not taken
But what good was it to have another vote taken
The vote was not taken



I thought the vote was not taken
But the vote was not taken
But what good was it to have another vote taken
The vote was not taken

Michael Foot

The Miner

Pray tell me no more of the outstanding nations,
 Of African Negroes in bondage and thrall;
 For slaves may be found amongst all occupations,
 But that of a miner surpasses them all.
 Behold the poor creatures in groups now descending
 Through strata and minerals, undaunted they go
 Where labour and danger together are blending
 An emblem of Pluto's dark regions below.
 Now doubt, death and sorrow at once are surrounding,
 They labour together by faint candle light,
 Fatigued and naked, with sweat almost drowning
 They cruise the earth's bowels from morning to night.
 Picks, hammers, and wedges, now clanging together
 Till terror cries echo throughout the domain,
 No sun ever cheers nor gay seasons of weather
 But labour and danger continually reign.
 Hark! Hark! The loud burst subterraneous thunder
 Now fills every bosom with terror and woe
 The gearing above is all blasted asunder
 Ah, woe to the poor wretched miners below.
 But the God of all mercies, who sees in all places
 For-warned them of danger the moment before
 All trembling and prostrate, fall down on their faces
 The fire pass'd above them, and danger was o'er.
 But mark the sad contrast, by heaven directed,
 A little time after while cutting a wall,
 The roof from above them fell down unexpected
 And two of the miners were killed by the fall.
 Such are the fruits of the miners' profession,
 The fruits of hard labour, and danger and woe,
 May the great God of heaven look down with compassion,
 And sooth the great hardships of miners below.

John Lumsdon



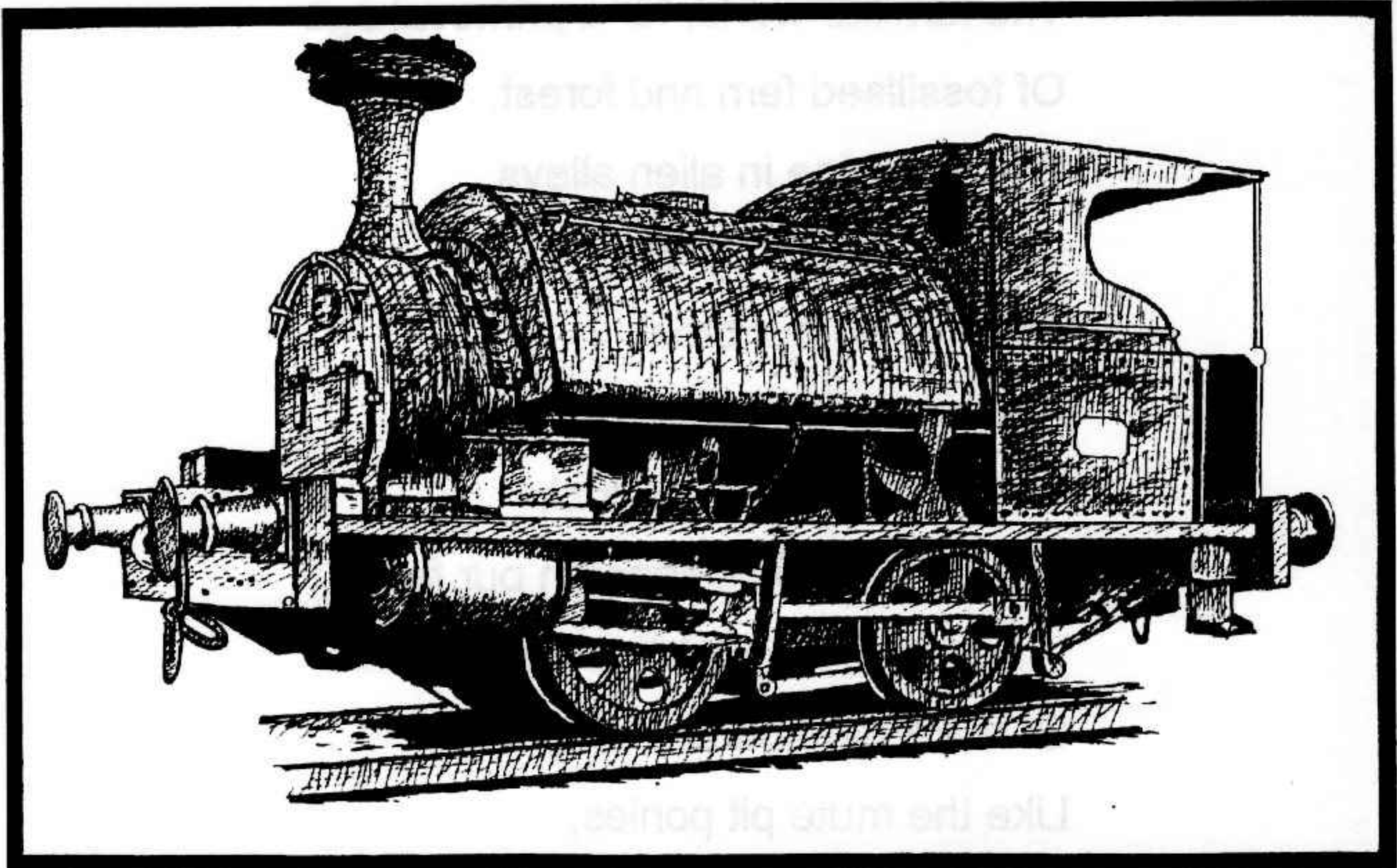
DESCENT AT CHATTERLEY WHITFIELD

We crowd in the cage.
And exchange to the rattle of chains,
And clanging of bars,
The familiar world, for a primeval age
Of fossilised fern and forest.
Then emerge in alien alleys
Of dark, dank tunnels.
The eye on our brow
Reveals dripping water
Oozing from walls of coal,
To settle in pools beneath our feet,
Where sheet metal rails carried tubs
Of black diamonds,
Like the mute pit ponies,
Men toiled and sweated
At this coal face.
This loathsome place, now a memorial
To little pit-boys, and stunted men
Who laboured then, to make others rich.

E. ROWLEY

DESCENT AT CHATTERLEY WHITFIELD

We crowd in the cage,
And exchange to the table of chairs,
And clanging of bars.



Like the mule pit ponies,
Men toiled and sweated
At this coal face,
This loathsome place, now a memorial,
To little pit-boys, and stunted men,
Who laboured then, to make others rich.

E. POWELL

"THE COLLIERY LOCO"

Cannock Chase Colliery, once part of my life,
 You provided employment, midst hardship and strife.
 I drove a pit pony when only a lad,
 A fatal accident once made me quite sad.

I worked down "sevens", My Dad worked down "Eights",
 I remember Bill Stacey at fives crossing gates.
 I remember the "Fly" pit, "The Plant" and old "Fives",
 Your railway to Rawsley, was part of our lives.

I cleaned "Alfred Paget" in the sheds every night
 And I worked on the footplate which gave me delight
 We filled up with water from a tank at "The Fly",
 While the smoke from the engine curled up to the sky.

We shunted our coal trucks, both empty and full
 T'was a life full of interest that never was dull.
 There were lamps to be filled and points to be turned,
 I made toast in the firebox which often was burned.

To the colliery at Rawsley Thro' Chase Terrace we went
 And to each level crossing a shrill whistle was sent
 Thro' fives, past the park, and past Railway Lane
 Thro' the cutting near "Sevens" in sunshine and rain.

We shunted our empties and picked up a full train
 And began the long run to the "Fly" once again.
 Thro' the heart of Chase Terrace we steamed very proud.
 On the bridge at Cross Street the children would crowd.

Old "Paget" and "Chawner" passed slowly each day,
 At the head of a train that once ran away
 The guards van came last, children watched every day
 As the lamp showing red slowly faded away.

In a world of their own built of iron and steam
 The colliery locos so proudly would gleam.
 Employer of thousands, digging coal from your seams
 Cannock Chase Colliery, you remain in our dreams.

Harry Harthill.

THE COLLIERY LIFE

Cannock Chase Colliery, one part of the life
You provide equipment, maintenance and a life



We should be glad to have you
And begin the long run to the pit
The heart of Cannock Chase Colliery
On the bridge at Cross Street the chimney stands tall
Old 'Peggy' and 'Chawney' passed their days
At the head of a fine shaft once ran away
The guards van came last, children waited every day
As the lamp showing red slowly labor away
In a world of their own full of fun and steam
The colliery locus so proudly would gleam
Employer of thousands, digging coal from the earth
Cannock Chase Colliery, you remained for years
They lived!

THE CLOSED MINE

See the old mine yonder,
A hundred years it spewed out coal,
Now the wheels are still and silent
The years have took their toll.

My grandad helped to sink that shaft
In eighteen fifty seven
He took my father with him
When he was aged eleven.

Then my turn came, my father said,
Tomorrow you leave school
You go with me down yon pit
And learn to use a tool.

I felt so proud, a little man
At thirteen years of age
Each day was paid one shilling
That the owners called a wage.

I raced along those tunnels dark
A full nine hours a day,
With my one-eyed pony Nelson
Hauling tram, or drug, or dray.

The years sped by, and when a man,
I slogged hard at the face
Swinging hammer, pick and shovel
Until age reduced the pace.

My body now had lost its steel
Would I get the sack?
Just in time came the N.C.B.
And pushed that trouble from my back.

What a difference, what a change,
To work with peace of mind,
A job secure, a rise in pay,
All fear left far behind.

I rode the rope for fifty years,
So I had my ups and downs,
But I only counted pennies,
While the owners shared the pounds.

I have no precious memories,
Only years of toils and strife,
Yet I helped to win the miner
A happier healthier life.

George Foster.

THE OFFICE

The office is a place of power and control. It is a place where the manager sits at the head of the desk, surrounded by the tools of his trade. The office is a place of order and discipline, where the manager is the center of the universe. The office is a place of authority and respect, where the manager is the one who makes the decisions. The office is a place of responsibility and accountability, where the manager is the one who is held responsible for the success or failure of the organization. The office is a place of opportunity and growth, where the manager is the one who leads the way. The office is a place of challenge and achievement, where the manager is the one who rises to the occasion. The office is a place of pride and honor, where the manager is the one who is recognized for his or her contributions. The office is a place of legacy and tradition, where the manager is the one who carries on the torch. The office is a place of hope and dreams, where the manager is the one who inspires the team. The office is a place of love and care, where the manager is the one who looks out for the best interests of the organization. The office is a place of life and vitality, where the manager is the one who brings the team together. The office is a place of joy and happiness, where the manager is the one who makes the difference. The office is a place of peace and harmony, where the manager is the one who creates a positive work environment. The office is a place of strength and resilience, where the manager is the one who leads the team through the toughest of times. The office is a place of courage and determination, where the manager is the one who never gives up. The office is a place of faith and belief, where the manager is the one who has faith in the team. The office is a place of trust and confidence, where the manager is the one who earns the trust of the team. The office is a place of respect and admiration, where the manager is the one who is respected and admired by the team. The office is a place of love and devotion, where the manager is the one who loves and devotes himself to the organization. The office is a place of life and hope, where the manager is the one who brings life and hope to the organization. The office is a place of joy and happiness, where the manager is the one who makes the difference. The office is a place of peace and harmony, where the manager is the one who creates a positive work environment. The office is a place of strength and resilience, where the manager is the one who leads the team through the toughest of times. The office is a place of courage and determination, where the manager is the one who never gives up. The office is a place of faith and belief, where the manager is the one who has faith in the team. The office is a place of trust and confidence, where the manager is the one who earns the trust of the team. The office is a place of respect and admiration, where the manager is the one who is respected and admired by the team. The office is a place of love and devotion, where the manager is the one who loves and devotes himself to the organization. The office is a place of life and hope, where the manager is the one who brings life and hope to the organization.



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NOTICE

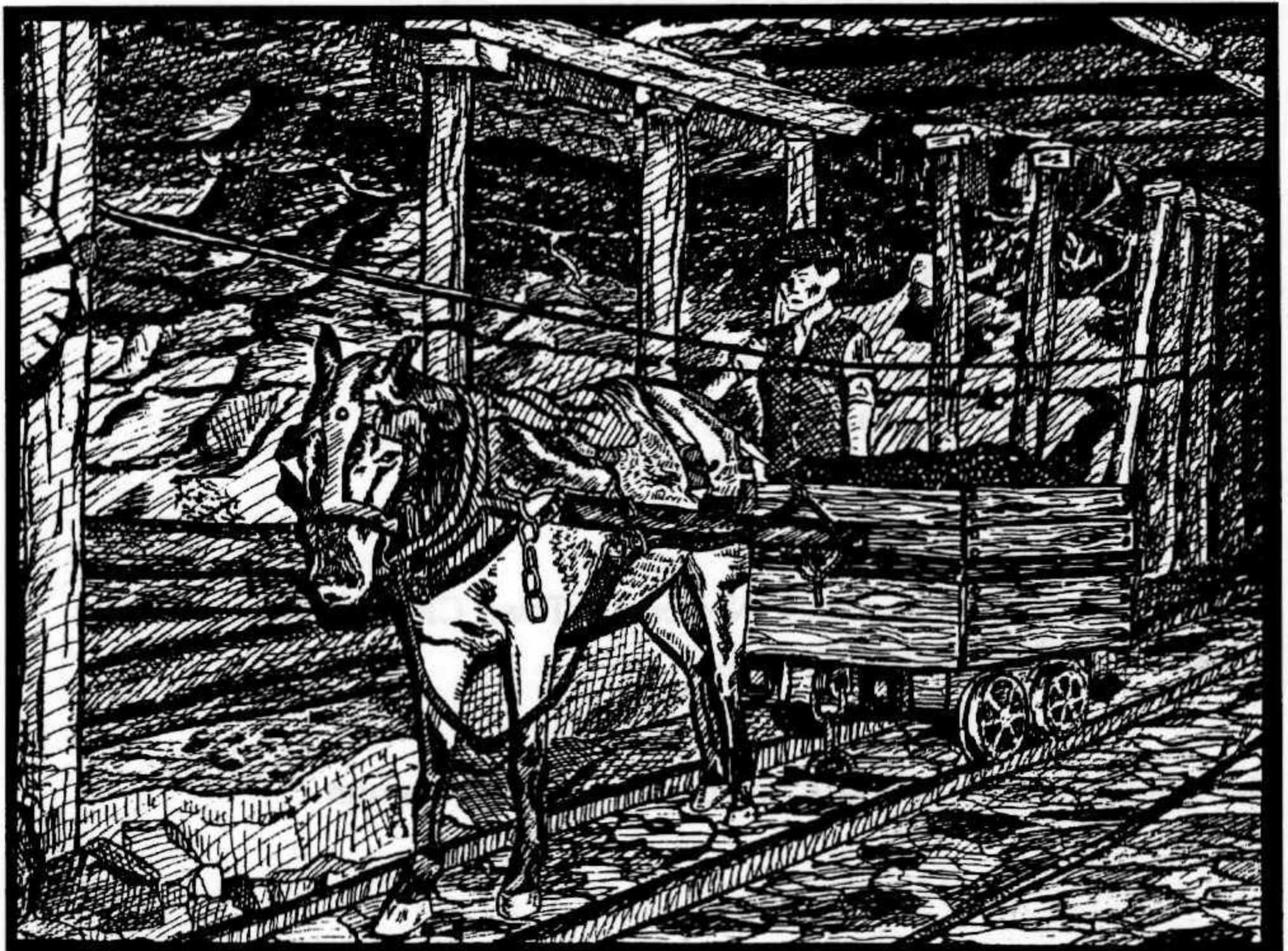
A Chatterley Colliery manager has received [May 1902] the following effusion from one of the miners in the firms employ:

This is my notice, and you can book it,
In fourteen days I mean to hook it,
My picks and kit I mean to flit
And bid farewell to the 'Institute Pit'
Dear Sir you may think this notice funny
But really I must have more money,
You've been a master good and kind
But a better I shall have to find.

Taken from Robert Fenton's [Newcastle Town Clerks] Common-place book held in Newcastle Museum.

Sent in by Paul Bemrose, Curator, Newcastle Museum.

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DAN

MY PONY DAN, MY OLD TRUE FRIEND,
 WHOSE SWEAT HAS FILLED THE GAFFER'S HOARD.
 THY DAYS ARE COMING TO AN END,
 THA'LL SOON BE SLIPPING HEAVENWARD.

FOR WEARY AGES THOU HAS TOILED,
 HEART BURSTING WITH THE DEADLY STRAIN.
 THY PASTURE E'ER THIS COLD DARK WORLD,
 NO WARMTH OF SUN OR TOUCH OF RAIN.

NO PRIDEFUL ARAB E'ER SIREN THEE,
 THOU UGLY, LION-HEARTED ONE,
 THY CRIB A HOLE 'NEATH MOORLAND TREE,
 THY ONLY WARMTH THE SUMMER SUN.

THY ONCE-BRIGHT COAT IS DULLER NOW,
 THINE EYES, ONCE GLEAMING, NOW ARE DIM,
 THY BACK IS BENT LIKE ARCHER'S BOW,
 THY SOUL THE SPORT OF TYRANT'S WHIM.

REMEMBER, MATE, WHEN LOCKER SNAPPED,
 AND TUB CAME CRASHING DOWN THE HILL?
 THE DAMN THING NEARLY HAD ME TRAPPED - -
 I STAYED ALIVE BY THY GREAT WILL.

FOR THOU DID'ST HEAVE WITH ALL THY MIGHT,
 AND THREW YON MONSTER OFF THE TRACK.
 THOU SAVE'ST ME FROM A GORY PLIGHT,
 INSTEAD, JUST GRAZED MY OFT-SCARRED BACK.

FULL MANY SCRAPS WE TWO HAVE SHARED,
 FULL MANY TIT-BITS SNUCK FROM WORK,
 OFT, THO' I CUSSED THEE, THOU HAS DARED
 TO STEAL THE LOT AND LEAVE BUT CRUMB!

BUT ALL THAT'S OVER NOW I FEAR,
 THY TIME HAST COME, AND LORD! I'M SAD,
 I NEVER HAD A FRIEND SO DEAR,
 OR ONE I LOVED AS THEE, OLD LAD!

(Continued Overleaf)

(Continued from previous page)

GOD GRANT THEE WARMTH AND PASTURES GREEN,
AND SPRING-COOL WATER FROM THE HILL,
BY SHADY POOL SO CALM AND CLEAN,
JUST LIE AND LAZE AND EAT THY FILL.

THE CLOVER WILL REACH PAST THY KNEES,
THY FADED EYES WILL ONCE MORE GLEAM,
THY MANE WILL STIR IN SUMMER BREEZE,
AND THIS FOUL HOLE BECOME A DREAM.

SO GOODYE, DAN, I HA'E TO WEND,
HERE! - LET ME STROKE THAT HEAD ONCE MORE - - -
I CANNA SEE THEE FACE THE END - - -
GOOD LUCK, OLD MATE, ON YONDER SHORE!

FRANK REANEY

THE PIT PONY

Slow and old, wet and cold with eyes that couldn't see,
In the dark, still made his mark, in the miners' memory.
Time replaced but not disgraced done his stint before,
Paid in hay didn't lose a day who could ask for more.

J. T. Richardson.

LITTLE BOBBY BRADY

It was three o' clock in the morning and the buzzers
Were blowing hard, when little Bobby Brady entered the
Old pit yard.

Now a queer little fellow was Bobby, he only weighed
Seven stone ten, but he knew how to make the coal crack
Lads, and keep his shift with the men.

Well he hadn't been long at the coal face until you
Couldn't see Bobby for steam, he was such a fast lad
With the shovel, he filled all the coal in the seam.
This didn't suit the old gaffers, they were all taken
Aback, they had a little bit of a meeting and decided
To give Bobby the sack.

Then he got himself a job on the council, they set him
On digging a drain. Well he made such a mess of the
Village, he drove the poor ganger insane, but that
Didn't worry little Bobby, he knew he wouldn't come to
Any harm, he had only been out of work a couple of
Days and he got himself a job on a farm.

He ploughed seven fields before breakfast, the horses
Dropped dead with the rush, well this didn't suit the
Old farmer, so he had to give Bobby the push.

Do you know something, idleness killed that little
Fellow, because he always did more than his whack, and
Whether he goes to hell or heaven, they're sure to
Give Bobby the sack.

H. MOFFETT.

LITTLE TONY DAILY

It was three o'clock on the morning and the lantern
Was glowing hard when little Bobby first entered the



Old chimney as he had to give Bobby the light

To you know something, although I know that you
Wallow, because he always did more than his share and
Whether he goes to hell or heaven, that's sure to be
Give Bobby the rock

THE WAREHOUSE

SHIFTING

Wake up to a Monday sun,
Another week has just begun,
Some rise early, some rise late,
Better hurry, bus won't wait.

Bleary eyed, late to bed,
Too much drink, 'Oh my poor head.
Perhaps it might be for the best,
If I just took a day of rest'.

"C'mon get up you idle slob,
Stay at home you'll get a job.
Fancy being a decorator?"
"Err g'bye my love, I'll see you later".

Canteen lady's battle cry,
"Who ordered meat and potato pie?
Milk, tea, coffee, plug and snuff,
Are you quite sure you've got enough?"

Into pit-cage there they go,
Slow to start, then down below
Into bowels of the earth,
Cutting coal 'for what it's worth'.

Over-men bray and tempers fray,
Wish you'd never come today,
Charge-hand mops his sweaty brow,
Wearily chanting "What's up now?"

Belt is broken, bunkers standing,
No one on the outbye landing.
They've done the job for many years,
Still they can't get all the shears.

Look lively men, don't hang about,
Else Under-manager may shout,
If you don't want to get the sack mind,
You'd better go and get that Packbind.

Far above you watch them go,
Fork-lift drivers shunt and tow,
Stone dust, Packbind, Braddice too,
Rings, wood, props and setts for you.

What's all this talk of gigajoules,
In Cost Control and Study Pool?
The cry goes up, the air is tend,
What on earth is meant by vend?

And when at last you've done your shift,
Into cage lads, got a lift.
Shed those clothes and have a bath,
Before you start on homeward path.

"I've had a rotten day my dear,
I think I'll go and have a beer."
"Yes, go on out, drown your sorrow,
But don't forget – there's still tomorrow."

Jim Brough



THE PRICE OF COAL

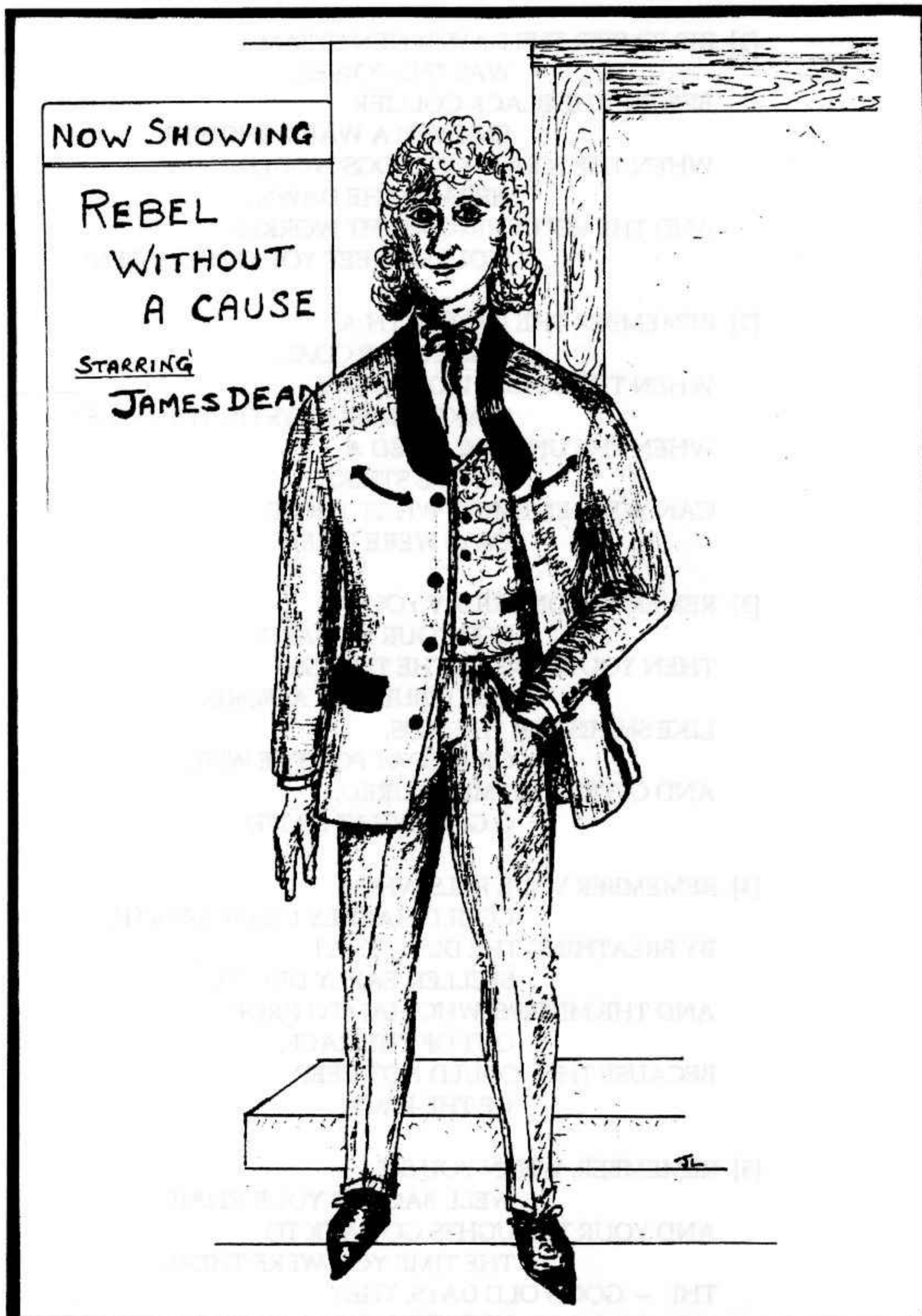
When a miner goes down into his seam below
 There's one thing for certain he does not know;
 And that is – will he come up again
 To see the sun and to feel the rain?
 For once down there in the depths of the earth
 He starts his work for what it's worth.
 No light from the sky, no birds to sing,
 Only inky blackness around everything.
 Sometimes on his stomach he crawls;
 He wriggles and pushes and often he falls.
 And when up above, the roof caves in,
 He's to run for his life, but sometimes can't win,
 For under the rocks his body lies
 Broken and buried, and many times – dies.
 He'll never again see the sun and the rain
 For all of his efforts have been in vain.
 Perhaps he'll be found and be taken home
 But perhaps he may not, and will stay in the tomb.

Mrs F. Harvey.

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

- [1] REMEMBER THE DAYS WHEN STEAM
 WAS THE POWER,
 BEFORE THE BLACK COLLIER
 ENJOYED A WARM SHOWER
 WHEN THE SOUND OF CLOGS WOULD
 HERALD THE DAWN,
 AND THE RETURNING NIGHT WORKER
 WOULD GREET YOU GOOD-MORN!
- [2] REMEMBER THE DAYS WITH A
 SURPLUS OF COAL,
 WHEN THE BOSSES WOULD SAY
 "TAKE THREE DAYS ON THE DOLE"
 WHEN THE UNION CALLED A
 MINERS STRIKE.
 CAN YOU REMEMBER WHAT THOSE
 DAYS WERE LIKE?
- [3] REMEMBER ON FRIDAY YOU
 GOT YOUR REWARD,
 THEN YOU SPOKE OF THE THINGS
 YOU COULDN'T AFFORD,
 LIKE SHOES FOR THE KIDS,
 OR A COAT FOR THE WIFE,
 AND OFTEN YOU MURMURED,
 O GOD, WHAT A LIFE!
- [4] REMEMBER YOUR PALS WHO
 COULD HARDLY DRAW BREATH,
 BY BREATHING THE DUST, THAT
 SPELLED EARLY DEATH.
 AND THE MINERS, WHO HAD TO DROP
 OUT OF THE RACE,
 BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT KEEP
 UP THE PACE.
- [5] REMEMBER, WHEN YOU SIT
 WELL BACK IN YOUR CHAIR,
 AND YOUR THOUGHTS GO BACK TO
 THE TIME YOU WERE THERE,
 THE – GOOD OLD DAYS, THEY
 USED TO SAY.
 THEN THANK YOU, DEAR LORD
 FOR THE PRESENT DAY.

FRANK HOLLOWAY



MEN ONLY

Young Willie obtained a job in the pit
 And soon became known as 'the long haired twit'
 For Willie no doubt was a sight to behold
 With winkle pickers and long tresses of gold.
 He turned up to work in skin tight black jeans,
 [Just one false move and they'd burst at the seams]
 And to these men of dedication,
 Willie was an education!

He spoke of records, shake and chicks
 As the men around wielded picks.
 He may have been a manager's dream
 But the likes of young Willie they'd never seen.
 He adorned in gloves and combed hair,
 In the time the miners couldn't spare,
 Time means money down below
 So resentment there began to grow.

He was rebuked for the hole that was made in their wage
 And silent men began to rage,
 Tee-totallers began to take drink
 And heathens to church began to slink.
 No doubt that young Willie these things had inspired
 They fervently hoped that the 'twit' would be fired.
 But Willie remained in his place of employ,
 Miners trudged to their work but their hearts held no joy.

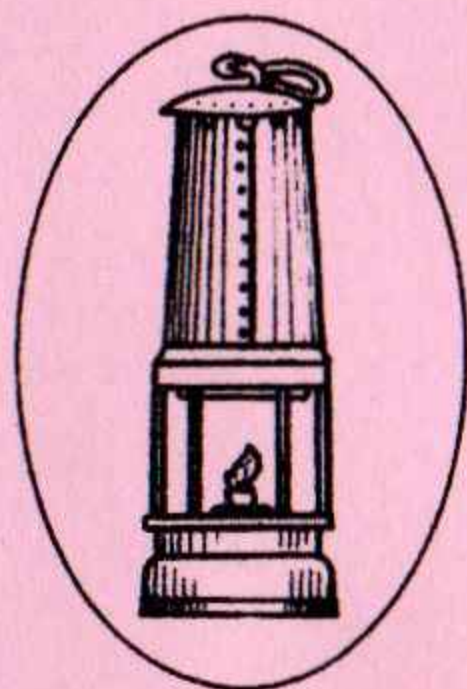
Now the lad that was 'with it' was better without . . .
 For the miners 'without it' gave many a clout;
 Young Willie just lived for the modern trend
 But one day matured and ways took amend,
 He turned up in trousers he could bend in, in ease,
 Had cut golden locks and padded his knees:
 Young Willie was never seen again,
 Down in the pit there is a new man among men.

M. Grolik

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