

shifting is the system of operations, affording employment to forty underground and ten surface hands. Engine haulage on the surface incline has taken the place of horse as formerly employed. Two prospecting-drives are being driven from the river-bank, with a view of making a probable connection with the present working-area; but the coal is soft throughout the whole drivings, and heavy timbering is required.

Tyneside Proprietary Company (R. Alison, mining manager).—(8/5/08): Mining operations were successfully carried out on this property until the mine was flooded on the 8th May last. Output, 40,304 tons. In relation to the flooding of the Tyneside Coal-mine, past experience has proved that in all cases of pillar-extraction in dip workings, similar difficulties have invariably arisen, particularly where the strata overlying the pillared areas are broken, and free drainage unobtainable. These facts directly affect the economy of pillar-extraction throughout the West Coast coalfields. Prior to flooding, the water had been controlled for over twelve months by direct double-acting plunger sets, each 12 in. diameter by 3 ft. stroke, permanently installed on line of main dip haulage-road, where considerable storage-capacity was under control should emergency occur; but prior to the excessive rainfall on the 5th May last, danger of flooding was not anticipated. To meet this emergency, however, a special double-acting Tangye pump, fitted with rams 8 in. in diameter by 3 ft. stroke, was added, and worked in conjunction with the main pump, while mining operations were also suspended to apply the whole boiler-power available. With this additional pumping plant, complete control of the water was speedily maintained, and, on visiting the mine at 11 a.m. of the 8th May, the severity of the storm was apparently over, and the pumps were making satisfactory progress towards reducing the water. Unfortunately, however, on the evening of same date a terrific thunderstorm, accompanied by excessive rainfall, swept the whole West Coast areas, and speedily raised the rivers to high flood. At this juncture the unprecedented inflow of surface water through the broken strata, together with the inrush of flood-water from the River Grey, forced a passage through an old coal-drive formerly worked by the late Mr. Kilgour. It was then evident that no available means were possible to save the mine from flooding, notwithstanding the present company had previously protected the drive by an efficient log dam; but, as the site on which the dam had to be built was a fireclay floor with coal sides, crushing by “creep” from the adjoining pillared ground was unavoidable. I am satisfied the management spared neither time nor expense to save the situation, and the company certainly suffered a loss, as the few remaining months’ work would have been profitable. The mine was estimated to last about six to eight months longer.

COAL-MINERS’ ACCIDENT RELIEF FUND, ADMINISTERED UNDER THE COAL-MINES ACT.

Where the funds are managed under medical associations, the following table shows the contributions paid by the various coal companies, the balances credited at the Post-Office Savings-Bank, the amounts expended on accident allowance, and the increase or decrease on fund for the year 1908:—

Colliery.	Contributions and Interest.	Balance in Savings-Bank.	Accident Allowance.	Increase.	Decrease.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Denniston ...	888 0 0	5,410 15 4	709 11 8	178 8 4	...
Millerton ...	732 1 9	2,048 14 4	788 6 4	...	56 4 7
Blackball ...	193 16 10	1,047 18 4	112 1 11	81 14 11	...
Brunner ...	180 6 10	1,105 4 10	77 14 2	102 12 8	...
Point Elizabeth ...	491 18 3	247 4 8	441 11 10	50 6 5	...
Totals ...	2,486 3 8	9,859 17 6	2,129 5 11	356 17 9*	...

* Net increase.

ACCIDENTS.

Of the number of accidents reported as coming within the meaning of section 62 of “The Coal-mines Act, 1908,” three were fatal and six non-fatal. Of the persons killed, two were underground at the working-face, and the other, a surface hand, fell a distance of 27 ft. over the Blackball Coal Company’s storage-bins.

FATAL.

Point Elizabeth Colliery.—(4/6/08): Robert Lumsden, miner, killed by fall of stone in the face, caused by collapse of timber.

Millerton Colliery.—(24/9/08): John Moloney, miner, was killed by fall of rock from edge of goaf.

Blackball Colliery.—(15/10/08): Ernest Rouse, surface hand, killed by falling over storage-bins.

NON-FATAL.

Cascade Mine, Denniston.—(8/1/08): John Cook, miner, sustained compound dislocation of the right foot by fall of head coal in face.

Tyneside Colliery.—(9/1/08): Daniel Ganey, miner, sustained fracture of left leg by fall of stone in the face.

Millerton Colliery.—(4/6/08): Richard Arbuckle, miner, sustained injury to legs and lower jaw-bone, and Patrick O’Neill, miner, scalp-wounds and contusions of pelvis, by fall of coal in their working-face.