



The Durham Miner

No 6 July 2010

The Durham Miner is the magazine of the Durham Miners' Association, PO Box 6, Red Hill, Durham, DH1 4BB
General Secretary: D. Hopper, President: D. Guy

Wanted: A Leader Who Can Inspire a New Generation

Dave Hopper

The British people have a healthy mistrust of all the major political parties. This is the only clear message from the General Election and this mistrust will only be deepened by the unprincipled alliance of Tories and Liberal Democrats.

Labour's campaign failed to impress and lurched from crisis to crisis. Brown appeared totally out of touch and dug himself into one hole after another while the involvement of Blair and Mandelson served only to antagonise Labour's core supporters.

However, Labour's defeat was not caused by an inept campaign but by the whole 'New Labour' project of which Brown was a major player. He supported Blair's lies and deceit which led to the illegal invasion of Iraq and the deaths of thousands of innocent men women and children. He supported the invasion of Afghanistan which has mired the British army into a war which history has proved can not be won.

When the greed-fuelled banking system collapsed he poured billions of pounds of tax payers money to prop up a failed system without exercising any control on behalf of the people who will ultimately pay the bill. But most damning of all is that after 13 years of rule 'New Labour' has not only failed to redress the huge inequalities in British society it has allowed the gap between rich and poor to widen.

A particular disappointment for

Durham Miners was the Labour Government's refusal to introduce a scheme for 'miners knee' which would have brought some justice to former miners blighted by this painful injury and saved the Durham Miners Association the potentially crippling cost of fighting the miners case through the courts.

However, the result of the election could have been much worse for Labour had it not been for the voters fear of the alternative — a Tory government with a workable majority. The vast majority of people did not believe the Tories had changed. They knew that the smarmy, super rich Cameron and Osborne despite all their talk of 'family values' and the 'big society' were planning to attack the poorest in society and in particular the very poorest on state benefit. The recent budget has proved them correct.

Now they are joined in this venture by Clegg. One sniff of power and all their differences — the voting system, Europe and Trident evaporated. As we warned — vote Lib Dem you'll get the Tories.

Labour lost but let us put this defeat to good advantage. Let us have an honest post mortem and let us hope that this is the demise of 'New Labour'.

While protecting the banks 'New Labour' rejected the trade unions — the very organisations which gave birth to the Party for the express purpose of defending their interests in Parliament.



Dave Hopper

Now the unions are reduced to the role of paymasters without receiving any benefit.

For thirteen years the leader of the Labour party refused to speak at the Durham Big Meeting — the biggest demonstration of Socialist and Trade Union values in the country. An event which takes place in the heart of the most loyal Labour constituencies in the country all of which returned Labour MPs. This contempt for the people who have shown such loyalty to the party must end.

Labour must establish itself as the undisputed champion of the poor and disadvantaged as it was always supposed to be.

We must elect a leader who can embrace the whole party and a leader who can inspire a new generation. A generation who enter politics not for the generous salary and the expenses but do so because they believe in the socialist values which inspired our pioneers — the eradication of poverty, free health care and education for all and a desire to make the world a better and fairer place for all mankind.

The Labour party has no other legitimate reason to exist.

President's Compensation Report

Miners Knee Case Begins Critical Phase

Dave Guy

On June 28 2010 Durham Miners' legal team will be in court before Judge Grenfell to determine whether he will waive the Statute of Limitations and allow our claim for osteoarthritis of the knee to proceed.

The Statute of Limitation obliges a claimant to start legal proceedings within three years of an accident or in the case of an industrial disease within three years of the claimant becoming aware of the onset of the ailment.

We are confident we can prevail upon Grenfell to use his discretion as we were successful both in the case of vibration white finger (VWF) and chronic bronchitis and emphysema (CB&E).

Our lawyers rate our chances of winning highly, but we still have a funding problem to overcome. We are fighting the case alongside the Scotland, North Derbyshire and South Wales NUM, the Durham Mechanics and South Wales Deputies and it is hoped that together we will be able to secure 'after the event insurance' which would indemnify us in the event that we should lose the case.

We are disappointed that the National Union and the Yorkshire Area have not, at this moment in time, come on board as this would make a huge difference to our resources and be an enormous potential benefit to their members.

The North East Area NUM will be forcefully pressing the case for national involvement at the NUM biannual conference this year.

Another big concern is the time it is taking to progress this litigation particularly as the members we are

fighting for are elderly and may never enjoy the compensation we may win for them. It was for this reason we convened a meeting with MPs from mining constituencies and the junior minister David Kidney in the House of Commons last year. Our aim was to persuade the government to introduce a scheme similar to the VWF scheme which would save years of costly legal wrangling through the courts. Although the minister was not sympathetic to our arguments we will continue to campaign for this solution.

INDUSTRIAL INJURIES DISABLEMENT BENEFIT (IIDB)

Following the successful campaign to have miners knee classed as an industrial disease we have now helped 1,800 members fill in their claims forms to apply for IIB. To date 40% of our claims are resulting in a weekly payment being awarded either by reaching the threshold of 14% in one go or by the aggregate principle whereby awards for previous injuries are added to that given for osteoarthritis.

Of those who have been unsuccessful the vast majority have been sent to appeal.

We are sure that there are many members who have not yet applied and we urge them to make an appointment to come to the Area Offices where we will assist them in filling in their form.

CHRONIC BRONCHITIS AND EMPHYSEMA (CB&E)

The Durham Miners and Mechanics have commissioned a report by



Dave Guy

Professor Rudd, a respected expert in respiratory diseases, to investigate the way lung loss is calculated in claims for Industrial Injuries Benefit. We have been of the opinion for some time that the threshold of one litre loss of capacity discriminates unfairly against men of small stature, low weight and particularly those who are elderly. We were also concerned that an adjustment is made in the calculations to take into consideration loss of lung capacity due to smoking. This discriminates against nonsmokers and ex-smokers. While it may have been fair to assume that 20 years ago most miners smoked this is certainly not the case today.

On the basis of the professor's report and in discussion with our solicitors Thompsons we are questioning the factors and assumptions which are built in to the calculations which evaluate loss of lung function.

We are also of the opinion that a loss of one litre which roughly equates to the loss of a third of lung capacity is putting the bar far too high.

Many men who do not reach the

President's Compensation Report

threshold of one litre loss still suffer a considerable disability but do not receive any percentage points which could be aggregated with those they may have received for other unrelated disabilities.

This is not justified as in all other injuries and diseases the degree of disability is graded evenly from zero to maximum.

We are pleased to report that all live compensation cases for CB&E have now been concluded and the only outstanding cases are for the dependants of deceased miners. We hope to clear these cases by the end of the year.

DWP PAYS FOR ERRORS

We have been successful in claiming two awards of £7,893.69 and £18,111.12 for two of our members from the Sacriston Lodge who's IIB was miscalculated causing them to be underpaid. The lower amount we traced back to 1997 while the other was traced back to 1995.

Because the Department of Works and Pensions failed to aggregate our members percentage points correctly the DMA has successfully claimed an additional payment of £1,678.75 for the smaller award which is classed as 'interest as a form of compensation for delay in award of pension'. We are pursuing a similar claim on behalf of the other member and are prepared to go the full distance to ensure that this payment is made.

VIBRATION WHITE FINGER (VWF)

We are still fighting several cases for VWF where the Coal Authority is refusing to admit liability for our members who are suffering from this condition and we will continue to support those cases where our solicitors believe we have a chance of success.

PNEUMOCONIOSIS

As we reported in the last issue we are encountering more and more cases of pneumoconiosis which relate back to the late 70s and 80s when British coal were operating the incentive scheme. Miners were previously compensated for this condition under two separate schemes; one in 1972 covering employees of the NCB and the other in 1974 covering small mines where the



employer no longer existed. There was a discrepancy in the amount each scheme awarded and we successfully persuaded the outgoing government to amalgamate the two schemes giving the higher payment to all claimants.

We advise all miners who are having problems with their chest to ensure that their Doctor takes into consideration the possibility that they may be suffering from Pneumoconiosis.

EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT ALLOWANCE (ESA)

As we reported in previous issues of the Durham Miner ESA has now replaced Incapacity Benefit and Income

Support and the method of assessing a claimants disability has also changed making it much harder to qualify. We are encountering many problems where our members with considerable disabilities are failing to qualify for benefit and others who qualified under the old set of tests are being removed from benefit.

We will continue to advise and support all members who encounter problems.

I would like to thank all beneficial members for their loyalty and support and hope you will come and enjoy yourselves at the Gala on July 10.

Gala Book Project

The Durham Miners' Gala Book

The following is an excerpt from the History of the Durham Miners' Gala by Dave Temple to be launched at the 2011 Gala — 140 years since the first Gala.

THE FIRST GALA

August 12 1871 was a warm sunny day.

From early morning along the narrow lanes and byways of Durham's rolling countryside groups of miners and their families were moving towards the city, most of them on foot, some on horse-drawn carts and wagons, others marching proudly behind colourful banners expertly painted.

They marched proudly but perhaps apprehensive of the welcome they would receive. The good burghers of Durham City were not happy the pitmen were coming to their cathedral city. Pit folk were a race apart, living in isolated villages cheek by jowl with the constant clatter of winding engines, engulfed by the sulphurous fumes of the ventilation furnaces and the ever-present and invasive wind-borne dust. To the genteel town-dwellers they were clannish, took their pleasure in ale-houses, gambled at pitch and toss or wagered on cockfights. They poached the squire's pheasants and stole turnips from his fields. They were beyond the pale. But it was their smouldering discontent which could erupt at any moment into riot that was feared most.

Even the religious miners were feared — perhaps more so. The Church of England with its deference to the masters and its congregation of gentlemen, doctors and merchants had little influence in the villages. Methodism with all its splits and factions was the established religion of the pit communities. Almost every pit village of any size had at least two chapels, usually Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist, dividing the village ideologically — Wesleyan for the master's men, Primitive for the Union.

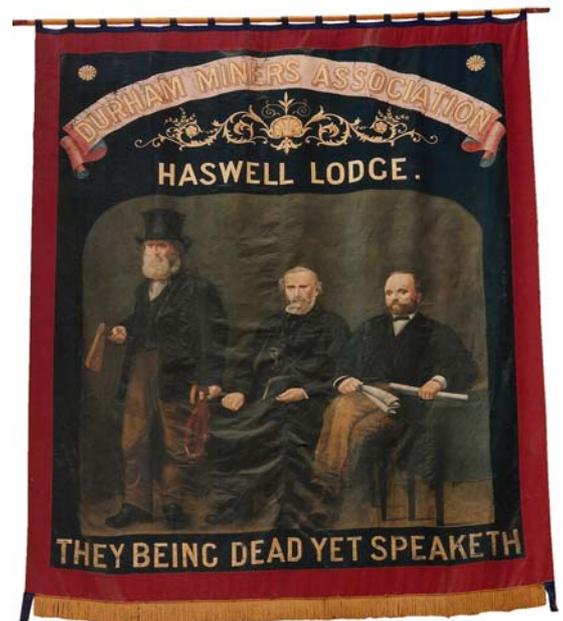
While the Church of England claimed God for the Monarchy, the State and Capital, the Durham Primitives claimed God for the working class, the cooperative store and the union. Organised in circuits of travelling lay preachers, these priests were regarded as dangerous fundamentalists and thoroughly subversive.

Abstaining from strong drink, dedicated to education and self-improvement, and frowning on marriage outside their own Primitive sect, these 'religious extremists' never accounted for more than 15 per cent of the community. However, they were respected as honest, decent men and were hugely influential.

When in 1861 the Mines Act of 1860 came into force it allowed miners to elect one of their number to check the weight of coal raised from the pit, and it was often a Primitive Methodist who was chosen. The checkweighman's job was more often than not a poisoned chalice.

One way the Master circumvented this law was simply to sack the check weighman. Since the law stated that the workmen had to elect 'one of their number' to be their weighman, a sacked man became immediately ineligible. Consequently ten years after the Act had come into force, at many pits in Durham, miners were still being cheated out of the full fruits of their hard and dangerous labours. This was just one of the 'reets' for which the miners were marching to Durham.

As they made their way they would pass farm labourers with backs bent, sickles and scythes in hand, bringing in the harvest. At first glance these two classes of worker could not have been



Above: Haswell Banner left to Right Old Tommy Ramsey, Alexander MacDonald and William Crawford all of whom addressed the first miners Gala

more different, the one working in the sunlight and the fresh air and the other in the darkness and foul air of the mine. However, they were united in one important respect - the terms under which they toiled. Farm servant and miner alike were tied to their employer by law.

Any miner who left his employment without a certificate of release could be hauled before the magistrates, fined or imprisoned and sent back to his employer.

For this reason Richard Rodrick, John Perkins, James Stewart and Richard Harle were not on their way to the first Gala. They had been summoned to appear before magistrates J. Fawcett and Rev. W. Greenwell at Durham County Court for leaving their employment without permission.

Rodrick and Perkins had absconded from East Hetton Colliery but agreed to return to the mine under a surety of £5.

James Stewart was charged with leaving Sherburn Hill colliery but could not attend court due to injuries he sustained at Tudhoe colliery, 'whither he had gone'. The summons was ordered to stand for a month.

Next in the dock was Richard Harle, who had also left Sherburn Hill pit to work at Tudhoe. The Durham Chronicle reported:

' Mr. Logan [for the prosecution] said

Gala Book Project

that the defendant signed the bond on the 8th April to serve the owners of Sherburn Hill colliery for one year but he absconded on the 20th July - Defendant's plea was that the air in the pit was so foul that it was killing him - Mr Johnson, the overman at the colliery, said the defendant asked him if he might go away and at once told him that he could not give him liberty to do so. Defendant then said that he was going to another colliery owned by the noble Earl but instead of doing that he went to Tudhoe pit.

The overman insisted that there had been few complaints about the ventilation in the pit although he agreed that Harle had been off work sick but he intimated that the real reason for Harle's objection was that he had drawn a bad cavil and found it difficult to make a wage.

Magistrate Fawcett then told Harle that he must return to the pit'.

Harle stuck to his guns and refused, reiterating that it was bad for his health.

Fawcett then made a statement that must have brought a wry smile to the face of any pitman present.

Fawcett: 'I am sure Earl Durham's agents would not put you in a cavil that they thought would be injurious to you. If it is true that you suffered from bad air you should have got a certificate from the colliery doctor'.

Harle protests that when he asked the doctor why his health was so bad the doctor had said that the air down the pit was not as good as that at Sacriston colliery where Harle had previously worked.

In a surprise turn of events the magistrates agreed that Harle be fined 10 shillings and his contract annulled.

An end to this hated bond was one more reason to be on the march that morning.

QUOTATIONS FROM THE FIRST GALA

HOURS OF LABOUR FOR BOYS

'I am also told — and hear this ye civilised mothers and Christian fathers — that the caller comes to your houses at one and two in the morning to wake your darling boys to go to the pit. Are you going to tell me that two o'clock in the morning is the proper time for a lad to get out of his bed and go to work? Common sense tells you that it is not and common honesty tells you that it is not; and I believe that the mothers of the pit boys of this county have shed millions of tears when they have been compelled to drag their lads out of their warm beds at two o'clock in the morning and when they recollected that they would not hear their darling voices again until six o'clock in the evening'.
(applause) — William Brown, North Staffordshire Miners

'...Before I would submit to allow a child of mine to go down the pit for 12,14, or 16 hours a day as yours do I would strike until the hairs came off my head (loud laughter and applause).—John Normansel, South Yorkshire Miners

ANTI-UNION LAWS ON PICKETING

'...I will suppose that men at one of the collieries in the neighbourhood were to strike tomorrow, and a trade unionist were to go to the colliery merely with the object of counting the blacklegs — and certainly they would not be worth counting; but if a unionist was near the pit, no matter what his object was, all that was required to send him three months to prison was for one of the dirty blacklegs to say that the man was there for the purposes of coercing him.—Alexander McDonald, Leader of National Miners' Association.

THE FAILURE OF PARLIAMENT TO PASS THE MINES INSPECTION BILL

'If nothing will move our rulers — if the cry of our widows and orphans will not move them - If the cry of the thousands injured will not move them — then I say that all the miners in Durham and Northumberland. In Yorkshire and Staffordshire, and in Wales and Scotland should lay down their tools (loud applause and cries of 'we will, we will').—Alexander McDonald, Leader of National Miners' Association.

EXCELLENT RESPONSE

There has been an excellent response to Durham Miners appeal for advance orders for the Durham Miners Gala Book Project and over 1,000 books have been ordered.

These books will be posted out to the sponsors in June next year and the names of the sponsors, or the name nominated by a sponsor, will be printed in every copy. This is helping us to gauge accurately how many copies to print. Only a small number will be printed over and above those ordered so the only way to be sure of receiving a copy is to order one now.

If you have not already ordered a copy fill in the form below. The book will make an excellent present for Christmas 2011.

A hard back copy will cost £19.50 + £3.50 p&p (£23)

Soft back copy £14.50 + £2.50 p&p (£17)

I would like to buy the following advance copy / copies of the Durham Miners Gala Book:

Hardback copy/copies of the Gala Book and/or

Softback copy/copies of the Gala Book

I enclose a cheque/ Postal order for £ _____ made payable to: **Durham Miners' Gala Book Project**

Please send the book(s) to the following address:

Name:..... Address:.....

Post Code.....Name(s) to be printed in book.....

Return to: Durham Miners Gala Book Project, PO Box 6, Red Hill Durham DH1 4BB

Obituary

Albert Nugent 1942—2010

When Albert Nugent died on Good Friday April 2 2010 the Durham Miners and the people of County Durham lost a good friend and a compassionate politician.

At Albert's funeral before a packed church of over 200 friends and family Dave Guy, President of the Durham Miners Association, described Albert as 'a friend, comrade, pitman, miner, socialist, councillor, union man; probably most important, a family man'.

Albert started work at Dawdon colliery in 1957 at the age of 15 and later worked at Seaham colliery where he was elected Secretary of the Lodge. During the 1984/85 strike Albert played a leading role organising fundraising and picketing. He indulged his passion for photography and built up an impressive archive of video film which recorded the day-to-day struggle and the many acts of gratuitous violence perpetrated by police on miners.

After the strike ended Seaham colliery was one of the first to be closed and in 1986 Albert transferred to Vane Tempest colliery where he was again elected Lodge secretary.

Albert distinguished himself in the help he gave miners seeking compensation for accidents and industrial diseases. No one with a problem was ever turned from Albert's door and there were many who called. It was in the course of this work that Albert identified a number of miners who he believed were suffering from the then little known condition of Vibration White Finger (VWF). As a result the Durham Miners took a huge gamble, put their assets on the line, and sued British Coal for compensation. After a long battle the case was won and as a result miners throughout the country have benefited by compensation awards amounting to over two billion pounds.



Albert Nugent

Albert's interests were not confined to the immediate community. He was a passionate opponent of the Apartheid regime in South Africa. His opposition was by no means a token gesture. He befriended South African students who he welcomed into his house particularly at Christmas time when he encouraged other mining families to do the same. It was this kindness and humanity which distinguished him from many politicians. For Albert Socialism was not a high ideal to be achieved some time in the future but day-to-day caring that made a difference.

It was therefore no surprise to his friends that when he was elected to lead Durham County Council it was to defend old-people's homes from closure — a policy which was not universally accepted amongst his colleagues. The strain of this last battle undoubtedly took its toll on Albert's health.

Albert was devoted to his family and Margaret who was his wife and his 'comrade in arms'. But perhaps the last word should be from his son also called Albert who spoke on behalf of the family at his funeral. He said, 'To us, he was our dad. There are so many treasured memories of our childhood it's impossible to know where to start. He loved us all the same, not favouring one more than the other, but making us all feel special'.

Albert leaves his wife, Margaret, children Jacklene, Albert, Margaret, Carole and Gloria, 12 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren

Peter Heathfield 1929 - 2010

Peter Heathfield who died on May 6 this year at the age of 81 succeeded Lawrence Daly as the secretary of the NUM just five days before the start of the 1984/85 strike.

Peter was born in Somercotes Derbyshire the son of a railway worker and worked underground at Williamthorpe colliery, Chesterfield. He was soon recognised by his fellow miners as a man of high intelligence with leadership qualities and in 1966 at the relatively young age of 37 was elected a full time official of the Derbyshire NUM. By 1970 he was the Area Vice President and in 1973 he became the Area General Secretary.

In 1963 he met and married Betty Vardy, a member of the Communist Party, who later chaired the Women Against Pit Closures Campaign during the 1984 /85 strike.

Peter was a firm supporter of the strike of which he was a passionate advocate.

In 1990 a campaign led by the Daily Mirror, supported by Neil Kinnock, Kim Howells and other erstwhile friends sought to smear Heathfield and Scargill with allegations of financial impropriety. Both were cleared by the subsequent Lightman Enquiry but the allegations deeply wounded Peter.

Although Roy Greenslade, the editor of the Daily Mirror at the time later apologised to both men Peter never fully recovered from the stress of those years. His health started to fail and in 1992 he retired.

Peter was a warm friendly man, a passionate left wing Socialist and his death is a great loss to the Labour and Trade Union Movement.

Below: Peter Heathfield speaking at NUM Conference



Energy Report

Can King Coal Return ?



Dave Guy

Can coal mining return to the North East? This was the question asked at a well attended seminar held in the impressive lecture room of the Mining Institute.

In his opening remarks Dave Guy, president of the NE Area NUM, explained that the prospect of opening a new mine had been the subject of an ongoing campaign initiated by the DMA and supported by the Mining Institute. He was first alerted to the prospect by Ian Day, the former Deputy Area Manager of British Coal, North East Area who informed him at the time of the Tory Pit Closure Programme that there was a seam of coal in the Wearmouth take which had never been mined on account of its sulphur and ash content.

However, with the advances made in clean-burn technology at power stations such as Drax this coal was now commercially viable. As this seam was in the upper reaches of the take it would be one of the first encountered if a drift was driven to reach a parcel of virgin coal which was known to exist under the North Sea off the coast near Ryhope. This seam could then be mined to offset the cost of further development. The goal was, he said, to provide at least 500 well paid jobs for miners which would translate into 2,000 jobs once the ancillary trades were taken into consideration.

He then introduced Dr Eric Wade, Secretary of the Mining Institute to give his presentation.

Dr Wade gave an extensive talk using diagrams and plans taken from the archives of the Mining Institute

identifying several areas off the northeast coast where there were areas of workable coal of sufficient quantity and quality to be commercially viable.

No progress, he said, could be made before a feasibility study had been carried out. He added that the NCB had in the past proposed the sinking of two new mines one off the Northumberland coast north of Whitley Bay and one between Wearmouth and Ryhope. These proposals had been costed and although the figures were now out of date these costings could be updated.

What was vital to the whole project was the price of coal on the world market. Britain uses 60m tons of coal a year of which 20m is produced in the UK and the quantity of this home produced coal was declining year on year. The shortfall of 40m tons is imported of which 8m tons comes into the Tyne every year which proved there was a demand.

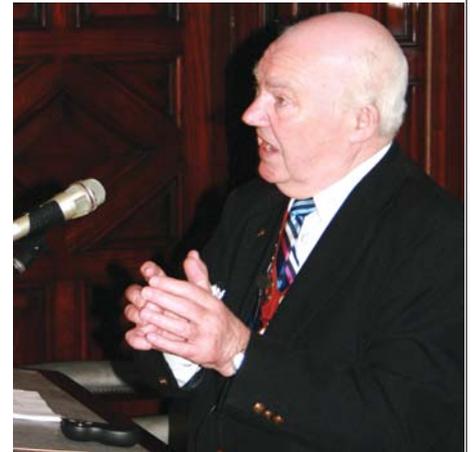
Norman Jackson, who at the time of the pit closure programme in the early nineties was head of Mining and Technical Services for British Coal was then asked to comment on the proposals.

He identified several problems which would have to be overcome: The flooding of the old workings, the surface complex which would have to be extensive and would require planning permission, the construction of a shipping terminal and a waste disposal system. He explained that modern shearers require a huge amount of power to operate and this had to be transmitted to the coal face which would require 'a lot of copper'. All of these problems could be overcome but all had to be taken into consideration.

Steve Hughes MEP was asked to comment on the prospect of funding from the European Parliament to carry out a feasibility study.

Steve recalled all the times he had hosted delegations from the North East appealing to the European Parliament for help to prevent the closure of their collieries. All they received was 'tea and sympathy'.

However, the situation had now changed and there was increasing concern within the European Union about the security of their energy supplies. He was therefore hopeful that



Dr Eric Wade

there would be a different response to projects which sought to access indigenous sources of energy. He pledged that he would work with the Mining Institute, the DMA and local Members of Parliament to secure the funding required.

A lively discussion ensued and many questions were asked of the speakers.

In giving a vote of thanks Dave Hopper, General Secretary of the Durham Miner's Association thought that the seminar had raised as many questions as it had supplied answers, but in his opinion, that was what the seminar had been about. He was, however, confident that there was the spirit and the knowledge to get the project moving.

Below: Section of audience



Mandela Released 20 Years Ago

On February 11 1990 Nelson Mandela was freed after 27 years in prison the majority of which was spent on the notorious Robben Island.

Now revered as a great man of peace and showered with over 250 honours including the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize he was for most of his life condemned as a communist and a terrorist.

Nelson was born in 1918, the great grandson of a former king, in the small village of Umtata in Transkei the home of the Tembu people.

He was the first member of his family to go to school where he did well. To avoid an arranged marriage he ran away from his homeland and for a time worked for a mining company as a guard, a job from which he was sacked when his employers became aware of his identity.

He later became an articled clerk in a

firm of lawyers and on qualifying formed a lawyers practice giving free advice to black workers who had fallen foul of the repressive laws of the apartheid regime.

The ANC was until 1960 dedicated to peaceful protest and Mandela was a great follower of the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. All this changed on March 21 1960 when the SA police opened fire on a crowd of black Africans peacefully protesting against the pass laws in the town of Sharpsville killing 69 including 8 women and 10 children.

The ANC responded by forming an armed wing they called Umkhonto We Sizwe (UWS) (Spear of the Nation) Shortly after the formation of UWS Nelson went into hiding but after almost 2 years on the run he was



Dave Guy meets Nelson Mandela at South African miners conference

arrested after the security police were informed of his whereabouts by the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Charged with the crime of leading workers on strike he was sentenced to five years imprisonment. Whilst in prison he was further charged with sabotage to which he pleaded guilty and plotting a foreign invasion of South Africa which he denied.

In his final speech from the dock Nelson ended with these words:

'During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to the struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die'.

A worldwide campaign to boycott South African goods finally led to Nelson's release after which he negotiated the dismantling of Apartheid and universal suffrage. When the ANC won the subsequent election in 1994 Nelson became the first black president of South Africa.

While the changes since the first free elections have benefited a growing black middle class the vast majority of the population still live in poverty. Nelson Mandela would be the first to admit there is still much yet to be achieved.

Durham Miners salute a remarkable man whose courage and spirit of resistance inspired generations throughout the world.

Bowes Railway Appeal: Volunteers Wanted



Bowes Railway, Springwell is the oldest standard gauge rope hauled railway in the world and is in need of enthusiastic volunteers particularly those with the following skills: Mechanical and electrical engineering, metal working, welding, joinery and Painting. These skills will be used in maintaining and restoring the locos, stock, track and equipment at the railway and museum.

Those who don't have these practical skills may be interested in helping other aspects of the running of the site.

The railway is dependent on volunteers to run operating days which are a major source of the finance essential in keeping the museum open.

The next operating day is on August 14 and 15 2010.

The site is open for visitors Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 4.00 pm and operating days are normally organised for week ends.

More information can be obtained by visiting the website

www.bowesrailway.co.uk. If you are interested please send an email to steve.france@sunderland.gov.uk or contact Steve France, Project Manager, Culture and Tourism, Sunderland City Council, City Library & Arts Centre, 28-30 Fawcett Street, Sunderland, SR1 1RE, Tel - 0191 561 1567