

PRESERVATION OF COLLIERY ENGINES AND HEADFRAMES

Ivor J. Brown

When coal mining is mentioned most people immediately think of a headframe and enginehouse even though many mines have been and are being worked using drifts or adits. But will this view of mining become just a folk memory? There are about 50 preserved colliery steam engines in Great Britain, of which about 30 are winding, winch or haulage engines but very, very few headframes have been preserved. Only rarely have engines, their houses and headframes been preserved together. Indeed as recently as 1989 the then Secretary of State thought so little of headframes that he not only permitted the historic concrete headframe at Ledston Luck Colliery, West Yorkshire, to be demolished even though it was connected to the "listed" winding engine house but was "represented" when it was carried out. The "listed" house, which in 1912 was among the first to be built for an electric winder now makes a very sad picture on an expanding modern industrial estate. Several industrialists on this site have asked for photos of the headgear so that they can use it as logos on letterheads and to make models to use in advertising. How much better to have kept the real thing!

Headframes come in many materials and shapes:- wood, stone, brick, iron, steel, concrete, open frames, A and H shape, single,

double, tandem, rectangular, enclosed, Koepe tower etc. Is anything being done to save say just one of each, preferably with its engine house and engine? On the continent there are enthusiasts who have recorded by measurement and photos all headframes and even moved some larger ones for preservation. After the present wave of demolition in Britain there will soon be few of any type left to save and even at the surviving collieries the shaft operations are tending to give way to modern drifts.

As this note is being written in November 1994 the writer can see the tall slim headframe of Charlston Colliery in the distance. This was the last of the old style shaft mines in West Yorkshire and when offered for license no takers were found, so the conical tips have been flattened, the buildings demolished and only the old steam engine house and headframe remain. It would be difficult to raise the finance to save this combination though, since all spare local authority money has gone into the development of Caphouse Colliery as a museum. In any case the old steam engines were scrapped years ago.

Below is a list of all *preserved* steam winding engines (including winches, capstans and haulage engine) known to the writer, together with a list of preserved headframes. If anyone knows of others he would be pleased to be informed of them.

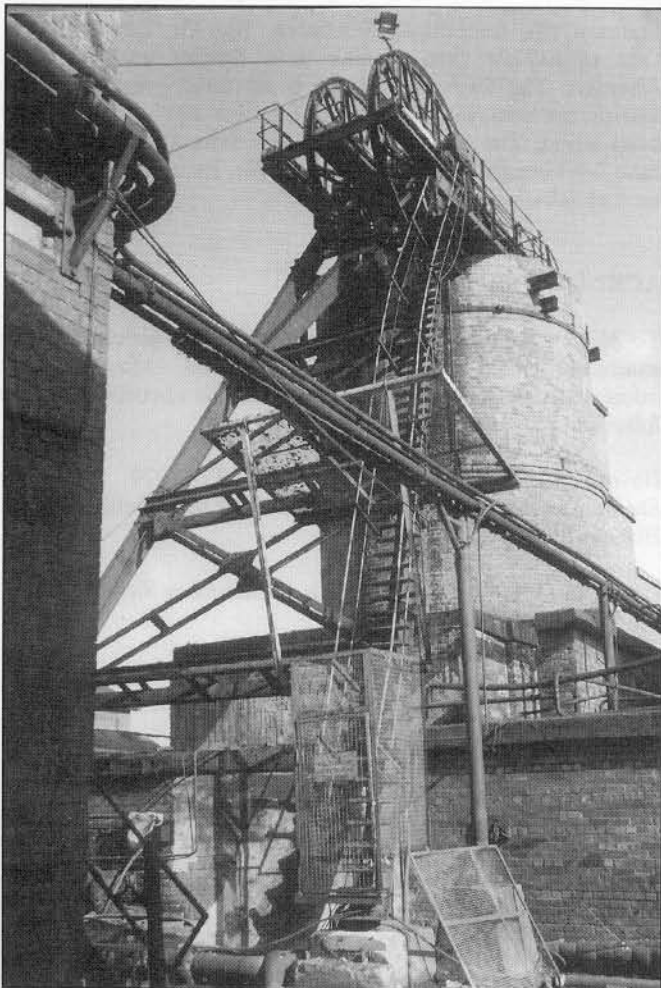
STEAM WINDING ENGINES (* indicates headframe is retained)

(a) Preserved on site with public access

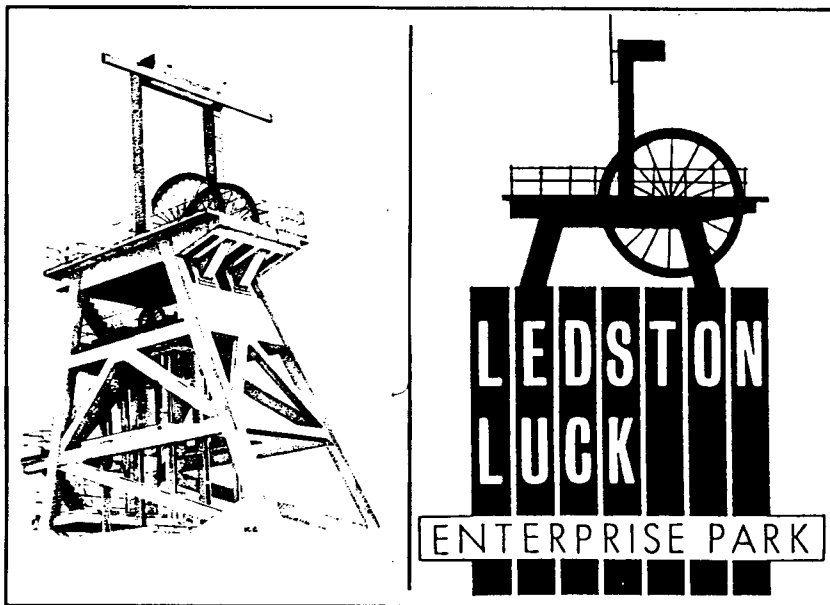
1. Lady Victoria Colliery winder 1894 (part of Scottish Mining Museum).
2. Chatterley Whitfield Colliery winder* 1914 (Chatterley Whitfield Museum Site).
3. Washington F Pit winder* 1888 (Washington Tyne and Wear).
4. Caphouse Colliery winder* 1876 (Yorkshire Mining Museum),
5. Blaenant Colliery winder* 1927 (Cefn Coed Steam Centre, Glamorgan).
6. Blaenant Colliery capstan* date nk (Cefn Coed Steam Centre, Glamorgan).
7. Lewis Merthyr Colliery winder * c1890

(b) Preserved on site with occasional public access.

8. Elliott Colliery winder 1891 (National Museum of Wales, Glamorgan).
9. Tymawr Colliery winder* 1875 (Local authority, Glamorgan).
10. Tymawr Colliery winch date nk (Local authority)



Markham Colliery No. 2 Shaft headframe (Derbyshire) - although important enough to be chosen to illustrate the cover of a recent Historical Monuments Commission book, an attempt at preservation failed when planning permission could not be obtained to resite the headframe as part of an expanded Peak District Mining Museum.



Ledston Colliery Headframe - now gone, and (right) reborn as a logo.

PRESERVED COLLIERY HEADFRAMES

1. Lady Victoria Colliery, Edinburgh.
2. Chatterley Whitfield Colliery, Staffs.
3. Washington Colliery, Tyne and Wear.
4. Caphouse Colliery, Yorkshire.
5. Blaenant Colliery, S.Wales.
6. Big Pit Colliery, South Wales.
7. Tymawr (Hetty) Colliery, South Wales.
8. Bestwood Colliery, Notts.
9. Haig Colliery, Cumbria.
10. Astley Green Colliery, Manchester.
11. Grange Colliery, Shropshire.
12. Snibston Colliery, Leicester.
13. Shipley Colliery, Derby.
14. Barnsley Main Colliery, Yorkshire.
15. Woodhorn, Northumberland.
16. Bersham Colliery, North Wales (Wrexham).
17. Hickleton Colliery, Yorkshire.
18. Mary Colliery, Fife.
19. Pleasley Colliery, Notts.
20. Western Shaft, Britain Colliery, Ripley, Derbyshire.
21. Hope Pit, near Caphouse Colliery, W. Yorkshire.

11. Glamorgan).
12. Glyn Pits winder 1840-5 (National Museum of Wales, Glamorgan).
13. Bestwood Colliery winder* (Local Authority, Nottinghamshire).
14. Elemore Colliery winder c1826 (Department of the Environment, Durham).
15. Haig Colliery winder* c1920s plus other engines, no information (Whitehaven, Cumbria).
16. Astley Green Colliery winder* 1912 (private trust, Tyldesley, Lancs).
17. Pleasley Colliery winder* 1873 and 1924 (Notts).
18. Hickleton Colliery winder* 1923 (Yorkshire).

(e) Engines in Museums (* indicates reconstructed with a headframe)

18. Black Country, ("Racehorse" Colliery) c1880 plus winches.
19. Ironbridge Gorge, (Milburgh Mine)* c1870 plus an electric winder.
20. Beamish, (Beamish Colliery)* 1855 plus a sinking winch.
21. London Science Museum, (Heslop Winder) 1795 source not identified.
22. Welsh Industrial Museum, (Park Colliery) c1870,
23. Dean Heritage Centre, Gloucestershire. (Lightmoor Colliery) 1805.
24. Kidwelly Tin Plate Works, Dyfed, (Morlais Colliery) 1907.
25. Greater Manchester Museum, (Haydock Colliery) c1825 (part only).
26. Newcastle Upon Tyne Museum (Woodhorn Colliery) 1900 (part only).
27. Summerlee Heritage Centre, Strathclyde (Cardown Colliery) 1924.
28. Launceston Steam Railway, Cornwall, (Penrhiwceiber Colliery), 1911.
29. Lound Hall Museum Site, Notts, (Donisthorpe Colliery) 1911.
30. Lound Hall Museum Site, Notts. (Sherwood) c1907.
31. Preston Grange Museum, Edinburgh (Newcraig Colliery?) 1904,
32. Papplewick Pumping Station (Lindby Colliery) 1865.
33. Abbey Pumping Station, Leics, (Morton Colliery) 1865.
34. Snibston Discovery Park, Leics (Donisthorpe Colliery), 1872.

There are also reconstructed or transferred headframes at Beamish, Ironbridge Gorge, Lound Hall and Kidwelly museum sites. Also a recently constructed wooden headframe on a road-island in Telford and a large Koepe Tower at Royston, Yorks (not preserved but too close to the bank of kilns at Monkton Coke and Chemical Co. to be removed safely).

PRESERVED ELECTRIC WINDERS

Snibston (2), Ironbridge, Woodhorn, Big Pit, Ledston Luck. One of c1920s date remains in a derelict condition near Aberdare. The Caphouse winder is of recent construction, for tourists not coal, but the nearby Hope Pit winder has recently been saved. The two electric winders from Littleton Colliery have been bought by Nuclear Electric plc. for use at shafts to be sunk at Sellafield, Cumbria.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Nigel Chapman for his comments and for providing some examples which the writer had missed. More detailed information on many of the engines can be obtained from the following sources:

Bowden, C.; Cooper, G. and McAvoy, T. 1979 *Stationary Steam Engines in Great Britain - A check list*. Colin Bowden, Bishops Stortford.

Hayes, G. 1990 (reprinted) *Guide to Stationary Steam Engines*. Moorland, Ashbourne.

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