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NEW LOUNT COLLIERY HERITAGE TRAIL

COLLIERY WASTE and BY-PRODUCTS

Overview

Coal mining intrinsically requires specific waste materials to be managed, and disposed of, and at New Lount Colliery these materials were:-

- **Non-coal rocks** - removed to access the coal seams or contamination of the seams
- **High quality stoneware clay** - associated with the coal seams.
- **Water** - was a major issue in the whole of the coalfield.
- **Removal of foul air** - which is essential for the safety of the miners.
- **Low grade coal** - which would have been unsuitable for sale.

You can see the remaining brickwork of the Dirt Bogey Haulage House in front of you.

Removal of Non-Coal Rocks

Underground workings consisted of a network of roadways, and the layers of other rocks, such as shale, sandstone and ironstone, associated with the coal seams would have to be removed in the construction of these roadways. The rocks were brought to the surface and deposited on the colliery spoil bank. Working the coal seams involved removing some contaminating rocks and these would have been screened out and transferred to the spoil bank. Some of this rock was also utilised underground to build support structures.



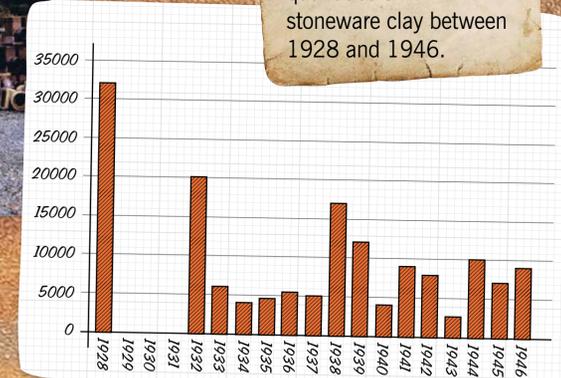
A photograph of the "Odd Stuff Room" at Newbold Pipe Company where the more unusual items were manufactured.

High Quality Stoneware Clay

Two of the coal seams, the Upper Roaster (also "Yard Seam") and the Middle Lount, were directly associated with substantial seams of high quality stoneware clay. Whilst the peak in clay production was 1928, when nearly 32,000 tons were produced, it remained a feature of the colliery well into the fifties. Production levels were more typically between 5,000 to 10,000 tons per year. The clay was brought to the surface in the same manner as the coal, and handled with dedicated plant above ground. Most of the clay went to Lount Pipe Works and Newbold Pipe Works. With the development of Dalls Farm opencast operation in 1934, most of the clay came from there and significantly less was produced from underground activities. The clay was used in the manufacture of salt glazed sanitary fittings and contributed to the financial success of the colliery.



Salt Glazed pipe fittings in the Newbold Pipe Company's Stock Yard.



This graph shows the quantities of stoneware clay between 1928 and 1946.

Removal of Water

The Leicestershire coalfield had a long history of problems associated with water flooding colliery workings and New Lount Colliery had complex systems to manage the excess water. Large pumps were installed underground and water was pumped up the shafts to a surface reservoir from where it was then treated before being run to streams. Some of the water was utilised for other purposes, e.g. in 1937 the colliery waterworks were enlarged and a purifying system installed. Water was then laid on to both the Pipe Works and to Newbold Village. Water for the pit-head baths also came from the colliery.

The underground facilities for pumping the water were periodically enlarged in an ongoing campaign to prevent flooding. Old mine workings were systematically drained to prevent any inrush of water. There was however a number of incidents, e.g. in December 1932 old workings in the Spring Wood area were broken into, resulting in an inrush of water under pressure, and up to 2 million gallons was pumped to the surface in just two days. This water was handled by pumps at the pit bottom and the pit was back in normal production within the week.

Throughout the 50's and 60's large quantities of water, mainly from old workings, were uncovered and various pumping solutions were installed to deal with this water.

Quantities of Water pumped in the Year Ending July 1968

From New Lount Pit Bottom pumps	200 million gallons
From the Coleorton Drift	21 million gallons
From Lount Wood	18 million gallons
From Peggs Green Borehole	42 million gallons
Total water for the year	281 million gallons

These figures give an excellent impression of the quantities of water associated with the workings in the New Lount Colliery area.

Removal of Foul Air

Good quality air was essential for the safety of the underground workers and systems were installed to dilute both natural and introduced (e.g. diesel exhaust) gases, to dilute or carry away dust and to provide cooling for personnel and machinery. The natural flow of air would have been insufficient and uncontrolled, and therefore mechanical means of ventilating were installed. This was achieved with a roadway at either end of the coal face so that fans could suck fresh air across the working face. These primary exhaust fans sucked air into the mine from the surface, through the roadways and across the mining operations before being carried out and back to the surface.

Ventilation was initially provided by an 80h.p. fan. As the workings were extended so the ventilation system was also extended. In 1953 a surface drift was driven at the old Coleorton Colliery in order to provide a new ventilation circuit, as well as an alternative emergency exit. Three additional booster fans were subsequently installed at New Lount, one on the surface and two underground, to improve effectiveness of this system. When miners were working in isolated areas they carried safety lamps as a precaution, however gas was not usually a problem at New Lount.



Photograph shows the reconstruction of the surface fan house in 1957 to accommodate larger fans.

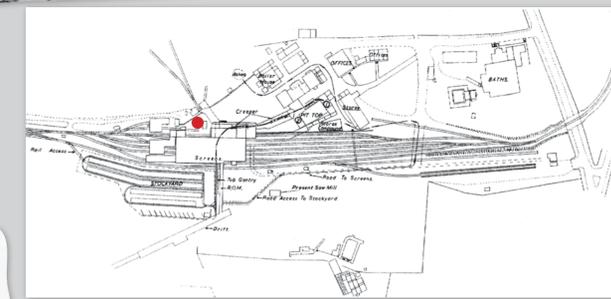
Pit Bank Waste

With the exception of the clay, all of the solid waste from the colliery was sent to the spoil heap, and over the years it became a substantial structure which could be seen from some distance away. By the early 1930's the spoil heap had grown so large that a special system was required. In 1934 a Blantyre Engineering Co. dirt bogey with haulage house and tippler was installed and coupled up to the existing gantry. This machinery took waste from spoil tubs coming out of the mine, and carried it up to the top of the spoil heap.

In 1937 a second dirt bogey system was installed creating an additional tip, with both bogeys being operated simultaneously. The bogeys consisted of a

frame holding a 5 ton hopper, in which the spoil was taken to the top, where it moved across. At the top a man was able to trip open the hopper door to deposit the spoil. The hopper swivelled so that the spoil could be tipped in any direction. Communication between the rope haulage house and the man at the top was by means of a bell; so that once the hopper was empty it could be taken down again. Periodically the rail at the top of the pit bank would be extended and this was a particularly difficult and unpleasant task. There are several tales of problems and mishaps with this system, which was unique in the Leicestershire coalfield. In the final years of the colliery the bogey system was removed and replaced with conveyor belts.

This photograph, circa 1960, shows the mountainous size of the spoil heap with two distinct peaks supplied by two separate bogey systems.



Colliery heritage trail follow black arrow posts.

This photograph circa 1930 shows the spoil heap with just a single bogey system operating. The spoil heap is small at this time.