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“Colliers with a collar on”: The mine management professions in the Scottish coal mining industry, 1930–1966¹

In a 1975 review of ‘labour in the coalfields’ for the *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, R. G. Neville and John Benson noted that: ‘the absence of any interpretation of the ‘management revolution’ in the context of the British coal industry as a whole during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries remains a glaring gap in the existing state of our knowledge.’² Since Neville and Benson’s article, there has been scant attention paid to managerial employees in the historiography of the British coal industry. As this initial section makes clear, this stems from the fact that, in many cases, managers have been assumed to be, at best, adjuncts to their employers and, at worst, obliging ‘agents of capital.’

The dominant views of the few, who have applied themselves to the subject of managers in the industry, are best summarised by the following observations made by Brian McCormick in a piece for the *British Journal of Sociology* in 1960, and, the latter, by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska in her Cambridge University doctoral thesis of 1990:

‘Colliery officials strongly identified themselves with their employers. Their individualistic, pro-employer orientation stemmed from the scattered nature of the coal industry, the small size and heterogeneous nature of the managerial unit at collieries, promotion possibilities which broke down group solidarity and the resistance of the coal-owners to trade unionism among their staffs, resistance which often took the form of establishing company unions.’³

One of the many myths of industrial relations in the coalmining industry conjures up the image of colliery managers as local tyrants hand-in-glove with, if not identical to, the hated owners. They are described as bosses whose main motivation was to exploit the mine-workers.⁴

McCormick’s view was not erroneous, in that it recognised the pressures placed on mine management professionals, their isolation and the private colliery companies’ opposition to organised representation for staff. However, it assumed that managers simply complied with

- 1 This comment, made by the President of the Institution of Mining Engineers President (1949–50), was a reference to the background and career path followed by many Scottish mine management professionals, including Gemmell himself: D. C. Gemmell: Presidential address: mining memories, *Transactions of the Institution of Mining Engineers (IME)* 64 (1949–1950), p. 36.
- 2 R. G. Neville/J. Benson: Labour in the coalfields (II). A select critical bibliography, in: *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History* 31 (1975), p. 49.
- 3 B. McCormick: Managerial unionism in the coal industry, in: *British Journal of Sociology* 2 (1960), p. 357.
- 4 I. M. Zweiniger-Bargielowska: Industrial Relationships and Nationalisation in the South Wales Coalmining Industry, Unpublished Cambridge University Ph.D. thesis, 1990, p. 341; I. M. Zweiniger-Bargielowska: Colliery Managers and Nationalism: The Experience in South Wales, in: *Business History*, 34, 4 (1992), pp. 59–78.

their employers and did not voice their concerns or highlight victimisation. It, therefore, perpetuated the general stereotype of managers as vassals to their employers. A number of other historical accounts have noted the isolation of officials and managers, and coal companies' opposition to collective bargaining by staff employees.⁵

Zweiniger-Bargielowska's brief, but significant examination of colliery managers in the South Wales coalfield for the first time challenged some of these assumptions directly, and proffered a more detailed and balanced view of managers in the South Wales coalfield.

The stereotypes of managerial employees in the coal industry, as outlined above, have not been confined to coal mining but have been applied to management employees across British industry. As one study of managerial trade unionism in the energy and power industries noted in 1975: 'Industrial relations literature frequently considers managers to be simply agents of the employer and therefore to be subsumed under the general category of "management"'.⁶ Increasingly, business historians pre-occupied with Chandlerian views of the firm have questioned this approach.⁷ Perhaps understandably, social historians of the workplace and labour historians may have largely chosen to disregard this. However, given the column inches devoted to managerial employees in sociological and industrial relations literature since the 1960s, and more recent resurgent interest amongst historians in white-collar workers, it seems remarkable that so few historians have decided to cast a critical eye over this subject.⁸

- 5 J. Melling: Safety, Supervision and the politics of productivity in the British coalmining industry, 1900–1960, in: J. Melling/A. McKinlay (eds.): *Management, labour and industrial politics in Modern Europe: the quest for productivity*, Cheltenham, 1998, pp. 145–173; P. Ackers: *Colliery Deputies in the British Coal Industry before Nationalization*, in: *International Review of Social History* 39 (1994), pp. 383–414.
- 6 A. J. Arthurs: *Managerial unionism in the coal, steel and electricity supply industries*, unpublished MA dissertation, University of Warwick 1975, p. 1.
- 7 A recent example is: J. Quail: *Visible hands and visible handles: understanding the managerial revolution in the UK*, in: *Journal of Industrial History* (JIH) 5 (2002), pp. 1–20. However, the formative work on the history of British management remains: S. Pollard: *The genesis of modern management. A study of the industrial revolution in Great Britain*, Cambridge 1968. For the pre-eminent analysis of modern management that has shaped much of the literature, see: A. D. Chandler: *The Visible Hand. The Managerial Revolution in American Business*, this edition, Cambridge, MA 2002.
- 8 H. Hartmann: *Managerial Employees-New Participants in Industrial Relations*, in: *British Journal of Industrial Relations* (BJIR) 12 (1974), pp. 57–62; M. P. Fogarty: *The place of managers in industrial democracy*, in: *BJIR* 14 (1976), pp. 119–127; L. Dickens: *Fighting for the Professional Engineer*, in: *Personnel Management* 8 (1976), pp. 18–35; D. Weir: *Radical managerialism: middle managers perceptions of collective bargaining*, in: *BJIR* 14 (1976), pp. 324, 326 and 336; W. R. Garside/H. F. Gospel: *Employers and Managers: Their Organizational Structure and Changing Industrial Strategies*, in: C. J. Wrigley: *A History of British Industrial Relations 1875–1914*, Brighton 1982, pp. 99–115; I. A. Glover/M. P. Kelly: *Engineers in Britain. A Sociological Study of the Engineering Dimension*, London, 1987; I. Glover: *British Management and British History: Assessing the Responsibility of Individuals for Economic Difficulties*, in: *Contemporary British History* 13 (1999), pp. 121–147; C. Wrigley: *From ASSET to ASTMS: An Example of White-Collar Union Growth in the 1960s*, in: *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 7 (1999), pp. 57–74; J. Melling: *Managing the White-Collar Union: Salaried Staff, Trade Union Leadership, and the Politics of Organized Labour in Postwar Britain, c. 1950–1968*, in: *International Review of Social History* 48 (2003), pp. 245–271.

Using evidence from the Scottish coalfields gathered from a wide range of archival and printed sources, along with oral testimony, to examine the role, status, growth and professionalisation of the mining professions, the author's work presents a picture of a far more heterogeneous social grouping with distinctive voices within the narrative of the industry – a flavour of which is provided here.⁹ This paper will illustrate how, prior to nationalisation, most operational level managerial employees had little significant control over developments at their collieries. In spite of this, colliery managers, in particular, bore the statutory responsibility for safety in their pits. Before 1947 – and nationalisation – most were drawn from the ranks of miners, had scant general education and were offered little in the way of structured professional development and technical education.¹⁰ This lack of opportunities limited their labour market mobility and more often than not tied them to their employers for perpetuity.

More generally, this work provides some evidence to ultimately challenge the assumption that by the 1930s British industry was run by 'the visible hand' of employee-managers, and that Britain was fast becoming an advanced professional society.¹¹ There were few colliery companies even amongst the large market leaders that were organised along Chandlerian lines – a fact that was not greatly changed by statutory measures or administrative bodies such as the Coal Mines Reorganisation Commission or the Mines Department, whose emphasis, anyway, was on concentration and competition, rather the internal mechanisms of the firm. Indeed, the author's work argues that this legacy, along with the general lack of investment in managerial employees' skills, was a significant impedance to the infant National Coal Board (NCB) at tactical levels, in particular, as a number of events would illustrate.

Despite their peripheral influence, some mining professionals became vocal critics of the way the industry was being run prior to nationalisation, and of the victimisation experienced at the hands of employers.

The nationalisation of British coal mining 1947 improved the opportunities for managerial employees exponentially, offering them for the first time: formal recognition in the industry's negotiating mechanisms and structured professional development pathways; security of tenure; and vastly improved pay and superannuation arrangements. In addition, Labour Ministers played an influential role in establishing a trade union to represent managerial employees, the British Association of Colliery Management (BACM). However, increasingly the industry's centralised structures – and lack of clarity about the role of differ-

9 For the geography of the Scottish coalfields, see: <http://www.mcpcitz.com>; A. Perchard: *The Mine Management Professions in the Scottish Coal Mining Industry in the Twentieth Century: 'Colliers With a Collar On, Lampeter: 2007* [Forthcoming]; A. Perchard, *The Mine Management Professions and the Dust Problem in the Scottish Coal Mining Industry, c. 1930–1966*, *Scottish Labour History*, 40, (2005), pp. 87–109; A. C. Perchard: *The Mine Management Professions in the Scottish Coal Industry, 1930–1966*, Unpublished University of Strathclyde Ph.D. thesis, 2005.

10 A. C. Perchard: *The Mine Management Professions in the Scottish Coal Industry*, Chapter 2.

11 H. Perkins: *The rise of professional society. England since 1880*, London 1990, pp. 299–307; L. Hannah: *Managerial Innovation and the Rise of the Large-Scale Company in Interwar Britain*, in: *The Economic History Review*, 2nd Series, 27 (1974), pp. 252–270.

ent levels of management – and, in some cases, an unsustainable production culture underpinned by unrealistic centrally devised formulaic targets placed strictures on local management, which could compromise health and safety and prompt confrontation between miners, officials and managers. However, it also reflects on the inherent conservatism exhibited by some sections of this grouping – and the contusions, which arose as a consequence of this within the BACM – illustrated through the media of industrial politics and education. Nevertheless, there were also visible progressive elements amongst their numbers.

Mine management professionals' emergence and growth mimicked the transformation of the industry, though ultimately divesting colliery managers, in particular, of a good deal of their authority.

The “Black Jock” Manager – Challenging the stereotype¹²

The popular contemporary image of the Scottish colliery manager, in particular, was one of a tyrannical ruler, and admittedly, in some cases, not without good reason. The infamy of one of these managers, Mungo Mackay of the Lothian Coal Company, has been immortalised in the recollections of former miners from Newtongrange in Midlothian.¹³ One retired wages clerk from Mackay's personal fiefdom, the Lady Victoria Colliery in Midlothian, described the infamous manager as follows:

Mungo Mackay was the type that demonstrated to the full ‘master and man.’ He was a master's man first and foremost. ‘There were a class which he belonged to, and there was a class that ah belonged tae. He was lord of the manor. Everybody walked in fear and tremblin’ of Mungo Mackay. As ah say, ye didn’t see much of him but ye heard the stories. He really ruled like a king in this village. He was the lord o’ the manor and we were the serfs. He ruled over the village with an iron rod.’¹⁴

Not all MacDougall's correspondents were so unflattering but generally history has not afforded Mungo Mackay a good press. Mackay oversaw every aspect of life in Newtongrange, employing spies and the colliery constabulary to keep him informed and enforce discipline outside the workplace. Miners and their families who fell foul of him could find themselves unemployed and homeless for as minor a misdemeanour as leaving their garden unkempt.¹⁵ Mackay's hegemony was also sustained by his paternal patronage of church,

12 ‘The Manager in the Mining Community’ (1949), Lectures of Professor George Hibberd, Records of the Department of Petroleum and Mining Engineering, University of Strathclyde, OF 34/1/9/1.

13 I. MacDougall: Mungo Mackay and the Green Table. Newtongrange Miners Remember, East Linton 1985; Montagu Wright, Manager at Ollerton Colliery, East Nottinghamshire, provides a similar example in an English coalfield, see: R. J. Waller: *The Dukeries Transformed. The Social and Political Development of a Twentieth-Century Coalfield*, Oxford 1983, various references.

14 Recollections of James Reid, in: *Ibid*, p. 51.

15 *Ibid*; Scottish Mining Museum Bulletin 13 (1984), p. 3; Scottish Mining Museum Bulletin 17 (1985), p. 3; ‘When coal was king and the large coal companies ruled supreme,’ in: Coalface, *The Bulletin of the Scottish Mining Museum* 20 (1986), pp. 3–4.

school board and the Masonic lodge (the latter of which he established), respectively as, Elder, Chairman and Grand Master.¹⁶

Retrospective accounts of 'old-style' managers presented by fellow mining professionals sometimes even tended to sustain this impression of the 'uncrowned kings of the village,' as much as to attempt to illustrate how much colliery management had changed.¹⁷

Infamous examples became legend which duly became stereotype. Thus, this orthodoxy has resounded within histories of the coal industry, not least in the immediate aftermath of nationalisation. The general perception of mine management professionals, received by the public at the time of nationalisation and subsequently reinforced in many histories of the British coal industry, was one of Fifth Columnists, fundamentally opposed to nationalisation and therefore willing to undermine it.¹⁸ Nevertheless, some significant figures within the Labour Party and Clement Attlee's administrations, most notably, Sir Stafford Cripps and Herbert Morrison, were keen to promote a key role for management in the newly nationalised industries.¹⁹ Emmanuel Shinwell, Labour's first post-war Minister of Fuel and Power, declared to the annual general conference of the National Association of Colliery Managers (NACM), the professional association which represented many colliery managers and mining engineers, in 1946:

I recognise, as indeed, I have always recognised since I was first brought into association with the mining industry way back in 1924, the importance of the mine manager and the mine technician in the economic life of the mining industry of this country.²⁰

In a reply to a local Labour branch – who had written complaining about the continued employment of managers left over from the private industry – Shinwell was at pains to reiterate the important role to be played by managers in the nationalised coal industry.²¹ Nev-

16 Scottish Mining Museum Bulletin (1984), p. 3; Scottish Mining Museum Bulletin 17 (1985), p. 3.

17 Sir Andrew Bryan: The Manager of Yesterday and Tomorrow, abstract of an address to the National Coal Board (NCB) Summer School, 10. September 1957, Colliery Guardian, 19. September 1957, p. 346; Gemell: Presidential address: mining memories, p. 37; Hibberd: The Manager in the Mining Community.

18 See following correspondence to Labour's first Minister of Fuel and Power, Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Shinwell MP: Letter from Edwinstowe and District Labour Party, 6. June 1946; letter from Lady Windsor Branch, National Union of Mineworkers, South Wales Area, 4. October 1947; and Northern Echo, 5. October 1946, [UK] National Archives (formerly Public Records Office), POWE 37/47; For historical reiterations in the Scottish coalfields see: Robin Page Arnot: A history of the Scottish Miners. From the earliest times, London 1953, pp. 278–291; L. Cooney/A. Maxwell (eds.): No more bings in Benarty. An account of coal mining in the Benarty Area of Fife, and its influence on the people who lived there, Benarty Mining Heritage Group, Glenrothes 1992, p. 84.

19 Letter from Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Shinwell MP to Edwinstowe and District Labour Party, 25. June 1946, PRO/POWE 37/4; See also: Austen Albu and Linicus' comments cited in N. Tiratsoo/J. Tomlinson: Industrial efficiency and state intervention: Labour 1939–51, London 1993, pp. 48–9; H. Morrison: Socialisation and Transport. The organization of socialised industries with particular reference to the London Passenger Transport Bill, London 1933; G.D.H. Cole: The National Coal Board. Its tasks, organisation and its prospects, London 1948, p. 16.

20 Transactions of the National Association of Colliery Managers (NACM) 44 (1946–47), p. 17.

21 Letter from Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Shinwell MP to Edwinstowe and District Labour Party, 25. June 1946, National Archives [formerly the Public Records Office, Kew, London], POWE 37/4; For more

ertheless, many miners continued to view managers as, 'the same team in different jerseys.'²²

Ultimately, the emergence and growth of the mine management professions followed trends in the development and transformation of the industry.

'Colliers with a collar on': the mine management professions in the Scottish coalfields, 1930–1946

Despite the increasing number of large colliery concerns – and the associated specialisation of managerial functions within these large industrial units – in the British coal mining industry in the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth, much of the production in the industry remained mostly concentrated in the hands of 'atomistic, nineteenth century organisations.'²³ Within smaller concerns, which were particularly prevalent in much of the Scottish coalfield, colliery managers, who typically did not have a share in the company, were – in spite of their statutory responsibility for operations in their colliery – 'essentially technical or under-managers' or 'grievies.'²⁴ Even in the large concerns, which were visibly run by a professional management cadre, colliery managers and other mining professionals were not free from interference and certainly few had any power over major development schemes at their collieries.²⁵

Howard Gospel's view that British firms 'were slower to develop strong internal management hierarchies,' and, 'paid less attention to recruiting and training a professional management hierarchy and to developing organisational structures' was certainly evident in a good many Scottish colliery concerns.²⁶ There were plenty of visible examples of hierarchies but these were neither organised along efficient lines nor were the post-holders always well qualified for their positions. This and the concentration of firms further diluted the authority of

details of this specific case, see: Waller: *The Dukeries Transformed*, pp. 217–223.

22 Cooney/Maxwell: *No more bings in Benarty*, p. 84.

23 R. Church: *The history of the British coal industry*, Vol. 3: 1830–1913; *Victorian Pre-eminence*, Oxford 1986; B. Supple: *The history of the British coal industry*, Vol. 4: 1913–1946: *The Political Economy of Decline*, Oxford 1987, pp. 362–366; B. Elbaum/W. Lazonick (eds.): *The Decline of the British Economy*, Oxford 1986, pp. 2 and 45.

24 'Grieve' is an old Scots term for farm overseers co-opted by nineteenth century Scottish coal masters to refer to their managers, reflecting their limited functions. See Duckham: *The Emergence of the Professional Manager*, pp. 21–38; Church: *history*, p. 463.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 443; B. Supple: *history*, pp. 403–5; Perchard: Ph.D. thesis, pp. 20–145; Zweiniger-Bargielowska: *Industrial Relationships and Nationalisation*, p. 341.

26 H. F. Gospel: *The Management of Labour: Great Britain, the US, and Japan*, in: *Business History* 30 (1988), p. 105; W. R. Garside/H. F. Gospel: *Employers and Managers: Their Organizational Structure and Changing Industrial Strategies*, in: C. J. Wrigley: *A History of British Industrial Relations 1875–1914*, Brighton 1982, pp. 99–115. See also: Quail: *Visible hands and visible handles*, p. 7; Glover/Kelly: *Engineers in Britain*; Glover: *British Management and British History*, pp. 121–147.

individual colliery managers.²⁷ In the majority of cases, the mine management professions were a diligent salariat, whose employers were rarely given to acts of generosity.

There were some notable exceptions to the employee-manager, as the example of Mungo Mackay illustrates. However, one of the few comparative surveys – carried out amongst businessmen across Scottish industry between 1860–1960 – revealed that only 26 % of their sample of managers in the extractive industries became business leaders.²⁸ It also revealed that it was rare for those who did rise to these positions to profit significantly from the firm.²⁹

An estimated 90 % of managerial employees, particularly, colliery managers, in the Scottish coalfield were drawn from the ranks of miners.³⁰ These ‘colliers with a collar on’ generally gained most of their technical knowledge on the job, supplemented by evening classes.³¹ The colliery companies rarely funded or supported in any way this education and training, much to the criticism of the Mines Inspectorate and prominent members of the mining professions.³² There were a few exceptions like the Fife Coal Company Ltd. who operated various scholarships and supported learning schemes for their employees.³³ The Mines Inspectorate and the 1938 Royal Commission on Safety in Coal Mines noted that this gap in technical and academic knowledge was having a deleterious effect on developments and safety in the modern industry.³⁴ This contrasts with the formalised vocational education and training undertaken by aspirant managers in the German and French coalfields but mirrors the skills profile of mine superintendents in the US bituminous coal industry.³⁵

- 27 Ibid. For discussion of ‘managerial labour processes,’ see: H. Braverman: *Labor and Monopoly Capital. The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, New York 1974, p. 267.
- 28 A. Slaven/D. Woon-Kim: *The Origins and Economic and Social Roles of Scottish Business Leaders, 1860–1960*, in: T. M. Devine (ed.): *Scottish Elites. Proceedings of the Scottish Historical Studies Seminar University of Strathclyde 1991–1992*, Edinburgh 1994, Table 1.
- 29 Ibid, pp. 165–168.
- 30 A. M. Bryan: *The recruitment and training of a mining engineer, with special reference to colliery management*, in: *IME* 50 (1941–1942), p. 24; Gemmell: *Presidential address: mining memories*, p. 36; Hibberd: *The Manager in the Mining Community*; R. L. Carvel: *One hundred years in coal. The history of the Alloa Coal Company*, Edinburgh 1944, pp. 130 and 160; Perchard: Ph.D. thesis, pp. 37–38; For British examples: Tailby: *Labour utilization and labour management*, p. 298; Zweiniger-Bargielowska: *Industrial Relationships and Nationalisation*, p. 345; S. Williamson: *Gresford. The Anatomy of a Disaster*, Liverpool 1999, pp. 100–101; J. Bullock: *Them and US*, London 1972, pp. 9–93.
- 31 Gemmell: *Presidential address: mining memories*, p. 36; Perchard: *The mine management professions*, pp. 37–42.
- 32 Bryan: *The recruitment and training*, p. 24; Mines Department, *Reports of H. M. Inspectorate of Mines, Scotland Division (HMIM, SD)*, 1938, p. 82; *Report of the Committee appointed by the University Grants Committee on the Miners’ Welfare Fund*, London 1923, pp. 14–15; *Royal Commission on Safety in Coal Mines (RC) Report*, (1938), (Cmd. 5890), pp. 160–190; *The Mining Electrical Engineer*, journal of the Association of Mining Electrical Engineers (AMEE), 16 (1935), p. 149.
- 33 *Proceedings of the Mining Institute of Scotland* 62 (1946–1947), p. 48; *NACM* 37 (1940), p. 29.
- 34 *RC, Report*, (1938), pp. 160–190; *HMIM, SD*, 1938, p. 82.
- 35 *The qualifications of colliery officials – II*, in: *CG*, 12, September 1930, p. 959; S. Tailby: *Labour utilization and labour management in the British Coalmining Industry, 1900–1940*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Warwick 1990, p. 297; P. V. Fishback: *Soft Coal, Hard Choices. The Economic Welfare of Bituminous Coal Miners, 1890–1930*, New York 1992, p. 49.

The limited skill-set of most managerial employees – and consequently their labour market immobility – apparently suited many of coal owners and boards of directors – whose primary concern was cost-effectiveness – not least because it made managers, on the whole, cheaper, more malleable and dependent on their employers. In some of the more progressive companies this was not always the case. Even in these, the company could avoid the cost of retaining or training engineers by the use of professional consultants.³⁶ Thus, in contrast to the portrayal of many colliery officials as omnipotent, ‘lords of the manor,’ many had little more than the status of overseers or supervisors.

The variation in conditions of employment for colliery officials and relationship with their employers is illustrated in the ensuing paragraphs.

In his presidential address to the 1939 annual conference of the NACM, National President, Major Stanley Walton-Brown, opined that he hoped that the ongoing statutory plans for amalgamations of colliery companies would not, ‘disturb the happy relations between individual owners, agents and managers.’³⁷ His favourable view of relations between management employees and their employers was reflected in the reply to his speech offered by the Managing Director of the Ashington Colliery Company, Ridley Warham, who declared that, ‘coal owners and colliery managers were so united in their interests that they were part and parcel of each other.’³⁸ This was a view which was apparently also shared by Andrew Reis, a Fife Coal Company Agent and Walton-Brown’s predecessor as President of the NACM, who declared in his response to the suggestion put to him – by one of the Royal Commissioners on Safety in Coal Mines [the Rockley Commission] in 1936 – that colliery managers were coerced and in some cases victimised by their employers, that he knew of no such cases.³⁹

However, the following response – from the colliery manager of a Lanarkshire pit in the west of Scotland) – to Reis’ extolling of the, ‘fellowship and camaraderie that existed between managers and agents,’ to the Scottish Branch of the NACM only a few years before suggests that employers’ treatment of managerial employees was less favourable than the latter suggested:

Mr. A. Lawson said he personally had no experience of mine agents, but he had heard them discussed by other managers. If some of the stories he had heard about the treatment meted out to managers by agents were true, then he was glad he had never served under one. It was nonsense to talk of the spirit of comradeship between managers and agents. In some areas, there was good feeling, but in others managers dreaded when agents appeared on the scene. Many a manager never knew what spoke was likely to be applied by an agent to the wheel of any useful work that might be going on at the colliery. Where an agent had authority and control over three or four managers the latter had not the status of colliery managers.

36 A. Jones: The role of the consulting engineer in the electrification of the South Wales coal industry up to about 1926, in: *JIH* 6 (2003), pp. 49–70.

37 NACM 37 (1940), p. 36.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

39 RC, Minutes of Evidence, Vol. II: 19–34, His Majesty’s Stationary Office, London 1936, Qs. 23,483–23,503; 23,689–23,691; 23,851; 23,945–23,973; and 24,118–24,120.

Their status was only a little higher than that of under-managers. Personally, he hoped to be a mine agent some day but if he could not be more humane to the managers under him than some agents he had heard about, then he sincerely trusted that preferment and promotion never come his way. He was glad to notice the criticism of mine agents to which Mr. Reis had specially alluded. It had opened up in a most interesting way the real position of colliery managers at many Scottish collieries.⁴⁰

Lawson's comments were apparently borne out by evidence of victimisation of managers, at the hands of their employers, referred to by a number of the Rockley Commissioners, and by illustrations provided to the commission by Arthur Roberts, the representative of the Colliery Under Managers of Great Britain.⁴¹ One wartime chronicler of the English coalfield of Durham – repeating the comments of a colliery manager – painted a similar picture:

'For large companies, with several pits, were appointing 'agents,' either to superintend various technical aspects of their business, or to co-ordinate the day-to-day working of sub-groups of collieries. Under this system the manager of the mine, while retaining his responsibilities under law, was tending in fact to lose real power and status.'⁴²

These concerns about the constraints placed on managers by owners and Boards of Directors were oft repeated.⁴³ Despite this, the NACM deposition and subsequent evidence to the Rockley Commission gave no inkling of the victimisation of managerial employees.⁴⁴ However, with the exception of Andrew M. Bryan (former Inspector of Mines for Scotland and by that time Professor of Mining at the Royal Technical College, Glasgow), all the other NACM reporters to the Commission were Agents for colliery companies, albeit some like Reis worked for more progressive companies like the Fife Coal Company. Nevertheless, the Rockley Commissioners were evidently not deflected from their own conclusions about the constraints on managers, as this observation suggests:

'The Act [Coal Mines Act, 1911] does not resolve the dilemma of how a manager subject to the orders of a superior can have "control, management and direction" of the mine in the full sense of the words; and, except that there may be more than one agent within this definition, the Act ignores the existence of a hierarchy of officials in a mine-owning company superior to the manager.'⁴⁵

40 Andrew Lawson was at the time the manager of Wm. Baird's Bedlay Colliery in North Lanarkshire, in: NACM 30 (1933), pp. 414–415.

41 RC, Minutes of Evidence, Vol. II: Qs. 18,995–18,998; 19,176–19,186; 23,762–23,774; 23,855–23,856; 23,945–23,973.

42 Mark Benney: *Charity Main: A Coalfield Chronicle*, London 1978, p. 66.

43 NACM 30 (1933), pp. 414–415; NACM 31 (1934), pp. 457–461; NACM 37 (1940), pp. 34–37; Benney: *Charity Main*, p. 74; B. L. Coombes: *These poor hands. The autobiography of a miner working in South Wales*, Cardiff: 2002, p. 86; Williamson: *Gresford*, pp. 114–117; I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska: *Colliery Managers and Nationalisation*, p. 62; Perchard: *The Mine Management Professions*, chapters 2 and 3.

44 RC, Minutes of Evidence, Vol. II: 19–34, Reis, Qs. 23,483–23,503; 23,689–23,691; 23,851; 23,945–23,973; and 24,118–24,120; and Shaw, Q. 25,253; and p. 893–4.

45 The Coal Mines Act, 1911 stipulated that each mine – excluding very small ones – should be managed by a qualified manager. Colliery managers were required to hold a First Class, and under-managers a

In many cases, Scottish managers had little control over developments at their own collieries, not only where it related to the long – term development of the pit but also day-to-day operations.⁴⁶ During the fifteen years preceding nationalisation, Scottish mining professionals became increasingly vocal in their criticisms about both the interference of senior managers, and the funding and planning constraints placed on them by the private colliery companies.⁴⁷ These constraints and the pressures imposed on them by production culture could impact deleteriously on health and safety, and exacerbated existing rifts with labour still further.⁴⁸ Thus to rebut one of Supple's claims and reinforce another, the industry was not so much held back by 'conservatism amongst managers' as much as by, 'short-term attitudes amongst employers.'⁴⁹

Mine management professionals' vulnerability was also well illustrated by their attempts to organise effectively to press for collective agreements on salary, superannuation or conditions of employment.⁵⁰ This was especially true where employers were fundamentally opposed to the combination of mine management professionals.

For example, Scottish colliery managers' below inflation rises in salaries were due in no small part to the repeated defeat of NACM collective claims for its membership throughout the 1920s and 1930s and the assertion and success of employer preference for company bargaining. Colliery employers in the west of Scotland remained fundamentally opposed to collective bargaining, steeling the Glasgow and West of Scotland Chamber of Commerce to resist any moves to entertain sector wide bargaining.⁵¹

In the face of NACM popularity in 1920, Scottish owners had agreed to meet with the NACM to discuss colliery managers' salaries and pensions, despite stiff opposition from some quarters, notably amongst some of the Lanarkshire owners.⁵² However, despite this and the Mining Association of Great Britain's (MAGB) development of a policy for representation of and superannuation for colliery managers, West of Scotland coal owners continued to bitterly oppose these moves.⁵³ Unsurprisingly, negotiations with the newly formed Scottish Under-Managers' Association (SUMA) were conducted in a similar fashion.⁵⁴ By 1922, with the defeat of the miners in the Lockout of the previous year, the owners were able

Second Class, Certificate of Competency issued by the Home Office. RC, Report, p. 148.

46 Perchard: *The Mine Management Professions*, chapter 3.

47 NACM 30 (1933), pp. 415–7; NACM 31 (1934), pp. 455–461; Mining Institute of Scotland 56 (1935–6), p. 125; Interview with G. Gillespie, Netwongrange, Midlothian, 14. August 1999; Supple: history, pp. 403–4.

48 A. Perchard: *The Mine Management Professions and the Dust Problem*.

49 Supple: history, p. 32.

50 McCormick: *Managerial unionism*, p. 357; Melling: *Safety*, p. 59; Zweiniger-Bargielowska: *Colliery Managers and Nationalisation*, pp. 60–62; Zweiniger-Bargielowska: *Industrial Relationships and Nationalisation*, pp. 351–352.

51 Lanarkshire Coal Masters' Association (LCA), minute book, No. 17, 22 September 1931, Glasgow University Business Archive, UGD 159/1/17.

52 Melling: *Safety*, p. 159.

53 Idem.

54 Idem.

to force through wage reductions for managers and under-managers.⁵⁵ Through the late summer months of 1931, the Lanarkshire Coal Masters Association (LCA) imposed further wage reductions on under-managers and oversmen, refusing to meet with their representatives.⁵⁶ They also called a meeting with other coal owner members of the conciliation board to insist that, 'coal owners should be left free to deal with their own officials.'⁵⁷

Nevertheless, minutes of discussions within the meetings of the Coal Owners of Scotland, between 1934 and 1938, do suggest an east-west divide on collective agreements, with west of Scotland coal owners apparently far more belligerent on wages and labour issues than their east coast counterparts.⁵⁸ This may be attributable to a number of factors – age of collieries, increased competition (because of the proliferation of small firms and consequently their reliance on extracting surplus-value from labour and staff in local agreements) and the paucity of new reserves in the west. However coal owner attachment to localised bargaining, and exploitation of attendant weaknesses in colliery officials' isolated bargaining position, was not confined to the west of Scotland, as Zweiniger-Bargielowska's studies of south Wales show.⁵⁹ In one south Wales colliery, employing 150 men, the colliery manager was being paid less than the fireman.⁶⁰

Between 1913 and 1942, it is estimated that colliery managers' wages – in the west of Scotland – rose by 49%, against price increases and average salary rises of 56% and 71% respectively.⁶¹

Guy Routh estimates more generally that average salaries, for a comparable grade of manager in industry, to be in the region of £534 in 1922–3 and £490 in 1938–9.⁶² Routh's examination of managers' earnings in coal, metals and engineering suggests that the highest paid individuals in this sector – from his data set – were earning £1195 in 1924/5.⁶³ If these same estimates are used as a baseline, then the following examples and comparisons suggest that Scottish colliery managers did not see great improvements in their pay over the next twenty-nine years. For example, in July 1942, the Lanarkshire Coalmasters' Association (LCA) recommended that members increase colliery managers salaries by 15 per cent to an absolute maximum of £595 5s.⁶⁴ While the pre-tax salaries of colliery managers at Scotland's

55 *Idem.*

56 LCA, minute book, No. 17, 24. August and 22. September 1931, UGD 159/1/17.

57 *Idem.*

58 Coal Owners of Scotland, minutes, 1934–1938, National Archives of Scotland, CB 7/1/7.

59 Zweiniger-Bargielowska: *Colliery Managers and Nationalisation*, pp. 60–62; Zweiniger-Bargielowska: *Industrial Relationships and Nationalisation*, pp. 351–352.

60 *Ibid.*

61 This estimate has been arrived at using Roy Church's average 1913 figure of £400 per annum for colliery managers against the LCA's recommended absolute maximum increase of colliery managers salaries to £595 5s. Figures for price increases and average salary increases for all wage earners are provided by Harold Perkins: LCA, minute book, No. 19, 13. July 1942, UGD 159/1/19; Church: *history*, p. 463; Perkins: *The rise of professional society*, pp. 270–271.

62 G. Routh, *Occupation and pay in Great Britain 1906–1979* (London, 1980), p.77.

63 *Ibid.*, Appendix E.

64 Lanarkshire Coalmasters' Association [hereafter LCA], Minute book, No.19, 13 July 1942, Glasgow University Business Archive (GUBA), UGD 159/1/19.

largest colliery company, Bairds and Dalmellington Ltd., ranged between £ 415 for the manager of a small colliery and £ 800 for the manager of groups of collieries in 1943.⁶⁵ The manager of one of their Ayrshire collieries employing a workforce of 569, for example, saw his salary rise from £ 675 in 1940 to £ 775 in 1945.⁶⁶ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska has cited a salary range for colliery managers in south Wales in 1944 of between £ 480 per annum, for small collieries, and £ 600 per annum for collieries employing more than 100 men.⁶⁷ By comparison, the Assistant Works Manager of a North of England engineering factory earned £ 950 in 1943 before tax deductions.⁶⁸ Closer to home, salaries for managers of the various departments and shops (including armour, foundry, forge, machine and melting) at William Beardmore's Glasgow Parkhead Works in 1937 ranged from £ 850–£ 1000, with the General Manager of the Works receiving an annual salary of £ 2000.⁶⁹

Scottish owners also rejected any form of collective agreement on colliery managers' superannuation claims, although, a request, in January 1937, from the NACM Scottish Branch for a meeting with coal owners to discuss superannuation of colliery managers, was felt by at least one member of the LCA executive committee to merit favourable consideration.⁷⁰ In February 1939, in response to a letter from the Central Committee of the MAGB, announcing that the MAGB had agreed with the NACM to set up a joint advisory committee to investigate drawing up a model pension plan scheme for managers, the LCA snubbed the MAGB's invitation to send a representative and sought the views of other Scottish coal owners to consolidate their position.⁷¹ Attempts to seek a national solution ultimately collapsed and the matter was referred to the individual colliery companies.⁷² In contrast 70% of south Wales' colliery companies operated superannuation schemes by 1941, although a meeting a year later revealed that some of the largest combines did not.⁷³ In many south Wales' colliery companies, officials were apparently also reliant – in the event of an occupational injury or disease – on ex-gratia payments from their employers.⁷⁴

The impact on the professional association, which had lobbied on behalf of its' members, over terms and conditions of employment, was not favourable either. Despite the fact that the NACM was prevented by its Royal Charter from being a trade union, its' role in these negotiations undoubtedly affected its standing with employers in the Scottish, south Wales, and Durham coalfields. This can be seen from a brief review of membership numbers. By the

65 Bairds and Dalmellington Ltd., Private ledger, No. 2, 31. December 1940–31 December 1945, GUBA, UGD 164/3/1/2.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid, p.63.

68 R. Lewis and R. Stewart: *The Boss. The Life and Times of the British Business Man*, (London, 1958), pp. 244–245.

69 William Beardmore and Company Ltd., Monthly salaries, 1. January 1931–31. December 1937, UGD 100/1/9/5.

70 LCA, minute book, No. 18, 25. January 1937, UGD 159/1/18.

71 LCA, minute book, No. 19, 27. February 1939, UGD 159/1/19.

72 LCA, minute book, No. 19, 28. August 1939, UGD 159/1/19.

73 Zweiniger-Bargielowska: *Industrial Relationships and Nationalisation*, p. 353.

74 Zweiniger-Bargielowska: *Colliery Managers and Nationalisation*, p. 63.

early 1930s, the NACM was haemorrhaging members. Between 1931 and 1934, it lost 482 members (around 36% of the national membership) from the export areas of Scotland, Durham and south Wales alone, with nearly 41% of these losses being in Scotland.⁷⁵ Inevitably, some of these losses arose because of the joint effects of market contraction and concentration in these areas. For example, between 1930 and 1936, Wilson and Clyde, Bairds and Dalmellington, the Fife Coal Company Ltd, Colville's and United Collieries alone ceased operations at 46 collieries.⁷⁶

However, these losses cannot solely be attributed to those exiting the industry. Firstly, the number of mines, registered under Home Office regulations, still considerably exceeded the number of qualified colliery managers and under-managers. Secondly, the numbers of candidates presenting themselves for examination for the statutory qualifications necessary to fill these posts had declined dramatically since the 1920s.⁷⁷

Another possible explanation is that members could not afford the subscription fees in a difficult climate. However, concurrently, membership of both the Mining Institute of Scotland and the Association of Mining Electrical Engineers (AMEE) rose during this period.⁷⁸

A more compelling explanation, given the evidence in the preceding pages about coal owners' opposition to collective bargaining and the fact that the Colliery Under-Managers of Great Britain's membership had suffered a similar appreciable decline, is that both colliery managers and under-managers relinquished membership of these specific professional bodies rather than face the risk of being victimised by their employers. Further supporting evidence for this hypothesis is found in the comments of one member of the Scottish Branch of the NACM, at a meeting in 1940, who suggested that the branch target their recruitment drives at the mining colleges in Kilmarnock, Bathgate and Dunfermline away from the watchful eyes of the colliery companies.⁷⁹

Joint wartime control, from 1942, brought with it some welcome relief for mine management professionals, as well as changed social relations of production, as the following comment from a colliery manager makes clear:

'The war has changed things a bit for us – in some ways better, in some ways worse. But remember first of all that this generation of managers has been trained in a pinch-and-scrape, cost-cutting atmosphere in which we all got a lot of practice in "making do" and no practice at all in being efficient. We'd learnt to rely on cheap labour and plenty of it – and now you make labour expensive and scarce. That's put most of us out to sea. For years we'd only got to put a notice up at the colliery gate to have skilled men walking ten miles to get a job – and now you expect us suddenly to learn to be tactful, to take pit production com-

75 NACM 31 (1934), p. 30; NACM 27 (1940), p. 344.

76 R. Page Arnot: *A history of the Scottish Miners*, London 1955, pp. 311–312.

77 NACM 31 (1934), pp. 19–32; IME 60 (1941–1942), p. 21.

78 *Transactions of the Mining Institute of Scotland* (hereafter *Mining Institute of Scotland*) 4 (1934–1935), p. 2; *Mining Institute of Scotland* 57 (1936–1937), pp. B–28; RC, *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. II, Major E. Ivor David (AMEE), Q. 18, 916–7.

79 NACM 37 (1940), p. 344.

mitted to our confidence, to be patient with trainees. That's the hard part of the war for us. The easy part is, that we've now got a chance to tidy our pits up a bit.'⁸⁰

Reflecting on recent developments in the practice of mine management in 1941, Andrew Bryan noted that, it was 'becoming increasingly difficult for one man to undertake efficiently all the responsibilities of Coal-mine management as now commonly practised.'⁸¹ He might have added, as he indicated in a paper to the Mining Institute of Scotland in 1936, that rarely did managers have a free hand to run their pits or, at times, fulfil their statutory obligations.⁸² That said, the 'black jock' manager did exist, and perhaps more importantly, many mining professionals on the eve of nationalisation remained fairly conservative and patrician in outlook.⁸³

'Captains of their ship'?⁸⁴

The advent of nationalisation signalled vastly improved conditions for mine management professions and gave them opportunities that they had not generally been offered by the private colliery companies.

On the other hand, the ultimate goal for the National Coal Board, and central government, of concentrating production in larger concerns and maximising productivity – underpinned by sophisticated management and accounting information systems and centrally devised targets – put operational and senior levels of management on a collision course. This was exacerbated by: slack initial planning; periodic inconsistent and ill-conceived political intervention; and reliance on inexperienced and unsuitable appointees at tactical and strategic levels of management.

For their part, as the preceding section has shown, most mine management professionals, in Scotland, were generally poorly educated and ill-equipped for spearheading progress in the modern coal industry. On his sick bed in his last illness, Ernest Bevin was alleged as having said to the former miners' leader, Sir William Lawther: 'you were right, Bill, when you said it would take a decade's hard work to nationalise mining – after the Act was signed.'⁸⁵ Of all the tasks facing them, the first Assistant Secretary to the NCB, P. M. D. Roberts, stated that, 'the main task of the Board was then, and is now, to rebuild the industry and to improve technical and general management continually [my emphasis].'⁸⁶

80 Benney, *Charity Main*, p. 73.

81 *IME* 60 (1941–1942), pp. 23–24.

82 *Mining Institute of Scotland* 56 (1935–6), p. 125.

83 H. F. Bulman/R. A. S. Redmayne: *Colliery Working and Management*, London 1912, pp. 54–55; *NACM* 37 (1940), p. 26; Interviews with George Gillespie, and Alistair Moore, Bo'ness, West Lothian, 12. March 2004.

84 G. W. Saunders: 'Management in a Specialist's World,' in: *NACM* 61 (1964), p. 275.

85 This appeared in the NCB's first employee magazine. *Coal*, (May 1951), p. 8.

86 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Contrary to some accounts, there was never a mass exodus of managers from the industry after nationalisation.⁸⁷ In fact, most of the Scottish Divisional Board and Area staffs were former managerial employees of the large coal enterprises like Bairds and Dalmellington, the Fife Coal Company and the Shotts Iron Company.⁸⁸ Unfortunately, this also meant that the industry still retained some of the more reactionary elements amongst the professions who were hostile to the forthcoming changes.

The most reactionary elements were best illustrated by the views of the first National Executive of the newly formed managers' union, the British Association of Colliery Management (BACM). Yet the mine management professions changed visibly over the period, although debates within the BACM illustrated the defining schisms between different groupings, with progressive voices amongst their ranks attempting to drive reform through.

As Andrew Bryan's commentary in 1941 indicated, the modernisation of the coal mining was leading to the increasing specialisation of the industry which was both responsible for the growth of the mine management professions, and, in part, for the gradual dilution of colliery managers' powers. The latter provides some explanation for the contusions, which arose in the managers' union in the nineteen years after nationalisation.

The National Coal Board (NCB) not only introduced formal employment conditions for its employees, including managerial grades, and regimented conciliation and arbitration structures but also clearly defined professional development pathways, which afforded those aspiring to become mining professionals a supported means by which to join the professions. This commitment to training and education was also turned on improving scientific and technical knowledge and competency amongst mine management professionals, and their managerial skills. The latter, in particular, provoked a dismissive response from some quarters of the mine management professions who viewed management education and industrial relations theory with mocking derision. Others, who had long advocated greater professionalisation of mine management, most notably, Andrew (later Sir Andrew) Bryan (Chief Inspector of Mines and, subsequently, Board Member of the NCB in this period) represented a more progressive wing who were keen to see a modernised and well-qualified management cadre.⁸⁹ Furthermore, the development of managerial skills and education were promoted and strongly supported by a number of Ministers, particularly in the Attlee and Wilson administrations.⁹⁰

87 W. Ashworth: *The history of the British coal industry*, Vol. 5: 1946–1982: *The nationalized industry*, Oxford 1986, pp. 32–33; R.S. Halliday: *The disappearing Scottish colliery. A personal view of some aspects of Scotland's Coal Industry since Nationalisation*, Edinburgh 1990, p. 173; This view was initially promulgated by the NCB's Advisory Committee on Organisation [the Fleck Committee], see: NCB: *Report of the Advisory Committee on Organisation*, London 1955, paragraph 109, p. 23.

88 Perchard: Ph.D. thesis, pp. 168–169.

89 Sir A. Bryan: *Sixty Years of Colliery Management*, in: *NACM* 49 (1952–3), p. 81; Sir A. Bryan: *The Renaissance of Management*, in: Sir G. Nott-Bower/R. H. Walkerdine (eds.): *National Coal Board: The First Ten Years*, London 1957, pp. 23–27; Bryan: *The Manager of Yesterday and Tomorrow*, pp. 346–349.

90 Conservative support for management education and professionalisation was far less evident: Anthony Carew: *Labour under the Marshall Plan. The politics of productivity and the marketing of manage-*

Nationalisation also introduced greater investment into the industry, although the competing post-war demands of addressing the balance-of-trade deficit, reconstruction, and the Korean War re-armament, meant that, in practice, the industry was under a great deal of strain and struggled to get the raw materials it needed.⁹¹ Further, most colliery managers, under-managers or engineers – at an operational level – still had little say in how that money was invested.⁹²

One of the failings of the infant NCB – and its architects – was to ensure that the management structures and role of the National Board were clearly defined, as the NCB's 1955 advisory committee on organisation pointed out in their report [the Fleck Report]. This report also criticised the calibre of those managers at Area level (tactical management) – a point that had been made earlier by the NCB and the policy think-tank, the Acton Society Trust.⁹³ At a disaggregated level, the chaos caused by in-experienced staff at a Divisional and Area level could be seen in some of the disastrous decisions made in the Scottish Division of the NCB over new colliery developments, in particular Seafield and Rothes Collieries.⁹⁴ These “white elephants” cost millions and bankrupted the Scottish Division. Furthermore, had local managers and miners, who warned of the inadvisability of sinking the pits at these locations been listened to, then the Scottish coalfields may have been better placed to meet forthcoming challenges.⁹⁵

However, potentially more damaging, in terms of industrial relations (between operational management and senior echelons of the NCB, as well as between managers and miners), occupational health and safety, and the survival of the Scottish coalfields, was the insistence on the wholesale introduction of power-loaded production into all collieries, underpinned by ill-conceived and centrally-devised output targets based on theoretical formulae for optimum potential output. In some parts of the coalfield, this was applied uncritically and ruthlessly by Area officials, who failed to use their initiative to interpret the policy more

ment science, Manchester 1987; Anthony Carew: *The Anglo-American Council on Productivity (1948–1952): The Ideological Roots of the Post-War Debate on Productivity in Britain*, in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 26 (1991), pp. 49–65; David Edgerton: *The ‘White Heat’ Revisited: The British Government and Technology in the 1960s*, in: *Twentieth Century British History* 7 (1996), pp. 53–82; Nick Tiratsoo/Jim Tomlinson: *Industrial efficiency and state intervention: Labour 1939–51*, London 1993; Nick Tiratsoo/Jim Tomlinson: *The Conservatives and industrial efficiency, 1951–64. Thirteen wasted years?*, London 1998; Jim Tomlinson: *Liberty with Order: Conservative Economic Policy, 1951–1964*, in: Martin Francis/Ina Zweiniger Bargielowska (eds.): *The Conservatives and British Society 1880–1990*, Cardiff 1996, pp. 274–288.

91 W. Ashworth: *The history of the British coal industry, Vol. 5: 1946–1982: The nationalised industry*, Oxford 1986; M. Chick: *Industrial policy in Britain 1945–1951. Economic planning, nationalisation and the Labour governments*, Cambridge 1998, pp. 25, 42–43; N. Tiratsoo/J. Tomlinson: *Industrial efficiency and state intervention: Labour 1939–51*, London 1993.

92 Perchard: *The Mine Management Professions*, p. 264.

93 Fleck Report, paragraphs 109, 226–228 and 242, pp. 23, 43 and 45; NCB, *Annual report and accounts, 1948*, p. 109; Acton Society Trust, *Management under Nationalisation*, London 1953, pp. 17–18.

94 Halliday: *The disappearing Scottish colliery*, pp. 49–107; Perchard: *The Mine Management Professions*, pp. 257–277.

95 *Ibid.*

flexibly, bringing them into direct conflict with colliery managements. In some cases, such as at Michael Colliery in Fife, the failure of local management to reach targets resulted in the manager's dismissal.⁹⁶ In others, the pressure on pits united managers and miners in resisting Area managements' attempts to close their colliery. It also had a calamitous impact on health and safety, particularly when it coincided with the period of intensification of productivity drives and the height of the closure programme in the Scottish coalfields, 1958–1963.⁹⁷

However, in spite of the dilution of power away from the colliery into 'managerial labour processes' colliery management still continued to exert some influence on the conduct of industrial relations at a local level.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, this requires two qualifications. Firstly, this was more pointed in the period, 1947–1955 (i.e. before the Divisional, and then, National, Power Loading Agreements came into force). Secondly, these relations were not context-free. Nevertheless, clear differences in management style can be discerned. Certainly a number of authoritarian managers remained in the industry during the infant years of the NCB. In February 1950, the manager of Thinacres Mine had a miner charged with a breach of the peace because he had disobeyed an order.⁹⁹ A year later, the Scottish Divisional Board were given further cause for concern when the manager at Pirnhall Colliery physically assaulted a miner for being off work for some time.¹⁰⁰ The NACM's President at the 1951 too seemed unconvinced that the membership had entered into the spirit of consultation:

With the best intentions in the world, we have not yet touched the fringe of consultation ... Consultation, as I see it, is not something in which one side gives the information and the other receives it ... The idea that consultation should start in London and finish with the Colliery Consultative Committees is not altogether right. It should begin at the coalface and on the "roads", in the shops and offices, and no project, however small, in which orders are going to be given to men and duties allotted to them, should be started without first of all arranging as much consultation as possible between the men on the spot who are actually doing the job.¹⁰¹

The speech was met with considerable animosity from delegates, while the Scottish Division's Labour Director, James Barbour, who was present, declared that progress was being 'retarded' by 'suspicion and fears.'¹⁰²

Despite ongoing wrangles between local consultation committees – on the one hand miners, junior officials and managers – and on the other apparatiks – whether NCB Area

96 Ibid, p. 238.

97 Perchard: *The Mine Management Professions and The Dust Problem*, pp. 100 and 103; Perchard: *The Mine Management Professions in the Scottish Coal Industry*, chapters 5 and 7.

98 R. Church/Q. Outram: *Strikes and Solidarity. Coalfield conflict in Britain 1889–1966*, Cambridge 1998, pp. 196–239; W.H. Scott/E. Mumford/I.C. McGivering/J.M. Kirby: *Coal and Conflict. A study of industrial relations at collieries*, Liverpool 1963; T.T. Paterson/F.J. Willets: Unofficial strike, in: *The Sociological Review* 10 (1951), pp. 57–94.

99 National Coal Board (NCB), Scottish Division (SD), Executive Committee (EC), minutes, 28. February 1950, National Archives of Scotland, CB 42/2.

100 NCB, SD, EC, minutes, 13. February 1951, CB 42/3.

101 NACM 49 (1953), p. 7.

102 Ibid, p. 20.

and Divisional officials or full-time trade union officers – over control of arbitration and consultation, managers' approaches developed considerably.¹⁰³ Some inevitably remained either dogmatically patrician. Others were evidently committed to consultation and could see the benefits to be gained from maintaining good industrial relations. Nevertheless, their locus was rarely unencumbered, and increasingly Board prerogatives over production and mechanisation put pressure on local industrial politics. As with health and safety, industrial relations became a colliery lottery. Managers at collieries with a secure future – and, often, easier geological conditions which made them better suited to power loading applications – were usually better able to enjoy stable or civil relations with the rest of the colliery employees. Conversely, managers at those collieries – because of their age or physical conditions – who struggled to meet production targets and/or were under threat of closure often experienced more fractious relations with miners. Although occasionally, when faced with bullish Area management, these circumstances united mineworkers, officials and mineworkers in their purpose.

The praxis of occupational health and safety, and mine management professionals' involvement, similarly varied. As a number of discrete pieces of work by the author on the subject have already shown, managers' knowledge and deployment of strategies for tackling dust related pulmonary diseases was circumscribed initially by their poor education and training, and the collusion of the coal owners, certain scientists and medics in fostering an orthodoxy which refuted the impact of coal-dust pneumoconiosis in particular.¹⁰⁴ The Mines Inspectorate, scientists, medics, trade unions, mine management professionals and the NCB did apply themselves to tackling the shocking record of mortality and mutilation in the coal industry. Clearly, there were some managers, as well as trade unionists, junior officials and miners, who flouted health and safety regulations. However, by far the most dangerous threat to occupational health and safety was posed by the productivity drives and closure programmes from the late 1950s onwards.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, often colliery managers and under-managers were often unfairly prosecuted – because of their statutory safety responsibilities – for mistakes made by staff at Area and Sub-Area level, although to a certain degree this was partially rectified with the introduction of the Mines and Quarries Act of 1954.¹⁰⁶

The contusions within the mine management professions between reformers, and conservatives and the different branches of the professions were well illustrated by informal caucuses in BACM. The first National Executive – in particular, the President and Secretary, Major Stanley Walton-Brown and Major Robert Anderson – was largely staffed by men who typified the minority of stakeholder-managers under private ownership (those with a sizeable

103 Perchard: Ph.D. thesis, chapter 6.

104 Perchard: *The Mine Management Professions and the Dust Problem*; Perchard: *A limited knowledge of deadly dust: employers, scientists and mining education in Scotland, 1911–1946*, Paper to the Working with Dust: Health, Dust and Diseases in the History of Occupational Health Conference, Centre for Medical History, University of Exeter, 10.–12. April 2006.

105 Perchard: *The Mine Management Professions and the Dust Problem*; Perchard: *The Mine Management Professions*, chapter 7.

106 *Idem*.

share-holding in the private companies and who had by and large not come up from the ranks) and were hostile to nationalisation. They were replaced by the late 1950s with a very different breed of mining professional. The newly elected President and Secretary, Jim Bullock and George Tyler, were the sons of miners and had worked as miners. Furthermore, they both supported nationalisation and were Labour Party members.¹⁰⁷ Under Bullock and Tyler, the BACM developed a stridently independent stance as a managerial trade union. In contrast, their predecessors had struggled to understand the status of managers within the NCB, vacillating between private deference and public petulance. However, the divisions within the union were most visibly expressed when Bullock and Tyler attempted to affiliate the BACM to the TUC and to reform policy making bodies within the union to give greater representation to surveyors, and mining electrical and mechanical engineers. In both cases, they faced a substantive and vocal opposition, particularly amongst colliery managers and mining engineers, who dominated the Union's National Executive and National Joint Council. There were also differences between the national leadership and local branches, most notably the Scottish and south Wales branches, over the practice of the Union's pledge not to do the work of other grades of employees in the event of a strike.

The mine management professions emerged as an important voice within the nationalised industry, as the NCB's artificers had intended. Further, they profited from greatly improved terms and conditions of employment, and from a comprehensive programme of professional development – so much so that mining professionals declared themselves with pride to be 'NCB men.'¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, changed business processes and organisation within the industry saw the gradual dilution of the powers of operational management and concurrently the strengthening of 'managerial labour processes.' This diminution in colliery managers' status, inadequacies in the form and substance of managerial hierarchies, and the approach of some tactical managers in the pursuit of strategic managerial prerogatives, caused understandable friction between colliery management and the rest of the colliery workforce, on the one hand other, and senior managers, on the other. The production drives and closure programmes of the period, 1958–1963, exacerbated differences between local and area management, and could also compromise health and safety and undermine industrial relations at a local level. That said, some members of the professions attempted to resist changes and the differences between branches of the professions and wings of the union was illustrated by the immediate reaction to nationalisation and attempts to reform union structures and affiliate BACM to the TUC.

107 J. Bullock: *Them and US*, London 1972; BACM, *The National News Letter*, 1, II, 46, March 1959, p. 10; For similar managers, see: Obituary: Phillip Weekes: Humane National Coal Bard area manager who clashed with Ian MacGregor over the handling of the miners' strike in Wales, *The Times*, 3. July 2003, p. 29; T. Ellis: *After The Dust Has Settled*. The autobiography of Tom Ellis, Wrexham 2004.

108 Interviews with: Jim Bowden, Bridge of Allan, Stirlingshire, 9. August 2003; Jim Dickson, Kirkintilloch, East Dunbartonshire, 14. August 2003; Frank Gibb, Cowdenbeath, Fife, 24. August 2003; Bill Marshall, Kirkcaldy, Fife, 21. April 2004; and Alistair Moore.

Conclusion

This paper has, by necessity, swept over this broad subject, which is dealt with in all its complexity in the author's forthcoming monograph and associated work. It illustrates the trajectory of the emergence, growth and development of the mine management professions in Scotland, alongside the transformation of the industry. It shows that, while some examples of the 'black jock' manager existed, the general impression of mine management professions is of a much more diffuse grouping. Similarly prior to nationalisation, while managers were often caught between 'rocks and hard masters,' they were conscious social actors who could be vocally critical of the conduct of their employers and of their treatment at the hands of coal owners.¹⁰⁹ If the technical and business modernisation of the industry was critical to the rise and growth of the mine management professions, then their professionalisation and improved status owed much to nationalisation and its architects. Ultimately, though it raised the profile of the specialised branches of the professions, it diluted the powers of the powers of colliery managers. Despite the metamorphosis of these groupings, most Scottish mine management professionals remained intrinsically linked to the communities from which they were drawn as, 'colliers with a collar on.'

109 G.M. Maxwell: *Between Rocks and Hard Masters: A Review of Mine Management in Scotland c. 1800–1960*, unpublished paper by a former Emeritus Professor of mining at Strathclyde (2000).