

North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers
Nicholas Wood Memorial Library

Miners housing

a resource guide

These cottages were built of stone plastered with lime, with blue slate roofs "as like to one another as so many soldiers" [1840] - Atkinson, 44

Colliery houses were overcrowded and lacked adequate sanitation [1850s] - Colls, 263

Drainage was poor, usually an open channel between rows, and easily blocked [1850s] - Colls, 263

The more fortunate [lead] miners bought or leased a few acres of ground on which they built or rented a cottage [19th Century] - Burt, 176

The greater number of lead miners lived in scattered cottages, not gathered in villages as in the Durham coalfields [19th Century] - Hunt, 139

In districts where development has been exceedingly rapid, such as in South Wales and in South Yorkshire, building enterprise has hopelessly failed and a serious house famine has resulted [1910s] - Jevons, 637

We find nearly everywhere a shortage of accommodation and overcrowding, obsolete houses and a general state of disrepair [1940s] - Zweig, 141

Introduction

The Institute Library has no comprehensive material on miners housing, but information can be gathered from a variety of sources. Other libraries and archives will have other material, including economic and social history journals with useful articles.

Books

Goodchild, J. *Colliers' housing in the West Riding Coalfield* in *British Mining: memoirs of the Northern Mine Research Society* (96), 2013

Lyall, A. *Model housing for Prestongrange miners*. 2000

Also online at: <http://www.prestoungrange.org/core-files/archive/housing.pdf>

Other books - historical or sociological - have sections or a few pages on housing conditions:

Atkinson, F. *The Great Northern coalfield, 1700-1900*. 1968

Benson, J. *British coalminers in the Nineteenth Century*. 1980

Bulman, H. F. *Coal mining and the coal miner*. 1920 Chapter on housing.

Bulmer, M. (Ed) *Mining and social change: Durham County in the twentieth century*. 1978. Includes a case study on housing.

Burt, R *The British lead mining industry*. 1984

Colls, R. *The pitmen of the northern coalfield: work, culture and protest, 1790-1850*. 1987

Davison, J. *Northumberland miners: 1919-1939*. 1973
 Dennis, N. *Coal is our life: an analysis of a Yorkshire mining community*. 1956
 Emery, N. *The Coalminers of Durham*. 2nd ed. 2009
 English Heritage *Alston Moor, Cumbria: buildings in a North Pennine landscape*. 2013.
 Flinn, M. *History of the British coal industry v2 1700-1830*. 1984
 Goodchild, J. *Pope & Pearson and Silkstone buildings : the origins of a West Riding colliery and colliery community*, 1977
 Hunt, C. J. *The lead miners of the Northern Pennines in the eighteenth and nineteenth century*. 1984
 Hyslop, J. *Colliery management*. 2nd ed. 1876
 Jevons, H.S. *The British coal trade*. 1920, reprinted 1969.
 Leifchild, J. R. *Our coal and our coal-pits; the people in them and the scenes around them*. 3rd 1968 (reprint of 1856 2nd ed).
 Turnbull, L. *Coals from Newcastle. An introduction to the Northumberland and Durham coalfield*. 2009
 Watkins, H.M. *Coal and men: an economic and social study of the British and American coalfields*. 1934
 Zweig, F. *Men in the pits*. 1948

Books of old photos, local history and reminiscence books may mention housing, eg
 Turnbull, L. *Chopwell's story*. 1979

Thesis

Brown, H.D. *The colliery cottage 1830-1915, the great northern coalfield*. PhD thesis. University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Department of Architecture. 1988.
 Online at <https://theses.ncl.ac.uk/dspace/handle/10443/452>

Bibliography

Hall, R. de Z. *A bibliography on vernacular architecture*. 1972
 A few items on miners housing.

Designs

Griffin, C.P. Three generations of miners' housing at Moira, Leicestershire, 1811-1934
Industrial archaeology review, **1** 1977, 276-282

Harper, John Povey *Set of designs for colliery houses, for workmen and officials* 190?

Mitton, H.E. Miners' dwelling-houses *Transactions - Institution of Mining Engineers*. **71** 1925-6, 417-427; Discussion **72** 314-6

Perkin, J. Colliery cottages and surface buildings *Transactions - National Association of Colliery Managers* **9** 1911-12, 369-381

White, Joseph H. Houses for mining towns *Transactions - Institution of Mining Engineers* **49** 1915, 855

Government reports

Board of Trade *Cost of living of the working classes. Report of an enquiry by the Board of Trade into working class rents, housing and retail prices, together with the standard rates of wages prevailing in certain occupations in the principal industrial towns of the United Kingdom*.

1908.

Includes colliery towns.

Ministry of Fuel and Power Coalfields regional survey 10 parts, 1945-6 Has a section on housing.

Report by the Commissioner appointed under the provisions of the Act 5,6 Vict c.99, [Mines and Collieries Act 1842] to inquire into the operation of that act, and into the state of the population of the mining districts. Annual, 1850-1859.

[Also 1859 edition in *Tracts* **64**, 220-283] Some housing information.

Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the condition of all mines in Great Britain to which the provisions of the act 23 & 24 Vict. Cap. 151 [Mines Act 1860] do not apply, with reference to the health and safety of persons employed in such mines; with appendices. 1864 [Kinnaird Commission] About mines for minerals other than coal. The *Epitome of Evidence* has a number of sections on Dwellings.

Royal Commission on the Coal Industry [Sankey Commission], 3 vols. 1918-19.

Vol II *Reports and Minutes of Evidence of the Second Stage of the Inquiry* also online at <http://tinyurl.com/RC1919v2>

Report of the Royal Commission on the Coal Industry. 1925

Includes housing conditions, costs, lodgers, rents, number per dwelling.

Vol3 Appendix 18 has statistics.

Local Government Board *Dr L.W. Darra Mair's report to the Local Government Board on the sanitary circumstances of the Whickham urban district, with special reference to its housing accommodation generally and to certain back-to-back houses at Marley Hill in particular.*

(Reports of medical inspectors of the Local Government Board; no. 262) 1907

Statistics

Royal Commission on the Coal Industry [Sankey Commission]. 1918-9 Vol.3 Appendix 72

Royal Commission on the Coal Industry. 1925 Vol.3 Appendix 18

Steam Collieries Defence Association *Wages and trade customs* [1873, 1875 and committee minutes 1873-1880]

Some statistics for Northumberland

NEIMME archives

Currently there is no online access to the archives lists, so you will need to contact the Library for assistance.

Examples:

[Watson Collection](#)

NRO 3410/Wat/3/50

Newfield Byers Green Colliery 1832 - 1854.

- Elevations of Pitman's houses, Sept 1839.
- Specifications, estimate and plan for masonry work on the new pitman's houses at Newfield, Sept 1839.

NRO 3410/Wat/3/60/73-79

Valuations of coal, stock, materials, engines and workmen's houses at Manor Wallsend. 1820?

NRO 3410/Wat/3/4/76

Particulars of workmen's houses at Bigges Main. 1808

Forster Collection

NRO 3410/For/1/16/8

Estimate of costs for building double pitman's houses with ground plan and elevation, no scale. 1817?

NRO 3410/For/3/10/141

Report to Messrs Chartes and Youll including details of the lease, rents, shafts, engines, sections of seams, previous and current workings, workmen's housing, estimated future working costs and recommended borings, by Thomas G. Hurst 1870?

Grand Allies Collection

NRO 3410/GA JBA/1/889

Letter from JB Atkinson to RH Longbotham, 13 June 1888, re the cost of housing.

Websites

Housing and Living Conditions - Scottish mining website

<http://www.scottishmining.co.uk/4.html>

History - Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association

<http://www.durhamhomes.org.uk/about-us/our-history/>

Miners Housing in Stoke-on-Trent

<http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/coalface/Housing/housing1947a.htm>