



“The Winder”

Jeff Kibby

My grandfather, George Kibby, lived at Pentrepiod near Penyfan Pond. He worked at the Navigation Colliery and was injured by a rockfall on 21st June 1928.

Like many sons, my father, Harry, left school and joined his father in the same pit. This would have been in the mid 1920's. Unfortunately he contracted scarlet fever, then came the 1926 General Strike and finally a large ingress of water into

underground workings causing severe flooding, so his employment in the early years of his mining career was curtailed somewhat.

He continued working at the Navigation and began driving an underground haulage engine. In 1950 he started driving the winding engine and continued working as a winder until the colliery closed in 1967. There were three winders, plus a relief, working at the Navigation, they worked a three-shift system.

There was always a winder there, 24 hours a day 365, days a year, but they had one weekend off in the three week cycle between finishing the night shift and starting the day shift.

The north shaft and winder was the one that was mainly used for men and coal, this was the downcast shaft, the south shaft was the up-cast shaft and was very unpleasant to be in with the foul air coming up from underground. The north winder was built by a firm from Bolton, it had two cylinders and a very unusual cable drum, it was known as a spiral drum which tapered out on each side from the centre, so the cages were travelling at slightly different speeds in the shaft. The south cylinder piston had a worm drive connected to it, this worked a large dial with a pointer hand on it which indicated where the cages were in the shaft, there were various landings in the shaft other than the pit bottom. The winder and the Banksman communicated to each other by a series of bell signals.

