

Mining and Industry in Fauldhouse during the First World War

‘Some strife is going on at Knowton Colliery just now. The “kleek”* seems to have been bad in the early part of the day, and it is supposed the men came home on Monday on that account. The men held a meeting at the pit on Tuesday morning, when their agent Mr Gilbert, was present, and promised to come back and see them on Friday, when it is hoped a settlement will be come to.’

West Lothian Courier 23 Oct 1914

*('...*the cleek* in course of time came to mean the whole organisation for raising the coal from a colliery. Hence *stopping the cleek* . . . i.e. causing an interruption of the output of the coal.' - Scottish National Dictionary)

‘Fatal Mining Accident

On Thursday last while Henry Hardie, sixteen years of age, a clipper [labourer underground] residing at 9 Victoria Buildings, Fauldhouse, was at his work in the main coal section of No. 1 Greenrigg Colliery, he was struck and knocked down by a rake of runaway hutches of coal. He sustained very severe injuries to the head, and was rendered unconscious. He was conveyed to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary by the 1 p.m. train, where, unfortunately he died next morning at nine o'clock.’

Midlothian Advertiser 7 May 1915

‘Serious Pit Accident

While at work on Monday in Greenrigg Colliery a serious accident happened to a man named Robert Barrie, residing at Sheephousehill, Fauldhouse. It appears that without warning the roof had given way where he was working, and severely crushed him. It is feared there are also internal injuries. He was immediately attended by Dr Gilchrist, and conveyed to his home in the ambulance wagon.’

Midlothian Advertiser 28 May 1915

‘Accident to Colliery Engineer

On Wednesday afternoon, Mr Hugh Martin, colliery engineer, Carluke, while engaged at the erection of a new coal-washing plant at Messrs Barr and Thornton’s Fauldhouse Colliery, met with a serious accident. Mr Martin fell from a height of 30 feet, and, coming in contact with a waggon, he sustained severe injuries to the head. He was removed to his house in Carluke in an unconscious condition.’

Midlothian Advertiser 28 May 1915

‘Accident

A burning accident occurred at Braehead Colliery, Fauldhouse, on Wednesday morning, when Robert Burke, engineman at the above pit, had his leg severely scalded by an escape of steam from a pipe. He is progressing favourably.’

Midlothian Advertiser 25 Jun 1915

‘Fatal Pit Accidents

Two fatalities occurred in Fauldhouse district at the week-end. Joseph Allan, a young married man residing at East Benhar, went to drown a cat in a disused pit shaft near there. Owing to the recent frost the ground round the pit mouth was in a crumbling condition, and gave way beneath him, shooting him into the shaft, which is 75 fathoms deep and about half full of water. The

body has not yet been recovered. While engaged at his work as drawer in Greenrigg Colliery, John McGillivray (31), United Buildings, Fauldhouse, was killed by a fall from the roof.
Midlothian Advertiser 1 Feb 18

‘Woman Worker’s death at Fauldhouse

At Linlithgow Sheriff Court on Tuesday – before Sheriff Moffatt and a jury – evidence was heard at some length concerning the death of Mary Elizabeth McCann, pithead-worker, Fauldhouse, which occurred on the 14th December as the result of an accident at Greenrigg Colliery, Fauldhouse, two days previously. It appears that a number of wagons were standing on an incline near to the chute where they were to be loaded with coal. An additional wagon was shunted into the siding, and it collided with the stationary wagons, and caused them to be set in motion, with the result that they passed beyond the chute, and had to be replaced in a position where they could receive coal. The foreman, according to the evidence, called for all hands to assist in pushing back the first wagon, and the deceased girl, along with other workers, both male and female, undertook the work. Meanwhile the waggon, which had set the others in motion began to move and colliding with the waggon which the men and women were pushing, knocked them all to the ground. Unfortunately, the wheels passed over the girl McCann, and she died two days afterwards in the infirmary, to which she was removed.

It was pointed out that the employment of women in pushing wagons was contrary to the Coal Mines Act, and after the jury had been addressed by Mr Joseph Sullivan, miners’ agent (Lanarkshire) for the relatives, and by Mr John Dundas, solicitor, Glasgow, for the employers, the jury brought in a verdict with the following addition: - “We further find that her death was caused when she was pushing waggons, contrary to the Coal Mines Act, 1911, having been sent there by the foreman”.

Linlithgow Gazette 31 Jan 19