appear side-by-side but in the middle types of the reign (BEH types E and F
c. 1050-56) forms predominate in which the vocalic glide is represented by I
instead of G; see SCRI 28, Index of Personal Names, 2. Aithel1.

24. There is a general tendency in late OE for I to disappear when it occurs
between consonants; see O. von Feilitzen, The Pre-Conquest Personal Names
of Domesday Book (at supra), 92.

25. B. E. Hildebrand, op. cit. no. 925-6.

26. Ibid. nos. 892, 894; SCRI 13, no. 951.

27. A slightly different local development appears in names at western mints such
as Chester, Gloucester, and Hereford where forms in AELE*, ELE* are
found, earliest at Chester c. 980.

The material in this paper was originally part of the introduction to my
thesis Moneyers of the Late Anglo-Saxon Coinage 1016-1042 (Nottingham, 1981).
I am grateful to Cecil Clark, Fran Colman, Stewart Lyon and Peter McClure
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material and suggestions for its presentation here.

COAL-MINING NAMES IN THE NORTH-EAST OF ENGLAND

When an eighteenth or early nineteenth century colliery viewer (the overseer of
one or more collieries) wished to know the problems and potentialities of a proposed
'new winning' there was little he could do other than 'set away an exploring drift',
that is, get his hewers to drive an exploratory tunnel into the coal to find out what lay
beyond the face. This article will be like a viewer's preliminary exploring drift into
the thick seam of mining nomenclature in the North-East of England.

The sources I have investigated are:

1) a slim file of papers called Post Dissolution Loose Documents Box 10 (Dean
and Chapter Archives, Prior's Kitchen, Durham Cathedral). This is the sole source
of names before 1700.

2) The Catalogue of Plans of Abandoned Coal Mines (published by the National
Coal Board, Durham Division, 1958) which is regularly updated. This is a very
useful source of pit-names, but unfortunately the only dates one can be sure of
finding are the years when the pits ceased working. Information as to when the
workings were started is never given; so the period during which the names were in
active use cannot be discovered from this source.

3) The Library of the North-East Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineering
in Newcastle upon Tyne. It would take years to explore the vast quantities of maps,
plans, view books, diaries and legal documents in this collection, but my own limited
search suggests that almost everything discoverable about the names connected with
coal-mining in the North-East is to be found there.

4) The Northumberland County Record Office, Gosforth.

5) Newcastle-upon-Tyne City Library.

The first main distinction to be made is between the use of the words 'colliery'
and 'pit' and thus of the names they generate. 'Colliery' carried a range of meanings
in the eighteenth century from 'the right to work coal', through 'coal-working'
(potential or actual) to the physical workings themselves consisting of pits, shafts,
drives, engines, etc. This is perhaps best illustrated by quotation:

'I desire to treat for the Colliery of Heaton'
(William Coatsworth writing to the Mayor of Newcastle, January 18th 1717); 1

'An Acco5 of what pits may be sunk annually in Heaton Colliery from 25th March
1726'; 2

'A PLAN being a Side Plan of the Present Winning of the South End of Heaton
Colliery... Knob & Thistle Pits'.
(Thomas Barnes's View Book 1736). 3

As the right to work coal was normally governed by the lease by a landowner of a
defined area of land, a colliery-name almost invariably consists of a pre-existing
place-name plus 'Colliery'. The names are often those of parishes (Heaton,
Kimbleworth, Lanchester), townships (Coundon Grange, Heworth), or minor surface
names (Prior Close 1627, Tanfield Moor Edge [almost invariably abbreviated to TME] 18th).
Only occasionally are they named after their owners (The Deane and Chapters
Colliery 1692-8). A colliery-name is thus a name given to all the workings on and
under a defined area of land and is normally retained from the moment when planning the workings starts until the final abandonment, no matter what the actual physical state of the working.

The naming of individual pits is a much more complicated matter. To begin with, though pits must have been given individual names — or at least descriptions — from the time when more than one pit was sunk in an area covered by one surface place-name, these names are not recorded in any documents before 1692, probably because these names were only of interest to the people who were concerned with the actual working of the pits, the viewers and pitmen. Lawyers and owners whose documents survive from an earlier period were only concerned to identify whole collieries, e.g. Fenkelee & Prior Close Colliery 1627.

The earliest documents referring to the working of pits, rather than their ownership, are in the Post Dissolution Loose Documents. By 1624, and as they refer only to the pits in the parish of Jarrow 1692-9, there is no way of knowing how typical they are of the naming practices of the North-East as a whole, or of the earlier period of pit-naming in general. They certainly do not reflect most of the commonest naming practices of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though the kinds of naming in them never entirely died out. We seem to catch the naming process at a time when it is just on the point of crystallising from descriptive phrases into genuine place-names: The Deane and Chapters Colliery in Jarrow parish, the Dean and Chapter Colliery at Howworth Swards, the Coale pits on Howworth Swards, Heworth more Collyarv, Jarroo Colliery, The Swards Colliery, all 1692-8 and all referring to the same workings. So also with individual pit-names: Coales wrought near Gateshead Road... in the dean and chaftra liberty 1692; street pit and Stobb pit 1699.

Many of the pit-names in this source, like the above, derive from ordinary place-names: Quarry pit, well pit, Ridding pit, Robson's House End pit, Snowdon's house End pit. Others appear to derive from personal names: Heppleston pit, Ramsays pit, woolfes pit (?). Others derive from the names of the seams that the pits worked: The Maine Colae pit, the first three Quarter Cole Pit, the New three quarter Cole pit (all 1692). The latter names come from the practice of naming seams by their thickness in fractions (more rarely multiples) of a yard.

The above three modes of naming continued to generate names in the succeeding centuries, but during the first half of the eighteenth century new fashions of naming arose which generated pit-names even more prolifically. Two of these fashions seem to have more in common with the naming of ships than with the naming of places. They tend toward the arbitrary rather than the descriptive, and insofar as they are descriptive at all, they are descriptive of the states of mind of the givers of names rather than of the pits themselves. (All the names in this section are to be found in the Catalogue of Plans of Abandoned Coal Mines, see above, and thus, unfortunately, the dates of their use cannot be given without further research. The lists in the catalogue are arranged alphabetically and are cross-referenced from pit to colliery; so the names themselves are as good a source-reference as page-numbers.)

The most prolific of these new fashions was the practice of naming pits with abstract nouns indicative of the aspirations (or fears) of the namers. (Who were they? Owners? Lessees? Viewers? Pitmen? The only time I have come across someone at the actual point of naming, it was a viewer — see below.) Generally these names indicate optimism: Hope, Providence, Delight, Endeavour, Vigour, Success, Good Luck, Venture. Others suggest more ambivalent feelings: Chance, Speculation.
There are also a large number of pit-names whose origins I can as yet only guess at. Cuddy Pit presumably derives from the name Cuthbert, but it seems more likely to refer to the pet-name for pit ponies, otherwise called 'Galloways,' than from the patron saint of the North. Arnt, Blue, Bone, Cellar, Green, Loud, Straightneck, Virgin, and Wham are but a few examples of pit-names whose origins could only be discovered by further research.

Another aspect of mining-names that seems to be worth exploring is that of names for underground features, but as yet I have looked only at the underground names of one colliery, Heaton in Northumberland, as recorded by the Viewer, John Biddle, in the diary he kept from 1807 to 1821; and I have no way of knowing how typical these names are of other places and times. As with the early pit-names, it is difficult to decide where descriptive phrases crystallise into genuine place-names. This may be illustrated by a selection of the main types of names in the colliery. The colliery was worked by the 'board and pillar' method of working, in which the term 'board' was given to each cutting in the direction of the advance into the coal-face. These were joined by narrower passages or 'headways.' On occasions it was necessary to indicate a particular board or passage, the West Back Narrow Board in the D pit 1810, the W Boards 1810, East Boards in Mid-Pit Dip 1814, Innermost West Board 1814, the Bie way Board 1816, the Galloping Board 1820 (note that advanced space). Similarly a 'drift' was a passage driven horizontally into the stratum: The West exploring Drift 1810, 1811, The Stone Drift 1810-13 (i.e. one driven into stone not coal), Old Pit North exploring drift 1814, The East Water Level Drift 1814, Barrier Drift 1814 (a barrier of coal was left between the workings and 'waste,' or deserted workings, to prevent the water from the waste flooding in); The Regent exploring Drift 1814, The Wellington Drift 1815 (presumably the year explains the name), The Stable Drift 1815 (from the stable where the horses were kept), the Bie way Chance Drift 1818 (from the Chance Pit). 'Way,' presumably in senses parallel to those found in surface place-names, is another productive element: Canopies way in D pit 1810, the S way S 1810, E pit SE way 1810, NE way Far Pit 1810, Rolly way 1811 ('Rollies' were trucks for carrying coves of coal), the Bie way (sic) 1812, Misfortune Way 1820, Endeavour Way 1820, The Galloping Board way 1820.

Board, Way and Drift are the elements most productive of underground place-names. Others, more briefly, are: Crane, a hoist used to lift coves from the strata to the rollies, and thus used of the junction between the branch railways and horse roads in a pit (The old — 1813, Gibson's — 1816); Dyke, a fault interrupting the working of a seam, (Thistle Pit — 3 fathom = 10 fathoms); Headway (see above) (the NE — 1812, The Stable — 1815); Mothergate, roughly an underground main road (The West — 1810, Old Pit — 1816); Staple, a pillar of coal left to support the weight of the overlying strata (Gardiner's — 1821); Waste, deserted workings (The Old — 1807, Old Heaton — 1807, The drowned — 1811); Winning, a place where coal was won (The North — 1811).

Twice in Heaton Colliery we actually get a glimpse of a place-name evolving. John Biddle records in his diary the great disaster that happened at five o'clock in the morning of 3rd May 1815, when the long-feared accidental holing into Heaton Old Waste occurred in the Stable Drift. The accumulated water of decades burst in and mightily force. The lucky were drowned within minutes; the unlucky escaped to the higher workings around Gibson's Crane where they died a slower death. 75 men and boys (including a 'very little boy') perished. Biddle did what he could to save them, but was to no avail. It was not until 9th February 1819 that Biddle, having 'set away the back Chance Drift,' went on to explore 'the waste where the accident happened.'

COAL-MINING NAMES IN THE NORTH-EAST OF ENGLAND

Extracts from the diary reveal the evolution of its eventual name:

4th May 1819

'I could not examine the fracture where the water burst in at the misfortune. It is in the face of a Single Board which had been worn out and put a few yards down to the E and the misfortune Drift had cut a back [i.e. a crack in the stratum, without vertical displacement] which ran into the face of this board. Had the Drift been a yard to the E and the accident would not have happened'.

6th January 1820

'Misfortune way, D Pit.'

And Misfortune way it presumably remained while anyone needed to use a name for it.

Apart from the emotional impact the accident must have had on Biddle, he would have been influenced in his choice of name by the fact that names from abstract nouns were by then long established in pits in his area. On another occasion he writes, 'Named this District Endeavour' — an apparently arbitrary act of naming, and yet, formally, very similar to Misfortune Way.

Now if anyone has followed my drift, I think they will see there is a thick seam to be won in this as yet largely unexplored area of onomastics, and, to drop the metaphor, the maps, plans and other documents relating to the coal industry, especially those in the Library of the North East Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineering in Newcastle-upon-Tyne would be a rewarding source for intensive study.

TETSBURY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

NOTES

1. Northumberland County Record Office, ZC10/3.
3. Ibid., Forster 49/4.
4. Dean and Chapter Archives, Prior's Kitchen, Durham Cathedral, Post-Dissolution Loose Documents Box 10.
5. North East Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineering, Biddle 32A, B, and C.