

The Cromhall Collieries - Supplemental Information

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Following publication of the article on the Cromhall Collieries (BIAS Journal 33 2000) further information has come to light.

- In interview with an elderly lady in the village who, in the 1950s was the last occupier of the cottage referred to in the article as Lilac Cottage, indicated that the property name was actually Lyn Cottage (fig. 1 fig. 2, page 21, plate 9)
- On page 26 the collapse referred to as being 'in the field to the west of this site' refers to the collapse correctly shown on fig. 1 & fig. 3 to the South East of the Engine house. Not to be confused with the other potential collapse which is due west.
- A further stone marked with a 'D' has been found in Bagstone. NB The c1890 OS map shows four stones: only two have been identified on site (now out of position). The cottage at the end of the lane used to be in the ownership of the family who currently own the colliery site and it could therefore be from the colliery site. The stone is however also on the edge of the land owned previously by the Ducie Estate. The supposition that the initial 'D' stands for Ducie and that the stones were some form of boundary marker is supported by both alternatives.
- Whilst looking into details relating to iron mining in South Gloucestershire I came upon the following reference in *The History of the County of Gloucester - compressed and brought down to the year 1803*, Vol. I, by Rev. Thomas Rudge, B.D. His chapter on Cromhall states:

'.... The lower parts and the whole district south of it, extending beyond Bristol, abound with coal &c. In this parish some mines were sunk at the expense of the late Lord Ducie, but soon discontinued on account of the frequently intervening strata of earth. The steam engine is now neglected and nearly in ruins.'
- The exact date of Rev Rudge's information is not clear although it would appear that some time before the publishing date of 1803 the mines were not operating although some of the engine was still there. The sale of pit-work from Cromhall to Cowhorn Hill in 1795 may not therefore have included all of the engine.
- BIAS Member Mr M. Bodman provided the following reference from Bristol Mirror for 18 February 1815:

'Cromhall Colliery to be let by private contract. All the Extensive Field of Coal in the parishes of Cromhall and Wickwar, and ..county Gloucestershire, belonging to the right hon, Lord Ducie; consisting of two or more veins of considerable thickness 7 Feb 1815.'

This date ties in with Thomas Weaver's indication that the Old Engine works reopened in 1815.
- Further investigation of the Ducie family has confirmed which Lord Ducie is referred to in each of the Cromhall leases.
- The International Genealogical Index has a record of the baptism of the mine manager, Christopher Keeling at the Calvinistic Methodist Chapel (Wotton-Under-Edge) on 10 June 1828. This confirms a link between Keeling and Samuel Long, who was very involved in the Tabernacle. The 1827 lease refers only to Samuel Long. It is clear that Keeling was in the area soon after this and it is possible that his move into the locality was specifically to manage the New Engine Works, which are believed to have been commenced at about this time.
- Further investigations into the Long & Keeling Families have confirmed that it is the same individuals and families which were involved in the mines at Yate Colliery, and that these were being worked at the same time as the Cromhall works.



Plate 1 Boundary stone in Bagstone, same as stones at New Engine Pit