

# The History of the Durham Miners' Association: Places



(E. Allan, *The Durham Miners' Association, 1869-1969*, p.6)

## The Durham Miners' Association

The Durham Miners' Association was established on 20 November 1869 at a meeting of representatives in the Market Hotel, Durham. Earlier attempts to form a miners' union had been broken by the employers, but four separate events in the 1860s led to success in 1869. These were The Mines Regulation and Inspection Act of 1860, the Hartley disaster in Northumberland in 1862, the Brancepeth 'Rocking Tub' strike in 1863; and the abolition of the annual Miners' Bond in 1869.



Easington Memorial, Redhills; courtesy of David Butler

The final decision-making body of the Association was the Council, which consisted of the permanent officials and one delegate from each lodge. Each delegate's vote was weighted according to the membership of his lodge. The Executive Committee dealt with matters arising between Council meetings and any other business delegated to it by Council. At a Council meeting in March 1871 it was decided that there should be four full-time officials to negotiate with the employers – a secretary, president, treasurer and one other. Over the years the number of agents varied, reaching a maximum of seven. Agents were first nominated by the lodges and elected by delegate vote, but from 1915 they were elected by an individual ballot of the membership.



Officials, Committee, Council delegates and staff outside Miners' Hall, Redhills, at the Annual Council Meeting, 20 December 1919 (DCRO D/MRP 43/1)



Miners' Hall, North Road (John Wilson, *A History of the Durham Miners' Association, 1870-1904*, frontispiece)



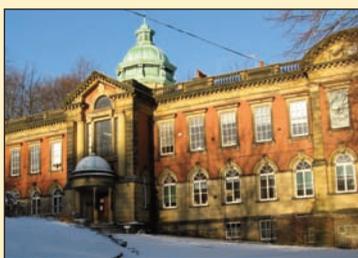
Unveiling the statue of William Crawford at Miners' Hall, North Road, 1892 (Norman Emery, *Banners of the Durham Coalfield*, p.65)

## Miners' Hall, North Road, Durham

In the early years of the Association, the Council and Executive Committee met in various locations around Durham City, but in 1873 it was decided that the Association needed its own permanent headquarters. Thomas Oliver, a Newcastle architect, won the prize for the best design and the contractor for the work was a local builder, Robert Robson & Sons. The hall was opened in June 1875, and included a council chamber with space for 238 delegates, and office accommodation. Houses for the union's agents were provided in North Road next to the hall. Life-size statues of miners' leaders were later erected on the first floor window ledges: Alexander Macdonald, William Crawford, William Patterson and John Forman. In 1915 the headquarters of the DMA moved to Redhills and the North Road building was sold.

## Miners' Hall, Redhills, Durham

The North Road building had been built to house a union with a membership of 40,000 in 1876. By 1913 membership had reached 225,000 and the headquarters was too small. A site on Redhills Lane was purchased and a new headquarters was opened in 1915. The building provided a large council chamber with seats for 400 delegates and extensive office accommodation.

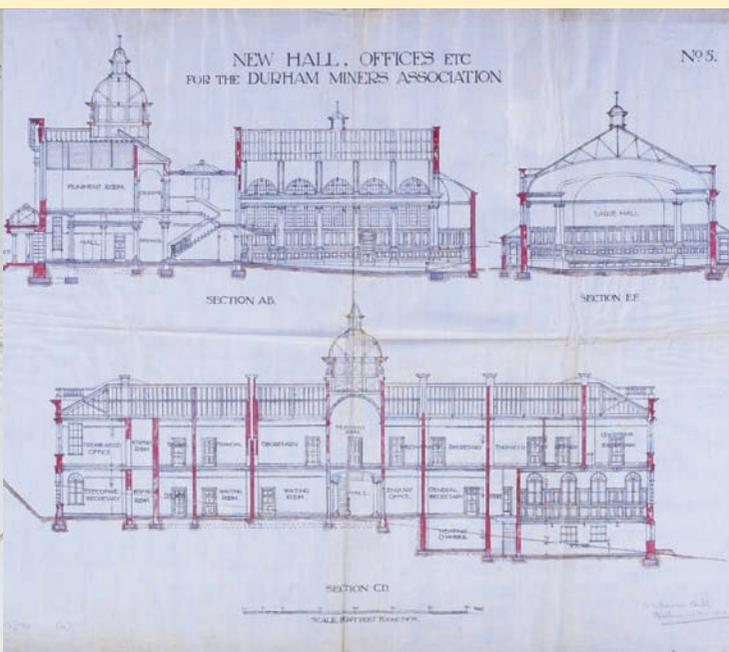
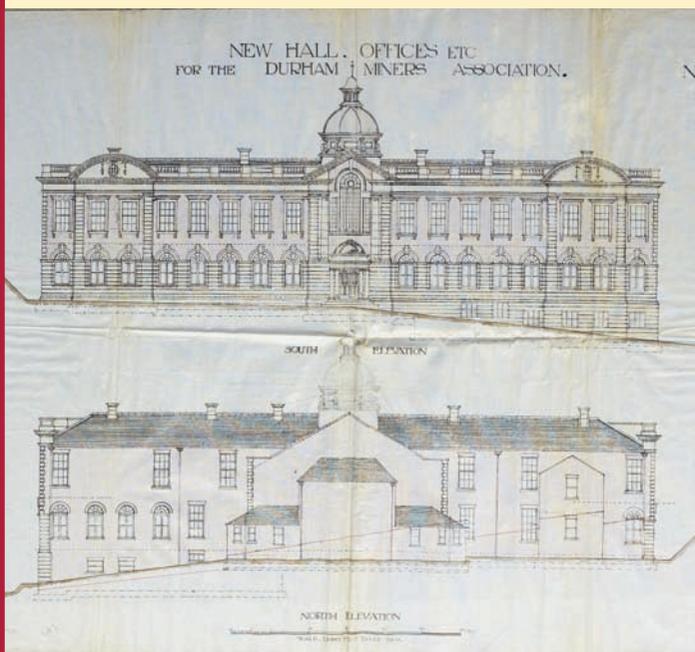


Miners' Hall, Redhills; courtesy of David Butler



The Council Chamber, Miners' Hall, Redhills (DCRO D/CL 27/277/341)

The statues from North Road were moved to plinths in the grounds at Redhills. There is a memorial garden for the victims of the 1951 Easington Colliery disaster in part of the grounds. The building is still occupied by the union.



Plans for hall at Redhills, for the Durham Miners' Association, H. Gradon, architect, 1913; DCRO Ref No. ND/Du 13/170 (4), (5)