

Leisure



Members of Pelton Fell Miners' Institute Cricket Club, 1926 (DCRO D/CL 27/277/276)

Education

The DMA promoted education through evening classes and residential courses for miners, supported by scholarships and bursaries.

Sponsored by The Arts Council, plays toured the Durham coalfield. The General Secretary's annual report for 1949 noted how these inspired the formation of drama groups at the Welfare Schemes in the county and 'a good number of schemes are now presenting their own sketches, plays, musical comedies and light opera.'

Sports and Hobbies

Sport was a popular pastime. The National Coal Board held interdivisional athletics meetings, and national boxing competitions. In 1958, John Dunn of Eldon Drift Lodge won the NCB bantam weight title at Leeds. At the sixth National Sports Day for Paraplegic Mineworkers in 1964 the Durham Division won for the second year running.

The Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation, formed in 1952 as a partnership between the NCB and the mining unions, was the successor to the Welfare Commission. It oversaw the provision of facilities relating to the welfare of miners and their families. This included the development of recreation centres and bowling greens.

Traditional miners' pursuits included vegetable growing and pigeon fancying.

Coal Queen competition

The NCB Coal Queen of Britain competition ran from 1969 to 1996. To select the Durham Area entrant, two dances were held and three contestants were chosen from each to attend the main event at the Miners' Gala. The 1969 Gala Souvenir described the event as a 'real break with tradition and it will probably raise many eyebrows' but expected the venture to be a resounding success. Judged by the Home Secretary, James Callaghan and his wife, and the Paymaster General, Judith Hart, the prizes were £50 (winner), £15 (runner up), and £5 (third).

The first Durham Coal Queen was 24 year old Rose McLachlan, whose husband was a miner at Westoe Colliery. She went on to win the Coal Queen of Britain final, where the prizes were:

- Winner – a winter sunshine holiday for two for 15 days with 'a VIP welcome at a top resort in exotic East Africa, with £200 to spend.'
- Second – a trip to Tenerife with £50 spending money.
- Third – a trip to Majorca also with £50 spending money.

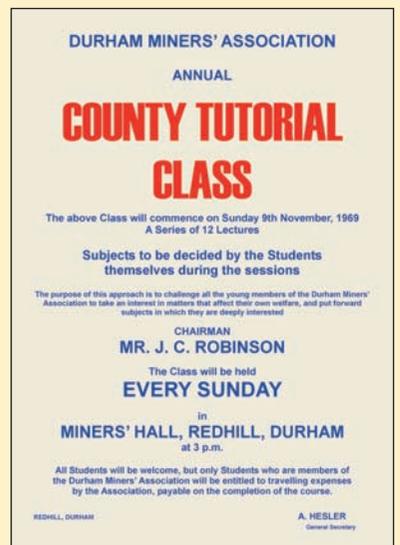
The winner also received a complete wardrobe of the latest fashion, an Ilford Monarch camera and a six-bottle case of champagne and other wines. All finalists received a case of Chesebrough-Ponds cosmetics.



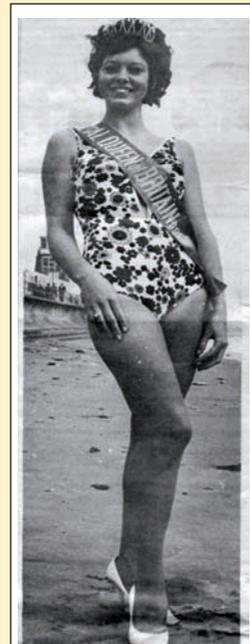
Members of Boldon Colliery Leek Club, n.d. c.1920 (DCRO D/X 148/20)



Members of Boldon Colliery Homing Club with cup, n.d. c.1920 (DCRO D/X 148/21)



DMA publications issued, 1969 (DCRO D/DMA Acc: 2157(D) volume 141)



WHAT a year for Durham! 1969 was their centenary year and as part of the celebrations for the Big Meeting they chose their first ever Coal Queen, Rose McLachlan, a 24-year-old miner's wife. And now Rose is the first Coal Queen of Britain! Rose won the title from 14 other Area Coal Queens in the final held at the Derbyshire Miners' Holiday Centre in Skegness. Nottingham's Theresa Coleman was voted second and Jeanie Zincke from Yorkshire was third.

Extract from The Miner journal, 1969 (DCRO D/DMA Acc: 2157(D) volume 141)



Coal Queen poster, 1969 (DCRO D/DMA Acc: 2157(D) volume 140)