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Death of Mr. John Eaton.

A Colliery Pioneer.



In South Yorkshire mining circles the news has been received with great regret of the death of Mr. John Eaton, mining engineer, which took place at his residence, Belle Vue, Northfields, Thorne, on Sunday, at the advanced age of 81 years. Mr. Eaton practically died in harness, for he was superintending the sinking of a third shaft at Crigglestone Colliery, near Wakefield, when he was taken ill, and had to take to his bed about four months ago.

The deceased gentleman was one of the pioneers of the South Yorkshire coalfield. Born in Derbyshire, he became a mining and mechanical brickworks engineer, and was one of the first members of the Association of Colliery Managers, and was perhaps the oldest mining engineer in South Yorkshire. He was the first manager of the Hickleton Main Colliery, and had been manager of various other collieries, including Pilsley and Manners (Derbyshire), and Tibshelf. He had also had experience of lead mining in Cumberland. Sixteen years ago he began pit sinking and contracting as the head of the firm of Eaton, Walker, and Eaton, the name being altered about four years ago to that of Eaton, Son and Hinds. Amongst the pits he had been engaged in sinking were Manvers Main, Tinsley Park, Sherwood and Bentley. It was at the latter that the contractors experienced practically the first serious difficulties in the development of the coalfield towards the East Coast. Running sand and water were encountered, but by special processes, tubbing and freezing, this obstacle was overcome. Mr. Walker, one of the partners, having a great deal to do with this. Mr. Eaton's firm were also engaged to sink the Thorne pit, which work was stopped owing to the influx of water. Mr. Eaton's services had also been requisitioned for the sinking of two pits in the Dover coalfield, and the firm are at present sinking a pit at Coalville, South Leicestershire.

Before going to live at Thorne, in order that he might the better supervise sinking operations there, Mr. Eaton lived at Thurnscoe, where he was for eleven years Rector's churchwarden under the Rev. Fleetwood Shepherd and the Rev. J. Brock. He was also the senior overseer for the parish, and vice-chairman of the Parish Council. He was a staunch Conservative in politics.

Mr. Eaton lost his wife several years ago, and he received another severe blow in October, 1911, by the death of his only son, Mr. John F. Eaton, who was in partnership with him. Since that sad event took place Mr. Eaton's sole companion had been his niece, Miss C. E. Rose, there being no children surviving.

THE FUNERAL.

The funeral took place at Thurnscoe on Thursday afternoon, amid many tokens of deep respect. The Rev. J. J. Littlewood, R.D. (Vicar of Thorne) officiated, being assisted by the Rev. J. Brock-Beard (Rector of Thurnscoe), and the Rev. T. T. Taylor (lord of the manor). The funeral cortege journeyed by road from Thorne to Thurnscoe, a motor conveyance being used for the purpose. The church was crowded when the cortege arrived. The chief mourners were Mr. Edmund Eaton (grandson), Mr. J. Eaton (grandson), Miss Rose, Mr. and Mrs. Rose, Mrs. Keywood (Worksop), Mr. Knox (Thorne), Mr. Fullwood (Doncaster), Mr. and Mrs. Hinds (Thorne), Mr. Fawcett (Sheffield), and Miss R. Crookes (Thorne).

There were also present Mr. N. B. Laidlaw (Mexboro'), Dr. W. Craik (Goldthorpe), Mr. E. Turner, Mr. J. Minnikin (manager of the Hickleton Main Colliery), Councillor W. Hazard (secretary of the Hickleton Colliery), Mrs. Toyne (Sheffield), Mr. and Mrs. R. Higginbottom (Thurnscoe), Mrs. G. White (High Melton), Mr. P. White (High Melton), Mr. W. P. Matthewman (representing Mr. G. Dunston, Thorne), Mr. G. Dunkerley (Goldthorpe), Mr. A. Gawthorpe, Messrs. I. Bateman, Peck and E. Amos (representing the Thurnscoe Working-men's Institute), Mr. G. Marsdin, Mr. J. Garwood, Mr. C. McKinning, Mr. T. Brookes, Mr. C. Sylvester (underground officials at Hickleton Main), Mr. R. Hann, Councillor G. P. Chapman (Thurnscoe) Mr. S. Hardwick, Mr. J. T. Hopkins, Mr. J. Cooper, Mr. B. M. Badger, and others.

Wreaths were sent by the following:—Brother, sister, and niece, Harry and Mrs. Livingstone (London), Mr. and Mrs. G. White and family, and Mr. & Mrs. P. White, the underground officials at the Hickleton Colliery, Thurnscoe Working-men's Institute, Mr. and Mrs. H. Brock and family, Mr. J. F. Archer, Mr. and Mrs. H. Hinds, Major T. Hutchinson, Rector, churchwardens, and members of the congregation of St. Helen's Church, Thurnscoe, Mr. H. Greener, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Andrews, Mrs. C. E Greaves and family (Sheffield), Mrs. Toyne, Mr. and Mrs. H. Fullwood, Miss R. Crookes, Thorne Colliery officials, sinkers at Crigglestone, J. Haldenby, W. Brunt, and F. Denby.

The deceased's body was enclosed in a plain oak coffin, with brass fittings, and was buried in the same grave in which his wife was laid to rest 14 years ago.