



Kellingley Colliery

“The Big K”

Closed on 18th December 2016

Marking the end of deep mining
in the United Kingdom.





Portraits of ex Kellingley colliery miners

The ghosting of a man and his occupation.

SHIFT

Ghosts fill this quickly-dropping cage
As it falls through memory's trapdoor
To a place where faces streaked with sweat
Stare with a look you can't forget
From history's unforgiving floor.

Ghosts stand and look you in the eye
As the world shrugs shoulders, turns its back
On years of graft and precious coal
Dragged out from this abandoned hole
In history's unforgiving sack.

Ghosts stare: remind us of a time
Obscured by dust and home-coal smoke
Of dignity and comradeship
Now left to rot, now just a blip
In history's unforgiving joke.

Ian McMillan









Closure

A wheel stops turning
And the sun sets slow
On sadness, burning
With an afterglow

Of struggle, bending
In a narrow seam.
Now summat's ending:
A collective dream

Of jobs for all
And jobs for life
Hits reality's wall,
Cuts like a knife.

Big K's closing;
The last shift's done
Ponty's losing
And history's won.

So raise a glass
In this solemn place
As the coal tubs pass
To the weeping face.

Big K's finished
The last deep mine
We're all diminished
End of the line.

Ian McMillan









A BIG K BANNER

The coal
We dug
Still burns brightly

Our
Black gold
Will always shine

Our ghosts
Still walk
Beneath your feet

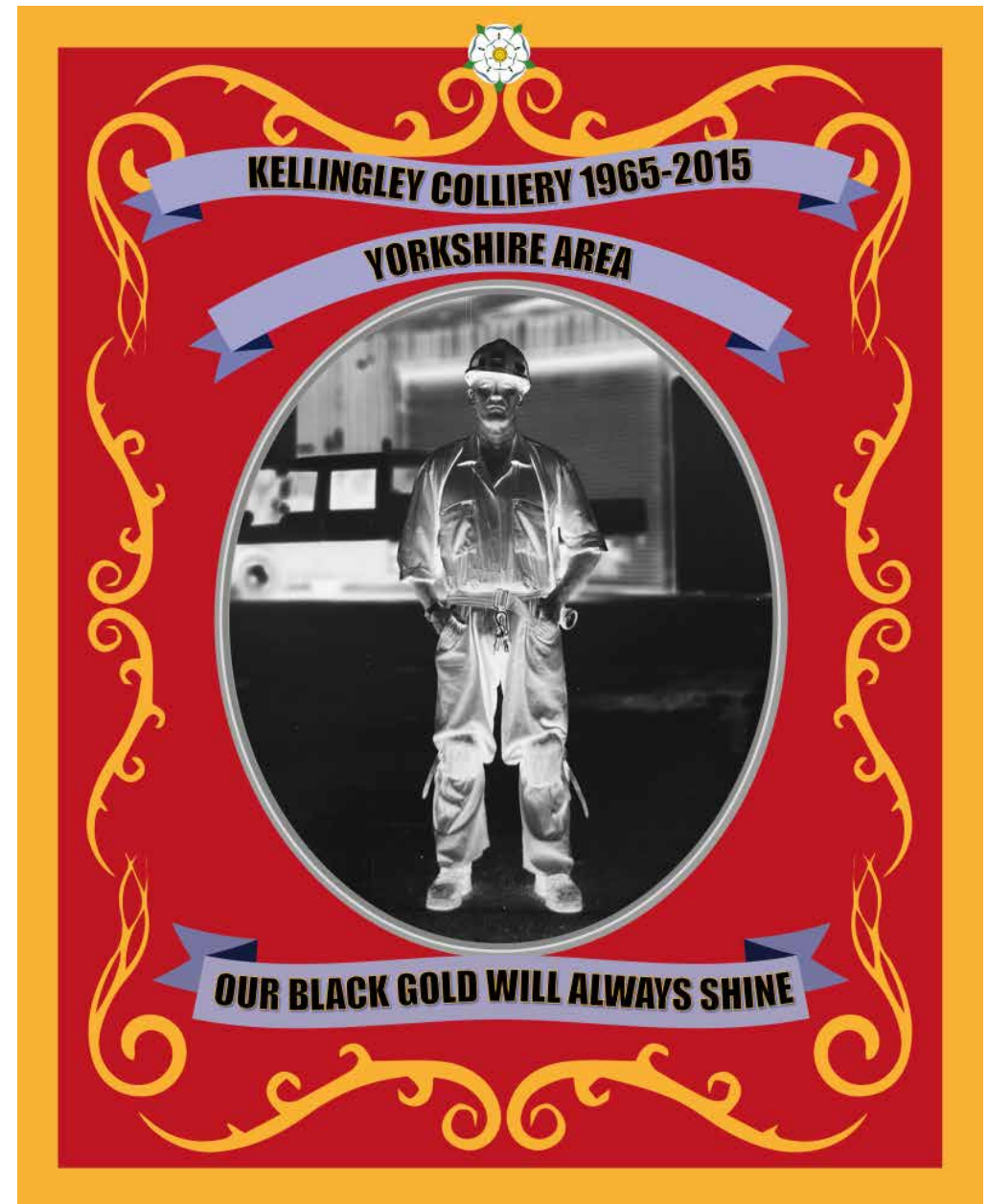
Big K
Will never be
Small K

This wheel
Never stops turning

Remember us:
We are the ghosts
In the flickering flames

The ghosts are here
With the coal in their eyes

Ian McMillan







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Beware
Reversing
Lorries





This big big camera was manufactured by the company of Hunter Penrose sometime around the turn of the last century.

It has been in the collections of Gallery Oldham since it was retrieved from Rome Mill in Springhead in 1990. The camera had originally been used in the printing of wallpaper. Ian Beesley, artist in residence for Gallery Oldham, spent several months cleaning and restoring the camera. These cameras were made specifically for the printing industry and consequently once installed were never probably moved again.

However, Ian set himself the challenge of using the camera on location for the first time in its history.



KELLINGLEY COLLIERY

*Working together
for*
SAFETY

BIOS

Ian Beesley is an award winning and internationally acclaimed artist. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at the Milan Photo festival Italy, the Photography festival Shenyang, China, The National Media Museum, Bradford, the Peoples History Museum Manchester and the London international art fair. His work is held in the collections of the National Media Museum Bradford, The Royal Photographic Society, The Smithsonian Institute, Washington, the Imperial War Museum London, the National Museum of Labour, Helsinki, amongst many other important collections. In 2012 he was awarded Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society. He is currently artist in residence at Gallery Oldham, and the Bradford Institute for Health Research. He was recently appointed reader/practitioner in visual representation at UCLAN.

www.ianbeesley.com

Ian McMillan is a writer, broadcaster and performer with a career spanning over thirty years. He has worked with performance poetry groups, been poet in residence at Barnsley Football club, Northern Spirit Trains and Humberside Police, and in addition to his published work has become a prolific broadcaster, he is a regular presenter on Coast and Countryfile. He is currently presenting The Verb on BBC Radio 3 and has weekly columns in the Yorkshire Post and the Barnsley Chronicle. He is one of the few poets able to remain completely accessible while exploring techniques such as surrealism and postmodernism.

www.ian-mcmillan.com



Photographs by **Ian Beesley**

www.ianbeesley.com

Poems by **Ian McMillan**

www.uktouring.org.uk/ian-mcmillan/

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