



# 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

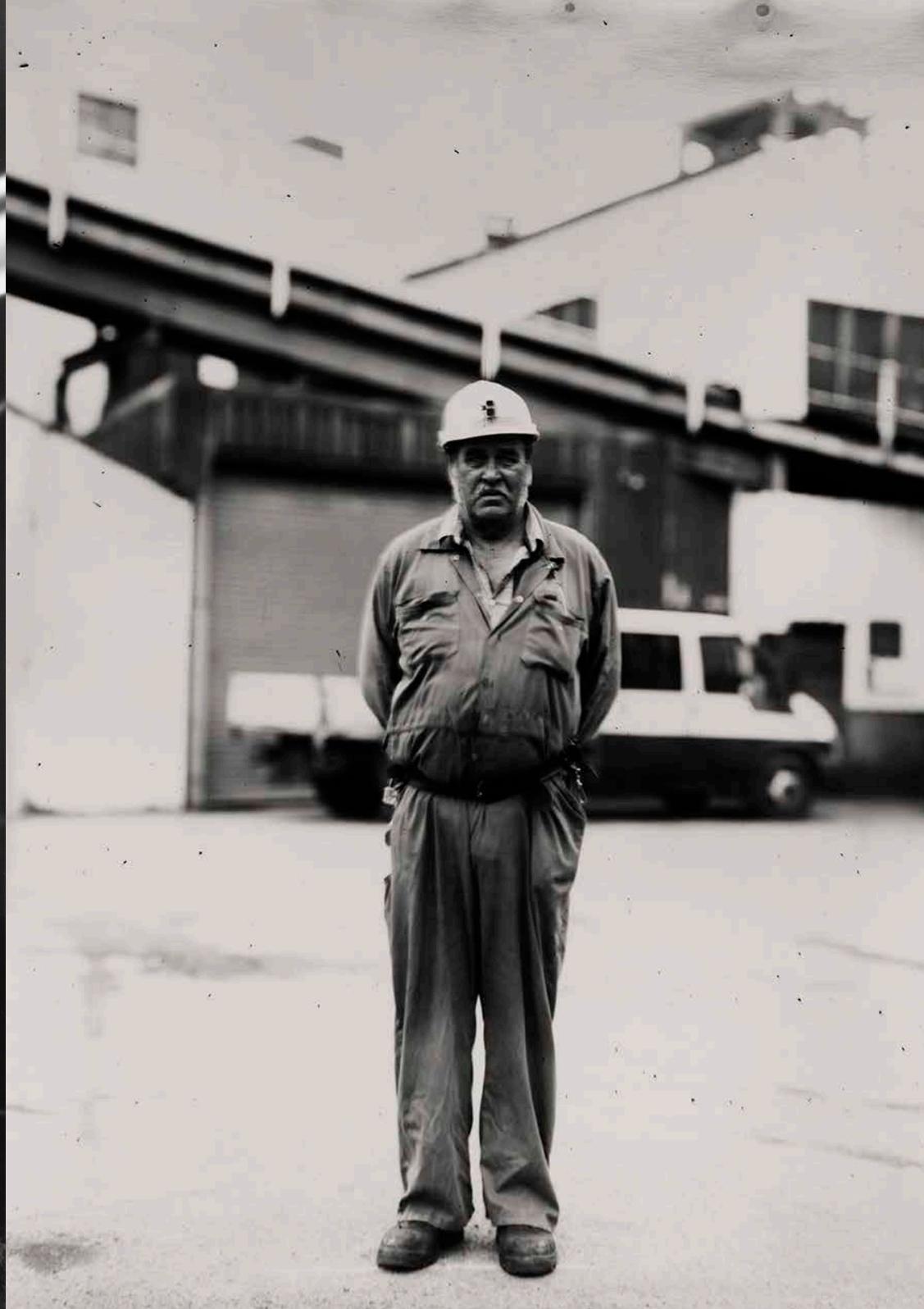
Ghosts fill this quickly-dropping cage  
As it falls through memory's trapdoor  
To a place where faces streaked with sweat  
Stare with a look you can't forget  
From history's unforgiving floor.

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.

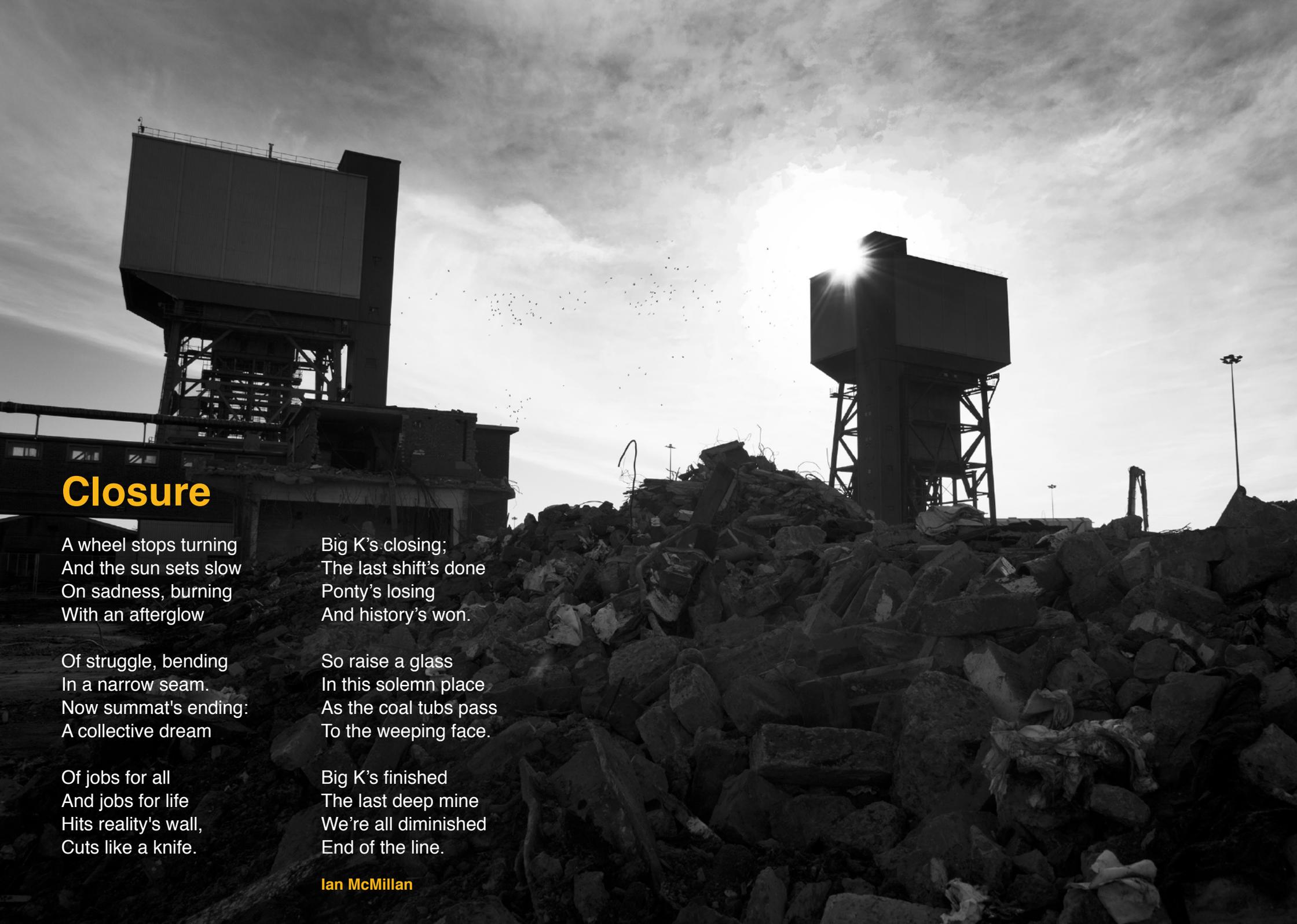
Ghosts stare: remind us of a time  
Obscured by dust and home-coal smoke  
Of dignity and comradeship  
Now left to rot, now just a blip  
In history's unforgiving joke.

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

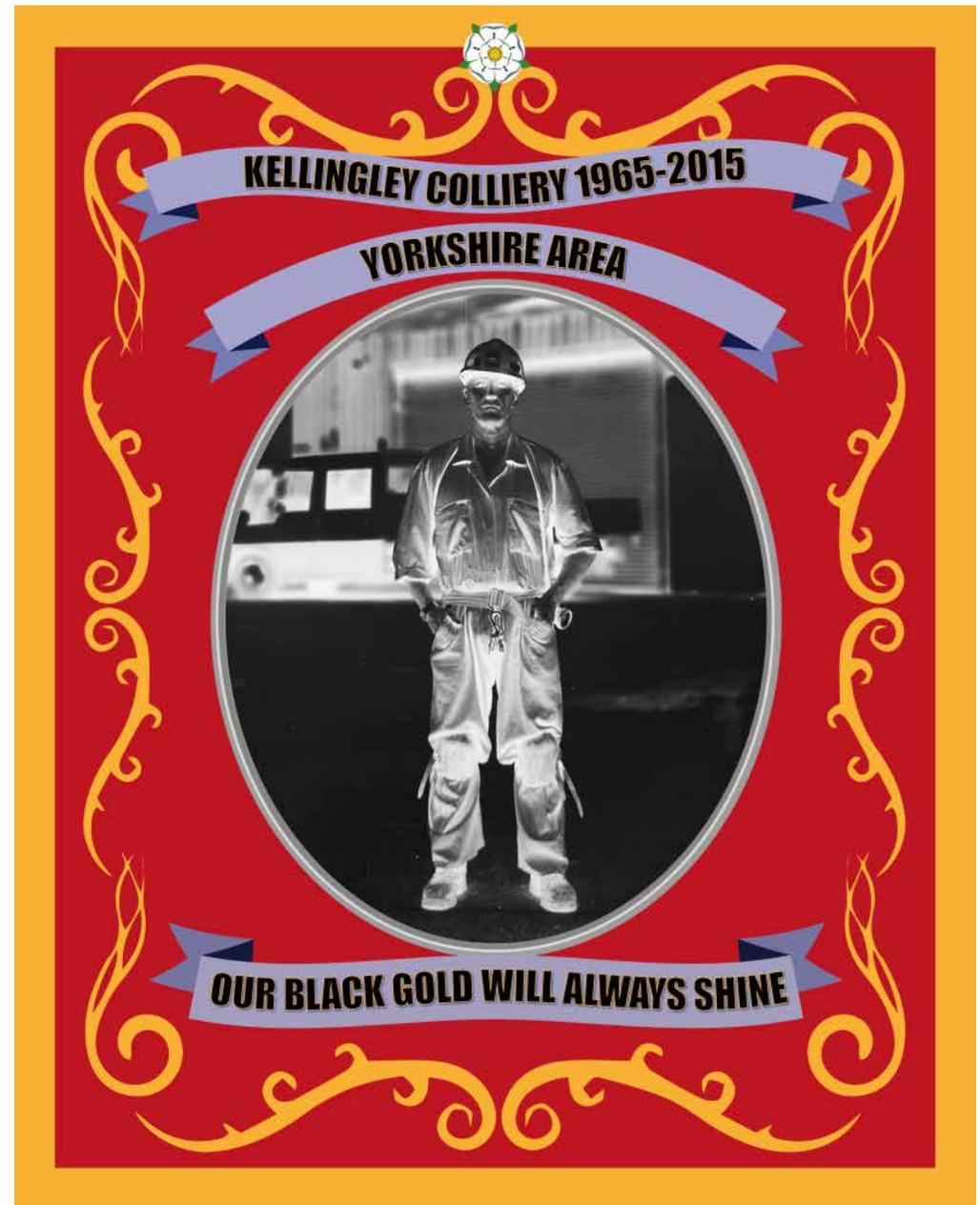
Big K  
Will never be  
Small K

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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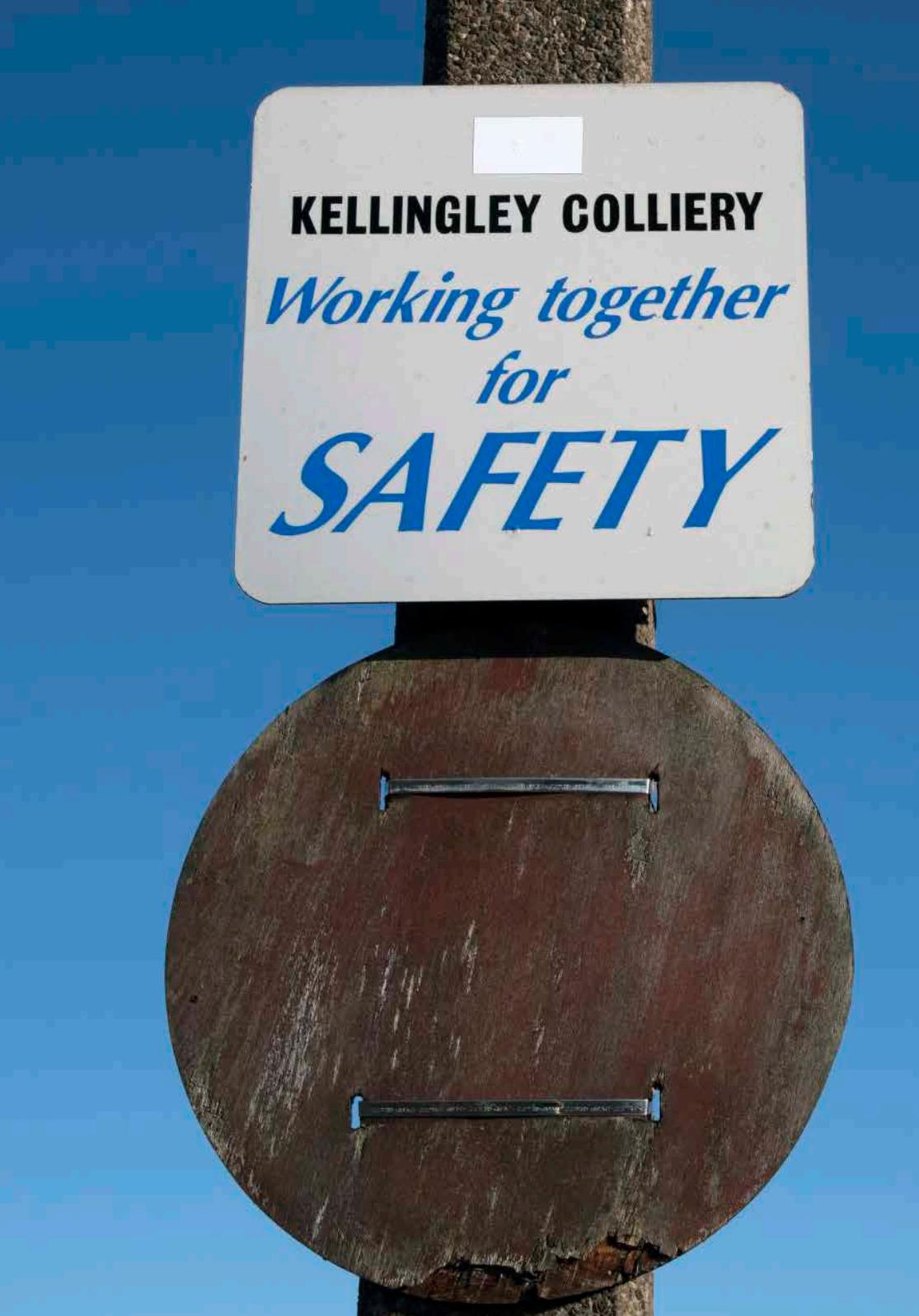




This big big camera was manufactured by the company of Hunter Penrose sometime around the turn of the last century.

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](http://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](http://www.ian-mcmillan.com)



Photographs by **Ian Beesley**

[www.ianbeesley.com](http://www.ianbeesley.com)

Poems by **Ian McMillan**

[www.uktouring.org.uk/ian-mcmillan/](http://www.uktouring.org.uk/ian-mcmillan/)

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