

# THE MINER

Journal of the National Union Of Mineworkers



SPECIAL CONFERENCE EDITION AUGUST 2008

# THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT THE FUTURE'S COAL



NUM PRESIDENT IAN LAVERY addressing the NUM Conference in Blackpool

**NUM PRESIDENT IAN LAVERY addressing the NUM Conference in Blackpool said “We have a great opportunity for the first time in many years to argue the case for coal.”**

He pointed out that it is beginning to dawn on many in government that they have got it wrong and that only coal can address the problems of the energy gap we face and the spiralling cost of gas and oil.

“Coal is not dead” he told delegates it is the fastest growing fossil fuel in the world for producing energy.

“The price of coal on the spot market on 4 July this year was \$219 – over £4 per gigajoule and isn’t it a crime what happened to Rossington, Harworth and Ellington, not to mention the Selby Coalfield where coal was being produced at 56p per gigajoule.”

Turning his attention to the green lobbies he said they “don’t want coal, they don’t want nuclear, they don’t want fossil fuels which includes oil and gas some of them don’t even want windmills because they kill butterflies and birds. If we listen to them how will we keep the lights on?”

# PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

**IAN LAVERY presenting his first presidential address to Conference since the title of president was reinstated two years ago said “We have a great opportunity for the first time since I have been president or chairman of the NUM. Things have changed and there are some bright lights on the horizon. What we need now is a commitment from the Labour Party and from the various coalowners we now have in the industry.**

“The government stated in the Energy Bill introduced to parliament in January this year that there were two long-term challenges, tackling climate change by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and ensuring secure clean and affordable energy. The way to reduce carbon emissions is to burn coal cleanly, not just in the UK but across the world.” He said.

“Coal is not dead,” he told delegates, “it is the fastest growing fossil fuel in the world for the production of energy. In 2006 coal consumption worldwide was 3.1 billion tonnes oil equivalent, that’s 30 percent above the 2001 level.

“The Republic of China last year produced 2.4 billion tonnes of coal, the USA 98 billion tonnes and India 4 billion tonnes.

“Coal is the only way the world will secure its energy needs in the future.

“Coal production is set to rise from 4 billion tonnes now to 7 billion tonnes in 20 years time.”

He pointed out that even if the UK stopped burning coal it would not stop the Chinese, the Indians, the American’s and others. “In fact the rest of the world will continue to burn coal. The growth in coal production in China alone in 2006 was 322 million tonnes, more than five times the UK’s consumption over the past five years.

“Globally coal is at the top of the agenda. China has 4.2 trillion tonnes of unproven reserves.”

He then told Conference that proven world hard coal reserves consisted of:

213 billion tonnes in the USA, 167 billion

in China, 95 billion in India, 69 billion in Russia, 48 billion in South Africa, 40 billion in Australia, 30 billion in the Ukraine, 12 billion in Poland, 10 billion in Brazil and 8 billion in Kazakhstan.

“These coal reserves will be used because coal is at the top of the world energy agenda.

“When we consider that there are many people, mainly in Asia, still without electricity – that’s 1.6 billion people throughout the world it is an indication of the problem we face.

“These people want to enjoy the same luxuries we enjoy; they want a better life too. Electricity in this day and age is hardly a luxury so coal production will increase. It is utter folly to assume that CO2 emissions can be capped through energy conservation or renewables, clean coal is the only answer.

“Clean coal technology and carbon capture and storage are required as a matter of urgency and there is a great opportunity for us to develop and export these technologies to these expanding economies and at the same time helping our industrial base.” He said.

He told delegates that China is currently building one 450 megawatts power station every four days. Last year they built 98 gigawatts of power station capacity.

“Coal is the fuel of the future not of the past. Coal is the answer to the world energy crisis not the problem.” He said.

The president informed Conference that last year we burnt 43 million tonnes of imported coal and 17 million tonnes of our own indigenous coal and referred to the massive increase in coal price of recent years that has made coal profitable again.

“The price of coal on the spot market on 4 July this year was \$219 over £4.00 per gigajoule and isn’t it a crime what happened to Rossington, Harworth and Ellington, not to mention the Selby Coalfield which closed in 2002 where coal was produced at 56p per gigajoule, it’s now £4 per gigajoule.

“The industry should never have been privatised and we are committed to its re-nationalisation.

“We have never had a better case for indigenous coal production in the UK. We can now burn coal cleanly but we have problems with the skills base at the moment and yet we have billions of tonnes of coal in Britain. He said.

He announced to Conference that projects that were being looked at under the old NCB are now being looked at again in different parts of the UK from Scotland to Durham and Yorkshire to the Midlands and South Wales and that these “massive reserves are now back on the table and being seriously scrutinised for the future.” Referring to John Hutton the Minister for Enterprise and Regulatory Reform who recently said that the Kingsnorth Power Station which previously had to be carbon capture ready no longer has to be because we would not be able to bridge the energy gap facing us, Ian said “ This statement is so significant to our industry it is unbelievable.”

“With the scheduled closure in the UK of 11 gigawatts of capacity between now and 2015 where are we to get our generation and how are we going to keep the lights on. “The green lobbies don’t want coal, they don’t want nuclear, they don’t want fossil fuels which includes oil and some don’t even want windmills because they kill butterflies and birds but in the meantime we have to keep the lights on.

“If we listen to the green lobbies we will have no energy other than water and some other little measures but they have not got the capacity we need.”

Ian called for at least four or five carbon capture and storage demonstration plants in Britain. He congratulated Powerfuel for reopening Hatfield and expressed pride in our members’ efforts now that the pit is actually producing coal.

“I am proud to represent miners as their president. The National Union will never, ever let you down. United we stand divided we fall” He said to applause from delegates.

# STOP THE PENSIONS' ROBBERY

**THE National Union of Mineworkers will launch a campaign to end the government's theft of the surpluses of the Mineworkers Pension Scheme. Keith Stanley NUM Vice-President told the NUM Conference in Blackpool "I can see it being no different to what Robert Maxwell did to the Mirror Group Pension Fund". Maxwell stole £440 million from the Mirror fund before mysteriously disappearing overboard from his luxury yacht.**

"The government is stealing our money. I could understand it when it was the Tories but what I cannot understand is a Labour Government creaming of the surpluses when we have pensioners on less than £10 a week.

"Neither the former British Coal nor the government have put one penny piece into the fund since 1987 but the total stolen in that time by the government amounts to a massive £3 billion."

Keith told Conference that on the one occasion when the government had to put



**Keith Stanley NUM Vice-President**



**Wayne Thomas**

£390m into the Scheme to meet a deficit we had to pay it back with interest amounting to £150m, a massive 38.46% and they still took half of the remaining surplus – another £229m.

He said the NUM would be lobbying the government and every Labour MP to stop this scandal.

"The problem goes back to the time of privatisation and the imposition of a UDM trustee who voted with British Coal enabling the government to steal 50% of our surpluses. Our position is clear. The

money in the Scheme is deferred pay and belongs to our people.

We helped establish the Scheme and no government should be allowed to make fundamental changes that affect the accrued rights of our beneficiaries. All the surpluses in the Scheme should be solely to improve benefits" He said.

Wayne Thomas South Wales Area Secretary said "This is a fundamental issue as far as we are concerned. It is an absolute scandal what the government is doing with our surpluses. The money should be returned so that we can give our beneficiaries the pension they deserve and so that our miners can retire at 50.

Steve Mace, Yorkshire Area told the government "Get your grubby hands out of our pensions. "Pay back that which you have stolen," he said "and give our old folk the respect and dignity of financial security in their old age" adding "Even Dick Turpin had the common decency to wear a mask".

## THE GREAT PENSIONS' ROBBERY

<b>1987</b>	£28,286,000	British Coal contributions holiday taken by the government
<b>1990</b>	£447,360,000	British Coal contributions holiday taken by the government
<b>1993</b>	£407,360,000	Half of Scheme surplus
<b>1996</b>	£742,000,000	Half of Scheme surplus
<b>1999</b>	£525,000,000	Half of Scheme surplus
<b>2002</b>	£390,000,000	Paid in by the government to meet a temporary deficit
<b>2005</b>	£540,000,000	Includes paying back £390m plus interest
<b>2005</b>	£229,000,000	Half of remaining surplus

# PAY, BENEFITS & SICK PAY

**KEITH HARTSHORNE** Yorkshire Area Vice-Chairman moved two of Yorkshire's motions to the Annual conference.

"The first motion was in respect of wages and called for a pay increase in excess of inflation. "Over the past number of years when we have come to pay negotiations the company always pointed to the fact that pits were not making a lot of money and that pit closures would be the result of excessive wage increases. Well we didn't get the excessive wage increases but we did get one round of pit closures after another." He reminded delegates.

"Now the price of coal has rocketed beyond our wildest dreams and the companies are set to make millions of pounds out of this hike in world coal prices and if it were not for their short sightedness they would be making millions of pounds more because the collieries they have closed were producing coal at less than half the price they could get today. So they have cut their nose off to spite their face.

benefits for a good number of years – in some cases 25 years. For example water money is still fixed at £1.74 per shift and has been for more than 20 years.

"It's an insult that men have agreed to vary shifts patterns and now work four extended shifts instead of the normal five and only receive four payments at £1.74 instead of five because they only get wet four times not five - even though they are there longer and are wet for a longer period. It is the same with redundancy payments and subsidised transport which the companies claim are outdated payments.

"However as a result of pit closures men have to travel further to work because with fewer collieries it goes without saying that people have to travel further to their jobs.

"To make matters worse UK Coal has teamed up with Halfords the major cycle retailer and under a national insurance and tax scam UK Coal will get you a half price bike to get you to work if you want. I think this is what they are looking at rather than

rising in cost and spiralling out of control from fuel and energy to the economy everything, that is, apart from our members' sick pay.

"We have members who try to come back on light duties after being injured simply because it's just a financial burden to remain at home and recuperate. There are members who come to work ill when in fact they should be at home resting. When you question them the response is I don't get paid like the supervisors who are employed to watch over us do. If it's good enough for supervisors it's good enough for us. We are the ones who cut the coal and timber up above the chocks. We are the ones who drive the headings and we are the ones who do all the manual graft.

"But when one of us gets hurt or is ill and has to take time off he is penalised financially.

"The average age of the workforce is around the late 40 mark. We are not getting any younger and therefore it takes more time to recover. We have to look to the future health of our members.



From left to right, Nicky Wilson, Steve Mace & Keith Hartshorne.

"This year the boot is on the other foot and we believe it's time for us to share in these profits by having a decent pay award." He said.

Moving a motion for an increase in contractual benefits Keith said "This motion sets out to secure increases to all contractual benefits and also secure the benefits for current non-contractual members.

"We now have three employers all paying different levels of benefits on transport and other benefits that we used to enjoy. We have not secured an increase in these

proper subsidised transport. So when you consider that UK Coal have only four working pits scattered over the country it may be quite a long ride at 4am in the morning to get to work for the dayshift.

"It is time these benefits were increased. It is only right and just"

**STEVE MACE** Yorkshire Area moving Motion 7 calling for full pay for the first 12 weeks of absence when a miner is off work injured or sick argued passionately that sick pay is one of the biggest burning issues among our members.

"It's now a time to act when everything is

"At the very least that is what they have worked hard for and what they thoroughly deserve.

"Therefore we call upon this conference to instruct the National Executive Committee to negotiate with all employers for increases in sick pay to include full pay for the first 12 weeks of absence." He said.

**NICKY WILSON** Scotland Area supporting Motion 7 said he would have liked to have seen us being more ambitious and aim for parity with management staff although recognising that 12 weeks is a start he thought we could have gone further.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

KEITH STANLEY NUM Vice President and Chairman of the NUM Safety Sub Committee presented his report to Conference saying that the last time he gave a report to Conference he had the unfortunate task of reporting that there had been a fatality in the industry, something that had not happened for many years.

“We have always been suspicious that when we went into privatisation safety would be compromised and although we had a decent honeymoon period when RJB Mining first took over the industry sadly that started to decline with the first fatality at Daw Mill and it was against the warnings given to UK Coal that there would be fatalities if we did not watch what we were doing that on the very same day that such a warning was given we had our first fatality at Daw Mill.

“Sad to say there have been three more fatalities in the deep-mined coal industry since then and I would like to pass on our sincere condolences to the families of those miners who lost their lives.

“We had a lad at Daw Mill, the second of the fatalities, he was riding illegally according to UK Coal on a haulage system, unfortunately he fell off and the car hit him and killed him. Peter Smith and I went to see UK Coal because we were pushing a ‘back to basics approach’ in safety. There were things that were radically wrong. UK Coal told us that the lad was doing an illegal practice. We did not accept that and asked why was he riding?

“They failed to tell us, it was the inspector that told us afterwards that he was supposed to walk in with the haulage 2,500 metres and then walk back out with the haulage 2,500 metres on an incline of 1 in 4. You simply cannot do it. It was the only reason he was riding.

“The third fatality at Daw Mill proved to us that there was something seriously wrong at the pit but UK Coal insisted that there was not.

“Unfortunately again the man should not have been where he was. Looking back at

our reports we had been warning about rib side supports. Peter Smith kept telling them that there was something wrong. We kept getting rib side falls in the magnitude of at least six feet. It was that which killed this third lad. Then we followed it up with a fatality at Welbeck Colliery.

“Again I knew and warned the inspector before he went down to visit the site that UK Coal would say he was in the wrong place at the wrong time and that is why he was killed.

“What they failed to tell us again was that it was a salvage face and after the last strip of coal taken from the face there should have been a prop and bar set on the face side over every chock throughout the face. UK Coal decided they did not have enough time to do that and left the face for six months allowing it to deteriorate. This lad was in the process of lowering a chock down to put the bar and beam in place. Unfortunately the roof came in on him and it’s horrific to think that he was trapped for five hours upto the waist and it was only when they got him out and started transporting him to the pit bottom that he lost his life.

“But what concerns me is that UK Coal refuse to hold their hands up and keep suggesting that it is not their fault.

“The Union has demanded that we go back to basics and UK Coal are now asking branches to give them their views on how the pits should be run and you think that you have made some progress because of that. Then even though we have had four fatalities in less than 18 months we get UK Coal considering an action at Thoresby Colliery where they had a fire and the men donned their self rescuers not to get out of the pit but to fight the fire wearing them.

“The National Officials have met with the Health & Safety Executive and demanded some kind of action from them because they are not doing their jobs right. If you have managers sending extra self rescuers into the pit to fight a fire then that manager needs condemning big style.

“If you have deputy managers leading them to the site of the fire telling them to put on



Keith Stanley

their self rescuers it is radically wrong. That deputy manager needs penalising for that kind of action.

“So this committee will continue to fight for the right response that we should be getting in respect of covering our members.”

Turning finally to the issue of inhaleable dust Keith said “The Safety and Health Sub Committee is now going around every colliery to see how the mine managers are policing extended shift working because they have a duty to make sure that the men get enough time off work for the body recovery mechanism to kick in.

“We want to see that they treat the men seriously rather than encouraging them to work all the extended shifts that they wish and then work weekends on top. We want a monitoring system in place so that the men do not get horrible diseases like bronchitis and emphysema and pneumoconiosis.

“So this committee continues to have a very important role to play in relation to what the Union is all about and I am delighted that I am involved with the exceptional work that it does.”

# STOP IMPORTS AND USE OUR DEEP-MINE RESERVES



WILLIE MENZIES

**WILLIE MENZIES** Scotland Area moved Composite A calling for an end to the use of imported coal and the exploitation of Britain's deep-mined coal reserves to provide us with security of supply in the face of ever increasing prices for imported coal.

"In today's developed world energy derived fuel is the most sought after commodity the world over and we believe a balanced energy policy is right for our country and it should not be left to the market. Over reliance on gas has left us vulnerable as our own stocks dwindle.

"The days of cheap imports have gone for ever with the price of coal doubling over the past year and emerging economies like China and India are major coal producers and also major coal importers as well.

"Coal fired generation amounts to about 40% of the world's electricity production and it is growing. It's morally wrong for our government not to invest in our coal industry. Whilst we recognise the significant developments on clean coal technology there are no announcements on exploiting our own deep-mined coal reserves to meet this demand.

"If we are serious about the security of supply for gas then we should be equally serious about the security of supply for coal" He said.

He told Conference that Russia and Poland are major suppliers of coal to Britain, but with an economic upturn in Poland it would appear that we will be more and more dependent on Russian coal unless we look at our own industry.

"The coal industry is a capital intensive industry and coal companies do not have the capital" he said "I believe we need government intervention on a grand scale. We need the Energy Minister and the Prime Minister to talk up the use of our indigenous deep-mined coal and most of all we need investment in coal not dirty coal as the green lobbies would have you believe - but clean coal with carbon capture and storage.

"Malcolm Wicks the Energy Minister will take up Clean Coal but will not endorse British indigenous coal. Security of supply and the part our own coal industry can play must be hammered home at every opportunity."

DAVID GUY North East Area reminded Conference what happened just over two years ago when Russia cut gas supplies to the Ukraine which in turn drastically cut supplies to central Europe and it should be noted that Russia supplies 45% of the European Union's gas supplies.

"It was a classic situation of how the UK could be vulnerable as demand increases and the government should be considering re-opening coal mines in Britain to replace imported coal that is

coming in from countries that we may not be too friendly with further down the line." He said.

"Security of supply" he said "is the most potent argument that we can put to government for replacing imported coal with indigenous coal deep-mined coal."

David referred to Weirmouth Colliery in the North East which he said was closed by the Tories as a purely political act resulting 100 million tonnes of coal being sterilised.

"We have put proposals forward for the re-opening of Weirmouth but the answers we get are that it will be too expensive, the roadways would be flooded, there would be problems with gas, there would be roof falls and the coal take is six miles under the North Sea.

"But that is not the proposal we have put forward" he told delegates "We have put forward proposals for a new mine. There is a five foot seam at Weirmouth that has never been worked because of high ash content but it could be used to access the rich high quality reserves under the North Sea. So the arguments about gas, water and roof falls just don't apply in this situation. What we propose is a brand new drift mine straight into the workings - no shafts, virgin reserves and 100 million tonnes of coal."

He added "This will provide jobs in industry, services, transport and local infrastructure. We need to get to this Minister to get some of the projects closed under the Tories to re-open."

# CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY

**DAVID GUY North East Area moving Motion 1 calling for the development of Clean Coal Technology said “We recognise the excellent work carried out by the TUC in regards to the establishment of clean coal technology in the UK and the need for indigenous coal reserves to be exploited so that the nation does not become heavily dependant on imported gas and other imported fuels.”**

He went on to say that “Government plans to have only one carbon capture demonstration plant in the next seven years does not reflect the urgency required if the government is serious about its intention to cut emission levels to meet its proposed targets.”

“The European Union has clearly identified the need for 12 or more such plants in the European Community - yet the government’s ambition stretches to just one.”

“Clean coal technology is something we have no choice about if we are serious about protecting the environment,” he told Conference “Across the world it is coal that is the main producer of electricity with gas and oil getting dearer and dearer by the day. Coal is set to play a greater role in world energy production in the future. The international Energy Agency has estimated that there is only 44 years of viable oil production left in the world and 60 years of viable gas production which compares with 200 years of viable coal production.. You do not have to be a mathematician to understand that that coal is going to be a major, even dominant energy resource for many, many years to come.

“People could be forgiven for believing that we no longer burn coal here.

In government circles coal is a dirty four letter word but the truth is we are burning it in vast quantities in our power stations and coal is still the main fuel for generating electricity in Britain.

“Without coal, he told delegates, “our electricity bills would be far higher than they are today as a result of gas price increases that have shot into the stratosphere. It’s going to get worse - British Gas has announced that in the next month both electricity and gas prices are likely to increase by more than 30%.

“It is a fact that if we listen to environmentalists and stop burning coal the lights will go out quite literally tomorrow.

“Slowly the arguments that we have been putting for years are beginning to dawn on those in government but not fast enough. Gordon Brown has given the go ahead for 8 nuclear power stations to be built in Britain at a massive cost. They will only replace the old magnox stations and no one has yet been able to put a cost on decommissioning which will be a financial burden on future generations.”

Explaining the magnitude of the nuclear waste problem he said “If we had built a nuclear power station at Hastings in 1066 when Harold had his eye out, we would still be trying to deal with the waste problem today – that’s how serious it is.”



DAVID GUY

DAVE HADFIELD Yorkshire Area seconding said “Richard Budge has just upgraded plans for a carbon capture ready power station on the site of newly opened Hatfield Colliery from 450 megawatts to 900 megawatts, if he can do it why not a Labour government? But I have my own view about these Labour Ministers; they are nothing but Tory clones”

NICKY WILSON Scotland Area Secretary in supporting said “The criticisms of the environmentalists need to be addressed. There is a certain amount of hypocrisy when they say that clean coal technology and carbon capture and storage are unproven technologies then call on the government and others to invest in offshore tidal power etc.

“Carbon capture and storage can actually help enhance food production and have other advantages that need to be looked at and we should be shouting louder and louder and taking on the environmentalists because we should not step back and allow them to criticise coal as not being a progressive industry, because we all know how coal was produced in the past and that it was a dirty fuel but that is not the way of the modern coal mining generation.”

# UNITE AROUND A SAFETY CAMPAIGN

**CHRIS SKIDMORE** Yorkshire Area moving Motion 8 calling for the NUM to launch a campaign to resist any watering down of health and safety in the work place said “We do not seek in any way to detract from the unstinting efforts of the Health and Safety Sub Committee. Rather we want to broaden the ongoing campaign towards zero accidents at work and to organise with other like-minded trade unionists to say enough is enough. It’s also important that we understand the depth of the problem.

“The watch word in the pits is work safe stay safe and never tempt fate and deliberately flout safety procedures as some managers have done recently at Thoresby for instance when men were instructed to fight an underground fire wearing their self rescuers.

“We now have someone in management in Yorkshire who deliberately flouted not only safety procedures but all the principles of working safely in a coalmine at a pit in Warwickshire.”

“What kind of accountability springs to mind when we have people in authority acting in such an undisciplined manner and more importantly, what message does it put out?”

“It’s when we look at the broader picture that the problem becomes apparent.

He went on to highlight horrendous accidents that happen almost daily in British industry not just in coalmines and especially among migrant workers.

He complained at the way the Corporate Manslaughter Act was watered down and singled out a recent poll of Company Directors as an example of some attitudes to safety and health in British industry. Of 230 directors questioned 40% thought that health and safety legislation was an unnecessary burden of red tape and regulation and one in ten thought it was worthless.

He lambasted those who seek to dilute health and safety regulations saying “they are rarely if ever put in the same dangerous situations that many face every day in their working lives.”



**ALAN SPENCER** Nottinghamshire Area moving Motion 9 also expressed deep concern at the decline of safety standards in the British coal mining industry and called for quarterly meetings of the



NUM Safety and Health Sub-Committee involving representative from each of remaining mines.

“There have been three fatalities at UK Coal’s mines followed by one another at Welbeck where I work and it indicates that something is sadly lacking in the Company’s approach to safety.” He said.

He pointed out that “In Nottinghamshire where UK Coal do not recognise the NUM the Company has been forced to give ground because the Union has told them that we will whistleblow to the inspectorate on issues of safety and as a result we now have the

opportunity of raising all our concerns with the manager on a regular basis.

“We also discuss safety at the Nottinghamshire Area Council meetings and are able to collate safety matters with our neighbouring mine Thoresby. If we do not get satisfactory answers from management to our questions then we have the ability to raise matters at Area level knowing that our concerns will be dealt with by the NUM Safety Sub Committee.

“The NUM’s policy of ‘Back to Basics’ is correct simply because of UK Coal’s poor attitude to safety and as more companies buy into our coal industry it’s possible that different standards of safety will be used and a common policy of back to basics were adopted we think it would be an advantage if the safety representatives from each of the mines different areas could meet from time to time so that any differences, bad practices, concerns or improvements at the different companies could be addressed. It would be beneficial to the NUM Safety Sub Committee when they meet with the inspectorate.

“Let’s show that safety is at the top of the NUM’s agenda.”

Dave Hadfield Yorkshire Area told Conference about the problems at newly opened Hatfield where despite the NUM winning a 96% ballot vote for recognition “The manager doesn’t want to know. “We have had enough” he said, “We need to let them know that we are still there and we are not going away.”

## INTERNATIONAL UNITY

**IAN LAVERY** speaking on the international situation said “The NUM is proud of its history of internationalism and it stretches back years and years through generations and generations of miners and of course that fine tradition continues today. One thing is significant - the NUM small as it is - punches well above its weight at these international conferences and we have made a difference in a whole lot of other countries in the way they operate within their own unions.

“The NEC agreed some two years ago that we needed to try to bring one coalminers’ international together and agreed to participate in the first ever International Coalminers’ Conference in Calcutta in December last year. It was the first ever coalminers’ international event.

“It was so successful that we are now working on holding another conference and it was suggested by Nicky Wilson that perhaps we could hold it in Scotland. An international coalminers’ conference in Scotland would be absolutely fantastic.” He said.

Turning to the Calcutta conference itself he said “The things we discussed were privatisation, safety and health as well as wages terms and conditions and I am now having discussions on behalf of the Union for the next conference. I have had discussions with the French and the Indians; I have had talks with the



Australians last week and the United Mineworkers of America could consider coming to the next conference. So we are making huge headway.

We are still members of the IEMO who were behind the Calcutta Conference. They have the contacts and were the prime movers in the success of that event” He said.

Following Ian’s speech Conference rejected a motion from the South Wales Area that we disaffiliate from the IEMO.

# Industry Wide Mineworkers' Pension Scheme

**TONY BECKWITH Nottinghamshire Area moved Motion 12 in respect of the Industry Wide Mineworkers' Pension Scheme (IWMPS).**

"In Nottinghamshire" he said "we are aware of a further challenge by the breakaway UDM to gain another trustee on the IWMPS Board of Management at the expense of the NUM appointed trustee.

"When the Scheme was framed the ratio for union nominated trustees was based on relevant numbers, for example working miners. The continuing pit closures have meant that both the NUM and the UDM have lost active members and for spite rather than advantage to the Scheme the UDM has decided to challenge the block share allocation again. When the Scheme began the Articles of Association allowed any union to seek a review of the block share allocation and this has happened in a practical way in the past when the UDM was thwarted because of refusal by the employer to give a check-off system for miners which meant that there was no way of identifying the NUM membership however the audit was found incomplete and the challenge by the UDM was lost.

"The Articles of Association allow for a challenge by the same union after a three year lapse. However the pensions' co-ordinator has allowed this challenge and we believe unfairly even though it is within the last three years.

"The British coal mining industry is in such a critical state now that a partial closure could swing the balance one way or the other on trustee representation if the Scheme continues to be based on working miners. Therefore the Nottinghamshire Area believes there should be an amendment in the Articles of Association which takes into account the whole of the membership of the Scheme so that deferred and retired members and not just working

members are taken into account as part of the block share approach.

"We therefore ask that the National Officials seek professional advice, if necessary in order to secure a way that the representation of the Scheme trustees is fair to all beneficiaries and not subject to a selfish political game as adopted by the UDM."



NICKY WILSON Scotland Area moving Motion 14 also addressing the Industry Wide Mineworkers' Pension Scheme and the way in which Scheme members appear to be losing out when there were assurances given at the inception of the Scheme that it would not be the case and that this should be investigated said:

"At privatisation it was made clear in our view that men who transferred over under TUPE from British Coal to the new private companies had a commitment given that they would not lose out in any way by comparison with the old schemes - the SSS and the MPS which closed in December 1994 on privatisation.

"If we look at some of the facts because of their earnings there are now members of the IWMPS

He told Conference that the increased earnings of Scheme members cannot be properly reflected in terms of the best three

years of the last thirteen years and "It is clear that there is a very big loss involved.

Nicky pointed out that because of that men could be losing upto £200 a week and the NEC has already taken steps on this "But the reason for this resolution is to get a Conference decision to strengthen that and give full backing to the officials and the NEC to take this forward.

"There is no question whatsoever that this can be afforded because we are not talking about fantastic numbers of men - it's not thousands and thousands of men. So what we have got to challenge and find out from everyone's memory that was involved at the time is what they can remember of the statements that were made by the ministers and others that

none of the miners who transferred over into the new scheme would in any way lose out.

"What we don't know at this stage is whether there is a legal argument, but there certainly is a moral one. But what we have got to investigate - and the NEC are hopefully going to take steps to do that, - is to look at the Privatisation Bill itself and anywhere else we can to see if that commitment was given in tablets of stone because it may well be there is a problem if it was only related to Ministers' statements and that would be qualified in Hansard anyway.

"Clearly it is a job to be done and we have to make sure to fight on behalf of those miners who stayed loyal to the industry because despite all the offers to take redundancy they stayed and fought to keep their jobs."

# REPEAL ALL ANTI-TRADE UNION LAWS

**ALLAN STEWART** North East Area moving Motion 4 calling for the repeal of anti-trade union legislation said “ Most ordinary people would be surprised to find out that in this country – in the 21st Century – we still do not have a legal right to strike and that we never have had.

“In terms of rights at work employers have always had the whip hand and it was always the worst type of propaganda that led people to believe that trade unions had become too powerful

“Now more than ever – as we live in a situation known as global capitalism where multi-national companies in reality rule the world – workers in Britain are subjected to the most draconian restrictions in terms of workers rights to such a degree that Tony Blair was able to boast that UK labour laws were the most restrictive in the western world.

“That is not something we should be proud of – it is not something we should be boasting about – it is an absolute disgrace and an even greater disgrace that a labour Prime Minister should have made such an utterance.

“Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s the Tories introduced an whole raft of anti- trade union legislation aimed at restricting the right of - not just trade unions – but workers generally to fight injustice in the workplace.

“For a worker to be able to lawfully take industrial action against even the most ruthless of employers the worker or his or her trade union have to negotiate through a whole labyrinth of legalistic shackles and even then employers are often able to find a sympathetic judge who will perform legal summersaults to declare a strike unlawful and force workers to return to work.

“The worst example in modern times” he told conference, “was the Gate Gourmet dispute at Heathrow airport when more than 600 workers – working for a firm preparing in-flight meals were sacked by megaphone.

“When baggage handlers at the same airport took strike action in support of their fellow workers they were immediately in conflict with the laws Tony Blair was so proud of.

“The disgrace was further highlighted when it came to light that some baggage handlers had close relatives sacked by Gate Gourmet.

“So it is easy to envisage a situation where a father could not support a daughter or a brother support is sister without such support being deemed unlawful.

“It should be a fundamental right of any worker to support another wherever they may work, whoever they may work for and whatever the distance between them.

“It is a fact that even the best of lawyers find it difficult to frame a ballot paper that will be legal and cannot be challenged in a court of law.

“Once a ballot has past, this almost impossible test, employers have to be given a weeks notice of any action giving that employer a tactical advantage in undermining any action.

“So called unofficial strikes are subjected to even more suppression.

“Unions are made by the law to disown their own members leaving them wide-open to selective dismissal.

“Any resistance by a union to any part of the anti-trade union legislation runs the risk of all the assets of the union being sequestered.

“These vicious anti-trade union laws must go and the United Campaign Group should be congratulated for the excellent work it has done in this regard.”

Concluding he said “Our National Official have for many years raised this issue at the TUC many times without success, but the time has come for a serious TUC campaign to fight these totally unacceptable laws.”



# UNION LEARN



**The Yorkshire Area N.U.M. is aiming to provide informal Adult Learning within your local community. The courses will be available to all working miners, former miners and their families. We intend to offer Learning Opportunities (e.g. Skills For Life) that are easy to access and tailored to suit your needs.**

**For further information please contact:**

**Chris Skidmore  
Maurice Kent  
Miners' Offices  
Huddersfield Road  
Barnsley  
S70 2LS**

**Tel: 01226 215555 Ext. 211  
Fax: 01226 215561**

**[www.unionlearn.org.uk/  
yorkshirehumber](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/yorkshirehumber)**

**[www.num.org.uk](http://www.num.org.uk)**

# Dennis and Billy

DENNIS SKINNER the miners' MP for Bolsover addressed the NUM Conference for the first time since he was the president of the Derbyshire NUM in 1960s.

In what could only be described as a masterclass in the art of public speaking he reminisced about his time in the trade union movement and his many years in parliament.

His experiences of many struggles over more than 50 years enthralled delegates as he related the highlights of his years of struggle with the NUM as an activist and as a Member of Parliament.

Clearly Dennis felt at home among miners and spoke with passion about his feelings for the NUM and the miners who work in the industry, sometimes seriously, sometimes with tremendous humour.

At the end of his speech the Conference rose to give him a standing ovation and Ian Lavery made a presentation on behalf of the Union.

Another standing ovation greeted the end of a speech by Billy Etherington the miners' MP for Sunderland North and Secretary of the Miners' Parliamentary Group.

Billy also spoke of his long association with the NUM since starting in the pit at the age of 21. Billy has regularly attended NUM Conferences over many years and help form the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign to assist miners victimised during the 1984/85 strike only relinquishing his position as chairman when he entered parliament in 1992.



Dennis Skinner

Always highly respected by the NUM he has been a tireless worker for the underprivileged and disposed.

He informed the Conference however that it would be his last appearance because he will retire at the next general election.

Ian Lavery thanked him for his tremendous efforts on behalf of miners over many years and made a presentation to him on behalf of the Union.



Billy Etherington receives presentation from Ian Lavery

# MALTBY CENTENARY



Steve Mace

Ian Lavery

Ron Buck

**The Maltby Centenary Service took place Sunday 1 June at St Bartholomew's Church Maltby and was attended by NUM National and Yorkshire Area Officials.**

Ron Buck former Maltby Secretary spoke movingly about his time working at Maltby and serving the men over many years. He told the congregation both the happy times and the sad times he had experienced. He said he would always be proud that he was elected to represent miners at Maltby and spoke of the camaraderie and the humour. Later he laid a wreath at the altar on behalf of the NUM Maltby Branch.

Ian Lavery NUM President said we meet in these very fitting surroundings to remember those tens of thousands of miners who worked in the Yorkshire region their families, their wives, widows, their sons, daughters, the orphans, the sick, the lame, the dead and those killed.

Ian went on to recount the events of 28 July 1923 when 27 men tragically lost their lives in an explosion at Maltby. "This 100th centenary service gives us the opportunity to share a thought for all those who suffered and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the name of coal" He said.

Ian also asked the congregation to remember all those miners around the world who are still losing their lives working in coalmines in countries as far flung as China or the Ukraine where we hear almost daily of multiple unnecessary tragedies which in their wake leave grieving women and children.

Steve Mace Maltby Branch Delegate also addressed the congregation and spoke about the way that mining and the problems facing the mining industry have changed over the years.

"It's also good to be talking to you about a colliery that is still operational and not stood talking about its closure even though we have been threatened with closure

on a number of occasions in the past we have always managed to pull through and keep the colliery open." He said.

Miners who worked at Maltby 50 years ago would not have heard about clean coal technology or carbon capture and storage but these are today's "buzz words".

"If we are to have a mining industry in Britain then we have to address people's concerns about the environment and create a modern mining industry that can burn coal in such a way – whether mined here in Britain or imported – so that we minimise any pollutants and save the planet for our children and grandchildren." He added.

A final touching part of the ceremony came when children laid 27 individual roses at the altar in remembrance of the 27 miners killed in the explosion at Maltby in 1923.

# CLEAN COAL TASK GROUP LOBBY MPs TO PUSH FOR GREEN COAL

THE TUC Clean Coal Task Group a joint industry and trades union initiative, took the arguments for clean coal and Britain's mining industry to the Houses of Parliament in May.

Arguing the case for a balanced energy policy in the face of rising oil and gas prices coupled with the increasing costs of nuclear power and the uncertainty of renewables members of the Task Group were joined by members from the NUM National Executive Committee National Officials and Area Officials for a meeting which was attended by Members of Parliament with the purpose of raising the vital necessity of developing clean coal technology and investing in the British mining industry.

Mike Farley Chairman of the Task Group gave MPs a presentation in which he asserted that there is a growing recognition in government that clean coal can play a part in Britain's energy mix and reduce reliance on gas and nuclear, but progress on clean coal technology has not been "rapid enough" he said.

He told MPs that "In the two years since the energy review prospects for coal have improved. We are heading for 60% reliance on gas and are the biggest importer and government should decide which scenario for coal would best meet its White Paper objectives and the they "should throw their weight behind carbon capture and storage".

Mr. Farley expressed concern at the progress on carbon capture and storage saying that "More than one demonstration station was necessary and that an acceleration of the programme was vital.

"There must be government incentives to make it happen and with the right incentives we could have six demonstration stations ready by 2015.

"The government should further analyse the risks to security of supplies via another dash for gas" he added.

"We are supportive of government plans insofar as they set out to achieve secure, clean and affordable energy but we are concerned over the pace and scale of progress to ensure that sufficient new power plants are built soon enough. We are concerned that the later decisions are made compared to the 2015/16



Miners' Leaders meet MPs.

cliff edge in generation capacity (due to closures of old plant) the greater the tendency to opt for gas fired generation. As well as impacting on security of supplies, delays in construction of new cleaner power plants (including both capture ready and plants with CCS) detract from UK claims to be setting a global example in reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions from fossil fuels."

Ian Lavery NUM President spoke for many in the industry saying that as far as many in government are concerned "Coal is still a dirty word with ministers; we need a clear commitment from government to the coal industry. We must continue to argue forcefully for the British deep-mined coal industry," adding that "If we cannot put the case for clean coal in the present circumstances then we will never be able to."

Ian reminded MPs that coal is not a fuel of the past. "We burnt 68 million tonnes last year but unfortunately 51 million tonnes of that was imported. Ministers must recognise the importance of clean coal in the future generation mix not just in the UK and Europe but globally. Coal is necessary for security of supplies; more than 50% of our electricity was generated from coal in the cold winter of 2006 when gas prices rocketed. Coal is economic and is now the lowest cost means for electricity generation and helps moderate the price of electricity."

Chris Kitchen NUM National Secretary continued with the same theme pointing out that if we are burning so much coal not only nationally but globally and are set to continue doing so well into the future then "carbon capture and storage will have to be addressed. It is vital to reduce CO2 emissions both within the UK and globally. Given the massive dependence of China, India, the US and European economies on coal fired power, the successful development of clean coal technology is essential not just in Britain but on a global scale if we are to provide energy security and at the same time reduce global warming."

Keith Hartshorne NUM Yorkshire Area Vice-Chairman said "We need to challenge the environmental Luddites who are against coal but are very happy to go home from their demonstrations and switch the lights on. Let's take coal and burn it green, that is the real challenge to providing the dual objectives of energy security and the need to reduce CO2 emissions."

Supporting Keith's remarks Mike Farley said, "The environmentalists say carbon capture and storage won't happen quickly enough and then they delay it by their actions."



# DURHAM GALA 2008



THE Durham Miners' Gala is now undoubtedly the world's greatest demonstration of working class solidarity. Almost every union is represented as well as other working class organisations and campaigns, all of which come together in a carnival atmosphere of unity.

The Gala takes place every year on the second Saturday in July and the ancient City of Durham rings to the sound of brass bands and pipe bands. Young and old alike sing and dance as they weave their way through the narrow, winding streets proudly carrying their banners.

Recent years have seen an added international flavour with people of all nationalities joining together to have fun and express solidarity with each other's struggles.

As pits in the North East closed during the nineties the numbers attending the Gala began to shrink but the miners' union refused to allow this historic occasion that has graced the streets of Durham for well over a century to disappear. Joined by the rest of the trade union and labour movement the Durham Miners' Association has worked tirelessly to revive the event and a great deal of credit must go to President David Guy and Secretary David Hopper.

So yet again the streets came alive on the second Saturday in July for this the 124th Gala. 30 bands and over 130 banners took part in the parade passing the County Hotel where they were greeted by union and political leaders as well as a delegation of Australian miners' leaders before making their way to the Gala field where speeches were made and the kids joined in all the fun of the fair.

Once again former MP and Labour Minister Tony Benn and actor Ricky Tomlinson, who plays dad Jim in the hugely popular TV show The Royle Family mingled with the crowds.

For working class and international solidarity the Durham Miners' Gala is the place to be and far from becoming the non-event our enemies would have wished for it has gone from strength to strength - long may it continue to do so!

See you all again next year.

# ROSSINGTON TEA



**IN APRIL** Rossington miners held their retired miners' Tea just as they have done for over 60 years - regardless of the fact that the colliery is closed. The Rossington Miners' Welfare was packed once again and the event continues to flourish thanks in no small part to the hard work of committee members Vic Lindsay, Des Henderson, John Gibson and Roy Cooke.

Also in attendance as specially invited guests were Chris Kitchen NUM Yorkshire and National Secretary, Chris Skidmore former Rossington branch Delegate and now NUM Yorkshire Area Chairman together with David Barber and Steve Fearnley from Raleys Solicitors.

For many years a tradition that evolved from a spirit of togetherness saw each club in Rossington send a representative to wait on the tables ensuring the lads never went thirsty and each club also donated a bottle of spirits which is presented to the oldest attendees at the tea

The wholehearted endeavours of the Rossington Miners' Welfare staff ensure that everyone has a wonderful time and it is fantastic to see old friends, workmates and comrades meet up again in a social setting, enjoy a hearty meal, have a few drinks and discuss old times.

The tradition in mining communities of providing a retired miners' tea has been widespread for many years. It seems it has been one of those traditions only miners in their close-knit community life are capable of. Long may they continue and prosper they are part of our proud history and magnificent heritage.



Chris Kitchen Yorkshire Area Secretary and Chris Skidmore Chairman with retired miners.

# Defending progress in Latin America

Colin Burgon MP

**The most recent *UN Social Panorama of Latin America* survey underlined the social transformation taking place in Latin America. In 2007, for the first time since 1990, the total number of people living in poverty on the continent dropped below 200 million.**

The rejection of neo-liberal policies in this region, historically led by Cuba and now joined by Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, is at the heart of this poverty reduction. In contrast, the free-market orthodoxies dogmatically applied in the region in the 1980s and 1990s — of which it was said ‘there was no alternative’ — worsened social exclusion.

Venezuela, under Hugo Chávez, is an inspiring example of the how progressive governments can radically transform the lives of the most excluded citizens. Twenty million Venezuelans can now see a doctor for the first time in their lives, illiteracy has been wiped out and extreme poverty radically reduced thanks to imaginative government policies.

Recent events underline the ongoing threat from Washington to such progressive governments, through military aggression and attempts to undermine democratic mandates via separatist movements.

In May, the US revived its Fourth Fleet in the

Caribbean. As the BBC reported “Some see in this decision a response to the election of several governments in the region which have expressed policies contrary to those of the government in Washington”. This move came against the backdrop of the military strike in Ecuador earlier this year by Colombia — the main ally of the US government in Latin America and a recipient of billions in US military aid.

Specifically, Venezuela’s government has expressed concerns regarding US suggestions that it may move a military base to the Colombian border with Venezuela, and recent incursions of US military aircraft over a Venezuelan military base and, separately, of 80 Colombian troops in western Venezuela, which Venezuela’s Nicholas Maduro called “violations of international law.”

Attempts to destabilise Evo Morales’ government in Bolivia suggest an additional strategy to undermine the region’s left-wing governments by breaking up countries. Right-wing separatist leaders in Santa Cruz, the country’s wealthiest province possessing vast gas reserves, held a ‘referendum’ in May on an Autonomy Statute which if fully implemented would, in effect, turn it into a new country. The Autonomy Statute permits the Santa Cruz oligarchy the ‘right’ to sell off and privatise its huge reserves of natural gas, oil and minerals. Santa Cruz would be given the right to sign

international trade agreements and form and run its own police force and military to defend this. This would benefit chiefly US-multinational companies and deprive Bolivia’s central government of revenues to continue its policies benefiting that country’s poor indigenous majority.

Bolivian President Morales has repeatedly denounced the US’ aggressions against his administration, highlighting how the US government agency, USAID, has financed Bolivian opposition groups with more than \$120m per year since the election of Morales in December 2005. Worryingly, similar secessionist currents are also being promoted in the oil-rich state of Zulia in Venezuela and in Ecuador, where the Rafael Correa administration is implementing progressive policies.

There is hope that a Barack Obama presidency would see some policy shifts away from the belligerence of the Bush regime. However whatever the outcome of the US election in November, trade unionists and all progressives in this country have an important role to play in ensuring the British government has independent and positive relations with Latin America. Its people must be allowed to use their national resources for their own use and determine their own future free from outside interference



# ENERGY POLICY IS “BLOWING IN THE WIND”

**NOTHING demonstrates more the futility of relying on the market for energy security than Royal Dutch Shell's decision to pull out of the flagship wind power project - leaving the government's energy policy in general and its target for renewables of generating all energy – not just electricity – from renewables by 2020 in tatters.**

The strangest thing is that among the reasons put forward for the pull out is a lack of government commitment and insufficient subsidy. Clearly to get the sinking project of the ground once again the government – meaning the taxpayer – will have to stump up more money or the market will simply fail to produce the goods.

Direct subsidy schemes that pay wind farm operators for each megawatt they produce, like those used in other parts of Europe attract more investment according to Dean Cooper Head of alternative energy at consultancy Ambrian,

“The right framework needs to be in place to attract investment from the majors such as Shell” Cooper said. Without that “France and Germany are likely to be the European leaders in offshore wind.”

So the market alone will not work for meeting the government's policy is the message unless we cough up subsidies to match those given by the French and Germans. This tells us that the entire European philosophy of “leave it to the market” is a fraud in respect of renewables just as it is in respect of nuclear power where the taxpayer will

be called upon to meet the costs of decommissioning and waste disposal.

The UK's complex subsidies system doesn't give adequate incentives to produce new wind farms according Dieter Helm, Professor of Energy Policy at the University of Oxford, adding that “This is a wake up call for the challenge the UK faces.”

The government gives energy companies incentives called Renewable Obligation Certificates or ROCs for each megawatt hour of clean energy they produce. Those that don't meet government targets have to pay into a fund distributed to those who do. The ROCs give bonuses to wind-farm operators simply because other energy suppliers have failed to build new ones. Nevertheless the subsidies are made and are still not enough for such as Royal Dutch Shell.

The government recently signed up to the European Union's Renewable Energy Directive, committing the UK to generating 15% of all energy, not just electricity, from renewable sources by 2020 a sevenfold increase from current levels.

This will mean in the region of 30,000 to 40,000MW of wind capacity built, the majority of which will need to be built offshore due to the limited number of sites onshore.

The London Array is the highest profile offshore wind project in the UK Project partners Shell, E.ON UK, a subsidiary of German utility EON AG and Denmark's Dong Energy were planning

place 346 large turbines in the River Thames Estuary in south east England providing 1,000MW or enough electricity for 75,000 homes - a quarter of those in Greater London - but if experienced operators like Shell, Dong and E.ON struggle to make the economics of large offshore projects work, reaching the UK's target looks increasingly difficult.

“It will be a challenge to build out the large government renewables target,” said Centrica spokesman Andrew Turpin.

It would appear that the government will be acknowledging another breach of its suspect energy policy and the government is amending the Renewables Obligation to give extra support to offshore wind. Government spokeswoman Phillipa Heap has announced that there will be consultation again with industry this summer on additional support.

The question is when will the ever rising costs of the government's preferred options of nuclear and renewables make them realise that investment in clean coal technology and the development of Britain's vast accessible coal reserves is the only way to secure our energy requirements?

Ian Lavery NUM President said “This is another example of the futility of leaving Britain's energy policy to the market. All our energy resources should be part of a planned, integrated energy policy. Leaving our energy security to the vagaries of the market has resulted in the loss of much of our coal industry and its vast coal reserves; the squandering of our natural gas and oil reserves and now the government's target for renewables is quite literally blowing in the wind.”

# HATFIELD VOTE

FOLLOWING a long 18 month campaign miners at Hatfield Colliery in Yorkshire have returned a postal ballot result of 96 per cent in favour of recognition at the re-opened mine.

PowerFuel reopened the colliery over 18 months ago and made it as difficult as possible for the NUM to consult with the workforce insisting that the Union could not enter the premises. Any contact with the workforce had to be made at the end of the pit lane as men were either going into work or leaving at the end of the shift to go home, yet it was a prerequisite of convincing the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) to conduct a ballot that the Union demonstrate that the workforce at Hatfield were more likely than not to support recognition of the NUM. The task was made more difficult as more miners were employed and the 50% target constantly moved the goalposts.

Lack of information and cooperation from the employer added to the difficulties forcing the Union to make rough estimates of what were the actual numbers employed.

An NUM Union Branch was set up and regular Branch meetings held at which information was gleaned to support the Union's estimates of workforce numbers and to learn of and deal with any problems against a background of management opposition and refusal to meet recruiting miners into membership of the NUM and signing a petition saying that they had no objection to recognition.

Apart from those who worked tirelessly, often in cold wintry conditions, most credit must go the miners themselves who never gave up supporting the Union, to those who joined and attended the meetings and to those who signed the petition over and over again to make sure that it was always up-to-date.

The final victory came on 6 May when the CAC announced that the workforce had returned a massive 96% yes vote.

A total of 165 votes were cast for the NUM with only 7 against representing a resounding 95.76%.

A total of 235 members of the workforce were entitled to vote and the turnout was 73% a stunning turnout for a postal ballot. The 165 voting for the NUM represent just over 70% of the total workforce entitled to vote.

Chris Kitchen NUM National and Yorkshire Area Secretary said:

"This is a great response by the miners at Hatfield Colliery and sends a clear message to PowerFuel management that the NUM has a role to play in what is hoped to be a success story at Hatfield Colliery. At a time when trade union membership is perceived to be in decline this ballot result shows this is clearly not the case.

"The next stage is for the NUM Yorkshire Area to agree with PowerFuel a Collective Bargaining Agreement. If at the end of 30 days no agreement has been reached the CAC has a further 20 days to arbitrate between the two parties. If this is not successful the CAC Panel will make the decision with regard to the mechanics of the collective bargaining at Hatfield Colliery. This is the procedure under the Trade and Union Labour Relations Act 2002.

"Given the concerns that have been expressed to the NUM from members and non-members working at Hatfield Colliery with regard to safety it is not the NUM's intention to sit back and wait for what could possibly be a further 51 days for this procedure. We intend to pursue the right to set up workforce elected representatives (123 Inspectors) to conduct 123 inspections on behalf of the workforce under the regulations. Reports from these inspections must be sent to the HMI which is not the case with the safety committee that currently operates at Hatfield Colliery.

"Any member with previous 123 Inspectors experience or wishing to put themselves forward as a 123 inspector should contact the NUM office 01226 215555 extension 211 as soon as possible. We will be writing to Mr Chris Daniels, Colliery Manager, in an attempt to facilitate the setting up of 123 inspections as a matter of urgency.

"The men at Hatfield Colliery should be

congratulated for the outstanding result and the vote of confidence they have given to their Union.

A well deserved pat on the back must be given to the staff and all concerned whose campaign efforts and hard work have come to fruition."



Chris Kitchen

## WELCOME BACK

Once again a miner from Hatfield attended the NUM Conference. New Branch President Howie Saunders took his rightful place alongside delegate Dave Hadfield.



# THE MINER

JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS



## WEBSITE

All members with internet access can now get quick up-to-date news and information on the NUM website.

Please visit us at <http://www.num.org.uk>

Past editions of the Miner journal can be read as well as many other important publications.

Links to other websites provide a wealth of contacts and information on many topics including:

- Advice and Rights
- British Trade Unions
- Health and Safety
- International Issues
- Lifelong Learning
- Pensions
- Politics and Sport

For those who have never seen our magnificent council chamber at Barnsley take a virtual tour and see the splendour of our historic Miners' Hall and look around our Scalby Convalescent Home.

The website will be updated on a daily basis with the latest news.

We hope you will visit us regularly.

## £100 Fun Quiz

In this edition of The Miner we are running a competition for all members of the NUM. Set out below is a question to answer.

The winner, who will be drawn from correct entries will win a £100 cash prize.

To enter please tick the appropriate box for your answer and send to:

**NUM Quiz, Miners' Offices, 2 Huddersfield Road, Barnsley S70 2LS**

Closing Date 15/09/2008

**Q.) Which of these Members of Parliament was once a coalminer?**

(Please Mark with a X)

William Hague  Dennis Skinner   
 Jack Straw  Peter Hain

Name: .....

Address:.....

.....  
 .....  
 .....

£100 winner of the quiz in the last edition was:

**Mr. Sean Kennedy. Mr Kennedy is a member of our Notts Area.**

NUM Publications on:  
**CARBON ABATEMENT** and  
**A RESPOSE TO THE ENERGY WHITE PAPER**  
 Can be seen on the NUM website <http://www.num.org.uk>, under  
**PUBLICATIONS** or can be obtained from your NUM Branch  
 Secretary.