

COALMINING IN HALLATROW

It is pretty certain that mining in a fairly simple form has been carried on spasmodically in Hallatrow for several centuries. The fields between Hallatrow, Paulton and Farrington Gurney still provide telltale evidence of bell pits today. However, there have never been any deep pits with coaling shafts in Hallatrow, although the workings of Farrington Colliery extended under part of Hallatrow. The maximum shaft depth of Farrington was 588 feet.

The Farrington Colliery had its origins before 1783, when Jacob MOGG and John GABY were partners. Between then and 1921, when the pit closed for good, the colliery operated under a succession of different partnerships and leases. As one partnership surrendered its lease through lack of profitability, so another partnership was formed with a new lease, in the hope that they would be luckier than their predecessors.

Landowners did not really start to realize the financial potential of the minerals that lay beneath their land until the first half of the seventeenth century. The least risky way of doing this was to lease the mining rights to a partnership for a period of years in return for "freeshare", which was normally one eighth or one tenth of the value of the coal brought to the surface. At the end of a coal lease the miners were obliged to ensure that all pits had been filled, heaps levelled and waste carted away. They also had to compensate the agricultural tenants for any broken hedges and spoiled ground.

Evidence of early mining partnerships is patchy and depends on which landowning families or their solicitors deposited their records at Somerset Record Office. No mention of coal has been found in documents relating to the HILL family, who acquired the manor of Hallatrow from the RODNEYS in the first quarter of the 17th century.

The earliest evidence of mining in Hallatrow appears in the Will of Jonas MOON, who died in 1704. The MOON family lived in Paulton for a while, before moving to Bishop Sutton, in Chew Magna parish, where Jonas had another "coleworks":

Extract of Will of Jonas MOON of Chew Magna, coleminer, dated 15th December 1704.

To my Son Thomas 1/16 part in my coleworks at South Slade, High Littleton.

Son Jonas 1/16 part in my coleworks at South Slade, High Littleton.

Son James 1/16 part in my coleworks at South Slade, High Littleton etc.

(SRO DD/X/SR4)

South Slade was in Hallatrow, just beyond the far end of Butts Lane, adjoining the parish boundary with Farrington Gurney. There were several closes of land at South Slade in different ownership, including the HILLS and it has not been discovered who leased the mining rights to MOON.

In 1716 John HILL leased out the mining rights under Grindstone and Allard's Ham. This was the land between the Hallatrow-Paulton Road and the Cam brook, almost opposite the entrance to Butts Lane:

Extract of Indenture dated 15 Oct 3 George [1716] between John HILL of Hallatrough (1), Mr John PURNELL of High Littleton, George CARTER of Charlton, Kilmersdon & Henry GREGORY of Paulton (2).

Whereby HILL (1) allows (2) to dig for coal etc. in certain lands, namely: Grinstone, Hooked Meade and Alardsham (7 acres) for 21 years from next lady day at £7.15/- p.a.

(Sgd) George CARTER, John PURNELL, Henry GREGORY. Witnesses Cha's STEPHENS, Thomas THRESHER. (SRO DD/MGG/2).

The manor of Hallatrow remained in the HILL family until the early 18th century. When John HILL died his Hallatrow estate was left to his four daughters, whose husbands put it up for sale. Amongst the prospective purchasers was Joseph LANGTON of Newton Park, Newton St. Loe. LANGTON commissioned a survey of the estate in 1716, from which it is obvious that coalmining activity was or had been going on before then. Amongst the details were:

Survey of Hallatrow Farm, 1716

Schedule of land and property including:

Coale Pitt Ground Pasture 3 acres Value £2 per acre (1720 in 2 closes)

Whole estate 135½ acres let to James COLLINS @ £90 p.a.

For timber & Coale £100

+ 3 tenements & closes let to others

Value of timber, Coale & Herriotts £10

Coal Pit Ground/Close lay on the right hand side of Butts Lane as one walks up it and was accessed by a short extension at right angles about half way along Butts Lane.

LANGTON bought the whole estate in 1717 for £1,900. The estate consisted of Hallatrow Farm, about 150 acres of land and two thirds of the lordship of the manor of Hallatrow. Joseph LANGTON wasted no time in exploiting his new purchase. A few months later he leased out for 21 years, the rights to dig for coal under his fields in Hallatrow for 1/- a year plus one eighth of the value of coal landed and sold:

Extract of Indenture dated 17th June 1717

Between Joseph LANGTON Esq. of Newton Park (1), & Jeremiah TUCKER of Chewton Mendip, chirurgeon, James SAVIDGE, gun smith of Litton and Jacob CARTER, butcher of Hallatrow (2).

Whereby, in consideration of free part, covenants, conditions, rents etc. (1) grants to (2) all mines and veins of coal & coaling lying in severall closes of ground on land belonging to the Farm of Hallatrow, viz. 1 close called Longhill Mead, 1 other close called Little Longhill, another close called Great Longhill, the closes called Cole Pitt grounds & the close called the Three Corner Close with licenses & right of workmen, labourers etc. to make pits, dig coal etc. etc. & allow their horses, carts and other carriages on the closes & grounds from the coal works, to carry away coal etc.

for 21 years from the date hereof,

at 1s. per annum and, every Monday morning, for every 20s. worth of coal dug or landed, sold etc. 2s. 6d., being one eighth part, clear of all taxes, charges or outgoings.

(2) agree to keep a book for entering all coal landed and sold & allow (1) to examine it.

(2) also agree to pay trespass to any tenant of the ground and also at end of lease do fill up and level such pit & pits & haul off the Rubble & Ardhill that they shall raise, to such part or parts of the ground where the same shall be raised as (1) shall direct.

If grounds are not worked for one whole year, the lease becomes void.

Sgd. Jer. TUCKER, James SAVIDG, Jacob CARTER. Witnesses William STACY, Jo. MORRIS.

(SRO DD/GL/132).

Longhills and Three Corner Ground lay on the parish boundary with Farrington Gurney about 400 yards in from the east side of the A37 about 600 yards south of White Cross.

Extract of Indenture dated 17th June 1717

Between Joseph LANGTON Esq. of Newton Park (1st part)

& Jeremiah TUCKER, chirurgeon of Chewton Mendip, James SAVIDGE, gun smith of Litton and Jacob CARTER, butcher of High Littleton (2nd part).

In consideration of free part, covenants, conditions, rents etc. (1) grants to (2) all mines and veins of coal & coaling lying in several closes belonging to Hallatrow Farm (Except the coaling on the several closes called Longhills, the Colepit Grounds, the Three Corner Close & the orchards, gardens & courts belonging to the said Farm) with right of workmen, labourers etc. to make pits, dig coal etc. etc. & allow their horses, carts or other carriages on the closes & grounds from the coal works, to carry away coal etc.

for 21 years from the date hereof,

at 1s. per annum and, every Monday morning, for every 20s. worth of coal dug or landed, sold etc. 2s. 6d., being one eighth part, clear of all taxes, charges or outgoings.

(2) agree to keep a book for entering all coal landed and sold & allow (1) to examine it.

(2) also agree to pay trespass to any tenant of the ground and also at end of lease to fill up and level such pit & pits & haul off the Rubble & Ardhill, that they shall raise, to such part or parts of the ground where the same shall be raised, as (1) direct.

If grounds are not worked for one whole year, the lease becomes void.

Sgd. Jer. TUCKER, James SAVIDG, Jacob CARTER. Witnesses William STACY, Jo. MORRIS.

(SRO DD/GL/132).

Extract of Articles of Agreement indented on 29th September 1733

Between Joseph LANGTON Esq. of Newton Park (1st part)

& Samuel WEST & John WEST, both of Farrington Gurney & John LOVE of Temple & Abraham QUARMAN the younger of same, colminers (2nd part).

In consideration of free part, covenants, conditions etc. (1) grants to (2) all mines and veins of coaling lying in severall closes being part of the Farm of Hallatrow in the tenancy of James COLLINS, yeoman, viz. 1 close called Longhill Mead, another close called Little Longhill, another called Great Longhill, the

closes called Coale Pitt grounds, the close called the Three Corner Close & the close called Chessells with licenses & right of workmen, labourers etc. etc.

(2) agree to pay damages to James COLLINS for hedges broken down, spoiled etc.

[no term entered],

Consideration, to be paid every Monday morning, 2s. 6d. money for each 20s. worth of coal landed or sold etc. 2s. 6d., being one eighth part, etc..

If no work for 6 months the leases becomes void.

[Unsigned].

(SRO DD/GL/132).

Note – LANGTON’s Lease of Hallatrow Farm to James COLLINS excluded benefit of trees and coal.

Extract of Indenture dated 1 Nov 1770 between John MOGG, gent. of Cholwell (1) & Jacob MOGG Esq. of Farrington Gurney & John GABY of Broomham, gent. (2).

Whereby in consideration of free part of coal or money MOGG (1) grants to (2) rights to coal etc. under: 2 closes of arable called Norton Way, 1 paddock called Wythies, 1 close called Goose Turne, 1 close called Tineing, 2 closes called Vernam, Meadow called Holy Marsh, totalling 26 acres and 3 closes called Darkett’s Napp, 8 acres in Farrington Gurney & High Littleton [Hallatrow] for 31 years for 1/8 part of coal landed or money.

(Sgd) John MOGG. Witness Saveg ABRAM, Geo. JAMES. (SRO DD/MGG/2).

Durcott’s Knapp adjoined New Close and South Slade.

Extract of Indenture dated 22 Mar 1773 between Richard LANGFORD of Hallatrow (1), John MOGG of Cholwell, gent., John GABY of Broomham, Wilts. gent. & Jacob MOGG Esq. of Farrington Gurney (2), Whereby in consideration of 5/- LANGFORD (1) allows (2) to make a level or drain thro’ 2 closes of ground called Lowest Close & Little Lowest Close (7 acres), adjoining ground of George JAMES called New Close in Hallatrow for 40 years.

Sgd. Richard LANGFORD. Witnesses Joseph BRODRIBB, John FRY. (SRO DD/MGG/2)

Extract of Indenture dated 22 Nov 1773 between George JAMES of Chew Magna, gent. (1), John MOGG of Cholwell, gent., John GABY of Broomham, Wilts. gent. & Jacob MOGG of Farrington Gurney, gent. (2),

Whereby JAMES (1) allows (2) to make a level drain or air pit for their Farrington pit, during the life interest of (1) in the ground.

Sgd. Geo. JAMES. Witnesses Wm. EDWARDS, Will’m HASELL. (SRO DD/MGG/2)

Down & Warrington date Jacob MOGG and John GABY’s Farrington Pit to shortly before 1783. If the above indentures relate to the same Farrington Pit, then its origins must be some 10-15 years earlier.

Extract of Indenture dated 20 Mar 1776 between Elizabeth & Mary JONES of Stowey, spinsters (1), Jacob MOGG Esq. of Farrington Gurney, gent. & John GABY of Wilts. (2).

Whereby JONES (1) grants (2) rights to coal under a close called South [blank], [blank] acres, now in possession of Wm. SKEY of Hallatrow for [blank] years for 1/8 part of coal landed.

(Sgd) Elizabeth JONES, Mary JONES. Witnesses Dinah SPREAT, Tho’s POWELL. (SRO DD/MGG/2)

Note - certain words/figures were left blank. The first two may well have been South Slade Bottom, 2 acres.

Extract of Indenture dated 3rd June 1890

Between Rt. Hon. William Stephen, Earl TEMPLE of Newton Park (1)

& William Beachim BEAUCHAMP of Norton Hall, Stratton on the Fosse, colliery proprietor (2)

Whereby for the consideration undermentioned (1) leases to (2) the coals, veins & seams under lands marked blue on plan (68 acres, 3 roods & 6 perches) in High Littleton [Hallatrow] and also two thirds part of coal, veins, seams etc. under land striped blue. Viz:

<u>1st part</u>		a.	r.	p.
341 Pt	Great Coombe	9	3	13
342	Longhills	4	0	8
345	Three Corner Ground	4	1	24
359	Broadribb’s Down or The Down, Three Acres	2	2	30
361	South Slade Bottom	4	3	12

364	Marshall's Paddock	1 2 35
365	South Slade Bottom	4 0 15
367	Down	8 3 15
369	Down	1 1 32
383	Butts	2 0 20
392	Grindstone	1 3 22
447 Pt	Home Ground	16 0 8
450	Garden	2 1
451	Farmhouse, outbuildings, homestead etc.	2 22
362	South Slade Bottom	2 0 17
454 & 455	2 Cottages & Garden	1 20
456 & 453	Grove, House etc.	3 0 20
440	House & Gardens	12
		<u>68 3 6</u>

2nd part

452 Cottage & garden 14

Term 40 years from 30th August 1890

Consideration for first 1½ years a peppercorn, then a minimum of £52 p.a. + royalties.

Sgd. William B. BEAUCHAMP. Witnesses Wm. Hy. DAVY, Sol'r, Cholwell, Temple Cloud.

SRO DD/GL/133

Notice to Earl TEMPLE to determine lease of coal

We Fanny Beachim BEAUCHAMP, Frank Beachim BEAUCHAMP & Lewis Beachim BEAUCHAMP, executors of William Beachim BEAUCHAMP of Norton House etc. give notice under the lease that, after a fair and reasonable trial & exploration, it has been found that the coal intended to be demised does not exist in the series of veins known as the Farrington Series in sufficient quantities to be worth working & also is of a bad, soft & unmarketable quality etc. to determine on 30th August 1898.

Sgd FBB, FBB, LBB, 24 Feb 1898.

A bundle of papers with the above notice suggests that Earl TEMPLE was far from satisfied that sufficient exploration had been done. On the other side some details of exploration were supplied.

The last search for coal in Hallatrow

The late Bert BRICE was given the following facts by an old mining friend, Harry SIMMONS of Paulton, who was involved in the enterprise.

In 1938 Edgar HEAL, former manager of Old Mills Colliery, Paulton obtained permission to sink a drift mine in a field near Butts Lane, Hallatrow.

Twelve miners were engaged to start the project. They were paid 10s. per day, which was a good wage for that time. As soon as the turf was cut shift working was introduced, 4 miners working on each of 3 shifts per day. An electric haulage engine was installed and later on a pump to clear any surface water that drained into the workings. An additional man was subsequently hired operate the machinery.

The drift was worked on a 1 in 3 gradient towards Butts Lane. On reaching a point 72 feet below the surface, broken ground was encountered. As Harry SIMMONS said to his workmates "It looks as if someone has been here before us." Nevertheless they drove on through a band of clift (soft limestone) until they were 100 ft below the surface. Here again they encountered broken ground. Edgar HEAL was called to examine the workings and decided it would be futile to continue and so the venture was abandoned.

It seemed most likely that the North Branch of Sir Frank BEAUCHAMP's Farrington Pit had already worked the series. Further investigation uncovered another old unrecorded pit at the far end of the field, which may also have worked the same area.

MLB