

PELTON | ELLALONG | SOUTHLAND | AUSTAR

100 YEARS OF MINING HISTORY



A PICTORIAL CELEBRATION
1916 - 2016





*FRONT COVER:
AUSTAR'S "D CREW" AFTER
COMPLETING WEEKEND NIGHT SHIFT,
NOVEMBER 2016*



*AUSTAR COAL MINE OPERATIONS
MANAGER BRIAN WESLEY (SIXTH
FROM LEFT) WITH AUSTAR'S SURFACE
SUPPORT STAFF, NOVEMBER 2016*



*AUSTAR'S CHPP (COAL HANDLING
PREPARATION PLANT) DAY SHIFT WITH
CHPP MANAGER PAUL DAVIS (THIRD
FROM RIGHT), NOVEMBER 2016*



Austar Coal Mine would like to acknowledge and thank Ed Tonks, Michael Barrett and John McKendry who contributed their photo collections to allow preparation of this pictorial celebration. Austar has also drawn from historical records in these books: "Wallsend and Pelton Collieries, A Chronology of the Newcastle Wallsend Coal Company" (Ed Tonks, 1990) and "History of the Greta Coal Measures 1861-1998" (Newcastle Regional Museum, 1998). We encourage anyone with an interest to seek out these wonderful, detailed historical records.

FOREWORD

A HUNDRED YEARS OF COAL MINING IS A HUGE ACHIEVEMENT AND IT'S A CELEBRATION AUSTAR WANTS TO SHARE WITH EVERY PERSON WHO'S BEEN PART OF THE PELTON, ELLALONG, SOUTHLAND AND AUSTAR COAL MINE STORY.

100
YEARS

A NEW ERA

DEVELOPMENT OF PELTON COLLIERY 1916-1917 IN THE SOUTH MAITLAND COALFIELDS, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA. WORK IS UNDERWAY TO BUILD THE RAILWAY SIDINGS IN PELTON COLLIERY YARD. IT HAS BEEN RECORDED THAT SURFACE OPERATIONS COMMENCED AT PELTON ON 15 APRIL 1916.

PHOTO: A. GALLOWAY, ED TONKS COLLECTION



HARD WORK AND OPPORTUNITY



*FITTERS JOHN HOGGAN AND RON HIGGINBOTTOM
IN THE YARD OF PELTON COLLIERY CIRCA 1960.
PHOTO: RON HIGGINBOTTOM*

In 1916 the Newcastle Wallsend Coal Company was already established in the Newcastle Coalfields. Pelton Colliery was built to exploit the Top Greta Coal Seam on the South Maitland Coalfield in the New South Wales Hunter Valley. It was located several miles south west of Cessnock and some 50 kilometres from the port of Newcastle.

The company's move into the South Maitland Coalfield marked the start of a 100 year legacy of hard work and opportunity.

In 2016 Pelton Colliery, now part of the Austar Coal Mine, is the last remaining coal-producing mine in the Cessnock area. Its centenary is a celebration of Australian coal mining history.

100
YEARS

HOSING DOWN THE COAL FACE

TO LIMIT THE DUST, VETERAN MINER MILTON VERNON (LEFT) DOES THE HOSING AS ERNEST NORLEY (RIGHT) OPERATES THE COAL CUTTER. VERNON STARTED WORKING AT PELTON COLLIERY IN ITS EARLY YEARS DURING THE 1920s.

PHOTO: NEWCASTLE WALLSEND COAL COMPANY



THE PIONEERS

WE, the undersigned, agree to the conditions of our employment at Pelton Colliery, and to conform to the Rules and Regulations established under the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1912, and Amendments thereto, and to perform the work we are given to the best of our ability, in a workmanlike manner, on the terms and conditions and wages now existing at this Colliery.

We also agree to give and accept 14 days' notice prior to leaving our employment.

We also acknowledge having received a copy of the Special and General Rules.

DATE.	NAME.	WITNESS.	REMARKS.
March 12 ¹⁹¹⁷	George Scott	E. Sanders	1 st class shiftman
12	Thos. Lundy	E. Sanders	1 st class
12	Arthur Matthews	E. Sanders	1 st class
12	Herbert Jackson	E. Sanders	2 nd class
12	Thos. Cochrane	E. Sanders	1 st class
12	Charles Naylor	E. Sanders	Labourer
12	Thomas O'Neill	E. Sanders	Labourer
12	Edgar Milgale	E. Sanders	2 nd class shiftman
12	William Shargo	E. Sanders	Welder
12	James Davio	E. Sanders	Carpenter
12	Leslie Melbourn	E. Sanders	Labourer, Saw Mill
12	Momy J. Sandbach	E. Sanders	Carpenter
12	Edward Kirby	E. Sanders	Carter
12	A. Wymelham	E. Sanders	Labourer
12	Pete York	E. Sanders	1 st class shiftman
12	Thos. Nichol, Saw Mill	E. Sanders	1 st class
12	Wm. J. J. J.	E. Sanders	1 st class
12	P. McColony	E. Sanders	Sawyer

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DATE.	NAME.	WITNESS.	REMARKS.
May 12 ¹⁹¹⁷	William Turnon	E. Sanders	1 st class shiftman
26	John Taylor	E. Sanders	Carpenter
26	James Lambkin	E. Sanders	Labourer
29	Bert Coombs	E. Sanders	Labourer
May 14	George Cook	E. Sanders	Labourer
June 7	William Perigo	E. Sanders	Sawyer
16	William Barr	E. Sanders	Carpenter
July 2	Robert Young	E. Sanders	Labourer
Oct 15	Christopher Burg	E. Sanders	Carpenter
20	Joseph Nemes	E. Sanders	Sawyer
Nov 8	Robert Copeland	E. Sanders	Labourer
27	Albert Swinton	E. Sanders	Labourer
27	Leslie Coombs	E. Sanders	Labourer
27	Ernest Coombs	E. Sanders	Labourer
Dec 4	James W. Howard	E. Sanders	Labourer
Nov 17 ¹⁹¹⁶	Ed. Brett (Wm.)	E. Sanders	Labourer
17	J. Dagg (Wm.)	E. Sanders	Labourer
17	Charles (Charles)	E. Sanders	Labourer

SOURCE: NEWCASTLE WALLSEND COAL COMPANY

Signing on to their first shift when surface operations started in 1916, Pelton Colliery employed 36 men and boys. Roughly a third worked underground. Many had previously worked at the Wallsend Colliery, also owned by Newcastle Wallsend Coal Co. Ltd. They relocated their families to the Cessnock area in order to work the South Maitland Coalfields, probably with little clue that...

their signatures would see them celebrated a century later as the pioneers of Pelton Colliery.

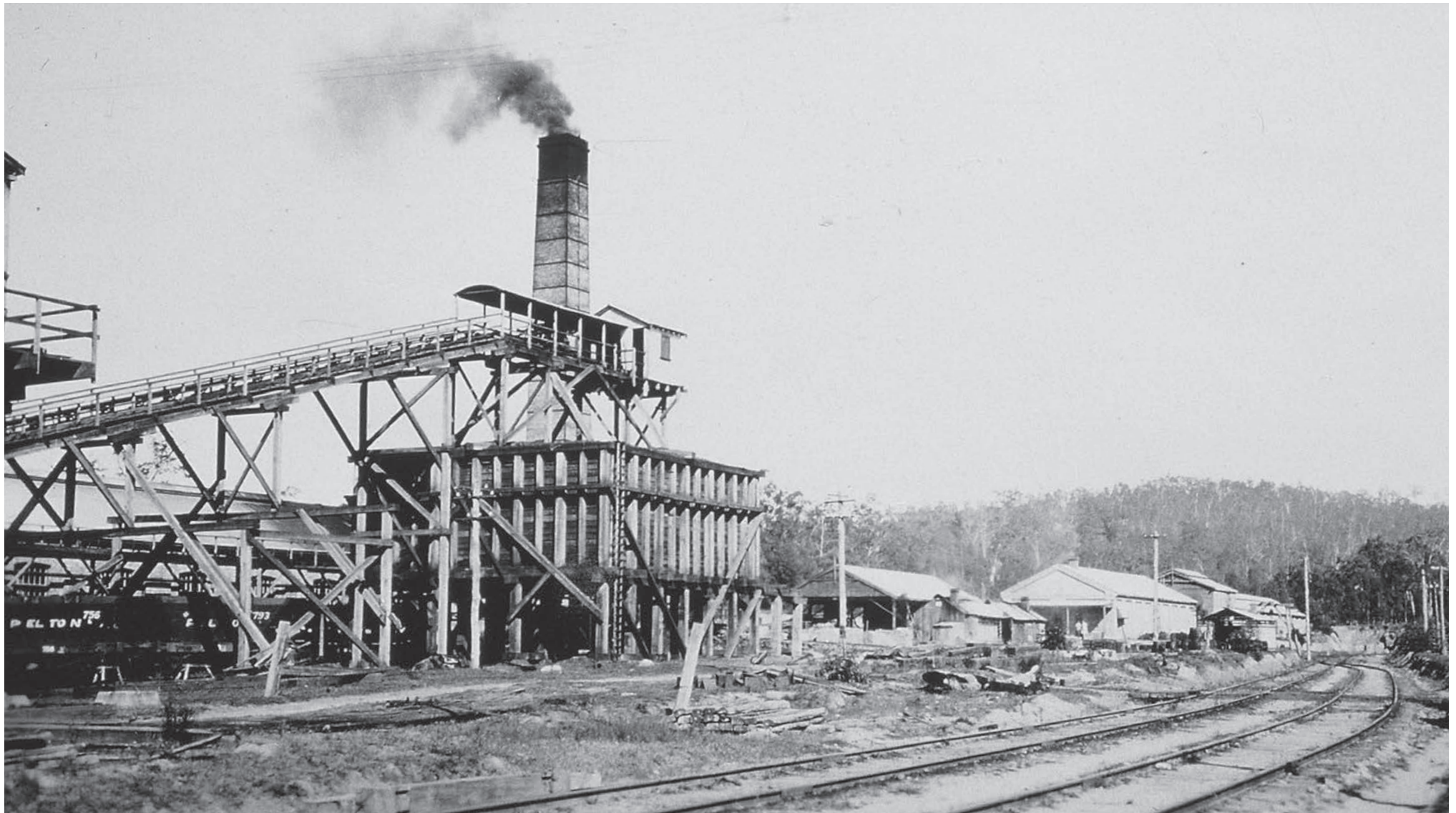
After 10 years, the number of employees had grown to 236.

100 years after that first sign-on, Pelton Colliery has forged a livelihood for thousands of Australians. Acquired by Yancoal Australia Ltd in 2004, it was renamed Austar Coal Mine and in 2016 employs 240 men and women.



PELTON COLLIERY YARD, 1926

PHOTO: ED TONKS COLLECTION



HUMBLE BEGINNINGS: BRICK BY BRICK

PHOTO: A. GALLOWAY, ED TONKS COLLECTION



Before the mine could be built, the bricks had to be made at the Pelton Colliery brick works.

They were used for construction above and below ground and by 1926 you could see the yard taking shape.

As the story goes, there was no real significance to the new colliery's name.

Like so many Australian place names, "Pelton" was simply copied from the north of England.

The Australasian Mining Directory 1918-1919 lists the capital invested at the Pelton Colliery as 200,000 pounds.

100
YEARS

HUNTER VALLEY HISTORY

PELTON COLLIERY'S NO.1 TUNNEL
UNDER DEVELOPMENT CIRCA 1917.

PHOTO: A. GALLOWAY, ED TONKS COLLECTION



A century of mining began right here in the original No. 1 tunnel at Pelton Colliery. In later years the tunnel was levelled to make way for a rectangular opening (or drift) to facilitate conveyor haulage, replacing the efforts of Pelton's hard-working pit horses.

In the first few years of underground operations the miners used naked flames to see, air flow was created by an underground furnace and coal was cut by hand.

It's unclear exactly when safety lamps were introduced at Pelton but it was probably during the mid 1920s. There's a record of a fan being installed in the No. 1 tunnel in 1923 but the No. 2 tunnel was still using the old ventilation method by which an underground furnace drew air into the tunnel towards the furnace, then expelled it upwards and outwards through a shaft.

By the mid 1920s, coal from Pelton and its neighbouring mines was becoming known as "South Maitland Coal".

PELTON BRANDED WAGONS IN THE YARD. IN THE BACKGROUND IS THE PORTAL OF NO. 1 TUNNEL AND ITS ASSOCIATED GANTRY IN 1917.

PHOTO: A. GALLOWAY, ED TONKS COLLECTION



100 YEARS

STEAMING ALONG THE SOUTH MAITLAND RAILWAY

PHOTO: ED TONKS COLLECTION



STEAM LOCOMOTIVE SMR NO. 31 CROSSING THE PINCH BRIDGE OVER WOLLOMBI ROAD INTO THE PELTON COLLIERY 1977. PHOTO: ED TONKS

Steam locomotives like SMR No. 18 pictured here in 1977 were part of the scenery for more than half a century as they hauled Pelton coal to the government rail system at the East Greta Junction. Pelton's custom-built, branded hoppers were used until 1973 when they were swapped for higher-capacity, government coal wagons.

Steam continued to power load after load along the privately owned branch lines from Pelton and other nearby collieries until 1983. Then the government took over haulage and diesel-electric locomotives became the newest link in the Hunter Valley coal chain.

A PROUD DAY

THE FIRST LOAD OF COAL FROM THE RENAMED, REOPENED AUSTAR COAL MINE IS PHOTOGRAPHED BY HISTORIAN ED TONKS ON 4 MARCH 2006 AS IT'S HAULED THROUGH THE EAST GRETA AREA NOW KNOWN AS GILLIESTON HEIGHTS.

PHOTO: ED TONKS



100 YEARS

THE CONDITIONS

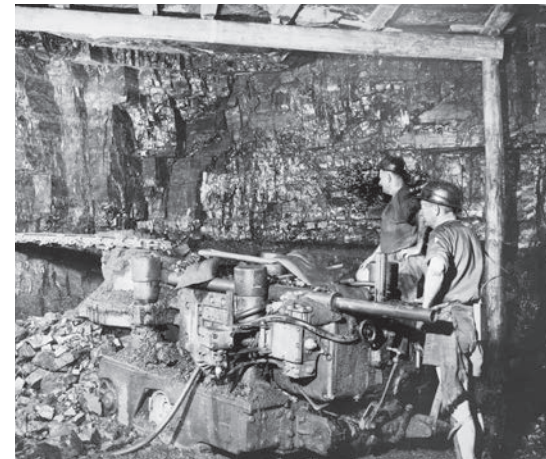
FILTHY DIRTY, COATED IN GRITTY COAL DUST AND GRIME AFTER A SHIFT UNDERGROUND...ALWAYS GOOD ENOUGH REASON TO LEAP OFF THE TRANSPORT AND SPRINT TO THE BATH-HOUSE.

PHOTO: JIMMY FAIRLIE VIA RON HIGGINBOTTOM. CIRCA 1960



LOADER DRIVER AMOS JONES OPERATES THE GATHERING ARM LOADER, NOVEMBER 1957.

PHOTO: M. BARRETT COLLECTION



MINERS OPERATING AN ARC WALL COAL CUTTER, TO CUT THE FACE. E STEWART AND T GLEGHORN, NOVEMBER 1957. PHOTO: M. BARRETT COLLECTION



UNLOADING A SHUTTLE CAR OF COAL AT THE CONVEYOR BOOT END, NOVEMBER 1957. PHOTO: M. BARRETT COLLECTION

100 YEARS

MAJOR MILESTONES

1916



1916 Underground mining begins at Pelton Colliery.

1929



1929 The Great Lockout: industrial mayhem stops production for 15 months across the South Maitland and Newcastle Coalfields.

1949



1949-55 Mechanisation project at Pelton Colliery takes more than five years to complete.

1960



1960-61 Pelton's Coal Handling Preparation Plant is constructed.

1970



1970-71 Exploration licence granted for new mine south of Pelton Colliery.

1978



1978 Underground mining begins at Ellalong: coal is delivered to Pelton washery by overland conveyor.

1983



1983 Ellalong Colliery pioneers the first longwall in the South Maitland Coalfields, and steam power is replaced by diesel electric locomotives on South Maitland Railways.

100

100 YEARS OF MINING

1987



1987 Pelton Colliery becomes the first underground mine in Australia to receive a one-star safety rating.

1992



1992 Underground mining ceases at Pelton Colliery.

1995



1995 Pelton open cut coal mine is established, extracting coal for a short period and entering rehabilitation phase by 1998.

1998



1998 Pelton and Ellalong Collieries amalgamate with Bellbird South and are renamed Southland Colliery.

2004



2004 Southland Colliery becomes Austar Coal Mine after purchase by Yancoal following an underground fire at the Southland Colliery in 2003.

2006



2006 Yancoal Australia pioneers the introduction of Longwall Top Coal Caving technology into Australia at Austar Coal Mine.

2016



2016 Austar Coal Mine celebrates 100 years at Pelton Colliery and is the last remaining coal-producing mine in the Cessnock area.

THE CHALLENGES

MINERS POSING AT THE MAIN TUNNEL AT NEARBY STANFORD MERTHYR COLLIERY IN THE EARLY 1900'S. MINERS IN THE ENTIRE SOUTH MAITLAND COALFIELD WERE AFFECTED BY THE GREAT LOCKOUT OF 1929.

PHOTO: ED TONKS COLLECTION



The history of Australian coal mining has always been rich with argument over the conditions faced by miners, especially underground.

The Great Lockout was a spectacular dispute lasting more than a year and is remembered as a watershed in the region's economic and social history.

Strikes regularly affected production at Pelton Colliery from its earliest years, as they did at every mine. The Great Lockout of 1929 affected the entire South Maitland Coalfield. Miners objected to a planned 12 per cent pay cut and changes to conditions. A drop in demand for coal had led to intermittent employment for many miners and for the company it meant plummeting profits. There were no winners and the total amount of coal exported through Newcastle that year fell to less than half the previous year's output, or around 1.2 million tonnes.

In 1934, coal prices were low and the Newcastle Wallsend Coal Company decided to close its Wallsend operation, focusing on Pelton Colliery. Pelton coal had a reputation for quality and this likely helped the colliery survive and ultimately prosper over a century of challenges and changes.

AND THE REWARDS

DIRTY WORK BUT A DECENT DAY'S PAY.

PERSONNEL ON THE MAIN ENDLESS ROPE TRANSPORT ARE READY TO GO UNDERGROUND AT PELTON CIRCA 1960. PHOTO: NEWCASTLE WALLSEND COAL COMPANY



In 1943, a typical miner's shift started at 7am and lasted eight hours. Actual work-time underground was about six hours a day. The rest was taken up in travel-time to and from the coalface.

At Pelton Colliery, the average contract miner was reported to earn slightly more than workers at other mines on the South Maitland Coalfield, an average of three pounds per shift. Roughly one pound per week was deducted from their pay for the cost of explosives.

Colliery employees worked a five day week with two weeks paid holidays each year plus public holidays. They could retire at age 60 on a pension of two pounds per week and extra if the miner had a wife. The pension was paid by a fund that employers, employees and the government contributed to.



SURFACE WORKERS AT PELTON COLLIERY CIRCA 1960: (LEFT TO RIGHT) FRANK WEST, RON HIGGINBOTTOM, UNKNOWN, FRANK ALLAN AND LEN BUSH. PHOTO: RON HIGGINBOTTOM

100
YEARS

THE CHANGES

SNIGGER ALLAN WEST WITH HORSE NUGGET, 1967.

PHOTO: NEWCASTLE WALLSEND COAL COMPANY



PHOTO: ED TONKS COLLECTION

Pit horses were part of Pelton Colliery's operation until 1972, even though investment in mechanisation began some 20 years earlier.

Early records show the stables and feed storehouse were built during 1922. They are pictured here in 1926 and about this time there were 37 pit horses. Each one had their own stall, in which to rest and recover after a hard day's work hauling coal.

Extra feed including oats was taken underground to keep up the horses' stamina, especially on days they worked a double shift.

On a typical day the stablemen, known as ostlers, were up at the crack of dawn to have the horses ready for work when the miners started their shift at 7am.

MECHANISATION

CONSTRUCTION OF THE NO. 1 SHAFT,
CONCRETE IS POURED INTO KIBBLE IN 1978.

PHOTO: MICHAEL BARRETT



The company's approach to mechanisation was "vigorous" according to the Chairman of Directors in 1960, Mr J. Proud.

The goal was to see Pelton Colliery as up to date as any mine in Australia and as a result, its selling price could be reduced to meet competition from other fuels.

"Our employees, who are sharing in the company's prosperity, have responded extremely well during the change-over to full mechanisation and we hope that these relations will continue."

Mr J. Proud, Chairman of Directors, as reported by the Newcastle Morning Herald on December 10, 1960.

100 YEARS

THE NEXT STEP: ELLALONG

A NEW MINE IS BUILT TO THE SOUTH OF PELTON COLLIERY.

PELTON COLLIERY AND COAL WASHERY, 8 OCTOBER 1978. ELLALONG'S OVERLAND CONVEYOR IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION. PHOTO: ED TONKS



ELLALONG COLLIERY'S OVERLAND CONVEYOR PRIOR TO THE INSTALLATION OF COVER, CIRCA 1979. PHOTO: NEWCASTLE WALLSEND COAL COMPANY

More progress came for Pelton Colliery in 1970 when an exploration licence was granted by the New South Wales Government for an area to its south. Over the next few years there were encouraging results and in 1978 underground mining officially began at the new colliery, Ellalong.

By this stage, Pelton's coal washery was considered a great success. An overland conveyor was constructed between the new Ellalong Pit Top and the Pelton site.

Approximately 2.5 kilometers long, the overland conveyor initially could move some 500 tonnes of coal per hour to the washery at Pelton. From there it was loaded onto rail bound for Newcastle. The overland conveyor proved a lasting investment—it's still used in 2016.

INNOVATION: ELLALONG LONGWALL MINING

ELLALONG COLLIERY LONGWALL FACE CIRCA 1983-1985. PHOTO: JOHN MCKENDRY



THE FIRST LONGWALL SHEARER DRUM TO CUT GRETA SEAM COAL IN JUNE 1983 STANDS AT THE AUSTAR COAL MINE PIT TOP. SOUTHLAND COAL MOUNTED A STATUE OF SAINT BARBARA, THE PATRON SAINT OF COAL MINES, INSIDE THE SHEARER DRUM. PHOTO: YANCOAL

The winning of coal in the Ellalong Colliery was by a new method for the South Maitland Coalfield. This system of working pioneered by Peko-Wallsend Company in this area is known as “longwall mining”.

100 YEARS

INNOVATION: LONGWALL TOP COAL CAVING

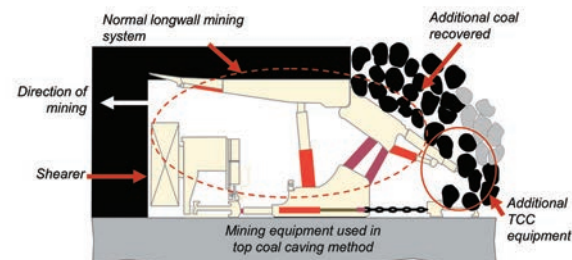
THE OFFICIAL PARTY AT THE AUSTAR COAL MINE OPEN DAY, 11 OCTOBER 2006.

PHOTO: YANCOAL



Yancoal introduced Longwall Top Coal Caving mining technology to Australia at its Austar Coal Mine in September 2006. Yancoal's major shareholder, Yanzhou Coal Mining Company, is acknowledged as one of the safest and most productive users of this technique in the world.

This technology enables much greater resource recovery in thick seams such as the Greta Seam. By using Longwall Top Coal Caving, a further 80% of coal in the seam can be accessed and recovered that would otherwise be left behind, using a conventional longwall system. This significantly improves the total recovery of the in-ground coal resource and overall mine economics.



SCHMATIC OF LONGWALL TOP COAL CAVING MINING EQUIPMENT.

WHITE COLLAR OR BLUE COLLAR

ALL PART OF PELTON COLLIERY'S 100 YEAR MINING HISTORY.

AUSTAR EMPLOYEES DAVE BURGESS AND BRENT GEYER, ROOF AND RIB BOLTING ON A CONTINUOUS MINER IN 2011. PHOTO: YANCOAL



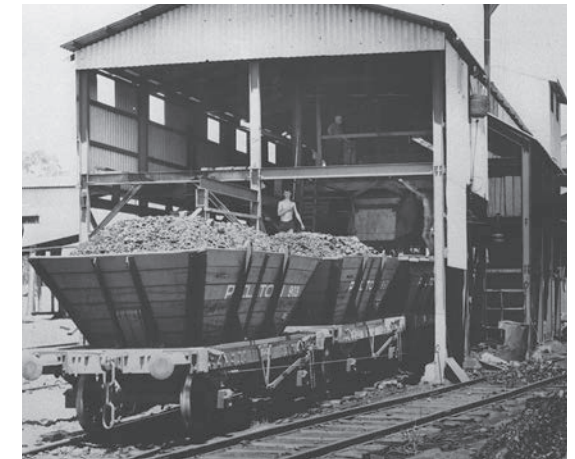
COLLIERY STAFF: COLIN HAFEY, BILL RUTHERFORD AND JOY STEVENSON (NEE FARMER) ARE PICTURED ABOVE CIRCA 1960. BILL RUTHERFORD WENT ON TO BECOME A COMPANY DIRECTOR. PHOTO: NEWCASTLE WALLSEND COAL COMPANY

100 YEARS

PELTON COLLIERY'S 100 YEAR HISTORY

OF HARD WORK AND OPPORTUNITY...

AUSTAR EMPLOYEE GERARD MILES OPERATES THE HYDRAULIC SHIELDS ON THE LONGWALL FACE, 2011. PHOTO: YANCOAL



PELTON COLLIERY LOADING POINT, 1967.
PHOTO: NEWCASTLE WALLSEND COAL COMPANY

It was warm work for the men at the loading point (above), which was used until 1977. And while there are no bare chests allowed these days, conditions for miners are a world away from the early chapters of this 100 year story of mining on the South Maitland Coalfield.

IS ALIVE AND WELL TODAY

AT THE AUSTAR COAL MINE.

AUSTAR EMPLOYEE JARED KING DESCENDS THE TRAIN LOAD OUT BIN CONVEYOR GANTRY AT THE AUSTAR COAL HANDLING AND PREPARATION PLANT, 2015. PHOTO: YANCOAL



We believe that's worth celebrating.

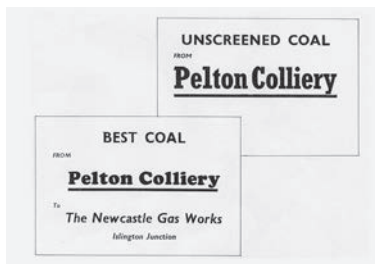
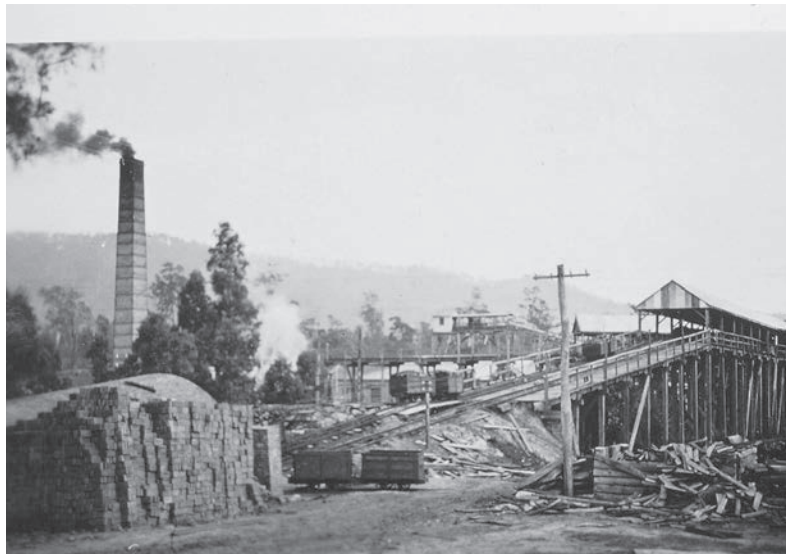
Coal continues to be crushed and washed at Austar's Coal Handling and Preparation Plant at the site of the Pelton Colliery, producing a product that's sent by rail to the Port of Newcastle for export around the world.

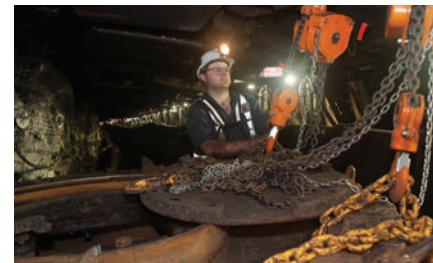
100 YEARS

100 YEARS OF MINING

THROUGH PICTURES.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE ED TONKS, MICHAEL BARRETT AND YANCOAL COLLECTIONS





100 YEARS

100 YEARS OF COAL MINING HISTORY...

AND COUNTING.



AUSTAR COAL MINE

PART OF THE YANCOAL AUSTRALIA GROUP