

## Ashworth Hargreaves & Co colliery proprietors.

John Ashworth traded with George Hargreaves and others under various names, initially Ashworth Hargreaves & Co and latterly George Hargreaves and Co and Hargreaves Collieries Ltd. They were also known as Rossendale Collieries. The evidence for Ashworth's involvement is summarised [here](#).

This page contains links describing some of the collieries operated by Ashworth's company, although many of the details relate to a later period in their operation. These are from Davies, 'Coal Mining in Rossendale', 1976, unless otherwise stated. Some of Davies' descriptions have been abbreviated drastically; his description of Old Meadow's Colliery ran to over 120 pages.

Collieries involved are thought to include:

<b>Mine</b>	<b>Grid reference</b>	<b>Opened</b>
<a href="#">Appletree</a>	848 239	1797
<a href="#">Bank End shaft</a>	?	1800
<a href="#">Bird Holes</a>	833 276	1612
<a href="#">Brex</a>	849 237	1820
<a href="#">Cloughead</a>	857 256	c1860
<a href="#">Fox Hill</a>	842 259 sic, at 844 243	1840
<a href="#">Gambleside</a>	823 273	1612
<a href="#">Goodshaw Hill</a>	806 276	c1820
<a href="#">Grimebridge</a>	850 250	1851(no 2 1940)
<a href="#">Hart Hill</a>	818 272	1860
<a href="#">Nabb</a>	853 261	1840
<a href="#">Old Clough</a>	870 234	1820
<a href="#">Old Meadows</a>	869 230	?
<a href="#">Scarr Barn</a>	801 268 sic	?
<a href="#">Scarr End</a>	876 251	pre 1800
<a href="#">Sharnyford</a>	885 245	1848
<a href="#">Stacksteads</a>	854 229	1821
<a href="#">Swinshaw</a>	826 264	c 1800
<a href="#">Top Pit</a>	854 238	?
<a href="#">Weir Pit</a>	869 254	1920

A further colliery, Old Broadclough, was not opened until 1894.

Davies has Weir Pit opening in 1920, but records an incident there in 1877

## **Ashworth and coal mines**

### 1. Will John Ashworth

‘And whereas under the Will of Richard Ashworth my late Father deceased I am liable to the payment unto my Sister Ann of the yearly sum of Seventy pounds during the continuance of a certain Lease of Coal Mines within the Manor of Accrington (now expired) and to the yearly sum of ten pounds from the expiration of the said Lease during the life of my said Sister’

‘And as to for and concerning All other my real estate (except estates hld upon mortgage or by way of trust) and all and singular my personal estate and effects not hereinbefore disposed of whatsoever and wheresoever and of what nature or kind or quality soever (save and except my interest in the new Lease of Coal mines within the Manor of Accrington) Subject to and after payment of my debts funeral and testamentary expenses including the debt and legacies payable under the will of the late Mr. John Heap and which I direct shall be paid our of my Personal Estate I give devise and bequeath the same and every part thereof unto and equally between my said two Daughters Elizabeth and Mary Ann And I give and bequeath my interest in the said new Lease of Coal Mines unto my said Daughters in the shares following that is to say one third part thereof to my said Daughter Elizabeth and the remaining two third parts thereof to my said Daughter Mary Ann and as to the shares of my said Daughter Mary Ann of and in my said residuary estate and my interest in the said new Coal Lease respectively I direct that my executors shall pay or assign the same respectively to her my same Daughter as soon as conveniently may be after my decease an the same shall have been received to and for her and their own use and benefit absolutely’

George Hargreaves was an executor of this will and trustee of various discretionary trusts set up under its terms.

### 2. Will Mary Ann Ashworth

‘a general power by my Will to appoint the fee simple of certain copyhold hereditaments situated in the Forest of Rossendale aforesaid or of undivided shares therein and a share in certain leasehold coalmines in the said forest also certain personal estate stocks monies and securities’

### 3. Will Charles Patrick

‘Whereas John Ashworth deceased the Father of my said late wife previously and up to the time of his death worked in copartmanship with George Hargreaves and others certain collieries known as the Rossendale and Baxenden Collieries under a lease or license from the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensbury And whereas since the decease of the said John Ashworth certain shares of the net

profits of working the said Collieries have been yearly paid by the partners for the time being in the said Colliery concern unto my said wife and myself in equal shares until the death of my said wife and since her decease to myself for my own use under or in pursuance of certain agreements or Instruments in writing made and entered into for that purpose ‘

Jack Nadin in his ‘The Rossendale Coalfields’ (History Press 2012) therefore appears to be incorrect in writing:

‘From about 1845, George Hargreaves went into partnership with Richard Ashworth of Cloughfold, and traded as Hargreaves Ashworth company. Richard Ashworth died in 1860, but the firm continued under the same title until the company was eventually dissolved seven years later.’ (P. 10)

The relationship between the Ashworths and George Hargreaves appears to pre-date this by some years. Nadin himself implies this in writing that Fox Hill Colliery ‘was opened around 1826 by Hargreaves and Ashworth Company (p. 68) and Old Clough Colliery ‘dates from around the 1820s, when it was worked by Hargreaves and Ashworth’ (p. 105).

[\(back to top\)](#)

## Appletree

Map reference	847 239
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co
Opened	1797
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 3ft
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The pit was situated at the top of coal Pit Lane, Shawclough. To get the coal from the mine to the road, Coal Pit Lane had to be built by the mine owner and his men, a distance of about 3/4 of a mile. At the bottom of Shawclough Road the owner of the land would not let the coal traffic cross it so a by pass road had to be built from facing Bowness's mill to Shawclough St and the main road.

This mine appears to have been one of the first commercially run pits in the area, working before c 1797 but abandoned by 1834. The workings were not very extensive, going into the coal for about 150 yards. At this time the coal would be bought to the surface using wicker baskets on sledges, with women and children as motive power.

The mine had almost been forgotten when the Shawclough Opencast workings came across them in 1952.

The mine was in the field just below Dean Height Farm, and now there is no sign of the pit, just a slight hollow in the field, though from Seat Naze it is possible to trace the outline of it.

After the mine was abandoned Brex pit was opened up to the right of the workings.

The main tunnel of the workings had side tunnels leading off it, this was typical early coal getting practice, the total area worked being about 150 yards square, with all the pillars of coal left in to support the roof.

[\(back to top\)](#)

**Bank End (shaft)**

Name of Colliery	Bank End (shaft)
Map reference	
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co
Opened	1800
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 3 ft
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

This shaft mine was situated on the right hand side of the land from Dean Height Far, to Bank End Farm. The only remains are a small mound of dirt containing blue shale and pieces of coal. Old plans show this as a separate pit but it could have been an air shaft for either Appletree or Fox Hill Pits. Being far the Appletree pit is doubtful as there is considerable distance from the shaft and the pit, but it is almost in line for Fox Hill Pit which was a bigger concern than Appletree. [\(back to top\)](#)

## Bird Holes

Map reference	833 276
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co
Opened	1612
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 2 ft 8 in
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The pit was situated about 30 yards behind the old village of Gambleside, and 30 yards north of Bird Holes Farm. It was only a small concern, and may have provided coal for Gambleside village.

The pit worked from a clough towards the crop edge which runs roughly parallel to the old pack road running over the hill from the top of Clowbridge Reservoir to Water.

Remains of the wing walls of the drift and part of the cabin can still be seen, although the drift itself has collapsed.

There is an air shaft nearby which may have been connected to the pit.

In later years the pit became part of Gambleside Colliery, the men using the drift as a travelling road during the 1920s. A wooden gate used to close the drift off at night and weekend

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 22.6 1878

Pollution at Clowbridge Reservoir was reported from the nearby coal pit at Bird Holes. About 30 men are employed in the coal pit, the water from which was pumped into the reservoir. The men at the pit had no kind of privy accommodation, and that the whole of their refuse was pumped into the reservoir, along with the water.

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 13.7.1878

A letter in reply to the above to the Local Board.

Gentlemen. We find in your medical officers' report upon the water supply from the Dunnockshaw Reservoir that a supposed possible source of some pollution is indicated in the water pumped from Gambleside Pit. It is not unnatural that the medical officer should have been led to suppose that "might be" a source of some pollution; but had he been acquainted with the habits of the men, he would have formed a different opinion. From the peculiarities of the case, this can form no element in polluting the water, as we shall be glad to demonstrate to your officers at any time, if he will favour us with an opportunity for that pur-

pose. The men, if ever the occasion arises, always choose a high and dry place in the mine for the purpose suggested, and no water ever goes near the place. When the roof has fallen in, it is buried in the gulf (gob). We write merely to allay any uneasiness which would naturally arise from this portion of the report.

Yours faithfully,  
George Hargreaves & Co.  
[\(back to top\)](#)

## Brex

Map reference	849 237
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co
Opened	1820
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 3ft
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated at the junction of four tracks leading to Middle Brex and Lower Brex Farms, off Coal Pit Lane, Shawclough.

The mine was being worked before 1820, and was an extension of Appletree Colliery. Whisket and chain were used to get the coal to the surface in the early days, but later tubs were used and these were drawn out to daylight. The workings were not very extensive, a lot of coal being worked from Grimebridge on one side and Stacksteads on the other.

Marks were found on the mud on the floor of the workings showing the footprints of bare feet, and the marks left by sledges carrying the whiskets, when the colliers from Stacksteads broke into the workings in the 1920s and 1930s.

The only remains of the mine is a small barrel culvert on the right of the farm track, just before the gates to the farms are reached. There is some pit shale over the top of the culvert and some nice fossils have been found there after heavy rain, which is slowly washing away the shale.

When the miners from Stacksteads broke into the workings they could see where the whiskets had rubbed the corners of the pillars round and smooth as they brushed past.

[\(back to top\)](#)



## Cloughead

Map reference	857 256
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co
Opened	c 1860
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 2ft 8 in
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The mine was almost in the stream bed and consisted of a stone built cabin over the hole end. The remains of the cabin can still be seen, a large fall blocks the tunnel about six yards in by.

Roof conditions at the pit were very bad, especially near to the surface, and on at least one occasion the miners had to dig their way out of the drift; the roof having fallen in during the day while they were at work.

The mine was later incorporated into Nabb and Grimebridge pits; being used as a travelling road, when the coal was being worked in the area.

Production at the original pit would have been only small, possibly about five tons per day during the summer, summer production was necessary because the roads were impassable in winter with a cart.

Getting the coal to the surface would be by whislet and sledge.

[\(back to top\)](#)

## Fox Hill

Map reference	(844 243)
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co
Opened	1840
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 3 ft
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated about fifty yards from Fox Hill farm, with access being via Shawclough Road and Coal Pit Lane.

The pit was the third in the series of small mines along the crop edge of the seam, the first was Appletree, second Brex, all small areas of working.

Fox Hill differed from the other two in having fairly extensive workings, the reason for this was that good haulage was available, the coal going down a tramway to Whitewell Bottom. In later years the workings were worked once more from Stacksteads on one side, and Grimebridge on the other.

The entrance to the mine is still visible, though covered recently with a breeze block with an iron gate which is kept locked to stop anyone entering the mine.

The drift is still used as a water supply by some of the nearby farms, it cannot be sealed...

The brake house is still standing, though a bit worse for wear for being about 130 years old. At the front of the building can be seen the sloping walls as needed to hold the tremendous weight of the incline in motion, the walls are massive, going well down into the ground to form a solid scotch in front of the ginney.

In the brake house was a small cabin for the hooker on, also possibly used by the miners when the pit was working, to leave their clothes in while they went underground. There was a fireplace with a small side oven, open at the front in which to put a meal to warm up if it was wanted. Behind the cabin was a small yard, which at one time, held a tub toilet, although in later years this was non-existent.

By the side of the brake house is the remains of the pit tip, and a little further down the clough a stone barrel culvert shows, this runs under the tip to the drift mouth to carry the water away.

The water from the pit could go in two directions, either into the river Whitewell, or into Bridge Clough, just off Coal Pit Lane.

The owner of Bridge Clough Mill (Higher), asked the mine owners to drive a tunnel from the workings to his lodges so he could drive his water wheel in dry weather. The owners of the mill, Messes Tattersall, said they would buy coal from Hargreaves for their boiler in summer, but as so much water came out of the mine this was not necessary very often. The cost of driving the tunnel was met by both companies, the colliery owner found one third and Tattersalls two thirds. The entrance to this tunnel can still be seen although it is sealed.

In the main drift of the pit a small dam was built using a pivoted plank, water could be diverted to the left to run into the Whitewell, where MASCO had the water rights for their felt works. If Tattersalls found they were not getting enough water they would send a man up to the pit to direct the water their way, and MASCO would find they were not getting enough water, and they would send a man up to redirect the water in their favour, and so it went on until Bridge Clough Mill closed down sometime about the first world war.

On the rails coming out of the pit, and later a siding, there was a small sett, used by farmers for their coal supply. When they needed coal they would pay for it at the office at Whitewell Bottom, and the hooker on would then be told to turn so many tubs of cobs onto the sett ready to be collected by the farmer with their horse and cart. In 1950 the farmer paid 5s for a tub of coal, 3 1/2 cwt. The talleys off the tubs would be sent down to Whitewell Bottom so that the mine would be paid for the coal taken off the chain at Fox Hill...

...Signalling from the brake house was as follows, from here to the sett at Whitewell Bottom, wire rope knockers pulled by hand, to the pithead at Grimbridge first wire rope and knockers, but a distance nearly a mile was to great for this and electric bells were installed.

There is another tunnel in to the pit in a clough where water to the river Whitewell ran out into the open, this was later dammed up to form a reservoir for drinking water for the farms....

[\(back to top\)](#)

## Gambleside

Map reference	823 273
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co
Opened	1612
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 2 ft 8 in Upper Mountain Mine 1ft 6 in
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated on the hillside behind Oak Hill, Dunnockshaw, and overlooking Clowbridge Reservoir. The mine was a very old one, Court Rolls show the mine working in 1612, although not on the same site. The surface installations have moved along the hillside in three stages; the earliest mine being behind Gambleside village on the opposite side of Clowbridge Reservoir from the main road. The second entrance, a shaft, is now known as the Pumping Pit, and it is still used by the North West Water Authority to supply the reservoir in times of low water, the underground workings acting as a storage until needed. The final pithead can still be seen, the shaft ring can be seen along with the engine bed and winding drum bed, along one side of the site can still be made out the remains of the winders, house and a smithy, with the remains of the boiler house and chimney at the rear of the site.

The mine was approached by cart track from Alma Villas, along this all the coal was carried until a steam driven chainroad was built through to Swinshaw Colliery on the other side of the hill.

The surface layout was as follows, working clockwise from the pit gates; on the immediate left was the boiler house which housed two full size Lancashire boilers with a small preheater boiler to one side. Next was the engine house, with a large single cylinder horizontal steam engine with a geared flywheel to drive the winding drum, this was next to the engine house and built over the top of the drift to Swinshaw Colliery. The winding drum was offset to one side of the shaft and the winding ropes had to be pushed into line by two pulleys mounted on a wooden frame just in front of the winding house, a very unusual feature.

Facing the yard gate was a stone wall through which was a door leading onto the tip, rails were laid through the doorway onto the tip to allow the tubs to be tipped over by hand. For the number of years that the pit ran from this location very little dirt came out of it, most of the tip being formed by the debris brought out of the shaft when it was being sunk. The doorway was next to the shaft.

This had a lattice frame headgear on single legs, braced back almost to the winding house. Round ropes were used for winding, but it is believed that flat ropes were used originally, from an old photograph the pulleys on top of the headgear appear to be wide enough for these. The cages were only small, holding one tub

or three men. When coal was being wound, the time it took to wind a tub was just the time required before another tub was to be put onto the chain, thus tubs were taken straight out of the cage and put onto the chain through to Swinshaw.

The top of the shaft was boarded off with wooden planks nailed to the headstocks, which [had] wood blocks bolted to them for this purpose. When the pit was not working the cages were left suspended in the shaft leaving the wooden safety gates across the shaft top on the open side.

Immediately in front of the shaft was the ginney head acting as a return wheel for the chain which ran to Swinshaw, the tubs from the cage did not have to be pushed very far before they were on the chain. The chain was driven by steam engine from the Swinshaw Colliery end.

The shaft was 10ft 6in diameter, lined with stone, and was 165 ft deep the coal being at 144 ft was 28 in high at this point.

Behind the headgear was a cabin for the men with a fireplace and wood planks for seats round the walls, nails knocked into the walls served as coat hooks. Here the surface men had their meals and dried their clothes in wet weather. The colliers also left their clothes here while they were underground, although the boiler house was the favourite place, the clothes left here were nice and warm when they came out of the pit, and if they were working in a wet shop they would be dry for them in the morning.

Next to the men's cabin was the office, this had a telephone, dock and chair for furniture and a fireplace in the rear wall, for the manager to retreat to. There was an oven in the fireplace where any of the men could warm a dinner if they wanted.

In front of the office was the ginney which ran down to the pumping pit, part along the surface and part underground. This ginney must have been driven by shafting from the bottom of the main haulage as there is no evidence of it ever having its own engine and could not have been self acting as the loads were coming uphill. No evidence suggests that it may have been rope worked at one time.

By the side of the office was the tackle yard where props, sleepers, rails, roof slabs or bays, and caps were stored within easy reach of the haulage.

Across the timber yard was a smithy, in here was an anvil, forge and slack trough for the colliers to sharpen their picks when they came out at night. The smithy was the ground floor of a building which housed the living quarters of the pumping pit winder. Next to the smithy was an arch through which the pumping pit haulage ran. Both this arch and the smithy had bedrooms above them from the house. The living room of the house was next to the arch with a window looking

out onto the pithead and another looking out over the fields by the side of the pit. At one time there used to be a door leading from the pit top into the house but this was walled up at some date not known. Entrance to the house was through the kitchen, a single story building on the end of the house. Old miners say the house was nice and snug with its large fireplace with hot water boiler on one side and a hot air oven on the other. One tale about the house is worth telling. The house keeper (Mr Auty) complained to the management that the roof was leaking and water dripping onto the bed could they please do something about it. "Ay" said the manager "move thi' bed" ...[A variant says that the housekeeper was given an umbrella].

...All the coal got at Gambleside went up the shaft, then through the hill to Swinshaw colliery, then down to the staithe at Crawshawbooth. The main customer for coal was Sunnyside Printworks, and when this closed down in 1936, the pit followed not long after. Each mine had its own customers, if the mills supplied closed so did the mine...

...In 1924/5 a very old pump was found in some old workings and taken to Whitaker Park Museum, it was a wood beam with a hole bored down the middle and lined with zinc, near one end was a spout. The pump was worked by a wooden plunger sliding in the zinc tube, as the plunger was pushed in it would force water out of the spout, slow, simple but effective.

Another find in the old workings was a relic of the early mining days, it was a belt, chain and wisket, with bare feet marks in the slutch on the floor.

An unusual geological fault was found in the mine by the colliers, the mine seam, the Lower Mountain Mine, was being worked when it suddenly went from twenty eight inch down to eighteen inch high, all the signs pointed to a fault but it was unusual for the coal to be level at both sides of the fault. As the low coal was being worked, faulting signs were met with again, and the coal went back up to twenty eight inch. It was later proved that the workings had in fact crossed a double fault where the Upper Mountain Mine coal had been brought down to the level of the Lower Mountain Mine, a very unusual feature...

...The shaft was 122ft deep, with only the top lined with brick, the rest of the shaft being unlined. When this district was abandoned it was allowed to flood and acted as a sump for the rest of the mine.

Heave faulting in the area caused the coal seams to outcrop in many places, some being higher than the shafts from where the coal was worked. This allowed drifts to be put into the coal in some cases...

...In this area there are some bell pits, and local mining lore has it that a boy was left down the pit one night and during the night the bell pit collapsed, burying

the boy, who never recovered. Research has shown that this may be true, as a boy, a half timer, was killed in a pit at about the time this was supposed to have happened, c1860. At that time miners could come and go as they pleased as long as they had done a certain amount of tonnage so no one missed the poor lad until it was too late.

Bacup Times 13.2.1869

On Thursday morning last, one of the collieries of Messers Hargreaves Ashworth and Co at Clowbridge, near Crawshawbooth, was flooded by water from an adjoining old pit. There were fifteen men at work at the time when the water burst into the pit, and it was with considerable difficulty that any of them made their escape. Up to an early hour on Thursday evening only ten of them had been got out of the pit, and the last of them was several times thrown off his feet by the great force of water before he could get to the bottom of the shaft. The remaining five men were rescued later.

[\(back to top\)](#)

## Goodshaw Hill

Map reference	806 276
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co George Hargreaves & Co
Opened	c 1820
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 2ft 8 in Upper Mountain Mine 1ft 10 in Arley Mine 4 ft
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated behind Loughclough Printworks, by the side of Sands Farm. There were two haulage drifts, one into the Lower Mountain Mine, and the other put in a good while after the pit had been working, into the Upper Mountain Mine.

The pithead was quite extensive although all that remains is the engine bed. The buildings were mostly of stone, with grey slate roof.

The travelling road into the pit appears to have moved around as the workings advanced, there was one at Scarr Barn Farm, another half way between this farm and the pithead, one in Great Clough (the original) and another on the other side of the hill above Baxenden.

Numerous air shafts were sunk down to the seam from the top of Goodshaw Hill, six in all have been traced. One of the shafts has settled about three feet, the lining is dry stone, and the shaft is egg shaped being 6ft by 4 ft.

The seams were very steep laid, the drawers had to use locks in the tub wheels in most of the workings, but at least the grade was in favour of the loads going down hill. In one portion of the mine the workings were so far away from the haulage that two drawers had to act as meeters, taking in trains of empty tubs along the level for about 300 yards, where the drawers met them and took the tubs up the steep warks to the colliers, when the tubs were full the meeters would bring out a train of loads. This was a hard job, although a good drawer could push 10 or 12 tubs along the level, there was between 2½ and 3 tons.

Most of the coal from the pit went to supply Loveclough Printworks, who had a small sett in their yard, the haulage road from the pit to the staithe at Rings Nook passing across the corner of the yard on a viaduct. Tubs which were taken off for the printworks were tipped into the carts, which were taken round to the fire-hole which had I've been told twelve Lancashire boilers. The talleys from the tubs were sent up to the staithe for counting every day. Another regular customer was Stonefold Mill, Crawshawbooth.



The staithe for the pit was by the side of the Rawtenstall to Burnley road, at Ring Nook, in fact this pit was called Rings Nook coal pit more than Goodshaw Hill. The staithe wasn't very big, being stone built, with a cabin for the surface men (banksmen), a shed over the staithe top, and a small weigh office, which also served as a sales office for other mines. There were two tipplers for emptying the tubs into the road vehicles, both horse drawn and later motor.

Coal from Dyneley Colliery was sold here, and there was a large board up at the side with all the prices for the different grades of coal...

...The earliest part of the mine was worked out of Great Clough, this was before 1820, with three drifts, two into the right hand side of the clough and one into the left, all working the Lower Mountain Mine.

The pithead proper was approached by a track from behind Loveclough Printworks. The pithead consisted of two groups of buildings, all built with local stone with grey slate roof.

The smallest of the two buildings housed the smithy and the men's cabin, the cabin being built over the tramway to the sett, and being entered through the smithy, or from a ramp which led towards the main group of buildings.

The main block consisted of boiler house, which was parallel to the tramway. Next to this was the engine house with a single cylinder horizontal steam engine, driving the ginney chains through a set of bevel gears on top of the ginney shaft. The ginney shed was also part of the engine house building, as the empty tubs came off the chain from the sett they were oiled before being put on to the underground chain. A small building on the end of the main block served as a cabin or as an office...

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 26.6.1886

On Monday morning, Mr. John Taylor, employed at Goodshaw Hill coalpit had his leg broken by a stone falling from the roof while he was engaged at his work.

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 23.11.1889

An accident occurred to George Gilbert Workman, aged six years, at Rings Nook Colliery, Crawshawbooth. His father was upsetting a tippler, with the boy watching him, someone shouted that some wagons were coming, the lad stepped back and fell over the edge of the sett into the yard twelve feet below. His father jumped down and picked up his son unconscious, it is hoped he will recover shortly as he walked part of the way home.

[\(back to top\)](#)

**Grimebridge**

Map reference	850 250
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co George Hargreaves & Co Hargreaves Collieries Ltd National Coal Board
Opened	1851
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 2 ft 8 in (No 1)
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

Grimebridge colliery was situated on the hills on the east side of the Lumb Valley. It was an old colliery, the shaft having been sunk in 1851, but parts were much older than this, the seam having been worked from 'day eyes' along its outcrop in the Dean Valley.

The approach to the pit was up Dean Lane in Water to the village of Dean, turn right along Carr Lane for about half a mile, where the pithead was on the right, just beyond Prince Bank Farm.

Carr Lane was not very suitable for heavy motor vehicles, apart from a short length of wheel stones and cobbles near Carr Farm, it was a dirt surface with large potholes, and wagons with loads had to go carefully in case they broke their springs.

There was a footpath up to the pit from Water, running through Water Fold, and past Height Barn Farm, from here the path followed the edge of Nebb Clough, past Prince Gate Farm and to the pithead...

...On entering the pithead from the main gate the layout was as follows. The pit yard was immediately in front of the gate, here there were stacks of pit props, rails, sleepers and roof bars. There was a single track siding running through the yard so that tubs and timber lorries could be run round for loading...

...No 1 pit worked the Lower Mountain Mine which was about 3 feet thick, and no 2 pit worked the Upper Mountain Mine which was only 18-24 inches high, they were called the bottom and top pits by the colliers.

On the left of the gate was a small smithy, here the colliers could sharpen their picks when they came out of the pit in the afternoon. Other small jobs requiring a forge were also done here instead of sending them to Whitewell Bottom...

...The smithy was below the level of the surrounding ground, a dirt slope leading down to the door. One weekend someone got into the smithy and opened the taps on the oil drums, when the colliers came on the Monday morning the floor

was swimming in oil. It was mopped up with old rags and coal dust and burned on the boilers.

By the side of the smithy door was the chainroad going down No 1 drift to the bottom bed, the drift was graded at 1 in 6 for the first length which was arched with stone, but it levelled out a little as it got further down...

...Signalling on the drift was by wire rope and knockers, the wire came up the right hand side of the drift and there was a plate by the side of the ginney frame for it to bang against...

...From the engine house the chain ran up the hillside for about two hundred yards, where there was a turn to the left, then another fifty yards to the hole end. The hole end, or drift mouth, had two stone walls along either side of the chain, these were roofed over with old rails for about thirty yards where the roof became rocky shale.

The turn to the left gave a lot of trouble with the tubs jumping off the rails as they came round the bend...

...In a corner of the top pit engine house there was a red brick salt box, this was used in winter to salt the rails on the haulage road, and around the top pit and dirt runs...

...Water for the boilers came from the three small lodges near Grime Bridge Farm, these can still be seen, the water coming from out of the pit...

[Detailed descriptions of the reel winder, rope clippings, detaching hooks, winding pumps and onto the disposal of dirt]

... The tub of dirt would be run along a temporary track to the edge of the tip and tipped over by hand...when this part of the tip was filled in, top soil was put on and it was reseeded, when the grass had got a good hold animals from Grimebridge Farm were allowed to graze on it. Today this part of the tip can hardly be distinguished from the surrounding fields, only the remains of the chainroad giving a clue to what it used to be.

There was quite a lot of land reclaimed by tipping... this applied at other pits in Rossendale as well, if there was a clough nearby rails were laid, a culvert built and the clough filled in, top soil put on this, reseeded and given back to the farmer whose land it was on...

... In the angle formed between the men's cabin and the office and engine house was the shaft. This was sunk in 1851, was 10ft 6 ins in diameter and was 33 yards deep, stone lined to the bottom...

...In winter working conditions on the pit top were rough, you were wet through before you got to work. The exposed position of the pit made itself felt, winds would blow through the openings and doors in the walls to the yard, blowing the rain and sleet and snow in with them...

...The age of the pit is obscure but the shaft was sunk in 1851, but parts of the workings were much older than this. The coal from the early workings would be got away in carts or pack horses, the chain to Fox Hill was a later addition.

[\(back to top\)](#)

## Hart Hill

Map reference	818 272
Owners	George Hargreaves & Co
Opened	1860
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 2 ft 3 in
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated at the rear of Hart Hill Farm, Loveclough, with access from Goodshaw Lane. It was an old mine which became part of Gambleside Colliery as the larger pit worked under the hill towards Crawshawbooth.

The pit was fairly extensive, working from the clough below the pithead of Gambleside, across towards Swinshaw Hall. When the mine became under the influence of Gambleside, a chainroad was put in and the coal went along this and up Gambleside shaft. The miners though continued to use the original drift as a travelling road for many years after...

...A number of "bell pits" had worked the coal in the early years, with a line of them going across the hillside, above the drift line mouth. This line can still be seen quite clearly.

The coal was very hard and in some places low, being only 2ft 4 in high. There was also a lot of water, both in the floor and coming in through the roof.

The colliers who worked there each had a month break by going to the pit in Gambleside, with a Gambleside collier taking his place. This wasn't a popular swap, but the coal was so hard the collier needed a change...

...In the very early years of the mine, a tramway ran from the drift off Gibb Hill Lane, to near Greenfold Farm, and is believed from evidence available at present to have crossed Folly Clough on a viaduct to Mecliffe Eaves, then down the tramway to Crawshawbooth Coal Staithe. Part of the trackbed of the tramway can still be seen where it comes out of the drift, and towards the reservoir for about 150 yards.

The colliers went into the mine from various entrances as the mine worked along the hill, one of these behind Swinshaw Farm appear to have been used the longest. This drift was brick arched for a good way into the workings, the ground being soft, and was only 4ft 6 in high by 3 ft wide.

[\(back to top\)](#)

**Nabb**

Map reference	853 261
Owners	George Hargreaves & Co Hargreaves Collieries Ltd National Coal Board
Opened	1840
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 2ft 8 in Union Mine 4ft 3 in
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated to the left of Dean Lane, Water, behind Turn Hill Farm, with a staithe on Dean Lane about half a mile from the pithead.

The mine was opened about 1840 with the tramway down to Dean Lane being built in that year.

The staithe by the side of Dean Lane, just above Farmers' Grove, was built of local stone. Large wooden gates mounted on stone pillars closed off the property when not in use at nights and weekends. To the left of the gates was a weigh office which was fitted with a twenty ton weighbridge. Behind the office was a "Donkey Nook" where bags of house coal could be filled and loaded straight onto carts. Access onto the bagging stage tip was by stone steps from out of the year. The bagging stage was flagged in local stone flags.

Next to the bagging stage was the sett top, this was roughly square in shape with two tipplers on the edge overlooking the yard for emptying the tubs of coal into the carts below. The edge of the sett was about ten feet above the level of the yard. All the sett top was covered in cast iron plates to make the handling of the tubs easy, some were plain cast iron sheets, and some were cast with a diamond pattern on them...

...At the rear of the sett top were three stone buildings, on the extreme left, the toilet, a tub toilet which had to be emptied every so often by the corporation "muck cart"; a small store cum smithy and next the men's cabin.

This had wooden planks round the walls for the men to sit on when they were having their meals, or the carters while waiting for their carts to be filled. As usual in most pit cabins the focal point was the fire place which held about two hundred weight of coal when banked up, in winter this never went out, the cabin being like a green house.

By the side of the cabin was the ginney head from the pithead up on the hillside. The chain road ran through a small tunnel just before running onto the sett, this having been built for access for the farm animals. The tunnel entrance was just a

tub length from the sett to this made hooking on easy, as a tub entered the tunnel another was pushed onto the chain.

To the right of the sett top was the “yep hole’ where coal could be tipped in time of slack trade during the summer months, in time of increased demand this coal would be filled into the carts as it was needed. In the yep hole was a loading bay in which a wagon could reverse and be filled. In later years this was used by baggers for house coal, the other bagging stage being used less frequently.

...From the sett the chainroad ran up the hillside to the pithead. After the small tunnel mentioned earlier the tramway ran along the surface on the land of Farther Robert Barn Farm. A small over bridge carrying a farm access road is gone through, the tramway now running along the side of a small clough. About a hundred yards from the bridge a pulley had been installed to allow the small amount of dirt from the pit to be taken from the chain and run along a small siding to the clough and tipped into it, the part which had been filled in was covered with top soil and returned to use as pasture for the farm on whose land the tipping had been carried out. The men working on the tip had a small sentry box for shelter in bad weather with a brazier for warmth, as they had to work there in all weathers when dirt was being run from the pit...

...The pithead was square in shape with the haulage running roughly through the middle of it. All the buildings were built of stone on the outside with red brick from Henry Heys and County Brick of Stacksteads. The layout of the pithead was as follows from the chainroad entering the building. On the left was a small cabin for the surface men and the colliers to share at. Through a doorway in the cabin you could go into the boiler house with its single flue Lancashire boiler, the boiler man being Jimmy Bird. The engine house was next with its single cylinder horizontal steam engine which drove both the surface and underground chains through a set of gearing and shafting running under the floor to the bottom of each ginney shaft.

At the rear left hand corner between the boiler house and the rear wall of the building was a haulage road going off to the left, down into a district known as the “red hole” because of the amount of carr water which coloured the coal red. This district was very wet and worked along the hillside towards Clough Bottom Reservoir, cropping out on the hillside in a few places, the workings being very near the surface...

Straight in front of the chain from the sett was the travelling road, this had formerly been a haulage road but the district had been worked out, a dam built across the old tunnels and allowed to flood, the water being used for the boilers and the baths. The old tunnel was stone arched for a short distance before the roof became strong enough to be left with only props to hold it.

An old collier who worked there said “the coal was lovely to get, it just opens up like the pages of a book”.

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 21.9.1872

Edwin Pickup, 8, was found dead under a wagon on a tramway leading from Nabb Colliery, belonging to Messers George Hargreaves & Co. The deceased, who was an imbecile, appears to have wandered onto the tramway, and been overtaken by coal wagons, and dragged along the line about fifteen yards.

[\(back to top\)](#)



## Old Clough

Map reference	870 234
Owners	1820 Ashworth Hargreaves & Co 1895 George Hargreaves and Co
Opened	1820
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 3 ft
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated by the side of the Bacup to Burnley road at the top end of Weir village, part of the yard and staithe still stand today.

Haulage at the pit was entirely by hand, the drawers drawing out to daylight throughout the life of the pit...

...There was also an air shaft for the pit about two fields away from the drift mouth which was put in to improve ventilation many years before in Nabb and Grimebridge pits which were linked to Old Clough underground...

...The drift mouth was right outside the farmhouse door, and the top of the steel rings used to support the drift can still be seen...

...1878: fatal accident to a man named James Ashworth, 29, when he was found buried under about 6cwt of coal.

When the mine was in operation the colliers were on a stint of sixteen tubs a day, when they had got these many of them would continue getting coal and tipping it at the side of their warks and ends. If they had day off, the fireman would fill their sixteen tubs for them and they wouldn't lose a day's pay. The same applied if they didn't feel so well, the coal would only need filling so they could take it easy and still have a full day's pay to come...

[\(back to top\)](#)

## Old Meadows

Map reference	869 230
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co, 1820-1847 George Hargreaves and Co 1847-1932 Hargreaves Collieries Ltd 1932-1946 National Coal Board 1947-1989
Opened	?
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 3 ft Union mine 4ft 6 in
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated on the right hand side of Burnley Road, just above the Irwell Inn, about half a mile out of Bacup centre. The mine was a very old one, having been worked for over 150 years, some parts though were much older than this.

By the side of the road, entered over a small bridge across the river Irwell, was the staithe or sett, here coal was loaded onto wagons for sale to local factories and households.

On entering the yard there was a small stone weigh office, with a 20 ton weigh bridge in front, the biggest in the Rossendale group of collieries. The weigh clerk was Charlie Whittles and he also made up the wages for the pit.

Behind the weigh offices there was an open fronted store, this was used to keep oil and sleepers in. In front of the store was an open space used to stack props, sleepers and roof bars, and a few girders for use underground.

In the river wall behind the weigh office was the remains of a stone pillar which used to carry the tramway bridge over the river and road to the old Broadclough colliery on the other side of the road. From this pier the tramway bridge sloped down to the sett top...

[storeroom, toilet]

From the side of the toilet the ground sloped up on to the sett top with the "Donkey Nook" on the right of the slope, where wagons could be loaded with bags of house coal, or old tubs pushed into wagons to be taken to Whitewell Bottom for repairs. In later years there was not a lot of house coal sold, the coal being of poor quality, fit only for steam raising. Earlier in the life of the pit though, when the Lower Mountain Mine was being worked, a fair amount of domestic trade was carried on, this being of better quality than the Union Mine worked later.

At the top of the ramp was another small storage area, used mainly for the heavier pieces of equipment, rails, steel roof bays, ginney wheels and such like. These would be tipped out of the delivery wagons at the back of the sett and carried through a small gate from the lane and stacked. All equipment had to be man-handled, whether tipped in the lane or in the sett yard, no mechanical handling methods were used...

...By the side of the gate was the men's cabin in the end of an oblong block of four small roofs, all built with stone.

On entering the cabin you saw from left to right, wooden benches ran round three sides of the cabin for the men to sit on. Over the bench to the left of the door was a window, by which was the "Nog Box", a wooden box in which the talleys from the tubs were tipped two or three times a day. Above the box was the "Nog Board", a large wooden board with iron pegs knocked into it, each with a number painted above it. When the sett foreman began to sour out the talleys he would hang them on the appropriate peg, this was entered in a book against the collier's number, which was the one stamped on his talleys. Each collier was paid by the number of talleys which reached the sett and were taken off the tubs as they were emptied.

Next to the nog box was the fireplace, this had a fairly large grate which held about 2½ cwt of coal, this was kept well topped up by the men. There was a small oven by the side of the fireplace where the men could warm a meal if need be.

At the right hand side of the fireplace was a luxury in a Rossendale mine, a stone slopstone with a tap with running water. The only such feature in a Rossendale pit, at all the others water had to be carried from the nearest tap, which could be up to two hundred yards from the pit. The rest of the cabin was bare except for a shelf in the back corner...

...Next to the cabin was the ginney shed, where the endless chain from the engine house came down the hillside, under a small footbridge which went across to Blackthorn, through the wall of the sett which was arched (this can still be seen today) to take the chainroad. The full tubs came down the left hand track, while the empties went back up the right. There was a small opening between the top of the arch in the wall and the footbridge so that the men could see when to push another tub onto the chain, a stake driven into the ground about twenty yards up the chainroad acting as a marker, when the tub passed this the next one was put on the chain...

...Most of the sett top was open to the weather, only the portion with the screen was covered by a corrugated iron shed with open sides and end. If it was raining the rain would blow under the edge of the shed and the men would soon be wet

through. In winter icicles hung all along the sides of the shed and underneath would be covered with snow which had to be shifted before work could begin.

The tipplers were also in the open and the men got wet emptying the tubs, they were never really dry or warm in wet or wintry weather...

...When the pit first began production the tubs of coal were drawn out by the lads to the turn and then let down to the sett, later a horse was used to draw out trains of about ten tubs to the turn from both the travelling road entrance and from another which later became the main haulage drift. In 1940 the incline was done away with and the chains coupled up to the engine, doing away with the horse...

...Signalling between the ginneys on the underground section was by means of knockers connected by wire rope. It was a long pull, the first ginney being almost a mile from the engine house. Later electric bell signalling was installed...

...The engine and boiler house appears to have been built about 1865 with the chainroad going across the field by the lodge, down through Blackthorne to the staithe at Crooked Shore. This was built to bypass a tollgate on the Turnpike road. The incline to the sett continued to be used for customers above the tollgate, and horses continued to bring tubs from the pit. For a time the steam engine brought the tubs to the surface and a horse took the tubs across to the incline after the Crooked Shore staithe was abandoned, but in 1940 the horse was made redundant and the incline was coupled up to the engine and the short connecting chain between the engine house and the turn was installed...

[From the 'underground' section of some 40 pages...]

...A few yards past the bottom of the wark leading to the shaft was the gob or waste of the old Acre Hoyle Colliery. The owners of this colliery were accused of poaching coal from Hargreaves Collieries who owned Old Meadows. To prove whether poaching had taken place the shaft was sunk and it was proved that Acre Hoyle had crossed the boundary into Hargreaves's coal. Compensation had to be paid for the coal got and also the cost of sinking the shaft. This made them bankrupt and Acre Hoyle closed down. No trace of this mine can now be seen and its exact location is not definitely known.

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 14.10.1865

For some time past, there has been in the course of construction a tramway to convey coals from Old Meadows Colliery, the property of George Hargreaves Esq., and other, to Bacup. The termination is behind Messers Aitkin Mill, and the tramway will shortly be ready for opening. This will be a great advantage to the carters, as they will not have so far to lead the coal, and it will avoid the Broad-

clough Toll Bar. Perhaps the road trustees may take it into their heads to remove the bar nearer Bacup.

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 2.1.1879

On Saturday last, the carters from Messers George Hargreaves & Co's Old Meadow colliery, with wives and sweethearts, altogether Mr. Gooding.

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 23.8.1879

A party of Irish haymakers were busily engaged in Scarr End Meadow, and as usual, were provided with 'summat to sup'. In the meadow, and railed off, is a large hole, which was caused by the getting of coal so near the surface, and which leads to the workings of Old Meadows Pit. From this aperture, a number of drawers employed in the pit one day suddenly emerged, to the astonishment of the haymakers, some of whom, in the words of a drawer 'lifes to a ta'en boggart' at their dusky and mysterious visitors. Meantime one of the drawers 'spotted' the ale bottle, and some time after, when the majority of his comrades had retired, he and one or two more were determined upon its capture. Accordingly one of the drawers emerged into the field and began talking to the haymakers, holding their attention from the bottle, which before ere long was secured and well on its way up the working 'to th' wheel yed', where its contents were handed round and enjoyed by the miners, one said 'by goch it wur a rare do, I got mi seven kit full'.

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 22.1.1881

The coal from Old Meadows pit, Bacup, has been in great demand. The proprietors have shown preference to their regular customers, but others who usually get their coal by rail have been charged an extra 2/6d per ton.

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 2.6.1877

On Tuesday morning last, an accident occurred to John Kershaw, a collier employed at Meadows Colliery, Bacup. While going to his work the mine fired, and he was badly burned around the face and hands. The mine had been laid off for about a week, and the gas had accumulated, and when Kershaw went to work he fired the gas in his workings.

[\(back to top\)](#)

**Scarr Barn**

Map reference	801 268
Owners	George Hargreaves & Co
Opened	?
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 2 ft 8 in
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated by the side of Scarr Barn Farm, Crawshawbooth. It may have been a mine in its own right in the early days, but was later used by Goodshaw Hill Colliery as a travelling road, and an air level.

There are still remains of a small sett near the farm which is high enough to have been used by horse drawn vehicles. The tunnel was stone arched for a good way into the hillside as the rock was very shaley and unstable.

[\(back to top\)](#)

### Scarr End (Bent Mine)

Map reference	874 251
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co 1840 George Hargreaves & Co
Opened	pre 1800
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 3 ft Union Mine 4 ft 6 in
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated near Scarr End Farm, Weir. It was an old mine, having been worked over a good number of years.

At one time the mine was connected to Weir Bottom Mill by a tramway, a horse providing the motive power. The mine also had its own coke ovens in the early days, these were the beehive type of oven, but the number of ovens is not known.

An air shaft helped to ventilate the mine, this had a furnace at the bottom of it which was lit when air in the mine became foul, the hot air raising up the chimney drawing fresh air in from the drift.

In later years Old Meadows workings broke through into some old workings at the pit, and some old wooden tools were found, these were preserved in the Bacup Natural History Museum. Sledges and whiskets were also found in the mine but none were saved.

When the workings of Scarr End and Old Meadows joined together, the Scarr End drift was used as a fan drift for air, and an emergency exit.

The stone built fan house which was built over the drift mouth is still standing, and is in good condition, a farmer using it for his animals.

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 16.4.1864

On Friday, while a number of colliers were at work at Scarr End Colliery, Bacup, they came across a good specimen of a wooden spade, said to have been used some centuries ago.

The external part of the spade had received a coat of iron by the influence of water upon it.

No information can be given as to how long the spade has been in the place where it was found, as we understand the oldest inhabitants do not remember any workings there before the ones now in use.

[\(back to top\)](#)

**Sharnyford**

Map reference	885 245
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co 1848-1854 George Hargreaves & Co 1895
Opened	1848
Seam worked	Upper Mountain Mine 1 ft 6 in to 2ft
Method of working	Modified Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated by the side of the Bacup to Todmorden Road near the top of Sharneyford. The mine was fairly extensive, with weigh office, stores, smithy, offices, boiler and engine houses, grouped round the site.

The main workings of the mine were in the Upper Mountain Mine seam working down into the dip. The main haulage drift was practically straight into the seam, arched in red brick. The haulage used was endless chain but it is believed that at one time wire rope haulage was in use. The haulage was straight for about five hundred yards then a turn to the left was made at right angles, down the hill into the working district.

A lot of problems with water arose from this way of working, all the water met with draining towards the coal face. To overcome this problem two bore holes were drilled down to Old Meadow Colliery, which was working the seam below, to drain away some of the water...

...The tip for the mine was on the opposite side of Todmorden Road from the pithead, being joined to each other by a short tramway laid across the road and set into the road surface. It must have been hard work pushing a tub of dirt across to the tip with all the dirt from the road getting into the rail flanges.

Coal from the pit went mainly to Horsfalls' Mill in Todmorden, and when the mine closed coal was supplied from Whitewell Bottom.

[\(back to top\)](#)



## Stacksteads

Map reference	854 229
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co George Hargreaves & Co Hargreaves Collieries Ltd National Coal Board
Opened	1821
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 2ft 8 in
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated on the hills above Stacksteads near East Hyle Farm, and was connected to a staithe on Booth Road, near to its junction with Newchurch Road, by an endless chain haulage.

At the staithe the coal was loaded onto wagons or carts to be delivered to the local mills and householders. It wasn't a very big staithe...

...The front of the staithe was on Booth Road, with red wooden gates closing off the yard when not in use. To the left of the gate was the "donkey nook" where carters could fill bags of household coal ready for loading onto their carts or wagons. From the donkey nook a ramp lead up onto the sett top, coming onto it by the men's cabin. This was a stone built structure almost square with a large fireplace in the left hand wall, in this wall there were also two windows, one on each side of the fireplace. Wood planks round the walls served as seats for the men to sit on. The fireplace, like most colliery fireplaces, was a big one, holding about three hundredweight of coal when it was banked up in winter.

Next to the men's cabin was the ginney head, where the chain from the pithead higher up the hillside delivered the tubs, the chain entering the staithe through a short tunnel in the hill behind.

By the side of the ginney head was a workshop where minor repairs could be carried out, this had a forge and anvil for working any metal, this was the largest room on the sett.

A small store room stood next to the workshop, where candles, tools etc could be kept.

The sett top was covered as was usual, by cast iron landing plated to give a smooth surface for pushing the tubs on. There were two tiplers for emptying the tubs of coal into the carts and wagons, and there was plenty of room on the sett top for "standers" spare tubs awaiting emptying or putting onto the chain...

...In the right hand corner of the sett was the “yep hole”, which also served as a bagging stage if need be. The yep hole was usually used for keeping a store of sleepers, rails and props ready for sending into the pit, but in times of slack trade, to keep the colliers employed, coal was tipped over into the yep forming a large stack ready for when trade bucked up.

On the immediate right of the gates was the weigh office and weigh bridge, this was a red brick building with an office at the side of it and a small store next to this all these buildings backed onto Booth Road and are believed to have been built about 1930...

...From the sett to the pithead was about three quarters of a mile...

...The pithead was a stone built affair roughly square in shape. There was a boiler house on the right, with the engine house next to it...

...Next to the ginney shed was a cabin for the men to leave their tools and clothes when they came out of the pit. A small footbridge ran across the chains from the cabin to the engine house, in part of which there was an office for the manager...

...A water loose went out into Whittaker Clough which was just below the coal seam...When the water loose was being driven, garnets were found of gem quality in the floor rock.

When the colliers were on their way to work, they would walk up the chain from the sett, they would look out for weak or split links, and mark them with a piece of rag or, if they had none, some grass was stuffed into the chain, when this reached the pit top the bad link would be cut out. This could save a lot of time and production, and the men were paid a shilling for marking any bad links...

...The chain which ran from the pit up to Top colliery was also very steep, about one in four, and was self acting, the weight of the full tubs coming down pulling up the empties, a common feature in steep portions of the mines, both above and below ground...

...The mine was a naked light mine, and you had to buy your own candles, a collier using about four a day, the candles were white and thinner than a domestic candle. The firemen had their candles bought by the firm and these were coloured pink, so that the men couldn't pinch them, although if you ran out, the fireman would lend you one. But you had to replace it for him.

The workings in the area of the outcrop above Jack Lodge are very old, and when parts of the old district were being cleared up ready for reworking, marks were found in the floor made by the runners of the oak sledges used to carry the baskets of coal. The method of pulling was named 'belt and buckle' and the baskets

were called whiskets. The sledges were pulled by women with their children pushing at the rear, the women having a belt fastened round the waist with a chain passing between the legs to a shackle on the sledge. The basket or whisket of coal was put on the sledge by the miner, and the load was dragged to the surface, an empty basket being taken into the pit when the woman returned for the next load, a few baskets being in use at any one time. It must have been gruelling work. One of the oak sledges in good condition, is on view at Bacup Natural History Museum, along with a drawing to illustrate how the sledges were used.

The old district was about three hundred yards inbye from the pithead, and out to the left, and about the same distance, somewhere under the Hile humps...

...The royalty owners who owned the mineral rights of the area had a surveyor, and the company had one, if a piece of coal for any reason was not worth getting, they both came and marked this off the plans. The two surveyors were brothers, called Law, and their father was the area manager, or man in charge above ground, called Illingworth Law, for Hargreaves Collieries. Royalties were paid by the tonnage mined...

Bacup Times 13.3.1869

The colliers employed at the Stacksteads pits have been out on strike for some time, but a number of them have resumed work. During the time of the turnout the manufacturers in that district were obliged to cart their coal from the Bacup pits.

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 9.10.1880

On Wednesday last a collier, John Pilling, employed at Isle Colliery lost his life in an accident. A young man, Phabey, who was working nearby heard someone calling out and saying 'will no one help me?' He and another young man went to where the deceased was working. They found Pilling had been seriously injured by the falling of what is known to colliers as a 'top stone'; in other words, a detached piece of rock which had fallen from the roof. The stone had fallen upon the poor fellow's head, which was so badly crushed that his brain protruded through his right ear. The stone was removed and the deceased taken home where he lingered until Friday morning.

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 2.10.1886

Messrs George Hargreaves & Co, colliery proprietors, of Stacksteads Colliery, were summoned for having a platform weighing machine in their possession at Stacksteads, three quarters of a hundredweight against the purchaser. They were fined 2/6d.

[\(back to top\)](#)

**Swinshaw**

Map reference	826 264
Owners	Ashworth Hargreaves & Co George Hargreaves & Co
Opened	1840
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 2 ft 8 in Possibly a small section of Upper Mountain Mine
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

Swinshaw colliery was situated on the hills above Greenfold Reservoir, Crawshawbooth. The mine was a very old one having worked for well over 100 years.

The mine had been worked throughout its life by drawers and horses. In the early days the drawers would draw the tubs out to daylight, and before the use of tubs became general, women and young children were employed to drag the coal to the surface by means of whiskets and chain. As the workings got deeper into the hill, horses were used to take trains of empty tubs into the mine for the drawers, and bring out the full tubs. The empties were left at a convenient place for the drawer to collect them, and take them in to the colliers to be filled, when they were full the drawer would bring them back to the shunt ready for the horse to pull the train out to the surface...

...The gall road entrance has almost been completely destroyed, but the ruins of the cabin and smithy can still be seen, and there is a small hole with water coming out of it about eighteen inches square which is left to let the water drain from the old workings into Greenfold reservoir. This hole widens out about six feet inbye into the gall road proper.

The gall road was built of red brick for its full length, and is believed to have run right through the hill to come out on the Water side of Swinshaw moor.

On the hillsides surrounding the area, numerous old levels and air shafts can be seen, although they have collapsed or have been filled in. One of these entrances was almost at the top of the hill on the Water side of the valley, near the entrance was a plantation and the name of Epping Forest was given to the district of coal worked from the drift...

...Coal from the pithead was run down to the sett at Crawshawbooth by endless chain although in the early days horse took the tubs down a tramway to Nocliffe Eaves where there was a turn in the tramway before plunging down a hill to the sett, this section being operated by a gravity jig.

The chainroad from the pit to the sett was 1667 yards long, with the bend at Nocliffe Eaves being 934 yards from the pithead. The jig road from Nocliffe Eaves to the sett is believed to have been opened on the 1 July 1837, when the coals were first run down it.

Before this though there was a small tramway from a drift across the valley from Nocliffe Eaves Farm to the turn. This crossed Folly Clough on a large viaduct apparently built of wood. The evidence for this comes from an old map referring to the construction of Greenfold reservoir, and old miners remember being told of the tramway when they were young men, but they know no details. A stone viaduct of the size needed would have left some evidence so wood must have been the building material, as no remains can be found anywhere on the site.

The other haulage road from the pit to Gambleside ran first through a tunnel 100 yards long, then along the surface to the smithy at Nodlock, a distance of 433 yards from the pithead. The tunnel from Nodlock smithy to the pithead at Gambleside was 467 yards long. The workings in this area were very unstable, the roof being very poor. Geological maps show a series of faults in the area so this was the cause of the bad roof.

An odd feature of the Crawshawbooth pits was that they used a smaller tub than the rest of the Rossendale pits. The tub held the same weight of coal, 3½ cwt, but were three inches lower and three inches longer. The reason for the difference was given as the coal was on average lower than the rest of Rossendale, average height being about twenty eight inches...

...Evidence has come to light of six year old children being employed as drawers, one case, confirmed, has come to light of a father carrying his son up from the village of Crawshawbooth asleep in a blanket to do his day's work, then carrying him back down again at the end of the shift. This was eighteen years after the Act of Parliament banning children of this age from working in the pit.

If the drawing was rough, two of these young children were used to push one tub.

At a bell pit near Swinshaw a young boy was left unknown in the workings below ground, the pit fell in, burying the boy. This was in the 1860s...

[\(back to top\)](#)

## Top Pit

Map reference	854 238
Owners	George Hargreaves & Co
Opened	?
Seam worked	Upper Mountain Mine 18-24 in
Method of working	Modified Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated on the hills above Lower Brex Farm, and approached by farm track from Coal Pit Lane, Shawclough, Waterfoot.

Coal from the mine was taken via a chainroad running part on the surface and part underground, into Stacksteads Pit. This chainroad was very steep and was worked by the full tubs going down pulling up the empty ones, a brake at the top of the incline was used to keep the speed constant. Most of the underground portion was arched with stone.

The mine worked a small area of Upper Mountain Mine coal between the crop edge and a fault under Brex moor. About three different drifts were put in at various times as the workings extended.

The first drift was built on what is believed to have been Top Farm, old maps show the farm, on the site of where the pit was later built...

...A second drift was put in to draw coal about three hundred yards away from the pithead, to which it was connected by a tramway along which horses pulled the tubs in trains of about six or ten.

The last drift to be worked was behind Far Brex Farm, and the arch in the boundary wall of the farm through which passed the drawing road can still be seen.

This last drift was connected to the main pithead by a double track tramway which was operated by wire rope driven by either a petrol or diesel engine, this was put in about 1931 or 1932.

Old colliers say the pit was easy to work, the coal being fairly soft and easy to get, but some ripping had to be done to make the main tunnels high enough for the drawers, although this appears to have been kept to a minimum owing to the fact that the fireclay which lies below the coal was also got and sold for brickmaking, this making the tunnel high enough for the drawers without ripping the roof...

[\(back to top\)](#)

## Weir Pit

Map reference	869 254
Owners	George Hargreaves & Co
Opened	1920?
Seam worked	Lower Mountain Mine 2 ft 8 in
Method of working	Pillar and Stall

The mine was situated at the top end of Weir village, on the left hand side of the road going towards Burnley. Some confusion occurs between this mine and Old Clough Colliery, though some Ordnance Sheets show two separate mines.

From 1920 to 1948? Two brothers, Coley and Dick Lord worked the pit.

Bacup & Rawtenstall News 14.4.1877

John Hoyle, 17, John Ward, 13 and Richard Horsfall, 14, were charged with stealing a handkerchief, a bottle and a quantity of bread and tea from Doals Coal Pit. Hoyle was discharged and the other two were sent to prison for 21 days.

[\(back to top\)](#)