

PIT PROFILE

(by H. A. FREETH)

WILLIAM HENRY JORDAN

of

Arthur and Edward Colliery
Lydbrook

(Reprinted by courtesy of the Editor
of "Coal", the N.C.B. magazine)

You can imagine this tough old man of 79 sitting and looking you straight in the eye as he tells his story. It is a story with no flourishes, no pretensions and no heroics, yet it is told confidently as though the subject knows his worth as a miner and his status in the Forest. It is punctuated by a lean forward, or by a nod and a sort of half wink as a secondary meaning is indicated, and is accompanied by a smile to indicate incredulity that anyone should want to listen seriously to the story of a miner's life.

Here it is as it was told: "I was born at St. Briavels in 1871 on the first day of September. My father was working at Trafalgar Colliery at the time—my grandfather had been a blacksmith. I live at Upper Lydbrook, but I've lived about these parts practically all my life. I've never had much illness or nothing wrong, see; always enjoyed good health.

EARLY MEMORIES

"I can remember scrubbing my little behind down that bank when I was two years old. I got very devilish as a schoolboy, and used to get the cane for going off birds' nesting instead of going to school. We used to go off to the Forest; we had the run of it then. But I was a very good all-round hand-writer at school, and today I'm as good a speller as anyone in the Forest.

"In those days you left school when you passed the full standard of proficiency. I left when I was 10 years 11 months old, and went to work in the Forest gathering cordwood for making charcoal at the distillery.

"Well, we were allowed to go to the

colliery when we were 12. I went four days after I was 12, on September 5, 1883, and I'll tell you something now. I've only drawn five weeks' compensation in my life, and today I'm feeling as fit as a fiddle, thank God.

"My first job was as a door boy at Trafalgar pit. This lasted one and a half years perhaps. Then for five years I was on hodding—dragging a box of coal from the face to the tram and back—and at 19 I took on contract work. I married a Lydbrook girl in 1903. I bred a family up of eight—three sons and five daughters—they've all married now. Two sons are deputies at Cannop Colliery; the third son works here on the new development.

"Things got pretty slack at the beginning of the century and chaps galore went from here to Wales. In

about 1906 I walked to Wales and worked in the Rhondda Valley, until there was a strike in 1908, so I returned to Trafalgar pit. The manager at this pit, called Waterloo then, asked me to come and work here. I was the fifth man to have a place. I've worked under every manager the pit has had. The present two are good supervising gentlemen; they've got the best knowledge of mining in the Forest.

"Music has been my hobby. I did 36 years' banding. First the cornet. I chucked that up for the tenor horn: then I was on the bass drum in the Trafalgar band, which became the Arthur and Edward band. It's broken up now. We used to have 14—20 players and practised at the Crown Inn. I love a bit of banding and a bit of singing now.

"I live on top of Worrall Hill with a married daughter. I've a number of grandchildren. Let me count up. Twenty-two in all—and one great-grandchild."

So Mr. Jordan finishes his autobiography—from his own birth to that of his great-grandchild, nearly 80 years of history. Just how tough he has been in that time you can tell by the fact that when he was 65 he had to go to hospital one morning to have "nonsense bumps" removed from his head: he went to work at night as usual! There is a story, which he will not dwell upon, of his having carried his brother unaided two miles underground after an accident.

The only time he has been seen to shed a tear was on Ross station during the Great War, when one of his boys was going back.

The "boy", incidentally, O. B. Jordan, won the Medaille Militaire and was recently invited to a banquet in London to meet the President of France.

Bridge Motor-Cyclist in City Crash

An accident in which a Forest of Dean motor-cyclist was injured had a sequel at Gloucester City Magistrates' Court on Friday, when Charles H. Pinder, of Brynelfwys, Llandona, Llanymaris, Anglesey, N. Wales, was fined 30s., plus £2 3s. 8d. costs, for having driven his car without due care and attention in West Street, Gloucester, on July 26.

P. D. Clarke represented Pinder, who admitted the offence.

NOT ACROSS HIS PATH

In the case for the prosecution, Inspector H. J. Price said that on July 26, 1933, he was on duty in the city of Gloucester, and that he saw Pinder's car on West Street, Gloucester, on July 26.

His intention was to turn to the right to reach the Bristol Road, via Quay Street. He put his hand out and signalled his intention, and slowed down. He had almost passed the white line when the motor-cycle and his car collided. He did not see the motor-cycle until a second before the collision.

Clarke, addressing the court in the case, said that his client had told him that on July 26, 1933, he was on duty in the city of Gloucester, and that he saw Pinder's car on West Street, Gloucester, on July 26.

Berry Hill Wedding

THE wedding took place at Lydney Registry Office on Saturday of Miss Enid Rose May Watkins, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Watkins, of Pentwyn, Crow Ash, Hill, and Ronald Henry, fifth Mrs. and the late Mr. Reg Bowler, 14, Coverham Villas, Berry Hill.

The bride, who was given away by her father, wore a powder blue piece suit with navy accessories. Mr. E. C. Wadley attended as best man.

The wedding was held