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### Classics Down the Mineshaft: a Buried History

#### *Henry Stead*

Why should a miner earn six pounds a week?  
Leisure! They'd only spend it in a bar!  
Standard of life! You'll never teach them Greek,  
Or make them more contented than they are!

Siegfried Sassoon 'The Case for the Miners' (1921)<sup>1</sup>

Since the eighteenth century and the onset of deep mining, British miners have worked at and indeed beyond the limits of our habitable world. With the huge demand for coal that fuelled the Industrial Revolution, and aided by the technology that came with it, miners dug down ever deeper into the earth's crust to extract its precious ores and minerals. The experience of minework is not only extreme in the geospatial sense, but also by dint of the physical severity of the work itself. The work was so severe that until it was normalized locally it attracted only the most desperate and dispossessed, thus creating a new and visibly identifiable class of the working poor.<sup>2</sup> Those engagements with ancient Greek and Roman culture that took place in the usually isolated and deprived communities surrounding the pits might justifiably therefore be considered extreme. But what is perhaps most *extreme* about the miner classics

of the industrial age is its marginality, which is bound up with the simple fact that it seems so very unlikely. Sassoon's poem, although a parody of the opinion of out-of-touch and 'port-flushed' dons reacting to strike action, neatly represents the class-based preconceptions of the miner's low level of cultural interest and intellectual capacity.

The kinds of cultural engagement miner classics represent for the most part took place so far from the centre of the historical and cultural maps of our time that their very existence is called into question. Jonathan Rose's groundbreaking study *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (2001) has done much to challenge the casual stereotyping of working-class cultural experience and to illuminate the 'intellectual life' of British workers, but the extent of the classical experience of members of mining communities between the 1750s and 1950s remains buried.<sup>3</sup> One reason for this is that miner classics operated beyond the social horizons of those middle- and upper-class men frequently supposed to have been the sole beneficiaries of the classical education and the primary consumers of those 'high' cultural artefacts that appear to have required such an education to be fully appreciated.

Over the course of this chapter we shall visit several sites of interaction between mineworkers and the ancient Greek and Roman classics. Beyond simply attesting to their existence, assessment of these interactions will cast some light on Greco-Roman antiquity's curious appeal to the mineworker of the period. But first I should contextualize this somewhat niche line of inquiry. The research into miner classics was undertaken when working with Edith Hall on her AHRC-funded project 'Classics and Class in Britain 1789-1939' (C&C). The project was designed 'to provoke a shift in the perception of the history of British classics, away from a conservative tradition of institutionalized elitism towards a brighter history of broadly inclusive cultural practice and inspired creativity'.<sup>4</sup> By admitting that the educational discipline of classics played a role in social division it is sometimes understood that it separated those who could, for example, read Latin verse, or parse a Greek

verb, from those who could do neither of these things. Classical education was, however, a tool of division suited for closer work than binary distinction. It did, of course, have the capacity to distinguish between the leisured and working classes, but more importantly than this (especially from the Industrial Revolution onwards), it also had the power to differentiate between the various and sometimes subtle ranks and affiliations of the middle and upper classes. Classically based persecution of working-class and lower-middle-class protagonists is prevalent in fiction produced by middle-class writers for the simple reason that it was the middle classes who suffered most sharply from it.

Classical knowledge has also been effectively weaponized at various points in British history, but perhaps most effectively in the cultural wars surrounding the Revolution in France. Persecution based on the class-symbolic power of the classical was a mainstay of Romantic-era periodical publications, and throughout the era served conservative interests by disingenuously painting political radicals and reformers as uneducated fools from the wrong part of town.<sup>5</sup> Such polarisations are fascinating in their own right and show just how contested the classics can become. They, however, also inadvertently divert attention from the majority of popular experience of classical culture in Britain.<sup>6</sup>

While, as Richard Hoggart warns – it is important to avoid the temptation ‘to see every second working-class man as a Felix Holt or a Jude the Obscure’,<sup>7</sup> it is also important not to underplay the cultural significance of the kinds of interaction with antiquity enjoyed by the relatively ‘unexceptional’ and ‘ordinary’ person. Lower-class engagements with Greek and Roman antiquity may take a different form than those of members of the educated elite, but *en masse* simply must have greater implications for cultural dynamics than the comparatively few engagements of the elite.<sup>8</sup> You do not, for example, have to be Felix or Jude (or Gildersleeve for that matter) in order to marvel at the Elgin Marbles, or listen to a translation of Homer’s *Iliad*.

The often mythologizing and formulaic ('zero to hero') nineteenth-century biographical genre tends also to exaggerate the extraordinariness of working-class classical experience, when in most nineteenth century communities, including pit villages and nearby towns, any education beyond the 'three Rs' involved learning at least some Latin, and when certain engagements with classical culture, e.g. in public architecture, were not so easily avoided in a Britain obsessed with its classical cultural heritage. This chapter therefore reminds us that the kinds of cultural engagements addressed in the present volume, all of which are perceived to have taken place *in extremis* might not have been so 'extreme' after all. This said, there were most definitely considerable problems with basic literacy in mining communities, especially in the earlier half of our period.

The miners' example is at one and the same time *extraordinary*, in the sense that their working day was – especially up until the final decades of the nineteenth century – uniquely dangerous and physically wearing, and *representative* of the 'ordinary' in the sense that the same social pressures and inequalities of opportunity were acting upon them as upon any other large-scale British industrial community in the long nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The extremity and starkness of their struggle against the shadowy forces of capital is no doubt what drew Marx to focus on their exploitation in such detail in Part 4 of *Capital* Volume 1.<sup>9</sup> Indeed Marx conceived of *Capital's* central undertaking as a *katabasis*, or heroic descent to the underworld, in which he himself was the reader's guide through the murky realm of production beneath the apparently paradisiacal surface realm of capitalist society.

The visible world, or 'sphere of circulation or commodity exchange', Marx calls 'a very Eden of the innate rights of man', where everybody 'works together to their mutual advantage, for the common weal, and in the common interest'.<sup>10</sup> The reader's descent to the underworld, or the 'hidden abode of production', begins the quest of learning 'the secret of profit-making'. The *katabasis* does important work for Marx here partly because the implied



departure from *our* world encourages the reader to rid herself of preconceptions and be free to witness the darker realm of production with fresh eyes. The descent takes us into another world where different rules apply, rules that shape our world as much as its own. As if by magic, Marx explains:

A certain change takes place, or so it seems, in the physiognomy of our *dramatis personae*. He who was previously the money-owner now strides out in front as a capitalist; the possessor of labour-power follows as his worker. The one smirks self-importantly and is intent on business; the other is timid and holds back, like someone who has brought his own hide to market and now has nothing else to expect but – a tanning.<sup>11</sup>

We may employ our own Marxist katabatic configuration by envisioning the surface world as the one of preconceived notions, i.e. that nineteenth-century workers had little opportunity, aptitude or appetite for classics. Step into the cage, therefore, and come down to another under-explored realm, where reading rooms, translations, cheap books, magazines, performance and superhuman effort reign supreme. The characters we meet in this under-realm are neither timid, nor do they hold back, rather they seek out engagements with antiquity irrespective of whether or not they are considered to be excluded from so doing. There is no clean division between so-called popular and elite culture; they operate in turbulent synthesis.

As Rachel Falconer has recently identified, the transformative journey through Hell is a rich and recurrent commonplace in post-war Western narrative.<sup>12</sup> Classicists are, of course, familiar with the katabatic tradition in Greek and Roman literature and myth, but are likely less familiar with the fact that this tradition resonated particularly strongly with the

mineworker. After all, each day for the miner contained a descent to another realm, and although the repetitive work and camaraderie would create a sense of familiarity, it has always been well understood that life underground leaves its mark, and that even nowadays the return to the surface cannot be taken for granted.<sup>13</sup> Employment of the commonplace does not, of course, necessarily indicate direct influence from a classical source, but the frequency of its fusion with other classical imagery (not always of a katabatic nature), does suggest that the miners' *katabasis* is at least imbued with a classical flavour.

### **Sid Chaplin's Inner Hades**

One literary miner who dreamt of escaping his underground life was Sid Chaplin (1916-1986). Before Chaplin made a name for himself as a versatile professional writer, he worked as a colliery blacksmith and later as an underground belt-fitter.<sup>14</sup> He was an avid self-educator, attending the 'pit university' of the Spennymoor Settlement, where he attended Workers' Educational Association (WEA) courses.<sup>15</sup> In 1939 he won a scholarship to Fircroft Working Men's College, in Selly Oak, Birmingham to study economics and political theory. After a year or so of struggling to meet the academic requirements, the onset of war sent him back to Durham and the pit life he thought he had escaped. Chaplin's papers contain the manuscript poems of a coalman in his early twenties dreaming of a literary life.<sup>16</sup> Most are typewritten and a number have critical comments and metrical notation scribbled over and around the text, including the handwriting of his quondam literary mentor, the Spennymoor Settlement warden Bill Farrell.

Among pages with titles such as 'Poems of an Unprivileged Poet' and 'Where Gorki Died' can be found the poem 'Miner', which sees the young pitman poet relate his own experience below ground to that of the suffering titan god Atlas:

I am the inner Atlas of this spinning globe.  
At the dark centre of your green circumference  
I crouch, the crawling wonder of my darker world,  
The sweating surgeon of the strata depths,  
The probing, blasting hero of my diamond doom.

In this poem, which casts its miner protagonist at once as a doomed hero, sweating surgeon and inner Atlas, Chaplin sets up the classic distinction between *his* painful ‘darker world’ and the ‘green circumference’, between the isolated and isolating world of work and the world of leisure, between ‘my’ world and ‘your’ world. The original and highly evocative image of the ‘inner Atlas’ shows an understanding that it is through his effort as a miner that ‘our’ (?) green and spinning globe is sustained. It is a dense poem with a protean, collage-style imagery that resists a clear central image, but if we are left with one image it is surely the (ultimately visually elusive) one of the ‘inner Atlas’, who whilst being at the centre of the world has its weight on his shoulders.

Another of Chaplin’s poems is ‘Miners at Work (After the drawings by Henry Moore)’:

Dim shapes swathed in darkness,  
In darkness swathed in mystery.  
Elements:  
Darkness, coal, the living flesh  
Crouching, crawling, creeping:  
The straining of unseen muscles

Against unknown weight.

Unreal men in their inner Hades,

    But look, ah!

See the pinpoint glowing of eyes,

The eyes of the dead who live

And in their life attain the mastery

Of blood and sweat.

Tears are for widows.

This straining flesh, this cornerstone

Of creature comfort;

Culture,

Cities of men,

Commonwealth to be.

This is the way to mastery,

Hewn through the planet's bones

To the ultimate shining lode.

The message of eyes in the dark?

(Cat's eyes that curve to the end of light)

Cauldron within

Says the smouldering spark.

This poem explicitly views the unseen ‘straining flesh’ of dehumanised forms toiling in the darkness as ‘the cornerstone of creature comfort; / Culture, / Cities of men, Commonwealth to be.’ It is written from the perspective of one of those ‘dead who live’, one of the ‘unreal men in their inner Hades’ and is justifiably critical of the stark inequalities of 1930s Britain, inequalities that have the ‘real’ people on the surface enjoying the fruits of his and his fellow workers’ exhausting labour.

Chaplin’s use of the classical colouring of ‘Atlas’ and ‘Hades’ cast his day’s labour in the cultural and emotional context he felt necessary to adequately describe to his surface-dwelling readers the grimness of his underworld. It is the cruel punishment and eternal labour of Atlas, and the dark, inescapable underworld home of the Grecian dead that best suited the young artist’s purpose. The epithet ‘inner’ that qualifies both Atlas and Hades emphasises the unjustly disproportionate personal burden laid on the individual subterranean worker. The colliers’ world painted by Chaplin in these two poems is not just dark, claustrophobic and uncomfortable, but also desperately lonely. There is no other human presence with whom the ‘unknown weight’ can be shared, no camaraderie, and not a hint of religion or even external mythology in which to take comfort. The absence of religion may surprise, given that Chaplin was a Methodist lay preacher from 1938 to 1948. While it is common in this turbulent period for political, religious, ethnic and social loyalties to be divided, or plural, the presence of religion would have been an awkward fit with the classical, Marxist aesthetic and framework otherwise employed.

After John Lehmann published Chaplin’s work in Penguin’s ‘New Writing’ series in 1941, the reluctant miner’s star steadily rose, and he became an established author, journalist and arts worker – for which service he was awarded an OBE in 1977. Chaplin’s example is an important reminder that we ought not always consider self-education, and self-improvement to be unidirectional, i.e. away from one’s origins. Although Chaplin felt

unsuited to the labour environment into which he was born, his personal aspiration was not, it appears, driven simply by a desire to escape his roots, but to use his hard-won cultural experience and classical knowledge to better represent the lives of his fellows in the stories that he told. Higher education may, for Chaplin, have been part of the route to success, but he used it not to sever ties with his ordinary social group, but to better communicate both its struggle and cultural richness to the world above.



### **Joe Guy**

In the 1940s Joe Guy worked full time down the mine at Sacriston Colliery, County Durham as a ‘datal worker’, i.e. a miner on a standard wage without bonuses. He was active in local government, serving as compensation secretary, and a member of the Parish Council. For one who occupied such a central position in his community, it is telling that the only reason we now know about Joe Guy at all is that in 1952 he won a place on a course set up by the

National Union of Mineworkers and Durham Colleges' Board of Extra-mural Studies. This achievement was subsequently recorded in *COAL* magazine, the PR organ of the National Coal Board.<sup>17</sup>

Joe Guy – so the story ran – was ‘a typical Durham miner’ in all ways apart from one ‘small accomplishment’. ‘He has taught himself to read Greek and is a regular contributor to a theological magazine’.<sup>18</sup> The course held at Durham University was designed to prepare promising workers for management and Trade Union leadership positions. Unlike Hardy’s Jude Fawley, therefore, Joe Guy was welcomed (albeit as part of a funded extension programme) within the high walls of academic study and, in spite of numerous logistical, social and economic barriers, achieved a higher level of education and actively engaged in current academic discourse.

As the *COAL* feature suggests, the eccentric way Joe Guy spent his leisure time made him somewhat untypical, and – both in terms of physical and mental stamina and intellectual capacity – he was no doubt an exceptional individual. However untypical, his example was no anomaly. This biographical fragment provides evidence (where evidence is scarce) for clusters of workers – constituting a significant minority – who were both willing and able to negotiate the hard-going routes to classical and academic attainment in spite of the meagre opportunities afforded them by their social position. Joe Guy was, in fact, following a long tradition of self-educating men and (occasionally) women in mining communities, who – as the term suggests – sought out learning via routes outside of formal educational provision. It is, after all, no mean feat to teach oneself Greek.

Even though it is probable that he learned Greek to prepare himself for entering into theological debate rather than reading Homer, Joe Guy’s example raises a fundamental question. As historians – especially but not exclusively of literature – we are accustomed to dealing with exceptional individuals (whether or not this ‘exceptional’ label is justified, and

how and by whom it is applied, is of course, another matter) . Indeed, using the literary remains of extraordinary individuals to identify and draw out general shifts in ways of seeing the world is such common practice that it is barely even noteworthy, despite those extraordinary individuals experiencing life in very different ways to the majority. Traditional scholarly practice has marginalized the ordinary individual to such an extent that *their* lives – and (quite bizarrely) not those of the often highly eccentric poets, politicians, scholars and makers of all kinds of art – have become extraordinary. Significant scholarly progress has been made to redress this balance, and twenty-first-century digital research techniques will certainly speed things up.<sup>19</sup>

Of course, the paucity and often low aesthetic appeal of the written records from the lower classes is partially responsible for the skewed historical record. But it is essential that we bring these underrepresented experiences into our conception of the past. Their combined contribution to broader cultural dynamics is of enormous significance. Mass consumption (since the Industrial Revolution) has driven the supply of cultural products, as it does other products, and the nexus of contemporary taste is hugely effected by the direction of travel of the mainstream. It is also important to remember that the examples set by those autodidacts may provide important inspiration for members of all marginalized constituencies, whose struggle against the social current can appear insurmountable.





### **Barbara Taylor**

Following the Mining Act of 1920, the mining industry of Great Britain supported ‘an organised system of welfare activities in the interest of mine workers and mining communities, through a fund raised by a statutory levy on the output of the mines’. Section 20 of the Act imposed a tax of one penny on each ton of coal mined in Britain, specifically to create a miners’ welfare fund to be used ‘for such purposes connected with the social well-being, recreation, and conditions of workers in or about coal mines, and with mining education and research as the Government, through designated agencies, should determine’.<sup>20</sup>

One such agency was the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO), which awarded a scholarship in 1959 to a certain Barbara Taylor, the ‘daughter of a miner at Yorkshire's Darfield Main’ who wanted to train as a teacher. This scholarship allowed her to read ‘Latin at London University’.<sup>21</sup> This information was gleaned, like that about Joe Guy, from *COAL* Magazine, but for Taylor we have even less information than for Guy.<sup>22</sup> You will find no entry for Joe Guy, or Barbara Taylor in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

The ‘ordinariness’ of their lives has meant that their experiences, like those of countless others, have been absent from both the historical record and wider popular consciousness. It is a simple point, not a pejorative one (the *ODNB* is not a census), but one that quickly demonstrates how traditional tools of research are limited in their application to working-class subjects.

At first glance Joe Guy’s and Barbara Taylor’s interactions with the classical languages appear exceptional, anomalous even. They come to us as biographical fragments ostensibly ‘out of the blue’. Further investigation, however, of the communities in which Guy and Taylor lived, the institutions supporting their efforts, and the educational routes they travelled, reveal clusters of classical activity. Largely perhaps due to the additional difficulty in tracking lesser-known women, i.e. changes in surname, the clusters around Guy are marginally more visible, as yet, than those around Taylor.

### **University Extension in Durham**

When in 1952 Joe Guy left his pit village and headed to a Saturday class on Palace Green, Durham, so did another 24 miners from different pit villages. The class was called ‘The Working of Democracy in Britain’ and it was delivered by Peter Kaim-Caudle (1916-2010), who would later become Professor of Social Policy at the University of Durham. Guy’s course was organized jointly by the Durham Area of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Durham Colleges Board of Extra-Mural Studies, drawing students from collieries in all parts of Durham. *COAL* magazine tells us that the students’ average age was 30 and that ‘some have attended NCLC [National Council of Labour Colleges] and WEA courses, but the majority have little or no adult educational experience’.<sup>23</sup>

Although – as the programme’s archived prospectuses show – most Political Sciences courses began with Plato, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that this particular extra-mural class in Durham made any reference to the classical world. From their tentative beginnings, however, in 1886, the University Extension Lectures in Durham often did include classical subject matter. The lecture series aimed ‘to bring some of the benefits of University teaching within the reach of persons, of either sex and of every class, who have been unable to join the University as Matriculated Students’. Alongside a wide range of subjects in the prospectus courses on Roman poetry, Ancient Drama, Ancient History and Greek Philosophy were offered.<sup>24</sup> As we dig deeper we realise both that social pressures barred the majority of mineworkers and their families from further study, and that Joe Guy’s experience was by no means a one-off.

In 1911, Durham University joined forces with the WEA ‘to foster and supervise tutorial classes in the area’. In 1916 the extra-mural teaching was directed by Rev. E. G. Pace, for whom ‘one major ambition... [was] to interest more pitmen in Extra-mural work’. His period in charge was successful partly because he was sensitive to ‘suspicion both from University and the Miners’ side’ which he thought ‘probably goes back a long way’.<sup>25</sup> He was also clearly a stickler for figures, and demanded detailed and reflective reports from tutors on class progress. In 1924, 45% of students in the tutorial classes were manual labourers and 33% colliers. These tutorials were conducted in an astonishing number of the mining communities surrounding the city of Durham. 1934 saw the presentation of a wonderful WEA/University Tutorial Class in the Council School, Easington Colliery, entitled ‘Utopias’. Before any mention of Thomas More, the tutor, Ralph Todd MA, ran three classes on Ancient Athens and Plato’s *Republic*.



Ever popular were classes that incorporated local Roman history, and provided abundant opportunity for day trips to nearby Corbridge and Housesteads, where lecturers in raincoats could point at (and declaim earnestly from) bits of Hadrian's Wall, before admiring crowds of students. Figures 10.3 and 10.4 detail such practices, and feature John P. Gillam and Walter Taylor, respectively. In the late 1940s Gillam was a lecturer in Archaeology at King's College, Newcastle, at which time he offered tours of sections of Hadrian's Wall. In the 1950s Walter Taylor served as staff tutor for extra-mural studies for Durham's Colleges. His late-1940s *Social History* course covered the Roman Occupation of Durham County, and his evening classes (1957-8), entitled *Archaeology and History of Roman Britain*, were well attended at Billingham Technical College.<sup>26</sup>

In 1947 Harold Boyden took Pace's place as head of extra-mural studies at Durham. He collaborated successfully with local media and local trade unions to drum up even greater participation from the harder-to-reach communities of coal and steelworkers. It was under his leadership that Joe Guy found the funding and opportunity to continue his education at the university. In 1955 Boyden explained to a reporter: 'We are pleased that more working class people – many of them miners and steelworkers – are taking advantage of the courses.' He continued: 'In a manner of speaking, there are miners and steel workers who will take a course in Elizabethan literature or the history of the Near East virtually 'at the drop of a hat'.<sup>27</sup> By looking at the extra-mural syllabuses of the time it is clear that 'Elizabethan literature' and 'the history of the Near East' could just have easily been 'Greek philosophy' and 'the history of the Roman Empire'.

## Wanlockhead

Before and during the Industrial Revolution, British working-class self-educators had to make do without the WEA, NCLC or University extra-mural programmes. Mechanics' Institutes and other institutions of the kind began to emerge from the 1820s onwards on the initiative of the new captains of industry. Before the Industrial Revolution, during the eighteenth century, if autodidacts received any support at all in their pursuit of knowledge, it usually came through the haphazard system of philanthropy, or the sense of social responsibility of wealthy landowners. Increasingly – and these two examples are not mutually exclusive – more horizontalist and (as it happens) frequently non-conformist religious organizations also provided support for education, both formally and informally. An example of where the philanthropic model worked well can be found in the villages of Wanlockhead and Leadmills in the notoriously grey glen of the Lowther Hills in Dumfries and Galloway.

This remarkable, isolated incidence of miner classics has come to light because on 19 August 1803 Dorothy Wordsworth visited the Lowther Hills. As they walked up the vale she, her brother William, and fellow poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge encountered three young boys. 'One', she noted in her *Recollections of a Tour made in Scotland in 1803*, 'carried a fishing-rod, and the hats of all were braided with honeysuckles; they ran after one another as wanton as the wind'. Soon the three 'were joined by some half-dozen of their companions, all without shoes and stockings. They told us they lived at Wanlockhead, the village above, pointing to the top of the hill; they went to school and learned Latin, Virgil, and some of them Greek, Homer, but when Coleridge began to inquire further, off they ran, poor things! I suppose afraid of being examined.'<sup>28</sup>

These children were from an extremely isolated lead-mining community and lived in what is to this day the highest village in Scotland. How was there such a concentration of classical learning in this remote part of the country? Part of the credit must be given to a

particularly benevolent landlord, Henry Scott, the 3rd Duke of Buccleuch and 5th Duke of Queensberry (born in 1746), who supported the miners in their endeavour to establish and run a lending library in the village. But also it ought to be noted that a good deal of the self-educating spirit is likely to have been brought to Wanlockhead by the Quakers, who ran the mines before the Duke's tenure. By 1750, for example, there was already a thriving school in the village, and by the time of the Wordsworths' visit it had gained a reputation for its excellent education. For four decades after Dorothy Wordsworth came to Wanlockhead, the Minister of Wanlockhead Free Church, the Rev. Thomas Hastings, educated many working-class boys, who went on to transcend their class origins to become lawyers, physicians, teachers, poets and ministers.<sup>29</sup>

From November 1756, 32 of the adult villagers of Wanlockhead also had access to their Miners' Library, the second oldest subscription library in Europe – after the one just down the road in Leadhills. Originally called 'The Society for Purchasing Books in Wanlockhead', it eventually housed more than three thousand volumes. Membership was not cheap, but just about affordable for a miner: the annual subscription was two to four shillings, and a miner earned nine or ten shillings a week. The library rules were very strict. Only one membership was granted per household, access to the library was granted just once a month when a single book could be exchanged, and damage or loss of a book led to a potentially crippling fine, of double the value of the book. The collection of books became so large that it had to be rehoused in 1851 to a purpose-built library, which is now a feature of Wanlockhead's Museum of Leadmining. There are numerous religious texts and volumes of self-improvement literature (including Samuel Smiles); journals and magazines from *Chambers' Edinburgh Magazine*, the *Penny Magazine* and Cassell's *Popular Educator* to the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews* and the London literary journal the *Athenaeum*. Novels too abound – Scott, Dickens, Fielding, Kingsley and Thackeray; there are also books on foreign



travel, adventure stories, scholarly treatises on agriculture, science and, of course, mining.<sup>30</sup>

There are, interestingly, no classical texts in the original languages in the library. These must have been the stuff of the schoolhouse. In translation, however, were available the works of Plato, Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*; there are two volumes of Josephus. Homer's *Odyssey* was accessible through John Hawkesworth's translation of François Fénelon's *Adventures of Telemachus*. The Duke of Buccleuch donated a good number of titles over the years, which intriguingly included a handsomely bound Ainsworth's *Latin Dictionary*, which would have come in handy when reading some of the more learned literary journals (though I'm not sure if I'd spend my one book a month quota on it).

What we have in the Wanlockhead Miners' Library is a record of the reading habits of a well-educated working-class rural community, that clearly revelled in the increased availability of improving literature during the nineteenth century. It shows that ancient Greek and Roman stories, if not the unmediated texts themselves, were a part – if only a humbly small part – of that improvement movement. There was clearly a rich and diverse engagement among working-class communities with classical culture, outside of the traditional educational routes, which have tended in the past to dominate the discourses of historical research.

While philanthropic landowners and religious organizations provided the chief routes to working-class learning in Britain before and during the Industrial Revolution, the struggles for social reform that took place through the nineteenth century brought about new and different avenues for education. These were increasingly driven by the politically motivated enterprises of an increasingly unionized workforce – or the Labour Movement.<sup>31</sup> Among them were such establishments and enterprises as the WEA, the NCLC, the Settlement Movement and the University Extension Movement. Philanthropic ventures continued in the shape of Mechanics' Institutes, often funded by industrialists, who considered that an



educated workforce would be a more efficient workforce. As we have seen in the case of County Durham, there was also significant cross-pollination and dialogue between these institutions and initiatives.

### **Ernest Rhys**

Sometimes all it took was the initiative of a small group, or an individual, within a community to set up a reading group, or begin a library. The evidence of such enterprises is scarce because they were often short-lived, lasting as long as the interest and energy of those individuals who began them. Ernest Rhys (1859-1946), the socialist poet and man of letters, was one such individual. He began his professional life as a mining engineer, or ‘coal viewer’ and is the unsung hero behind Joseph Malaby Dent’s hugely influential Everyman Library. As founding editor of the Everyman Library’s series (est. 1906), Rhys was chiefly responsible for early-twentieth-century Britain reading good English translations of many of the most famous works of world literature, including the Greek and Roman classics. Before he became one of the most productive ‘beetles’ (as he called them) of the British Library, at the age of 20, Rhys established the ‘Winter Nights Club’ in his coal village of Langley. Driven by the desire to do something to remedy ‘the plight of the pitmen who had precious few resources of amusement after their day’s work’, he turned a derelict miner’s cottage into a clubhouse and library. He recalled years later that he was so proud of his achievement that he ‘even drew up a catalogue of the books I meant the pitmen to read, and you may laugh to hear that Plato’s *Republic* was one of them’.<sup>32</sup>

But why should we laugh? Presumably because the lazy narrative of working-class disinterest in perceived ‘high culture’ was so pervasive, that it even survives in the writing of a man who did so much to challenge it. Rhys learned early on in life both that there were

many working men, especially miners, with a powerful thirst for knowledge, and that there was a deeply ingrained resistance to this notion. When he first took his idea of the miners' reading room to his colleagues at the coal pit in Langley Park, Co. Durham, he tells of how he was met with derisive snorts of contempt: 'A libery (*sic.*), begod! What do they want with books? Papers now, with the betting news, and a billiard table, but books!'<sup>33</sup> (Compare Sassoon's port-flushed dons.) These words belonged to a fellow coal viewer named Tolliday, who was older, larger and considerable more gnarled than the young Rhys, and whose dismay at the idea of a library Rhys recollected in his autobiographical *Wales England Wed* (1940). Tolliday was clearly of the school that considered workers to be interested only in drinking and gambling. To say that both modes of diversion were rife among mining communities across Britain in the nineteenth century would be an understatement, but this was largely because there was often little else to do – hence Rhys's plan.

Another colleague, however, Tom Hepburn, the chief viewer, or 'overman' at Langley Park colliery, warmed to Rhys's idea. Hepburn was, Rhys tells us, 'a good Methodist, and hated the public house like the devil, and here [the reading room] was a good rival'. Together Rhys and Hepburn 'managed to get round our chief and the directors of the colliery'.<sup>34</sup> It is no coincidence that it took the utopian vision of a young literary enthusiast and socialist, and the support of a Methodist foreman bent on Temperance, to push through such a radical idea. Political and religious groups, often with considerable overlap, helped to foment the spirit of reform which would eventually bring about positive changes to the lives – in- and outside the workplace – of British workers.

The pitmen of Langley Park, who attended Rhys's 'Winter Nights Club', used to meet to discuss politics and philosophy, from Plato to Ruskin. The Saturday night reading circle, which Rhys himself described as 'that queer school of philosophy', attracted a dozen students, mostly under 20 years old. They read Henry George's treatise *Progress and Poverty*

(1879) and Ruskin's *Unto This Last* (1860). Their progressiveness knew some limits, however, when they refused entrance to two young schoolmistresses. One of the club's members complained that they would not be able to read Burns and Shakespeare without causing the women to blush, then added, with lower levels of altruism, 'We'll be having a dance class next!'<sup>35</sup>

In his publishing career, Rhys was obsessed with the notion of capturing 'the Big Public' and reaching 1000 books in the Everyman's Library series, a democratizing literary ambition and achievement perhaps matched only by Maxim Gorky's Всемирная Литература ('World Literature') publishing project of the early Soviet Union. He summed up his attitude to what world literature, including the classics, could do in the world when he wrote: 'If only Everyman had been the guide of a New Europe in that year of grace, there need have been no war in 1939. Such volumes as Plato's *Republic* (and *Symposium*)... [and] Mommsen's *History of Rome*... provide a testament of civil liberty, political wisdom, and a mental gymnastic, which had he been put through 'a course of them' would have prevented the author of *Mein Kampf* from writing that book.'<sup>36</sup>

## **Jack Lawson**

Just 16 miles northeast from Langley's all-male reading group, and around 30 years forward in time, the Durham collier Jack Lawson (1881-1965) lived in the pit village of Bolden. Lawson, who was later to become Financial Secretary to the War Office in the first Labour government, began his working life at the age of twelve as what he would later call a 'two-legged mule of industry'.<sup>37</sup> Lawson's example usefully confounds the distinction between those working men who gambled, and those who took to books. After he lost his money in the games, he would skulk back to his house and lose himself in his steadily growing library,

shelved in orange crates. He spent his penniless weekends ‘in following the Goths over Europe, right into old Rome, or marching with Attila’s “Huns”’.<sup>38</sup> His father worried for his mental health.

Lawson was a glutton for history, and this is what formed the major part of his orange-crate library. Among his history books was the ever-popular Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. But he was certainly not reading Gibbon at the coalface. What *did* happen actually down the mineshaft was an especially formative discussion with his fellow collier, the Welshman Jack Woodward, which Lawson reported in his memoirs:

I can see Woodward now... I can see the wraith-like figure of him as he talked books. The shovel squealed against the hard stone floor, then leaped over the tub its burden of coal, coming back for more almost before it had started... The pick was biting the coal as though driven by a machine. Thus we worked and talked, swallowing our peck of dust every minute... I timidly turned the subject to Ruskin, who was just at that time receiving my homage. His plea for art, education, and a decent life for the toiler aroused mutual enthusiasm in us.<sup>39</sup>

No classics, admittedly, but this evidence of ‘talking books’ down at the coalface suggests that classics down the mineshaft was both possible and indeed probable, especially when we consider – as evidenced by catalogues of miners’ libraries – that many of the books read by such men were related to the classical world.

Before long Lawson was embarking on an undergraduate course at Ruskin College, and was soon enjoying the newly won privilege of Ruskin students of attending Oxford University lectures, finally benefitting from the same educational practice as the children of the wealthy power-holders. Lawson declined post-graduate education, in spite of every

encouragement. He preferred to return to the pit, from where he would begin his successful political career.

In case we should think of Lawson as an anomaly (he was clearly exceptional) we ought to note the experiences of those other men with whom he talked books in Bolden. Not only does Lawson mention in his autobiography the wise Jack Woodward, but also an unnamed man, whose wife taught him to read in his 30s and who – we are told – would wait for Lawson so that they could walk home from the pit together and discuss his reading. This long-illiterate collier spoke memorably to Lawson about his passionate appreciation of Nietzsche. Lawson wrote admiringly: ‘This man read the New Testament in Greek and oratorios were as easy to him as the latest song is to the man in the street’.<sup>40</sup> Again, like Joe Guy, the Greek mentioned is Biblical rather than classical, but it is unlikely that so avid a reader was not at times tempted to read a line or two of Plato or Homer. The key is that he could. A man who could not even read English until his thirties had the opportunity, desire and ability to become a fluent reader of New Testament Greek. (Remember, once again, Sassoon’s port-flushed dons.)

### **Pitmen Painters of Ashington**

Around 20 miles north of Bolden Colliery lies the coal town of Ashington, Northumberland. Although we still find no evidence of *discussion* of classical culture down the pit in Ashington, we do discover that it was not unknown for miners to take their classical reading material down with them in the cage.<sup>41</sup> Since the formation in 1898 of the Ashington Debating and Literary Improvement Society, classical Greek and Roman authors were included on the reading list and discussed at its regular meetings. Harold Laski, soon to be appointed professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics and co-founder

of the influential Left Book Club, visited their group in September 1924, and returned the same time the following year.

After his second visit he wrote to his friend the American jurist, Oliver Wendell Holmes: ‘I gave them four lectures, but I learned more from them than I could ever teach. It was sometimes grim talk, for there are hard times ahead for the mining community in England. But, in general, it was of books and men... There was one... who had learned Greek in order to read Homer in the original... These twelve every Friday for thirty-six years have met to read and discuss a book. They argue grimly with text and counter-text and you have to know your piece to get by them. They were saddened, while I was there, by the death of a miner who was found killed by a fall of coal; in his coat was found a translation of Thucydides with the page turned down at the Periclean speech.’ This is a remarkable piece of evidence for classics down the mineshaft. Its mediation through a letter exchange between two men of prominent social standing is typically precarious. Our knowledge of it relies upon the extraordinary circumstance of Laski, a committed socialist (he was an executive member of the Fabian Society at the time), travelling from London to give a series of lectures to the miners’ reading group. Had it not been for those visits, we would never have known of the classical reading of the Ashington pitmen.

In the political crucible of the 1930s – as Laski moved from Fabianism to Marxism – the colliery community at Ashington also saw the rise of a tradition of painting, facilitated by Robert Lyon, then master of painting at Armstrong College, Newcastle. The unlikely voyage of a group of colliers to artistic discovery, and a certain amount of fame, has been well documented by William Feaver in his book *The Pitmen Painters* (first published in 1988), which in turn inspired Lee Hall’s play by the same name. It began with the formation of an art appreciation group. When Lyon arrived in Ashington under the auspices of the WEA, he began to lecture the class as he would his undergraduate students. He showed them a series of

lantern slides of old masters, but he quickly learned – or more likely was taught – that this was not the way to go about teaching this tightly knit group of adults, who had their own ideas about what they wanted from the class. Oliver Kilbourne, a founding member of the group and one of the most acclaimed painters among them, spoke of how the old black and white pictures Lyon showed them in those first sessions were ‘mainly of Renaissance paintings and either religious or mythological subjects. As we didn’t know the Greek myths *then* we were rather baffled and didn’t really get anywhere with this.’<sup>42</sup>



Lyon changed tactics: he embarked on a purely practical style of teaching, encouraging the pitmen to learn by doing. It did not take long for the group to start painting scenes of life in the pit village. One of the first pieces of work, however, produced by the group was a linocut by Harry Wilson of a cloth-capped, stern faced and muscular miner chained to a large cog, presumably representing the pithead winding gear. Although the majority of accounts of the pitmen painters have tended to play down the political resonances of the group’s work, Wilson’s image clearly engages with the Marxian trope of the exploited

labourer chained to the means of production. Their art returns, above all, to scenes of daily life from the pit village, and representations of work down the mine: revealing the unseen world that they inhabit, in an urgently political gesture.

Even though these pitmen painters gave the classical tradition the cold shoulder, they still encountered classical culture at every turn in their artistic development. The *then* of Kilbourne's dismissal of Lyons's lantern slides ('we did not *then* know the Greek myths...') is indicative of the fact that through their exposure to the art world, which included educational trips to columned London galleries, meetings with formally-trained artists, the study of artistic techniques from books, and practical art classes, for example, in King's College, Newcastle, they did before long become familiar with the Greek myths. One studio in King's College, where they worked, was lined with sections of the Parthenon Frieze: their passion for art literally surrounded them with classical culture. Whether they liked it or not, this cultural presence seeped into their lives, and opened a window onto another world, perhaps Chaplin's 'green circumference'.





### **If Plato Lived in Spennymoor**

In 1930, straight from the University Settlement Movement headquarters at Toynbee Hall, Bill Farrell arrived in Spennymoor in County Durham.<sup>43</sup> He saw that the unemployed miners needed encouragement (in his words) ‘to think of other things and other spheres of possible work besides the defunct or moribund mine’.<sup>44</sup> At its peak, the town had boasted the largest ironworking mill in Europe; in the 1920s and 30s it was a boomtown gone bust.

Farrell’s Settlement, with the backing of the Pilgrim Trust, set out ‘to encourage tolerant neighbourliness and voluntary service, and give members opportunities for increasing their knowledge, widening their interests, and cultivating their creative powers in a friendly atmosphere’.<sup>45</sup> What it achieved was perhaps even more important. As the reporter-activist Arnold Hadwin put it: ‘The Settlement gave an impoverished community the will and means to fight back against the failings of the State, with assurance and dignity.’<sup>46</sup> In January to March 1936 the Spennymoor Settlement, established in a disused shop on the high street,

was the scene of an encounter with Plato by employed and unemployed Spennymoor inhabitants alike. Farrell encouraged local people to think of the ‘Pitman’s Academy’ as their university. The activities were provided for them at almost no cost. One came in the form of a BBC listening group. Each Tuesday evening at 7.30pm the men would gather around the radio and listen to two young Oxford fellows ‘examine modern society in the light of Plato’s teaching’. It was part of a series of eleven BBC broadcasts of what was essentially an adult educational course entitled ‘If Plato Lived Again’.

The two young philosophers were Dick [R.H.S.] Crossman and Charles Morris. Crossman (1907-1974) the lead writer of the programme, was – at the time – a fellow of New College, Oxford, writing his first book entitled *Plato Today* (1937) and wowing undergraduates with his ‘special gift for the toughest sort of dialectic’.<sup>47</sup> He became a Labour MP in 1945 and won fame posthumously as a political diarist. Morris (1898-1990) was fellow and tutor of philosophy at Balliol College, Oxford, and later became a knighted university administrator.<sup>48</sup>

Not all of the Settlement members were miners, but every one of them lived in the extreme deprivation of a failing Durham coal town during the Depression. Programs like ‘If Plato Lived Again’ were a valuable point of access for individuals and groups such as the Spennymoor one, nationwide. One of the great strengths of the *If Plato Lived Again* series was the balance of ancient and modern: the grounding of Platonic philosophy in the familiar world of the present. In the sixth talk, *Who Can Save the World?* – following a lucid summary of Plato’s plan for the salvation of the world – Charles Morris took Crossman to task for appearing to have too fully absorbed his Athenian teacher’s doctrine.<sup>49</sup> In an entertaining Socratic exchange, when the Christian Socialist Morris suggests that ‘Nobody can really regenerate the social life of a people except the people themselves’, Crossman replies: ‘Yes, but isn’t it just the great political leaders, like Cromwell, or for the matter of

that Hitler, who do get under people's skins and make them do things they could not possibly do otherwise? I can see you haven't heard Hitler speak! [*clearly responding to enthusiastic objection from Morris in the studio*] You may not like it, but he does get at his hearers and make them do things.'<sup>50</sup> It was perhaps Crossman's gift for 'upping the ante' that barred him from Attlee's front bench. Indeed, the BBC became increasingly wary of the ways he stretched the bounds of the Corporation's alleged but often contested political impartiality.

In 1936, Crossman was not new to BBC broadcasting, nor was he new to making comparisons between classical Greece and German fascism.<sup>51</sup> In 1934, Crossman's BBC radio debut 'Germany: The Inner Conflict' was broadcast, where he sought to outline the appeal of National Socialism to Germans. As Stephen Hodgkinson has discussed, Crossman created in these broadcasts an analogy between ancient Sparta and Nazism, mediated by personal accounts of Germans and the writings of Richard Walther Darré, the Reich Minister of Agriculture, who looked back admiringly to an apparently 'agrarian peasant Sparta'.<sup>52</sup>

Through the prism of Plato's philosophy, contemporary events and dilemmas were presented in an accessible, relevant and provocative way. Fears relating to the rise of fascism abroad (and at home) swim beneath and, from time to time, leap clear from the surface of this philosophical series. A little further submerged, but still very much discernible, lurks the spectre of communism, which – with the apparent success of the young Soviet Union and its inclusive and united 'Popular Front' opposition to Fascism – did not inspire fear in many of those impoverished self-educating workers, those unforgettable forgotten men sitting around the radio in Spennymoor learning about international relations through Plato, while the steelworkers and shipbuilders of Jarrow planned their historic march on the capital.<sup>53</sup>

This chapter has captured glimpses of an elusive miner's classics, often fragmentary accidents of history, disturbances in the surface. It has attempted to contextualise these disturbances and illuminate what lies beneath, assessing the extent of their anomalous

appearance. It has directed some light towards the intellectual and cultural lives of those usually perceived to have gone without either. There are many more archives to explore, particularly in the Welsh miners' libraries, and more work to be done on the katabatic tradition in miners' art.

It is difficult to make general observations, let alone conclusions, when the subject is still so fragmentarily represented and the scope, both in terms of time and place, so wide. What is clear is that there was considerable engagement with classical culture where numerous factors conspire to lead us to believe that there would be none. Why were the miners attracted to the classical? The answer, of course, was different for each individual, and we only have a few case-studies available. We have come across miners attracted to the classical languages for religious (and non-classical) reasons, that is to read the New Testament in Greek and enjoy the Latin of the oratorio. Interest in the history under their feet drew many to explore Roman Britain and classical material culture. We have witnessed classical knowledge gained more or less as a byproduct of Further Educational courses, and the creative practice and study of art. Reading of classical texts (as 'world literature') has been both undertaken and encouraged as a horizon-expanding preventative against the kinds of narrow-mindedness that result in provincialism and fascism. The attraction of the classical, in this sense, is driven by a humanistic impulse to expand our horizons beyond our own limited experience, and in so doing increase tolerance and the capacity to cope with new social challenges. And finally – to end where we began – we have journeyed downwards with the mineworkers who have reached for the titanic suffering from classical myth to attempt to communicate in recognizable terms the harsh and confined lived experience of the subterranean, to those who dwell in the world above.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Nation* (New York), 18 May 1921: 715.

<sup>2</sup> R. Williams, *Notes on the Underground* (Cambridge, M.A.: MIT Press, 2008), 184 extends this new ‘subterranean’ class to workers of all mechanical industrial trades, including factory work. Before the common availability of pithead baths, supported by revenues following the 1919 Sankey Commission, miners would have to travel home soaked with mine water and sweat, and caked in coal dust.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Rose, *Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2010 [Second Edition]).

<sup>4</sup> H. Stead & E. Hall, ed., *Greek and Roman Classics in the British Struggle for Social Reform* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 19

<sup>5</sup> For the use of classical culture and alleged deficiencies of education in political debate in the Romantic era see H. Stead, *A Cockney Catullus: The Reception of Catullus in Romantic Britain, 1795-1821* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 205-222 and Stead & Hall (ed.), *Greek and Roman Classics*, 55-78.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Rose, *Intellectual Life*, especially chapter 4; Stead & Hall (ed.), *Greek and Roman Classics*; Annie Ravenhill-Johnson & Paula James, *The Art and Ideology of the Trade Union Emblem, 1850-1925* (London: Anthem Press, 2013), on Trades Union banner imagery.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957), 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Karl Marx, trans. B. Fowkes, *Capital* (London: Penguin, 1976/1990), Part 4, especially 626-635.

<sup>10</sup> Marx, *Capital*, 280.

<sup>11</sup> Marx, *Capital*, 280.

<sup>12</sup> Ruth Falconer, *Hell in Contemporary Literature. Western Descent Narratives since 1945* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 1.

<sup>13</sup> The ‘blue scars’ of colliers are an evocative example of the visual marks born by underground workers. Industrial Britain’s history is a catalogue of mining disasters, and the terrible health hazards, e.g. ‘Collier’s Lung’, and low life expectancies are well documented. See, e.g. J. Hatcher, *The History of the British Coal Industry* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984-93).

<sup>14</sup> S. Barstow, ‘Chaplin, Sidney (1916-1986)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> The term ‘pit university’ was used in reference to the Settlement by Tisa Schulenburg in her unpublished autobiographical ‘Sketches from the life’ held in the Newcastle University's Robinson Library, Special Collections, GB 186 SC/8/7/13.

<sup>16</sup> Chaplin (Sid) Archive at Newcastle University's Robinson Library, Special Collections, GB 186 SC/4.

<sup>17</sup> *COAL*, Vol. 5 (January 1952), 6.

<sup>18</sup> At point of writing, this theological magazine remains obscure.

<sup>19</sup> For an introduction to the study of working-class reading history see Rose, *Intellectual Life*, xi-xiii and 1-2, with full bibliography.

<sup>20</sup> Mining Industry Act, 1920.

<sup>21</sup> *COAL*, Vol. 13 (January 1960), 6.

<sup>22</sup> In 1957 there were also two CISWO classical scholarships awarded to F. Joy Roberts and John Brammah: *COAL* Vol.11 (September 1957), 10-11.

<sup>23</sup> *COAL* Vol. 5 (January 1952), 6.

<sup>24</sup> Durham University, Special Collections, UND/DB15. Thank you to all at the Durham University Library, Archives and Special Collections, for their assistance and expertise.

<sup>25</sup> E. G. Pace, ‘The Extra-mural Work of the Durham Vision of the University of Durham’ (undated), 13. Durham University, Special Collections, UND/DB15.

<sup>26</sup> More names come up in the archive, but the whole enterprise calls out for closer scrutiny and more space.

<sup>27</sup> Durham University, Special Collections, B15/K/P/b.

<sup>28</sup> D. Wordsworth (ed. J. C. Shairp), *Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland A.D. 1803* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1874), 15.

<sup>29</sup> John C. Crawford, *Wanlockhead Miners' Library: a guide book* (Wanlockhead Museum Trust, 1978), 1-16.

<sup>30</sup> S. James, *Catalogue of the Wanlockhead Miners' Library* (Paisley: Paisley College of Technology for Wanlockhead Museum Trust, 1979).

<sup>31</sup> On the rise of the WEA (est. 1903) and its relation to the classics see Goff in Stead & Hall (ed.), *Greek and Roman Classics*, 216-234.

<sup>32</sup> Ernest Rhys, *Wales England Wed* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1940), 56., 56.

<sup>33</sup> Rhys, *Wales*, 55.

<sup>34</sup> Rhys, *Wales*, 55.

<sup>35</sup> Rhys, *Wales*, 57-8.

<sup>36</sup> Rhys, *Wales*, 273. On Gorky’s project as ‘World Literature’ see Khotimsky (2013) with full bibliography.

<sup>37</sup> Jack Lawson, *A man’s life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 95.

<sup>38</sup> Lawson, *A man’s life*, 50.

<sup>39</sup> Lawson, *A man’s life*, 94.

<sup>40</sup> Lawson, *A man’s life*, 70.

<sup>41</sup> See Marx, *Capital*, 627-8, where a miner explains to ‘Bourgeois Vivian’, a member of the 1866 Select Committee on Mines, that while reading down the mine is theoretically possible,

its probability is diminished by the fact that he would first need to be able to afford candles, and then neglect his duty and suffer the consequences. It is likely that reading material taken down the mine was meant for reading *after* work.

<sup>42</sup> William Feaver, *Pitmen painters: the Ashington Group 1934-1984* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1988), 17. Emphasis added.

<sup>43</sup> On the British Settlement Movement and Toynbee Hall, see Asa Briggs & Anne Macartney *Toynbee Hall: the first hundred years* (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).

<sup>44</sup> R. McManners & G. Wales, *Way to the Better: the Spennymoor Settlement* (Bishop Auckland: Gemini Productions, 2008).

<sup>45</sup> ‘A guide to the Archives and Special Collections at Durham University Library website.’ Available online: [https://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/collection\\_information](https://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/collection_information) (accessed 1 September 2017).

<sup>46</sup> Hadwin in (unpaginated) foreword to McManners & Wales (2008).

<sup>47</sup> Anthony Howard, ‘Crossman, Richard Howard Stafford (1907–1974)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>48</sup> Dainton, Fred (2004), ‘Morris, Charles Richard, Baron Morris of Grasmere (1898–1990)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>49</sup> *Who Can Save the World?* was broadcast on 3 March 1936 at 19.30.

<sup>50</sup> *The Listener*, 11 March 1936, XV.374: 490-2.

<sup>51</sup> For discussion with full bibliography see Stephen Hodkinson, ‘Sparta and Nazi Germany in Mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century British liberal and left-wing thought’, in *Sparta: The Body Politic*, ed. A. Powell and S. Hodkinson (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2010), 301-312.

<sup>52</sup> Hodkinson, ‘Sparta’, 304.

<sup>53</sup> For more on the use of classics by members of the Wilson government see Simpson in Stead & Hall, *Greek and Roman Classics*, 269-291.