

# **DURHAM COUNTY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**



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## **DURHAM AGED MINERS' HOMES: UNIQUE PROVISION FOR RETIRED WORKERS**

*We think it is impossible for an aged couple to provide food, clothing and firing and pay house rent out of four or five shillings per week, hence this movement to provide them either with a free house or one at a nominal rent of sixpence per week; and we aim at having garden ground attached wherever possible.*

*A contribution of one penny per fortnight per member of the Permanent Fund membership would repay the cost of a general scheme in about twenty-five years. It is hoped that much material aid will be given by sympathetic supporters.<sup>1</sup>*

### **Preamble**

The reader who lives in County Durham may see these distinctive buildings as a familiar part of the landscape. Indeed, they are so ubiquitous across the county (in seventy towns and villages) that they may be one of the most enduring legacies of the industry. Yet these Aged Miners' Homes, together with a smaller number in Northumberland, are something very special which deserve to be more fully understood and appreciated. I write this from the perspective of a historian of almshouses, especially their buildings.<sup>2</sup> I was previously aware of the Durham Aged Miners' Homes on two counts: their large population and their late date of foundation. It was not until I started to investigate early twentieth-century state provision for the elderly that I visited the Aged Miners' Homes as they constitute one of the possible models for subsequent nationwide building. This article attempts to place the Durham Aged Miners' Homes in context as accommodation for the elderly and to identify their unique characteristics, while looking more closely into the buildings which became homes for many retired miners and their wives. As I have concentrated on the buildings and their implications, there are other aspects which are not addressed here, notably the wider housing context<sup>3</sup> – colliery housing, vernacular buildings and local authority input – as well as the place of the Aged Miners' Homes in their cultural landscape, although I will return to this briefly in the conclusion. (Figure 1.)

### **Almshouses**

Almshouses may be defined as residential charities for the elderly poor. Almshouses have been founded since early medieval times, with booms during the late sixteenth to seventeenth century and again in the mid to late nineteenth century. Many of the earlier examples were called 'Hospital' in the sense of 'hospitality' and 'hospice' but specialisation led to a separation of functions, although some almshouses retained the old designation. The founder of an almshouse was in the



Figure 1. Durham Aged Miners' Homes, built 1914 at Vindamora Road, Ebchester. The row of twelve is rendered above the sills and has alcoves for sheltered outdoor seating and foundation stones beneath the windows. Photo: H. Caffrey.

fortunate position of being able not only to afford the charitable action but also to choose the terms for the scheme. In practice this meant establishing criteria for beneficiaries, most often concerning: age (or infirmity) preventing work; place of origin (often parochially restrictive); sometimes male or female only; poverty and need (basically an inability to earn sufficient to continue paying rent and without surviving relatives or any who were in a position to support them). A small pension usually accompanied the accommodation.<sup>4</sup>

Some founders were concerned with the welfare of particular groups such as former employees or estate tenants, those of specified religious affiliation, or people who had pursued a particular occupation. These occupational almshouses form a subset by their limited client group, which might include the widows of those former workers. Occupational groups include the military (most visible today as the Chelsea Pensioners), retired members of London livery companies, and, especially within the North-East, at Hull and Newcastle upon Tyne, former sailors and seamen. The founders themselves might be men or women, often gentry, later professional or business people, without direct heirs or where these were already provided for. Foundations were often established in wills, whereby a body of trustees was appointed to carry out the benefactor's requirements in perpetuity, often managing investments to maintain the almspeople and the buildings.

In terms of buildings, the medieval hall with cubicles went out of fashion in favour of greater privacy, although the courtyard form regained popularity in the later nineteenth century, while town houses reflected the eighteenth. By the early twentieth century pairs of semis had appeared but by far and away the most common form, irrespective of time or place, was the single-storey row. Internally a two-and-a-half room layout was common – living-room/kitchen, bedroom and small scullery – but many were single-room bed-sits while some had separate sleeping rooms but shared sitting and dining facilities with other almspeople.

Almshouses in County Durham ranged from the medieval Sherburn Hospital to the Master Mariners' Cottages at South Shields.<sup>5</sup> In terms of funding and organisation the Keelmen at Newcastle provide an interesting example of collective effort.<sup>6</sup> This group of independent-minded workers paid contributions of one penny per tide on which they worked, raising £2,000 to open their Hospital in 1701. Their occupation, ancillary to the coal industry in loading coal as cargo for shipping, declined, while status as a friendly society was politically vulnerable. One function of a friendly society was to pay relief to members who could no longer support themselves and to widows and orphans of deceased members, but this was a temporary response and not a permanent commitment in the form of buildings.

In retrospect it might be assumed that the coming of that great boon in 1909, the Old Age Pension, would obviate the need for almshouses, yet the composition of workhouse inmates in the early twentieth century was increasingly weighted towards the elderly.<sup>7</sup> Almshouses had never been sufficient numerically, being arbitrarily distributed about the country and reflecting neither changes in size of local population or the economy. There was also a severe national shortage of habitable housing, exacerbated for the elderly by the amount of accommodation tied to employment, a problem both in agricultural and mining districts. Those who could no longer work, or their dependants, might therefore find themselves homeless. This situation was not unique to County Durham but the solution there was exceptional.

### **Miners and the Durham Miners' Association**

The coal-field was the dominant presence in nineteenth-twentieth century County Durham, affecting landscape, population movement and settlement pattern, the regional economy, employment opportunities, community and social relations, health and longevity, with daily life at the behest of shift patterns, prosperity and poverty reflecting the price of coal, and always the threat of a disaster. In its heyday the industry comprised around 200,000 workers with their families and about 200 pits. In this context the Durham Miners' Association was founded in 1869, joining the Miners' Federation of Great Britain in 1897 and duly linking with the National Union of Mineworkers at nationalisation. The Durham Miners' Association's history<sup>8</sup> shows a continual struggle over issues such as wage agreements, hours worked, compensation and young workers. Later it was possible to do more in terms of safety and welfare agreements, from the establishment of the Convalescent Home at Conishead Priory in 1930 to the pithead baths of the 1950s, while the Gala has been held annually with a few interruptions since 1871. Several high-profile individuals rose through the Association to enter Parliament: John Wilson, William Whitely and Jack Lawson, and for some in the early days Methodism was another important dimension.

A feature peculiar to the Durham coal-field was its relatively early exploitation by landowners employing miners on similar terms to agricultural workers, through annual hiring fairs and accommodation in tied cottages. When new pits were opened in more isolated areas providing housing on-site was a means of obtaining and keeping able workers. However, expenditure on housing was a substantial part of the initial outlay for the colliery owner whilst returns on the enterprise reflected fluctuating coal prices. These could be better reflected by variable rents, so that rent allowances gradually came to replace free housing and coal. In 1913, however, 73.5% of free colliery housing in Britain was in County Durham, while figures for 1914 show that there were 48,791 colliery houses accommodating 261,703 people.<sup>9</sup>

Whilst the Durham Miners' Association and its members were unavoidably affected by national political and economic trends, including war and depression, local interests were catered for in individual lodges. This regional-cum-local structure, reflecting the distribution of pits and population, formed a significant context for the development of the Aged Miners' Homes, drawing on members' subscriptions, as with the Permanent Relief Fund, and co-operating with neighbouring lodges and other workers' groups within the mining industry.

### **The beginning of the Durham Aged Miners' Homes**

The foundation of the Durham Aged Miners' Homes reflects three factors: a work-force brought together by pit, village, union and common experience; that classic Victorian virtue of self-help (also interpreted as 'we've always had to stand on our own feet as nobody else is going to bother'); and pioneering leadership by a charismatic and articulate individual followed by the commitment and administrative skills of another – Joseph Hopper and John Wilson respectively. It is only fair to say that, even after local authorities were enabled by the 1890 Housing Act, and able to apply for government subsidies under the terms of the 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act, low rateable values, future economic insecurity and a plethora of small authorities made council-housing provision difficult on the coal-field.<sup>10</sup> It was not until 1930 that support was available for councils to build small-scale dwellings for the elderly in addition to family houses. By then Durham Aged Miners' Homes were offering over 1,000 places. The dislocation of the First World War and economic and financial catastrophes of the following decade had remarkably little impact on the Durham Aged Miners' Homes' viability and continued building programme at a time when the building industry nationally was drastically affected, with the least remunerative in terms of future rent-generation falling to the back of the queue.

The Durham Aged Miners' Homes Association's beginnings were recounted by John Wilson in his 1907 history of the Durham Miners' Association. First an older property was rented for conversion at Boldon 'by the Boldon workmen for their own old men', then an entire former colliery village at Haswell Moor (now gone) became available for purchase and 'gave inspiration to the Committee as it was very cheap, and an impetus to the effort, as it formed a very nice colony of old people, the cost of a house being about £25'. Funding was set up on the basis of one shilling per member per annum, producing around £3,000, with further contributions received from pit deputies and lodges and generous donations from the public in response to items in the press. The-all-too frequent reports of mining disasters elicited public sympathy, and those who could not influence legislation or impose suitable safety measures were at least able to support welfare provision. In that sense, old retired workers presented a non-controversial and deserving body.

Joseph Hopper, 1856–1909, must surely have been an inspiring speaker, his oratorical skills developed as a Methodist lay preacher.<sup>11</sup> A miner himself, his membership of the Board of Guardians (responsible for the implementation of the Poor Law) had made him aware of the plight of retired mineworkers and their wives when poverty committed them to the workhouse. With the Durham Miners' Association providing an organisational base, Hopper was persistent and persuasive, eliciting contributions from the administrators of disaster funds, colliery owners and dignitaries such as J.P.s and churchmen. He was an acceptable negotiator in a cause which overrode social status. The opening of the Joseph Hopper Memorial Homes at Windy Nook (his birthplace) in 1924 was accompanied by a brief biography, price 3d.<sup>12</sup> This illustrated souvenir publication recounts the initial stages of the movement and the direction it took, although the character and language of Hopper himself remain elusive. (Figure 2.)

Hopper's first formal proposal 'to devise some scheme for aged miners homes' was made at the annual meeting of the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund in Durham in 1894, and by 1896 had gained sufficient support for an appeal to be launched in the press. As the Durham Aged Miners' Homes Association was formed Hopper continued as its Secretary. The earliest initiatives at Boldon and Haswell Moor did not fit Hopper's vision of 'ordinary separate dwellings, preferably to have gardens attached'. Hostels for single men – and a number of these were built – may have been influenced by the model of seamen's homes on the North-East coast, whilst the 'retirement village' may have been a current idea, with Whiteley Village in Surrey founded in 1907 by the London department-store owner as one of the earliest.<sup>13</sup> Councillor Henry Wallace, an influential supporter of the movement, favoured the communal approach, citing the cost-benefits of a group of say fifty homes with shared facilities<sup>14</sup>, but smaller groupings of self-contained houses soon became the common form.

### **Local responsibilities**

Even before Aged Miners' Homes were built, local committees were at work. Once the Homes were occupied responsibility continued, in selection of occupants and organisation of repairs and maintenance. The duties and problems were much as those experienced by other almshouse trustees and recorded in their minutes; some issues over tradesmen and certain elderly residents were perennial. A selection from Thornley's committee between 1915 and 1923 gives something of the flavour.<sup>15</sup> In 1915 the accounts showed an overdraft of £1,460 15s. as payments were made to cover rates, taxes and insurance; the contractor was repeatedly requested to clear debris from the site! The War and enlistment left some of the elderly without their former carers; insurance against air-raided damage was discussed in 1916. On a happier note, a quoits match raised 10s. 9d. for the funds (although a football competition in 1922 was to raise £15). In 1917





an application was received to remove part of the boundary fence to accommodate the Gala and Field Day Procession.

Communication also took place with the secretary of the Durham Aged Miners' Homes Association, notably over subscriptions (in 1922 these were reduced from 6d. to 3d. during the stoppage) and with neighbouring lodges over the number of nominations to which they might be entitled, and on the situation when a pit closed. The local network included Thornley Parish Council, who managed to contribute £37 1s. 3d. in 1922, and the Co-op. For Wheatley Hill's foundation stone-laying ceremony in 1923 they undertook to provide 'a real good substantial Tea' for 1s. 6d. per head. This event took a good deal of organising in terms of the platform party, who was speaking and who was present for each of the nine stones, and the band. The ordinary management problems cropping up during the period included a tree, planted by a tenant on the common path rather than his own garden, and a few instances of unofficial residents – younger, unentitled family members. In one case it was minuted that the resident's daughter was permitted 'once a month to wash clothes, and stay for a day or two' but not to bring the children to stay as well!<sup>16</sup> The lodge committee in Murton in 1939 had to deal with the sad, but not unique, problem of a resident in hospital who was 'suffering from senile decay and in my opinion is a dangerous subject for a home like this'.<sup>17</sup>

More information about the residents (more often called tenants in the sense of not owning the property, but living there rent-free) appears in Brancepeth and Oakenshaw ABC Pits Aged Miners' Homes minutes.<sup>18</sup> In 1913, the foundation stone was laid in February and the Homes were officially opened in July. Forty individual donations were recorded, including many small ones, some from businesses, others from events and street collections as well as 'workmens' contributions'. Only the men, not their wives, are named as the first tenants, with details given showing name, age, date of arrival, the nominating lodge and the years employed by that colliery. Ages ranged from sixty-three to seventy-six, with years' employment for the same firm ranging from twenty-four to forty-seven. Annual reports continued to list male residents, and any surviving widows, accompanied by an appropriate poetic sentiment. In 1913 this included the couplet 'All their prospects bright'ning to the last, Their heaven commences ere the world be past'. (Figure 3.)

### **The buildings**

Now, on moving from the committee and the residents to look into their homes in more detail, essential questions arise. How did the familiar form – consistent but not uniform – emerge? Who was the original architect (whether or not in the formally qualified sense)? Why was the model so readily adopted and what were the mechanics of its spread and implementation?<sup>19</sup> One might also ask whether there are features which somehow relate specifically to County Durham, whether



Figure 3. The first residents at Willington's Aged Miners' Homes in 1913. The original windows and timber detail on the verandah support can be seen behind the nine men and eleven women. Reproduced by permission of Durham County Record Office from DCRO: D/Co/BA 93.

stylistic, topographical, or in the choice of materials or approach to planning. Looking inside the houses, we might ask questions surely close to the concerns of the original residents: how big are the rooms, are they adequately heated and damp-resistant, is there a sunny aspect, what about a garden and yard, and what of those indicators of modernity – in modern parlance the kitchen and bathroom? There is room for more research, including oral testimony, to answer these questions in depth, but the following section provides some evidence based upon archives and observation. It should always be remembered that, irrespective of individual needs and preferences, our concept of ‘home’ reflects both prior experience and contemporary expectations. Any qualitative evaluation of the Durham Aged Miners’ Homes must be made on these terms.

### **Indoors and outdoors**

The characteristic Aged Miners’ Home is a self-contained one-bedroom house within a single-storey row with chimneys for coal fires, garden at the front and yard at the rear. Plans show a surprising diversity of room lay-out which may belie apparently similar exteriors.<sup>20</sup> Even within a single terrace, internal arrangements may be affected by, for example, end houses, which form a visual stop by projecting gable-on to the street and require a different position for the front-door, usually in the return. Possible lay-outs include: placing living-room and bedroom side-by-side, producing a double front with shallow depth; the bedroom behind the living-room; or occasionally the reverse, in response either to the position of the site in relation to the access road or to aspect. These options affect the entry and route through the house. There may be a small, draft-resistant lobby; front-doors may be paired facing one another in a verandah, where this is present; and there may even be a space-consuming through corridor, essential for privacy where the bedroom lies in front of the living-room. The kitchen is almost always accessed from the living-room. These options do not appear to reflect significant differences in local tastes nor show a pattern of change over time. In terms of overall space, an area of about 400 to 500 square feet was the norm. (Figure 4.)

What is important is to understand the way in which rooms were used, following common provision of space in working-class housing of the late nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> The living-room incorporated the functions of sitting, socialising, eating and cooking, commonly with a coal range for cooking, warmth and hot water. A separate pantry or larder provided cool storage for food. The scullery (later generally referred to as the kitchen) included sink and tap for washing vegetables and dishes. A tin bath might be brought out to add the function of bathroom to this space. Such a house was designated a ‘non-parlour house’ at a time when housing reformers were concerned over amenities and morals in working-class homes. However inadequate this might be for a family, a single elderly person or couple have different needs, and cosiness, propinquity and minimal housework could be



**DAWDON**

*No 4, Maglona Street, Seaham.  
Scale 1:50 (As existing)*

*Drawing No. 8098*

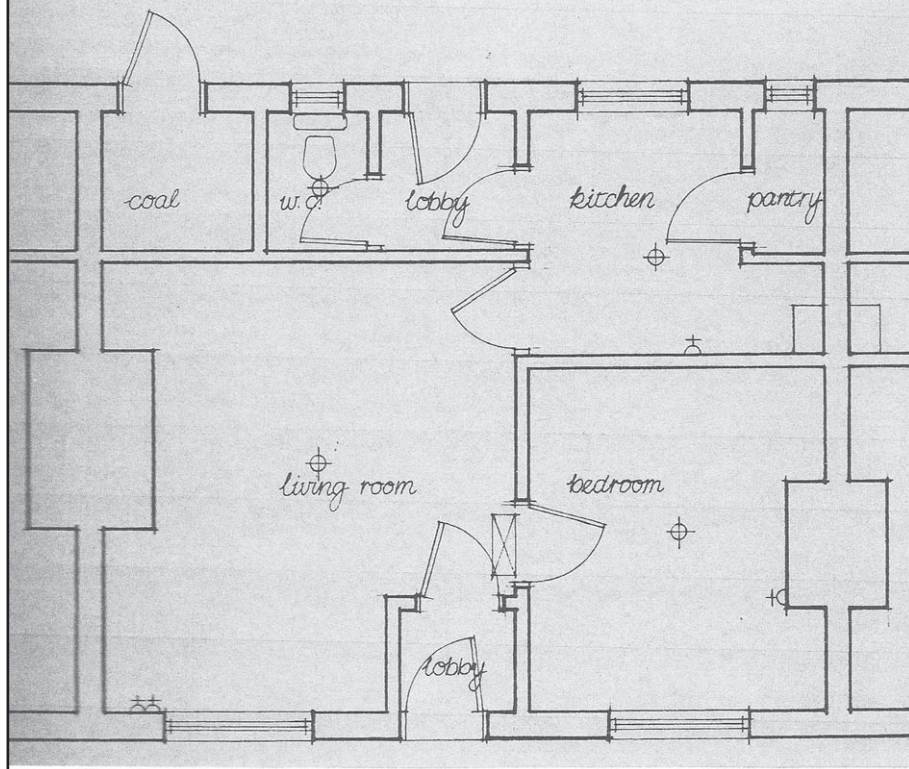


Figure 4. Plan showing one house in the row of twelve built in 1924 at Maglona Street, Dawdon. Reproduced by permission of Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association from Blackmore, Son and Co. (1980) (see note 20), drawing no.8098.

seen as advantages. Perhaps more relevant were habits and expectations, and these were to change considerably over the following half-century. Access to the W.C. and fuel store by a back door to the rear yard were also commonplace at a time when a separate bathroom and indoor toilet were rare in working-class housing.<sup>22</sup> Worthy of mention was the fact that each household was independent with its own front-door; there was no sharing of common facilities. Yards, nowadays often containing the extensions resulting from modernisation, were perhaps over-generous for older residents without need of a play-area or bicycle parking, and who often had a garden or allotment. But sheds and washing lines, together with rear access and a sense of privacy, may account for the use of space, while gardens, however spacious, could be less private.

An apparent anomaly lies in the provision of some Aged Miners' Homes with two bedrooms. These are not later adaptations but as built, for example on Clark Terrace at The Pont, Leadgate in 1924. Who had the use of the second bedroom? A recurrent problem for almshouse trustees was that of family hangers-on. These were the relatives who saw the chance of a free berth but were not deserving objects of the charity or acceptable residents within its rules and regulations. The exception to this which might be sanctioned was a carer, as mentioned at Thornley, staying to help while the resident was unwell. But this was a temporary measure and would not justify expenditure in building an extra room per house. There is, however, a slight possibility that these were houses built with government subsidy which was not available at that stage for single-bedroom houses and would have risked their use as substandard family homes, contravening legislation for subsidised newbuild.<sup>23</sup>

Along with the house came the garden. This certainly followed almshouse practice as well as more recent Garden City ideals. The healthy benefits of a sunny sheltered place to sit outdoors, nearby, safe and with something of interest to watch were as well known to many earlier philanthropists as to more recent planners. The Durham Aged Miners' Homes, along with other almshouses, may have both small individual gardens, even just a single front border, and a larger communal maintained green space. But many of those lawns now fronting Aged Miners' Homes were in origin allotments for vegetable cultivation. Their conversion to grass reflects not only social and economic change but also recognition of the physical reality that even the retired workers who enjoy physical labour above ground may no longer be capable of it.

### **The buildings: external appearance**

Now that we have come out of the house, we can view it as neighbours, passers-by and architects might do. How is it sited, and within what environment? How

many homes fit in one terrace, and are there alternatives to the terrace form? What materials are used and how much decorative detail?

Two of the features to attract our attention – and identify the building for what it is – are its relationship to the site and its relative proportions. Whilst siting must depend on availability of land, the majority of Aged Miners' Homes are within or on the edge of their town or village, so within reasonable reach of local amenities: shops, post office, pub, church and people.<sup>24</sup> Only a few are to be found between settlements, while some places such as Easington have two or more groups, either adjacent or dispersed on several sites. Purchase of land is a major part of building costs, and donation of sites by colliery owners could make a significant contribution, especially if the infrastructure was already in place.<sup>25</sup> A consistent preference was shown for linear sites beside a road but of sufficient depth to set the housing well back from the frontage, with individual back yards accessing a lane to the rear. However, few plots were level, often resulting in a row raised above the road (as at Ebchester, for instance) or below it (as at The Pont, Leadgate). Even a terrace of six might need to be stepped. Beyond this necessity the plan notably avoids individual adaptation to its site or to any other local features. This in itself forms a characteristic feature of the Durham Aged Miners' Homes.

The popular form of terrace has been mentioned and this was the usual choice. In practical terms, a row has lower costs in materials, saves space, and reduces heat-loss and the need for weatherproofing in comparison with detached houses. A row of six, without intervals or through passages, seems to constitute a terrace on a human scale, though that may be a subjective observation. Even where the overall number was larger, construction might be split into sixes, as at Dairy lane, Houghton-le-Spring. While there is a tendency for earlier terraces to be longer this is not a universal rule nor is there a clear relationship between overall site dimensions and length of row. For almshouses in general where built as a row, a dozen or half-dozen was a popular number, but the Aged Miners' Homes are more consistent in that almost equal numbers come as a row of six, a row of twelve, or of the intermediate number of eight to ten. Of the remaining quarter of sites, about half contain a very long row (that is, more than twelve) while the rest are set out as semis or arranged in other groupings.<sup>26</sup> Even where semis were built, these might be set out in a line as at Peace Haven, Ferryhill, where they extend the length of the adjacent row. What does this attachment to the row suggest? That answer is left to the reader.

Visually, the proportions of a row are affected by its height and all the Durham Aged Miners' Homes without exception are single-storey.<sup>27</sup> Again this is a popular almshouse form but not the only one. Certainly avoidance of stairs



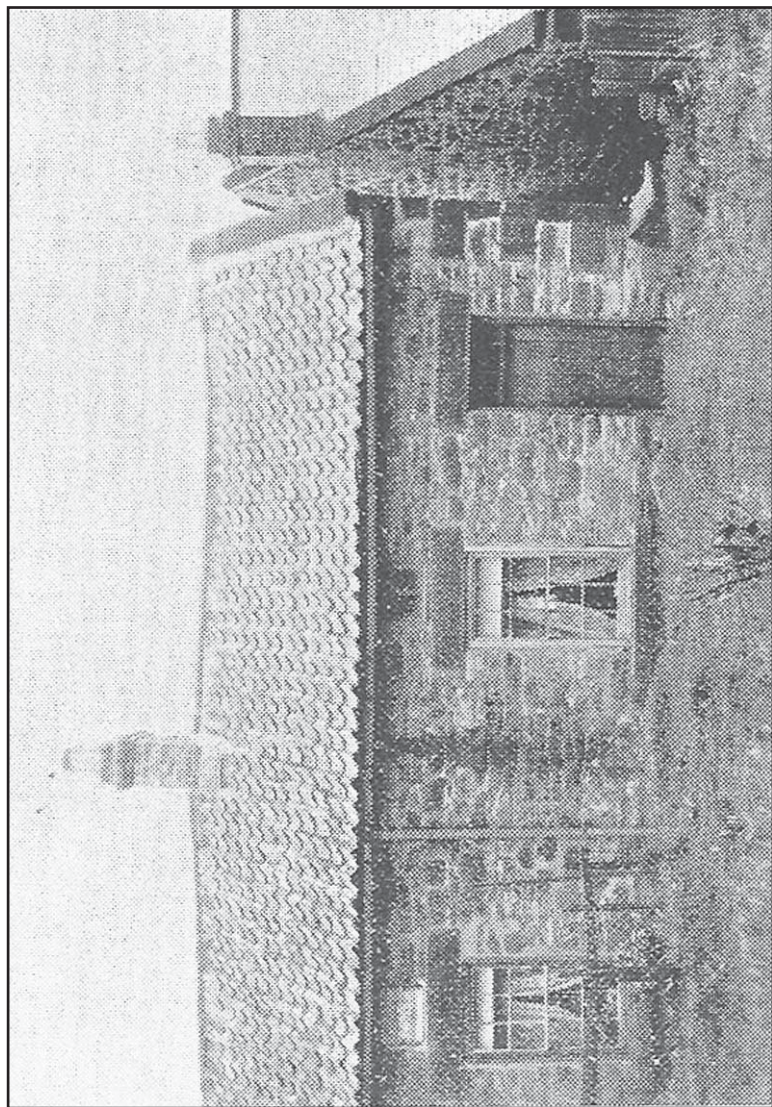


Figure 5. Joseph Hopper's birthplace at Windy Nook. Illustrated in Oxberry (see note 12) for its associations, this is the end dwelling in a vernacular single-storey row. Reproduced by permission of Durham County Record Office from DCRO: D/Sho 115/4.



(at least indoors) might be welcomed by less mobile residents and compact design obviates the need for additional space. However, even land that is donated still has a value and it is significant that flats were not chosen, even though the ‘cottage flat’ or Tyneside flat was known within the region.<sup>28</sup> The importance of an individual front-door and direct access to a garden outweighed such considerations, but perhaps the vernacular single-storey cottage (fewer now remaining) exerted an influence too.<sup>29</sup> (Figure 5.)

The logic of a terrace might be exploited to avoid monotony of appearance, and this can be seen for instance at Chester Moor and at Galbraith Terrace, Trimdon, where, as mentioned earlier, the end units are turned gable-on to the front. That is a common enough device in terraced housing. The almshouse interpretation might employ it to emphasise the centre of such a unified row but the Aged Miners’ Homes demonstrate different versions of patterning, such as the use of pairs of gables within the length of the row (incidentally reminiscent of Garden City-style double Ms) and houses paired between them. On a long row this design conceit is less apparent to the viewer than it may be in plan, and seems rather to enhance the impression of continuous length than to subdivide it. (Figure 6.)

Another feature which invites curiosity is the roof. This might be clay tile, pantile or slate, with of course chimneys, although these are functional and not treated as decorative features, nor extended in height as is notable in older almshouses. Roofs are generally plain and pitched, less often hipped, but end units show a number of complex forms, incorporating rear projections.<sup>30</sup> Some designs even suggest a delight in puzzles, rather than a practical approach to gulleys and rainfall!

In addition to land, some materials might also be made available via the colliery, notably timber and bricks. Brick was used throughout, with colours reflecting the clays of different brickworks, including plain red, glazed red and some cream to yellow shades. Variety might be achieved through rendering the upper portion of the building in white, cream or yellow, though it is hard to be certain now of original colours. Thornley’s accounts refer to ‘colouring’ but further detail makes it clear that this meant white paint.<sup>31</sup> Red brick remained visible in cheerful contrast as plinths below the sills and sometimes on window surrounds and quoins. Elsewhere, as at Axford Terrace, Hamsterley, brickwork remained exposed to the weather.

An important feature, both visually and practically, is the verandah. Defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) as a ‘usually roofed open portico or gallery extending along a wall of a house’ this appears on about one third of the Durham Aged Miners’ Homes, in two distinct versions. For convenience I am



Figure 6. Peace Haven, Ferryhill, built 1929. Paired gables and the terminal gable with its hipped roof add variety to the long façade. The intermittent verandahs have been glazed in. Photo: H. Caffrey.



Figure 7. Broomhill, Hetton-le-Hole, built 1923. The row of twelve has shaped lintels, contrasting bands of brickwork, barge-boards and finials on the gables, and a true verandah. Foundation stones are set into the outer face of the verandah wall. Photo: H. Caffrey.

calling these the intermittent verandah and the true verandah. As you see them today the first type is frequently glazed in, producing a flattened façade from an architectural view-point but offering ‘conservatory seating’ and /or storage space for the occupants. Front-doors which open into this additional porch gain shelter whilst retaining the benefit of outdoor seating. In an alternative design, as at Vindamora Road, Ebchester, arched alcoves contain benches. This can form part of the patterning and perspective within a long façade, as well as being functional.

The true, or continuous, verandah appears less frequently but seems to have been particularly popular within the Sunderland area, with a fine example at Broomhill, Hetton-le-Hole. (Figure 7.) In this version the oversweeping roof runs for the length of the terrace, supported on wooden posts with some decorative detailing. A brick or timber wall, with openings at intervals, encloses the verandah to waist-level. The presence of a true verandah in the Joicey Aged Miners’ Homes at Herrington Burn shows that this was seen as an appropriate feature from early on in the building programme. This gently stepped row of twelve has the house at each end gable-on to the street, with the verandah composed of wooden posts on a low brick wall to support the roof running uninterrupted between them. These Aged Miners’ Homes were built in 1906 and their status as first of a type accounts for their grade two listing. The English Heritage wording indicates their opinion of the architectural merit of the Durham Aged Miners’ Homes: ‘included for sociological reasons’.<sup>32</sup> Antecedents for the verandah are as varied as chalets, seaside bungalows, Picturesque *cottages ornees*, Indian colonial housing and the original Roman colonnade! It is not found as an almshouse feature elsewhere, although an overhanging roof may offer vestigial shelter to the parallel front path. This also occurs on some of the Aged Miners’ Homes but who was responsible for introducing the verandah in County Durham, applied in these two distinctive formats?

Features discussed so far, even where arranged for visual effect, are all essentially functional. Is there any adornment which could be seen as decoration for its own sake? The answer is: very little indeed. Whilst not claiming an exhaustive list, I might mention just five. Peace Haven has moulded window lintels on its semis; finials are found on gables at West Cornforth and half-timbering at Kibblesworth. At Esh Winning Coronation Homes a brick cross or lozenge appears near the apex of the rendered gables, whilst at Broomhill, Hetton-le-Hole, a double row of contrasting yellow brick at sill-height accentuates the stepped levels and even the chimneys are given a narrow band of darker brickwork. But overall the impression is utilitarian and numerically the handful of decorative details has little impact on the overwhelming consistency of design. Further research may reveal individual explanations, and the rôle of individuals in making those choices.

Finally there is one exceptional site which cannot be overlooked. This is at Marsden Road, Harton, South Shields, where a complex of over sixty homes was built in 1914, approached through a two-storey gatehouse leading to a courtyard. Houses face into the courtyard and also form a double block lengthways across the centre. (Figure 8.) Not only is this different in scale from other sites, bringing to mind some examples of almshouses found elsewhere in a courtyard layout, but it also differs conceptually, being an inward-looking enclave. Other almshouses set out thus occur in the Netherlands (the Dutch *hofje*) and the Dutch association is reinforced by the site's use of Dutch gables – the only Durham Aged Miners' Home to do so. Fortunately in this case something more is known about the architect and his other work. Joseph Hall Morton, FRIBA, 1849–1923, joined by his son Ralph Henry from 1900, had an extensive practice, mainly in the North-East and including public-sector clients, for whom he built workhouses and asylums, although the boom in that field had passed with the century. The Durham Aged Miners' Homes also required mass accommodation at relatively low cost, in a building which clearly stated its particular purpose. It would seem then that Mr Morton deliberately went for an 'almshouse message', although I have not found any evidence for a Dutch connection. The miners of Harton and South Shields were indeed fortunate to find such an experienced professional close at hand, whilst the architect himself may have appreciated the opportunity to contribute to local amenities. He remained true to his home ground, being buried in Harton cemetery.

## Architects

The majority of the Durham Aged Miners' Homes' architects remain anonymous, and even when named have not as yet acquired biographers. Rather than reducing the architectural status of the Homes, this increases their fascination. Who was responsible for first introducing the characteristic form? Why did it remain so consistent, apparently unaffected by changing fashion over the period? This was not a centrally imposed design, but was its continued implementation the result of laziness or of good sense in not reinventing the wheel? Who designed those variations discussed above? Once the decision to build had been made, was an architect chosen on the basis of personal recommendation or for particular expertise and what sort of brief was provided? Were some projects, in traditional manner, left to the interpretation and experience of the builder?

The first basic drawings, for a single-storey row, appeared at the same time as the announcement of the scheme in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* for 3 June 1896. Hopper's careful wording accompanies his preferred alternative to Wallace's communal approach. It is tantalising to read that 'we have been kindly furnished with valuable information as to the cost of cottage building by the designers of this plan, and by Messrs Walter Scott and Co, the well-known contractors, Messrs Oliver and Leeson, Architects, of Newcastle, and others'.<sup>33</sup> Not surprisingly, likely costs





Figure 8. Detail of the Durham Aged Mineworker's Homes on Marsden Road, Harton, 1914. The double block occupies the centre of the courtyard, accessed by a two-storey gatehouse. 68 houses with Dutch gables, porthole lobby windows and sheltered garden seating form this secluded complex. Reproduced by permission of Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association from J.H. Morton's blueprint (1914).

were found to vary, depending on cost of land and materials, but the ‘designers’ are not named and perhaps the intention was rather to produce an eye-catching flyer to attract appropriate interest and donations. The first new Homes then seem to have been those built at Wallace Village in 1904, set out on an L-plan with angled bay windows and no verandah, followed in 1906 by the Joicey Aged Miners’ Homes at Herrington Burn, where again the architect is anonymous. Gateshead and District’s page in Oxberry’s *The Birth of the Movement*<sup>34</sup> acknowledges Mr F. Willey, architect to the Durham Education Committee, for ‘his honorary services’ at Windy Nook and Washington, although it is the builder, Mr C.B. Smith, whose photograph appears on the opposite page.

When Murton decided to build a two-storey hostel, incorporating ‘dining and recreation rooms with a verandah to the garden’, kitchen and caretaker’s rooms, Hays and Gray of Durham, chartered architects, surveyors and valuers, undertook the design of a ‘dignified and monumental’ building.<sup>35</sup> They also coped with the tricky addition of an external electric clock which was presented by East Murton Parish Council as a gesture towards the 1937 coronation. This relatively elaborate scheme was facilitated by a government grant of £950 from the Special Areas programme. J. Wilson Hays and his partner, Gray, were involved in the more up-market, or substantial, Aged Miners’ projects over a number of years as well as designing some of the Homes. They had already built the terraces at Wingate Road, Deaf Hill and the accompanying Welfare Hall in 1926–1927. In 1932 they laid out fourteen additional semi-detached Homes on an irregular site near the War Memorial off Park Lane in Murton. Both developments employ porthole windows for the lobby beside the front-door. Blackmore’s report mentions this feature for Coundon, also built in 1926, and draws attention to the ‘interesting hipped and returned roof’ at Deaf Hill.<sup>36</sup> Is the porthole window a trade-mark for Hays and Gray or a recycling of a useful detail? Although neither vernacular nor a traditional almshouse feature, it had been used in Morton’s eclectic design at Marsden Road.

Brancepeth and Oakenshaw appointed William Cummings as their architect for Willington.<sup>37</sup> Their first balance-sheet, for 1913, notes that he was paid £54, but nothing further is recorded about their relationship. Judging from the tone of the paperwork, this was a committee with very clear ideas as to what they wanted. The site chosen was neither the first or cheapest option and ‘cottages are to be double-fronted’, giving them a more generous appearance, although not necessarily more space overall. No more is known about the Derwent Valley District’s architect for Ebchester in 1914, except that G.P. Heron gave his services voluntarily. Esh Winning had also secured the voluntary services of their architects, C. Johnson and Son, for the Coronation Homes in 1911. The number of different details incorporated here into one row suggests either the respective tastes of too many committee members

or an inclination towards the slightly pretentious as the effect of fussiness is rare in Durham Aged Miners' Homes' designs.

While some of these examples were built during the second decade of the century, more followed in the 1920s and a good number during the 1930s. It would be reasonable then to look for characteristics of those periods and possible influences. Doors and windows (often subject to later alteration) are period indicators, especially if purchased ready-made in bulk. Architects, though not necessarily their clients, would have been aware of the current model cottage designs from competitions, published in *The Builder* and other journals. Although these were intended for working-class occupancy, and supposed to be cheap to build, the elderly were not yet addressed as a client group, nor was the row popular, being too close to the rejected urban terrace. The Local Government Board also issued exemplar plans, notably those that accompanied the 1919 Housing and Town Planning (Addison) Act. These were intended for the use of local authorities applying for subsidies to build working-class housing immediately after the First World War. The Act, and those which followed in the early 1920s, did allow other bodies such as housing trusts (forerunners of modern housing associations) to apply for subsidies, although again family homes were the intended product.<sup>38</sup> It was not until the 1930 Housing Act that an exception was made to allow for the building of smaller houses as 'aged persons' homes' which stimulated local-authority provision for the elderly.<sup>39</sup> For the most part Durham Aged Miners' Homes show little sign of fashion affecting their distinctive form. Even the choice of semis rather than, or in addition to, terraces does not tally with a clear change over time.

## Identity

In addition to their distinctive and recognisable appearance there is another feature crucial to the Durham Aged Miners' Homes' identity. This is the use of foundation plaques. In itself, this is nothing unusual. Almshouses often use plaques to name the building, the founder and sometimes the founder's family when a memorial is intended, as well as other detail such as date, number of beneficiaries, and occasionally a quotation or emblem. The plaque is often centrally placed and treated architecturally, not only as a utilitarian means of giving the full address but also to convey a message. An element of self-aggrandisement might be present, a wish to be remembered as well as the presence of a worthy example to encourage others, a reminder of social responsibility. Foundation stones, as the term suggests, are placed in the lower levels of the building once construction has started, but may equally name people involved – most often local dignitaries with few other claims to fame rather than the brickie, slater or plasterer.

Aged Miners' Homes have instances of both types of plaques but in their own particular style. In a few instances, as at Esh Winning and Ebchester,





Figure 9. Plaque on the gable end of the Coronation Homes at Esh Winning, 1911, naming the lodges and trades, officials, contractor and architect who contributed to the project. Photo: H. Caffrey.

a more detailed scroll, shield or cartouche names the relevant pits and lodges as well as specific groups of workers. It would be worth stating here that ‘miners’ is a less accurate term than ‘mineworkers’ as enginemen, cokemen and others were also involved. The bodies named had contributed financially and in return their retired members would be eligible to apply for one of the Aged Miners’ Homes. These plaques are set out in a clear and straightforward manner – a list rather than a description – and seldom decorated beyond the symbol of the trades-union handclasp. The building may be seen as a material representation of those ideas: the product certainly justifies the message that much may be achieved by working together. (Figure 9.)

The foundation plaques are also simple individually, often giving only a name, sometimes accompanied by occupation. They are placed below windows (at about knee-height) or on the outer wall of the verandah where that is available. The peculiar feature is that there are so many of them, often a dozen or more on one building. These stones acknowledge the support of individual subscribers, and reinforce the message of achievement by collective effort and involvement of the community across social divisions. This is an aspect in which Durham Aged Miners’ Homes differ from other almshouses, being funded by those who might come to use them or were directly concerned with them rather than by a prosperous philanthropist or corporation. (Figure 10.)

The use of plaques as address has been mentioned, and it is worth noticing that relatively few of the Aged Miners’ Homes have names beyond that of their street. The imagery of Peace Haven at Ferryhill is obvious and a few were named commemoratively, such as Joseph Hopper Terrace at West Cornforth. Later developments by Thornley Lodge were named Greenwood Homes in recognition of the achievements of Arthur Greenwood, minister responsible for housing during the 1929–1931 Labour government. The Coronation Homes at Esh Winning were built in 1911, so that name is not surprising, although it would seem that the occasion might be more memorable than the particular monarch; Queen Mary’s visit in 1913 is not reflected in patriotic nomenclature. Some Memorial Homes commemorate people of local importance, for instance George Parkinson, Methodist preacher and writer on pit life, at Sherburn. A sub-group of two-bedroom semi-detached Memorial Cottages was built between 1921 and 1929 in the Sedgefield area. ‘Memorial Homes’ could have been so called as war memorials: a form of World War One commemoration during the 1920s which took the form of village halls and other amenities in daily use rather than a list of names engraved on a monument. At Tursdale and West Cornforth the Aged Miners’ Homes lie directly behind the Great War memorial, suggestive of a centre for community memory. Were there personal connections with miners who fought in the War? In this and



Figure 10. A selection of foundation stones from Ferryhill, West Cornforth and Bearpark naming individuals and groups who helped fund their Aged Miners' Homes. Photo: H. Caffrey.



Figure 11. Joseph Hopper Terrace at West Cornforth, built 1924 and named in honour of the founder of the movement. The row of eight has gables with half-timbering and the plaque near the centre names Thrislington Colliery. The fencing clearly places the War Memorial in a public position. Photo: H. Caffrey.



other respects the population of the Durham Aged Miners' Homes merits further research. (Figure 11.)

### **The Aged Miners' Homes as emblems**

The Homes have in turn contributed to the miners' visual imagery and identity. Trades-union banners in general are liable to include tools of the trade, mottoes, some portraits and allegorical figures. Durham colliery banners may do any of these, but a significant number also display images of their Aged Miners' Homes. To see the banners in context, the reader is referred to the work of W.A. Moyes.<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately banners are hard to date, wear out, and are sometimes replaced by second-hand ones from closed lodges, while the bulk of banner-maker Tutill's business records were destroyed in the Blitz. However, Moyes found six examples of Durham Aged Miners' Homes, 'either local or a generalised view', in the surviving 1921 Tutill archive of forty banners. For comparison, there were twelve images of Conishead Priory Convalescent Home and three of Miners' Halls. Half a century later attenders at the 1972 Gala could see thirty lodge banners featuring the ever popular portraits and mottoes, with five showing Aged Miners' Homes, including Hylton and Bearpark.

Banners are not a common source for the historian of buildings. If choice of motif indicates self-perception, then many lodges chose to emphasise a sense of place and their local nature, as well as their welfare provision. Banner-production is a specialised and expensive job, and the firm responsible for most of the Durham banners was George Tutill of London. In practical terms this meant that a lodge had the option of choosing from a catalogue of appropriate images or sending in a picture or photograph to be copied. The latter was more expensive and required precision from the banner-painter, who had not seen the original. Manufacturer might attempt to guide customer, as in the following extract concerning a new banner for Seaham in 1949:

Our artist can only make a representation of what he can see in the position in which he sees it ... but he cannot, working from a photo of two houses, make a picture of "20 houses in a row, built on a rising slope, with a slight curve all the way" ... In any case have you considered that a row of 20 houses, ground floor only will not look very inspiring. If you visualise it, you will see that it will be a very narrow band of houses combined with a lot of foreground and sky.

Despite such artistic misgivings, the Lodge persisted and the result was greeted with enthusiasm.<sup>41</sup> It would seem that a full, detailed and clearly identifiable representation of their Aged Miners' Homes was essential. Banners make a public

statement and are designed to be seen by large crowds. The opening of a new Durham Aged Miners' Home was also an occasion for a public event in the gala tradition, as indicated at Thornley. Band, speeches and the best slap-up tea which could be afforded made the day memorable for the community at large, not only for the fortunate new residents. In this way the Aged Miners' Homes soon became part of accepted custom and regional tradition. Yet this very success and spirit of self-help may have detracted from their wider recognition.

### **More recently**

Aged Miners' Homes continued to be built through the 1930s, with Marley Hill the final group being erected in 1940, but colliery closures and the impact of the Second World War left some existing houses isolated from lodge support for funds, repairs and maintenance and the usual supply of coal.<sup>42</sup> Some modernisation, mainly for kitchen and bathroom, took place in the 1960s, but pressure on decreasing funds led to the sale of hostels and some housing together with the introduction of maintenance charges. Because of the Homes' charitable status as almshouses, rents could not be charged while the Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association continued to be responsible for keeping up with current requirements and expectations, as well as ongoing maintenance and repairs to an ageing, although soundly built, housing stock. In addition demography created an increasingly impossible situation as there were fewer miners – about a tenth of the number a couple of generations earlier, in a mere eighteen collieries – to support an inexorably ageing population. In 1980 the Association commissioned a report on the state of its properties and what needed to be done to bring them up to standard.<sup>43</sup> Today, the criteria used in the *Report* may in turn be seen within the process of social history.<sup>44</sup> The upshot was that the Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association became a Housing Association in 1982 and embarked on an extensive programme of modernisation via government grants. New building has followed, including sheltered housing and a residential care home, but applicants need no longer be connected to the coal industry: there are few aged miners left in County Durham. Their current aim is to enable 'more independent living but with an emphasis on promoting community spirit and neighbourliness':<sup>45</sup> a fair version of the almshouse purpose. (Figure 12.)

Although this article is essentially historical, the Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association's current building programme will duly become a subject for future researchers. Has new building retained that specific identity discussed here? If so, does it copy tradition or develop it? Will twenty-first century Homes be seen to reference contemporary design details as earlier ones did for the 1920s and 1930s, and will this show comparable architectural distinction? Indeed, in an era of increasing development of accommodation considered suitable for older people, of greater or lesser means, will the post-mining Durham Aged Mineworkers'

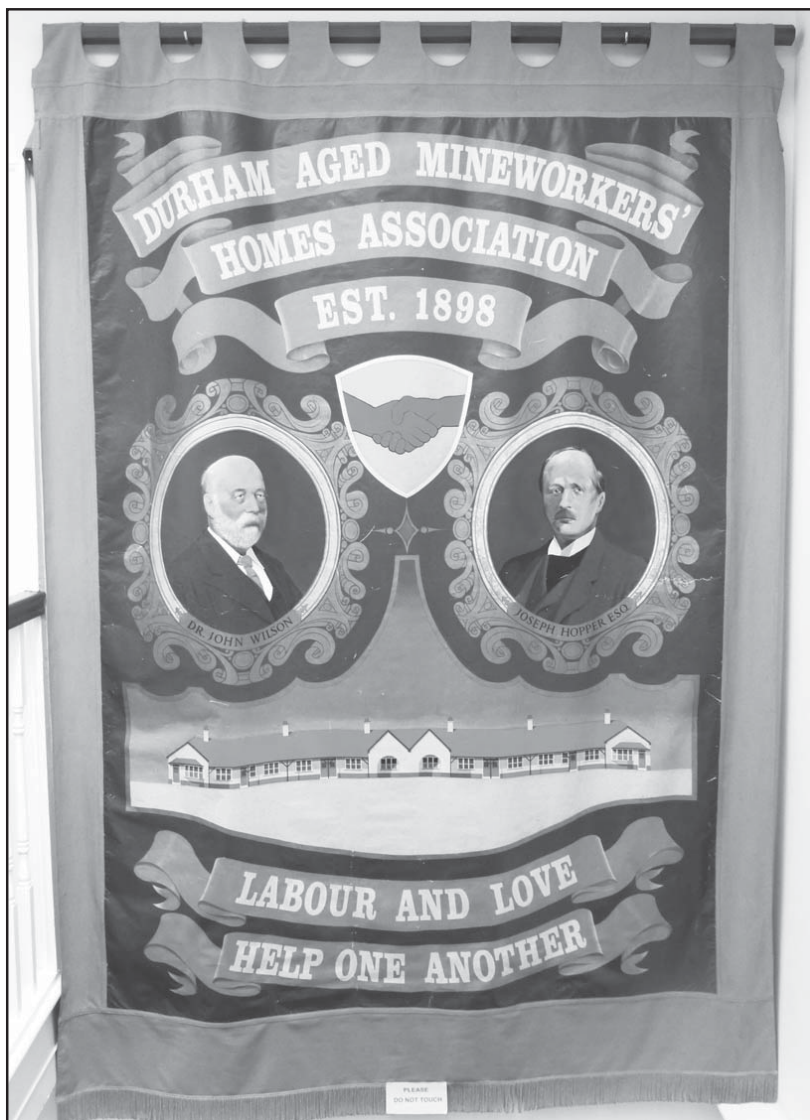


Figure 12. This modern banner incorporating traditional elements was designed by Walter Hudspith, also known for his ceramic-tile murals in Sunderland. Portraits of the founders of the Durham Miners' Association and the Durham Aged Miners' Homes Association, the handclasp and mottoes accompany a satisfyingly symmetrical image based on the Castlereagh Homes at North Road, Seaham. Photo: H. Caffrey.

Homes offer anything different from local authorities, other housing associations and private care and retirement developments?

## Conclusion

In this article I set out to assess the Durham Aged Miners' Homes as almshouses and architecture. I hope that readers will look at them both more critically and appreciatively as a result, and that those who did not know them before will become aware of their special nature. To me, the most important points to emerge are: the particular and consistent design; the extent of provision numerically in relation to size of population; location throughout the home communities of the retired workers and their wives; and the truly impressive concern for the elderly expressed through collective effort and subscription from the work-force itself.

I have deliberately posed further questions as there is plenty more to be done on this subject. For instance, studies of the details of construction, management, longevity of the residents compared with their peers in the workhouse, the effect of the Aged Miners' Homes on the social dynamic of their communities, and the experiences of individuals as residents of the Homes could strengthen the history of the movement as a whole. If you have information to share in response to any of the questions raised in this article, I should be delighted to hear from you at [caffreyhelen@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:caffreyhelen@yahoo.co.uk)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank the Durham Aged Mineworkers' Housing Association, especially Brian Stobbs, for their help.

I should also like to remember the former miners and their wives for whom there was no prospect of Aged Miners' Homes on retirement.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> J. Hopper, Aged Miners Homes, Notes 1st and 8th (copy held by Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association).
- <sup>2</sup> H. Caffrey, *Almshouses in the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1600–1900* (Kings Lynn, 2006).
- <sup>3</sup> The possible architectural connections between Aged Miners' Homes and welfare and recreational buildings such as institutes and halls would be worth investigation. N. Mansfield's *Buildings of the Labour*



- Movement* (London, 2013) notably omits the Durham Aged Miners' Homes in a survey of public buildings, whilst his article with M. Trustram, 'Remembering the Buildings of the British Labour Movement: an act of mourning', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* (May 2012), pp.439–456, might have been less pessimistic for their inclusion.
- 4 This is a brief overview of almshouse provision; examples show considerable diversity. Essentially, free permanent accommodation was accorded to those selected, and living expenses were usually addressed by a small pension (long before state provision), frequently accompanied by a supply of fuel (wood or coal), later commuted to a cash payment.
  - 5 C. Seal, 'Social care in northern England: the almshouses of County Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland in the nineteenth and twentieth century', *Family and Community History*, vol. 16, no.1 (April 2013), pp.45–65.
  - 6 [www.sunnisidelocalhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.sunnisidelocalhistorysociety.co.uk)
  - 7 K. Morrison, *The Workhouse: a study of Poor Law buildings in England* (Swindon, 1999).
  - 8 J. Wilson, *A History of the Durham Miners' Association, 1870–1904* (Durham, 1907).
  - 9 M.J. Dauntton, 'Miners' Homes: South Wales and the Great Northern Coalfield 1880–1914', *International Review of Social History*, vol. xxv (1980), issue 02, pp.143–175.
  - 10 R. Ryder, 'Council house building in County Durham, 1900–39: the local implementation of national policy', in M. J. Dauntton (ed.), *Councillors and Tenants: local authority housing in English cities, 1919–1939* (Leicester, 1984).
  - 11 Connections between nonconformity and almshouse foundation are also evident in Yorkshire.
  - 12 Durham County Record Office (DCRO): D/Sho 115/4, John Oxberry, *Aged Mineworkers' Homes: the Birth of the Movement* (1924).
  - 13 Built in Arts and Crafts style on a spacious layout, it continues to flourish.
  - 14 *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 3 June 1896. The accompanying illustration suggests a stretched symmetrical two-storey building in eclectic style with protruding central communal and service block. Individual rooms of 12 feet x 9 feet 6 inches are shown; the proposal remained speculative.
  - 15 DCRO: D/X 832/162–177.

- 16 Today the issue is clarified for Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes  
Association residents in their 'Obligations', [www.durhamhomes.org.uk](http://www.durhamhomes.org.uk)
- 17 DCRO: D/DMA 325/1.
- 18 DCRO: D/Co/BA 86–96.
- 19 The Thornley Committee of Homes informed the General Secretary of  
the Durham Aged Miners' Homes Association when they were intending  
to extend the existing row of twelve, and that they 'would like to borrow  
any good plans', DCRO: D/X 832/170 (1923). A week later they went out  
to tender, receiving a quotation from Ed. Shorter of £3,489 15s., pricing  
a house at £387 15s., 'in accordance with the plans and specification'. It  
is not clear whether anything was received from the Association and if so  
whether it was used.
- 20 An extensive collection of plans drawn in 1980 and indicating previous  
alterations appeared in Blackmore, Son and Co., chartered architects,  
*Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association Feasibility Report* (1980).
- 21 As this still forms a significant part of twenty-first century housing stock it  
is easy to reconstruct earlier usage.
- 22 Successive legislation on minimum standards between 1919 and 1930  
shows the struggle over the need or desirability for expenditure on  
providing indoor facilities. It might be thought that manual workers such  
as miners would be particularly in need of adequate bathrooms.
- 23 See notes 19 and 38. Thornley's enterprising committee approached both  
Sidney Webb and the Ministry of Health (then responsible for housing) as  
to whether they might be eligible for a subsidy under the 1923 Act. The  
official response was that 'houses under 380 square feet as at Thornley  
would not' but made an interesting comparison in favour of houses at  
Wheatley Hill: 'The simplicity of the larger house, compared with the  
smaller house, which has a gabled porch and expensive back additions,  
might easily result in prices so nearly equivalent as to make the larger  
house, which is much better planned for its purpose, the most rational  
proposition', DCRO: D/X 832/170.
- 24 When a site was being sought in Willington in 1911 the more expensive  
option was chosen on account of its 'close proximity for shopping, its  
splendid position for the old folks for walks, and the everyday flow of  
people passing and repassing – giving to our old people comfort in their  
declining years', DCRO: D/Co/BA 94–96.
- 25 This might be minimal as colliery housing often abutted directly onto  
unmade streets with little in the way of drainage or sewage.

- 26 This does not include the new generation of Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association housing since 1980.
- 27 The few early conversions, and hostels for single aged miners, are not included here.
- 28 This form was not unique to Tyneside and continued to be built through the first half of the twentieth century. It consisted of a block of four but with the first-floor units having separate front-doors at ground level.
- 29 These were built in a row, in urban or rural surroundings, and were working-class family homes. The nearest geographically is the Sunderland cottage, a form of 'pit row housing mediated by local bye-laws' for well-paid artisans. M.A. Johnson, 'The Sunderland Cottage: "the favoured and typical dwelling of the skilled mechanic"', *Vernacular Architecture*, vol. 41 (2010), pp.59–74.
- 30 Examples of hipped roofs include Shotton Colliery, with no variation on the façade, and Peace Haven at Ferryhill, where the hipped roofline has to accommodate the gables on the return.
- 31 DCRO: D/X832/166–168. White paint is mentioned, but not exactly where this was applied. At Murton in 1938 it was decided that colouring should be left to the architects, although this might refer equally to the interior, DCRO: D/DMA/313.
- 32 Joicey Aged Miners' Homes, list entry no.1184991, English Heritage, grade II listed.
- 33 As for note 1.
- 34 As for note 12.
- 35 DCRO, D/DMA 325/1.
- 36 Blackmore, 1980, p.75. Hays and Gray's drawings, DCRO: D/WH1/349/3, show the windows and roofline, internal dimensions of 13 feet x 13 feet for the kitchen (living-room), 12 feet x 12 feet for the bedroom, a generous scullery of 12 feet 6 inches x 6 feet 4 inches, and a neat square of paved yard between the W.C. and coal store on one side and the back wall of the bedroom.
- 37 DCRO: D/Co/BA 86–88.
- 38 As for note 23.
- 39 H. Caffrey, 'Housing the Elderly Poor: from Philanthropist to Local Authority', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, vol. 87 (2015), pp.168–190.
- 40 W.A. Moyes, *The Banner Book* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1972).

- <sup>41</sup> Moyes, 1972, p.41. The accompanying photograph of the unfurling shows the effect.
- <sup>42</sup> In the enthusiastic response to nationalisation, so long awaited, the clip of a miner speaking in Ken Loach's film, *The Spirit of '45'* (U.K., 2013), included reference to the Aged Miners' Homes among those about to benefit.
- <sup>43</sup> As in note 20.
- <sup>44</sup> These criteria include the height of window sills for an elderly person to see out when sitting, sufficient space to take casual meals in the kitchen, and health and safety standards for bathroom and kitchen. A desirable location is described in terms similar to those considered appropriate at Willington (see note 24).
- <sup>45</sup> Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association at [www.durhamhomes.org.uk](http://www.durhamhomes.org.uk)

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