Family, Training, and Career in the British Coal Industry in the Era of Decline

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On June 8, 1928 the *Colliery Guardian*, the premier journal of the British coal trade, published a short profile of T.H. Bailey, the senior partner in a mining engineering firm active in South Wales and the Midlands. The 136th of the 155 profiles the *Colliery Guardian* printed in its "Men of Note in the British Coal Industry" series between 1923 and 1929, this article provided, beneath a photograph of Bailey, a short account of his education, training, professional accomplishments, and marriage. Most of the story, though, was not about Bailey at all. Part of it was about his great-great-grandfather, John Bailey, who had worked as a mining engineer at the Yorkshire mines of Earl Fitzwilliam in the eighteenth century and his great-grandfather, Samuel Bailey, also a mining engineer, who had seen service in the employ of Earl Fitzwilliam and at Lord Lichfield's collieries in Staffordshire. Also included in the profile were Bailey's grandfather, Barnabas Bailey, and his father, Samuel Bailey, who together had set up a general practice as mining engineers and surveyors at Willenhall and Walsall following employment at the South Staffordshire collieries of John Bagnall and Sons, the famous rail manufacturers. Bailey's uncle, John Bailey, later joined the firm, which eventually opened an office in Birmingham as well, and by the time that T.H. Bailey himself was the senior partner in the practice, his elder son Cecil Henry Bailey, had begun a career as a mining engineer and entered the family business. The *Colliery Guardian's* tribute to T.H. Bailey was thus less a testimonial to his achievements in the British coal trade than a family saga of six generations devoted to coalmining.

Among the *Colliery Guardian*'s 155 Men of Note Bailey may have been unique in the longevity of his family's connection with the coal industry, but as the scion of mining men he was not unusual. Fifty-seven (37%) of the men honored by the *Colliery Guardian* were descended from mining families,

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[1]The biographical findings reported in this paper derive primarily from the *Colliery Guardian's* profiles, though I have drawn wherever possible on the standard reference works and on obituaries. I should also point out that no unpublished materials pertaining to the *Colliery Guardian* of the 1920s seem to have survived.

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC HISTORY, Volume Twenty-two, no. 1, Fall 1993.
 ISSN 0849-6825.

and 26 of these were at least the third generation to have made their careers in the industry. Nor was the attention the Colliery Guardian lavished on Bailey's forebears atypical. Its profile of the Nottinghamshire colliery proprietor Sir Dennis Readett-Bayley, for example, told of the founding of the Digby Colliery Co. by his grandfather, the founding of the Manners Colliery Co. by his father, and about the histories of these firms before the Man of Note joined them.

The *Colliery Guardian*'s "Men of Note" series thus seems to exemplify the preoccupation with family that historians such as Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. and T.R. Gourvish have seen as a distinctive--and harmful--feature of British capitalism [1, 3]. The Men of Note themselves bear witness to the density of family ties within British industry and to the frequency with which sons succeeded fathers in British enterprises. The *Colliery Guardian*'s fascination with industrial lineages would seem to testify to the high value that attached to kinship within the culture of British business.

This paper examines the role of family in British industrial life by analyzing in detail the *Colliery Guardian*'s "Men of Note in the British Coal Industry." Its method is a comparative one. How, I shall ask, did the lives and careers of the Men of Note from mining families differ from the lives and careers of the Men of Note whose families had had no prior connection with coalmining? Were they educated differently? Did they enter the industry by separate routes? Were the patterns of their careers dissimilar? Before I take up these questions, however, some preliminary remarks about who the Men of Note were and about the distribution of family influence in the coal industry may be in order.

I

The contemporaries the *Colliery Guardian* singled out for distinction in the 1920s constituted an industrial elite rather than a business elite. Forty-four of the 155 Men of Note (28%) made their mark on the public side of the coal industry as government officials, scientists, and educators. Another seven (5%) were top-ranking trade union officials, though the more militant miners' leaders such as Robert Smillie and A.J. Cook were not among them. The remaining two-thirds of the Men of Note distinguished themselves in the service of private enterprise, and the majority of them (63/104) were coalmasters, i.e. proprietors, chairmen, directors, and general managers of coalmining enterprises.[2] Twenty-four from the *Colliery Guardian*'s who's who list were practical mining men singled out more for technical accomplishments than for business achievement *per se* , i.e. mining engineers, mine managers, and mining agents. Men who made their careers in the distribution of coal (typically as partners in merchanting firms) accounted for

[2]I have included among the coalmasters the one royalty owner the *Colliery Guardian* included on its honor roll, Sir Granville Wheler. A large landowner and MP, Wheler was a forceful advocate of the rights of mineral owners.

another twelve of the 155 Men of Note and the permanent officials of coal trade associations for five.

The Men of Note from mining families were located disproportionately in the private sector of the coal industry (76% of the group compared with 62% of the first-generation Men of Note), and fully three-quarters of these were drawn from the ranks of the coalmasters. (Forty-nine per cent of the first-generation Men of Note were coalmasters.) For the rest, practical mining men, scientists and educators, and trade unionists were found in roughly equal proportions among the family and nonfamily subsets of the Men of Note. Only among coal distributors (1/12), trade association officials (1/5), and civil servants (3/17) were second- and third-generation Men of Note conspicuous by their infrequency.

Men of Note with family ties to coalmining were thus concentrated most heavily among the owners and top managers of colliery enterprises. Indeed, men from mining families constituted half (32/63) of all the coalmasters featured in the *Colliery Guardian.* The weight of inheritance among the business leaders of the industry reflected both the preponderance of coalmasters among the fathers of the Men of Note and the overwhelming tendency for the sons of mining men to follow in the paternal footsteps occupationally. Of the fifty-seven Men of Note in the family group, information about the father's occupation is available for fifty-three. Twenty-eight of these fathers were owners or top executives of mining enterprises, and all but one of their sons made careers as coalmasters. Even the one exception, Dr. William Galloway, returned to the fold in the end. A controversial inspector of mines and then professor of mining at the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire, Galloway, in retirement, played an active part in the development of the Kent coalfield as chairman of the East Kent Colliery Co. and Snowden Colliery Ltd.

The seven sons of pitman and trade association officials showed a similar inclination to adopt the careers of their fathers. Only W.G. Phillips, the son of a collier who began work at the Hyde and Haughton Collieries at nine and rose to became managing director of the Ansley Hall Coal and Iron Co., and Mark Ford, the son of a winding-engineman at Washington Colliery who qualified as a mining engineer and later spent twenty-five years as mining engineer to the Washington Coal Co., moved beyond the occupations of their fathers.

The one element among the Men of Note with family ties to the coal industry whose careers displayed much occupational mobility were the sons of mining engineers, mine managers, and mining agents. Ten of the eighteen men in this category pursued careers different from those of their fathers, but their movement was primarily lateral from employment with private enterprises to jobs in the public sector. Five became educators or scientists, and three joined H.M. Inspectorate of Mines. Only A.J.A. Richard, whose father had been employed as a mechanical engineer at the Shamrock and Hibernian collieries in Westphalia and who became general manager, and ultimately a director, of St. Helens Collieries in Lancashire, and G.A. Lewis, the Cambridge-educated son of a consulting mining engineer whose own

consulting practice brought him on to the boards of several firms, ascended into the ranks of the coalmasters.

The tendency of the second- and third-generation mining men among the Men of Note to pursue the same careers as their fathers raises a number of questions about their lives in mining. Were they specifically trained for the positions they inherited? Were they able to skip over the lower rungs of the career ladder on their way to positions similar to those their fathers occupied? Were there, in effect, two career trajectories in the coal trade, one for those born into it and one for those entering from outside it? Let us see what light the lives of the *Colliery Guardian*'s Men of Note shed on these questions.

II

Amidst the attention devoted to T.H. Bailey's mining ancestors the *Colliery Guardian* reported that its 136th Man of Note had been educated at Clifton and King's College, London. Educational information of this kind figured prominently in the profiles the journal published, and we know something about the schooling of 128 of the 155 Men of Note (83%). Most of those who, like Bailey himself, hailed from mining families received a quality secondary education. Thirty-one of the fifty seven (54%) attended a public school, and no fewer than sixteen went to Eton, Harrow, Charterhouse, Rugby, Repton, Shrewsbury, Clifton, or Haileybury. Nine (16%) were educated at a private academy or "privately," and three (5%) went to a local grammar school.

T.H. Bailey's university education was no more unusual among the Men of Note with mining forebears than was his attendance at a public school. Thirty-three of the fifty-seven (58%) continued on beyond secondary school, with one-third attending Oxford or Cambridge and nine studying at the Durham College of Physical Science (Armstrong College), the Wigan Mining School, or the Royal School of Mines. Sir Hugh Bell, the iron and steel magnate and coalmaster, learned his chemistry at the Sorbonne and Gottingen, and the South Wales coalmaster Sir Leonard Llewelyn attended Heidelberg while three others combined a continental education with matriculation at a British university. Two Men of Note studied exclusively at Scottish universities and four at provincial English universities.

Information about the courses the Men of Note took at university is patchy, but what is available indicates that the majority concentrated on subjects relevant to careers in mining. Fourteen took a degree in mining engineering, attended a mining school, or had a "mining education," and five read natural sciences or mathematics. Only the coalmasters Sir Arthur F. Pease and David Davies, both of whom read history, are known to have taken their degrees in the humanities, so at the very least 57.5% of those who went on to university studied subjects of potential use in a coalmining career.

The educations of the Men of Note who made their ways in the coal industry without the benefit of family connections were not as impressive as the educations of the Men of Note born into mining families, but these men were by no means poorly educated. Twenty-six of the ninety-eight (27%) attended a public school, including seven who had been at Eton, Rugby,

Shrewsbury, or Winchester. Twenty (20%) were educated at a private academy or "privately," and seven (7%) went to local grammar schools. Of the thirty-nine nonfamily Men of Note whose secondary school experiences are unknown or unclassifiable, at least one-third attended an institution of higher learning, so the actual numbers of first-generation mining men who attended public schools and private academies were almost certainly higher than the figures given here.

Forty-five (45%) of the Men of Note from nonmining backgrounds continued on beyond secondary school to university. Twelve of them went to Oxford or Cambridge and eleven to one of the English mining schools. Ten studied at an English or Welsh provincial university, four at Glasgow or Edinburgh, and four at a college of science or technology.

The majority of the first-generation Men of Note who attended university devoted themselves to subjects related to the business of mining. Twenty-six studied engineering or the natural sciences, and some of the fifteen for whom no information is available probably did so as well. Three read law--an education that may well have proved useful in a coalmining career--and just one, Sir Ernest Gowers, permanent under-secretary for mines at the Home Office, chairman of the Coal Mines Reorganisation Commission, and later the Coal Commission, and finally a pig-farmer and man of letters (he revised Fowler's *Modern English Usage*), read classics.

The educational record of the Men of Note descended from mining families does not fit well with the received wisdom about the schooling of British industrialists. Far more of them attended distinguished secondary schools and universities than the emphasis on the "practical man" in the literature would suggest, and the large proportion of university men that studied engineering, science, or mathematics would seem to disqualify these men and their families from membership in the cult of the gentleman. Though the populations are not strictly comparable, the second- and third-generation mining men among the *Colliery Guardian*'s Men of Note appear to have been better educated than the steelmasters Charlotte Erickson studied and the businessmen included in the A-C volume of the *Dictionary of Business Biography* [2, pp. 30-44; 4, pp. 9-13].

The proportion of nonfamily Men of Note that were educated at the most prestigious of Britain's secondary schools and universities was not so great as the proportion among the family Men of Note that were so educated. Fewer of them went to a public school, and more gained their higher education at a provincial university or technical college. Too much ought not to be made of this difference however. Like their counterparts from mining backgrounds, most of the new entrants to the trade among the Men of Note received a good-quality secondary education. The majority of those who did continued on to further schooling, and these higher educations were largely in practical subjects. In any event, it remains to be seen whether these differences in their formal educations affected the ways the Men of Note entered coalmining and the character of their careers in the industry.

III

T.H. Bailey's entry into the coal industry combined formal professional training with the tie of kinship. After King's College, London, he began an apprenticeship to Thomas McGhie, managing director of the West Cannock Colliery. He then continued his apprenticeship at S. & J. Bailey, the family's mining engineering firm. In both the professional and the familial aspects of his entry into the industry, Bailey was again typical of the *Colliery Guardian*'s elite. Twenty other Men of Note from mining families (37% of the family group) also served formal apprenticeships. Eleven (including Bailey) did at least part of their time under a relative or at a firm with which family members were associated.

Eleven Men of Note with coal-industry backgrounds entered directly into family mining concerns upon the completion of their schooling. At least some of them, including the coalmasters Lord Gainford and Sir Hugh Bell, served something like informal commercial or managerial apprenticeships in their families' offices and works before advancing to positions of responsibility. Another four trained for short periods elsewhere before entering the family firm. The Staffordshire coalmaster W.E. Harrison, for example, followed on Oxford education with six months of colliery work before joining his father's coal company.

Six Men of Note were employed early in their lives at enterprises with which their fathers were at one time associated. James Lomax's career as a paleobotanist and geologist may not have benefited much from the work he did down the pit where his father was the manager, but the experiences of J.T. Greensmith, J.S. Haldane, and Arthur Ratcliffe-Ellis appear to have been different. Greensmith obtained his manager's certificate while at J. and G. Wells, for whom his father was general manager, and he later returned to the firm as a director. Haldane, the eminent physiologist who was descended on his mother's side from a family long involved in the Northumberland coal industry, did his first important work on the health and efficiency of men working underground as a demonstrator at Oxford under his uncle Sir John Burdon Sanderson, the Wayneflete Professor of Physiology, and the solicitor Ratcliffe-Ellis followed his father (a Man of Note himself) into the service of the Mining Association of Great Britain and the Lancashire and Cheshire Coal Association.

No fewer than thirty-eight (66%) of the Men of Note from mining families thus made their way in the British coal trade via institutions with which they had kinship ties. In addition, five of the other coalmasters cited by the *Colliery Guardian* eventually occupied executive or directorial positions at firms where their fathers discharged similar responsibilities. At the minimum, then, forty-three (75%) of the Men of Note in the family group were definitely associated with the family concern at some stage in their coal mining careers. That family ties to the industry were far from inconsequential for the *Colliery Guardian*'s honorees would seem clear enough.

Yet it would be wrong to read here a simple story of nepotism for proper professional training also played a part in the entry of these men into coalmining. No fewer than 63% (27/43) of the Men of Note whose careers

took them to the family enterprise served a formal apprenticeship, had a higher degree in a course relevant to mining, or both. Moreover, this calculation omits all those who, like C.P. Markham who was groomed from a young age to succeed his father at the helm of the Staveley Coal and Iron Co., served what were in effect in-house managerial apprenticeships.

The routes by which the first-generation mining men cited by the *Colliery Guardian* came into the coal trade were of course more varied. Some like Sir Edward Troup, the head of the industrial division of the Home Office for fourteen years and chairman of the Safety in Mines Research Board from 1923 to 1939, made their way through government service. Others such as Lord Aberconway and Sir Francis Joseph inherited the colliery interests of their fathers-in-law. For the most part, however, the avenues that took the nonfamily Men of Note into mining were similar to the professional steps taken by the Men of Note with kinship ties to the coal industry.

Twenty-eight (28%) of the Men of Note from nonmining backgrounds served formal apprenticeships, and circumstantial evidence suggests that another three also did so. Six Men of Note undertook the commercial equivalent of an apprenticeship, entering into coal-distributing houses upon leaving school. Seven moved directly into scientific or educational careers from a higher education in mining, five took up mining research from scientific backgrounds in other fields, and five began work as mining engineers, mine managers, or coal company officials immediately after finishing higher educations in mining. Altogether, 54 (55%) of the Men of Note without family ties to the industry proceeded into coalmining via formal professional training.

Eleven Men of Note joined the coal industry as adults from occupations in other branches of the economy. Four of them--Sir Thomas Ratcliffe-Ellis (law), Sir Josiah Court (medicine), J.A.B. Horsley (electrical engineering), and Reginal Guthrie (public administration)--translated professional skills to coalmining. The other seven entered from private enterprise. Sir Alfred Mond (chemicals), Sir Robert Gardiner (gas), Thomas Evans (shipbroking) and Sam Mavor and Sir Arthur Duckham (manufacturers respectively of mining equipment and coking plant) had been in business in related lines while two Welsh coalmasters, H. Seymour Berry (later Baron Buckland) and Sir Beddoe Rees, moved from estate egency and architecture and town development respectively.

Familial ties to the coal trade played a significant part in the entry of the Men of Note from mining backgrounds into the industry. The majority of these men either began their mining lives at the family firm or joined it within a few years of commencing work in the industry. For a handful employment at the firm where their fathers worked was not a noteworthy step in their careers, but for most of the Men of Note the achievements the *Colliery Guardian* commended were associated with their family firm. The family connection to the industry by itself, however, did not make for distinction in the trade. As the *Colliery Guardian* described the lives of its Men of Note from coalmining backgrounds, formal professional training was an important element in their making as mining men, and this formal professional training was something they shared with the Men of Note new to the coal trade.

If few of the second- and third-generation mining men on the *Colliery Guardian*'s honor's list saw much service with businesses other than those with which their relatives were connected, few of the Men of Note without family ties to the industry had been employed in trades other than coal. Consequently, the varied experience that might have prepared the coal trade's elite for unanticipated changes in market conditions and technology could only have come within the industry--from working at different firms, in different coalfields, and in different capacities. Did the *Colliery Guardian*'s Men of Note pursue diverse careers within coalmining? Did kinship ties restrict mobility and limit experience? In the next section I look at the career patterns of the Men of Note.

IV

By the age of twenty-four T.H. Bailey had become a partner in the family consulting firm, and he spent the rest of his working life with S. & J. Bailey. His practice took him to different enterprises in different coalfields, and he was retained in a variety of capacities, but he nevertheless remained within the same firm throughout his career. Bailey's working life was representative of a large minority of the Men of Note from mining backgrounds. Twenty-one of them (including Bailey) spent their coalmining careers within the confines of the family enterprise.[3] Eleven of the twenty-one ascended to partnerships or directorships before the age of thirty, and the Scottish coalmaster J.A. Hood became the general manager of the Lothian Coal Co. (of which his father was managing director) at thirty-one. Another five Men of Note passed virtually all of their working lives at the firms with which their families had been associated, and the mining engineers Mark Ford (twenty-five years) and S.F. Sopwith (thirty-seven years) spent lengthy stretches, but by no means the whole of their careers, in the employ of the family firm.

Seven of the Men of Note descended from mining families remained for most of their careers with a single nonfamily enterprise. W.G. Phillips chalked up more than forty-six years with the Ansley Hall Coal and Iron Co. and W.C. Blackett at least thirty-seven with the Charlaw and Sacriston Collieries. Altogether, of the forty-three Men of Note whose families had ties to coalmining and who worked within the private sector of the industry or in service to it, thirty-six (84%) gained virtually all of their experience at just one organization.[4] A similar institutional loyalty was apparent in the careers of four of the Men of Note employed in the public sector. Henry Walker and F.H. Wynne, for example, both devoted more than thirty-five years to H.M. Mines Inspectorate.

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[3]Some of these men also held directorships of nonfamily enterprises.

[4]Three of the thirty-six played entrepreneurial roles within the single firm to which they largely devoted themselves. I discuss them below.

Less than one-quarter (13/57) of the men from mining families honored by the *Colliery Guardian* experienced a noteworthy measure of mobility in the course of their careers. For four of them occupational mobility was principally a matter of movement within the public sector--between government service and university positions--and the Scotsmen G.L. Kerr and James Lomax both distinguished themselves in the public sector following more than a decade apiece of work at privately-owned coal companies. Only seven of the Men of Note from the family group both made their mark with profit-seeking organizations and served in responsible capacities with at least three firms. Four, like the Welsh coalmaster Edmund L. Hann who worked as a colliery manager for three years, as agent and general manager at another concern for six years, and as a partner in a consulting engineering firm for five years before joining the Powell Duffryn Steam Coal Co., of which he was eventually the chairman, moved from job to job for a decade or so and then settled with the firm with whom they passed the bulk of their working lives. The careers of the other three more closely resembled that of the mining engineer T.Y. Greener who worked as a mine manager or company manager for at least five years for four different firms in Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, and Durham and who changed jobs at twenty-nine, thirty-six, and fifty-eight.

The careers of the Men of Note who entered the coal trade without the benefit of family connections exhibited no greater occupational mobility than the Men of Note from mining backgrounds even though there was no family firm to embrace them. Eight of the nonfamily Men of Note passed the whole of their careers in the employ of a single firm, and another eight spent the greatest part of their working years with just one enterprise. John Brass, for example, devoted more than forty years to the service of the Houghton Main Colliery Co. and Ridley Warham twenty-seven years to the Ashington Coal Co. Five others divided their careers principally between two firms, with each of which they stayed many years. D.E. Parry managed the North Cannock Collieries for twenty years and then moved to the Allens Rough Colliery Co. where he was managing director for fifteen years. The coalmasters Lord Aberconway, Sir Francis Joseph, and Sir Robert Gardiner remained with the colliery companies to which marriage and related business interests had brought them in the maturity of their careers, and, finally, three Men of Note passed just about all of their careers as independent consulting engineers.

The one significant difference we can observe between the coalmasters descended from mining families and those from nonmining backgrounds was that the former ascended to positions of executive responsibility much more rapidly than the latter. One-third of the coalmasters with mining forebears, we have seen, attained partnerships or directorships by age thirty while none of the first-generation coalmasters, with the possible exception of Sir John Hindley (later Viscount Hyndley), assumed a comparable position at such a young age. More typical were J.T. Todd who was appointed general manager of the Blackwell Colliery Co. in Derbyshire at age thirty-nine after sixteen years as an underviewer, manager, and agent on the Durham coalfield and John Gregory who became the general manager of Sneyd Collieries at forty-one after twenty years with the firm and the chairman at fifty-two.

Educators, research scientists, public servants, and trade association officials, no less than company proprietors, mining engineers, and mine managers, distinguished themselves by the length of their employment with the same organizations. Prof. Granville Poole, who occupied the chair of mining at Leeds for thirty-four years, Reginald Guthrie, secretary-treasurer of the Northumberland and Durham Coal Owners' Associations for more than thirty-six years, and J.M. Carey, a mining inspector for at least twenty-four years, can perhaps represent the twenty-five Men of Note who devoted themselves to these branches of the industry.

Against the fifty-seven nonfamily Men of Note whose careers were essentially stationary, we may set the twenty-six Men of Note whose working lives reveal an element of mobility. Seven of the twenty-six--five coalmasters and two mine managers--held responsible positions at four or more firms, though four of the seven remained with one of their employers for nineteen or more years. Another ten combined several years' employment with private enterprises with government service or educational positions. In each of these cases the Man of Note moved from the business sector to the public sector, and it was in the latter that he performed the work that the *Colliery Guardian* noted.[5]

Nine of the first-generation mining men cited by the *Colliery Guardian* founded their own firms or played key roles in the expansion and reorganization of existing concerns. C.L. Clay, Sir D.M. Stevenson, and Sir Samuel Instone created new enterprises for the export of coal, and Sir Arthur Duckham and Sam Mavor started businesses that manufactured coking plant and mining appliances. Sir Alfred Mond and Sir Beddoe Rees both took a hand in the restructuring of the Welsh anthracite industry. H. Seymour Berry and L. Reginald Lewis were recruited by D.A. Thomas (later Lord Rhondda) and served as his lieutenants in the construction of the Cambrian combine, the great Welsh steam coal concern.

Three coalmasters from mining backgrounds should be added to this list of the entrepreneurs among the *Colliery Guardian*'s Men of Note. Sir Leonard Llewelyn, the son and grandson of general managers of the Powell Duffryn Steam Coal Co., the other great Welsh steam coal empire, was with H. Seymour Berry and L. Reginald Lewis, among the architects of the Cambrian combine. Lord Joicey built the colliery business of his uncles and father into one of the largest in County Durham by acquiring the Earl of Durham's Lambton Collieries, the Hetton Collieries of the Hetton Colliery Co., and the Silkworth Colliery from the Marquess of Londonderry. Alone among the *Colliery Guardian*'s Men of Note, Wallace Thorneycroft founded a new coalmining company. The son of a Staffordshire ironmaster and descended on his mother's side from the Baird family, the great Scottish coal and iron magnates, Thorneycroft formed the Plean Colliery Co. at the age of thirty, and he continued as its managing director for the next three decades.

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[5]Three of them returned to the private sector upon retirement, two as consulting engineers and one as a colliery company director.

Stability was the defining characteristic of the coalmining careers of the *Colliery Guardian*'s Men of Note, and this was as true of the newcomers to the coal trade among them as of the second-and third-generation mining men. If only 23% of the latter occupied responsible positions at three or more coalmining firms or worked for private enterprise and in the public sector, this was true of just 17% of those Men of Note whose families had had no prior association with coalmining. Nor was entrepreneurship--either in the sense of creating new businesses or restucturing existing ones--much in evidence among the *Colliery Guardian*'s elite. Company founders and empire-builders were a greater proportion of the first-generation mining men (9%) than of the Men of Note from mining backgrounds (5%), but both sets of entrepreneurs constituted small minorities within their respective groups. The men whom the *Colliery Guardian* in the 1920s judged to be the best and brightest of the British coal industry were overwhelmingly men who joined established institutions early in their working lives and who spent lengthy segments of their careers, if not their whole careers, with these same institutions.

V

The collective biography of the *Colliery Guardian*'s "Men of Note in the British Coal Industry" suggests that family linkages were a prominent feature of the British coal trade in the late nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth and that these linkages were especially pronounced in the profit-seeking sector of the trade. The lives of the Men of Note from mining families differed in two respects from the lives of the Men of Note who were newcomers to the industry. A larger proportion of the former were educated at Britain's most prestigious schools and universities, and the sons of coalmasters ascended to the highest-level positions within private enterprises at younger ages than did men whose fathers had not occupied such positions themselves. We must be careful, though, about the importance we attach to these differences. The Men of Note from nonmining backgrounds were certainly well educated by the standards of their time and place, and they do not seem to have faced terribly formidable obstacles in moving upward in the industry. After all, virtually half of the coalmasters honored by the *Colliery Guardian* entered the industry without the benefit of family connections, and among them, those who moved up through the ranks outnumbered those who entered directly into positions of corporate responsibility by two to one.

Moreover, there were noteworthy similarities between the Men of Note with mining forebears and those without. A large majority of the Men of Note from both the family and nonfamily groups passed their careers in the service of one or two institutions. After their late twenties or early thirties the members of the *Colliery Guardian*'s elite infrequently changed employers, and even before that many of those who moved went from private enterprise into education and research or government service. Similarly, entrepreneurial accomplishment distinguished neither the family nor the nonfamily Men of Note. Indeed, founders of firms and empire-builders alike accounted for just twelve of the 155 men (8%) on the *Colliery Guardian*'s honor roll.

What implications does this analysis of the elite of the British coal trade have for how we think about the agonizing decline of British industry? By way of a conclusion, I should like to put forward four brief answers to this question. My first proposition is that we reconsider the emphasis we have placed on the family in previous dissections of the failings of British capitalism. While we can detect differences within coalmining among men who had family ties to the industry and those who did not, the features they had in common--particularly the stability of their careers--may well have been more significant. I would also like to suggest that we may want to curb our inclination to attribute Britain's economic problems to the schooling of its industrialists. Whatever else one may say about the *Colliery Guardian*'s Men of Note, their formal educational credentials were impressive enough. Third, I wish to note the largely one-directional movement between private enterprise and public employments and to raise once more the familiar questions about the relative prestige and material rewards accorded to profitable activity and public service in Britain. Finally, I want to draw attention to the institutional loyalty so apparent in the careers of the Men of Note. Is it not possible that men who remained with the same organizations for decades on end--frequently the organizations with which they began their working lives and at which they achieved professional distinction--may have found it difficult to promote the innovations in production techniques and marketing strategies that changing economic conditions demanded from British industries after 1914 and which the coal trade for one was slow to make?

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