



## Ex-miner's painting is striking cover for new edition of 'Shafted'

THIS is the front cover of the new edition of *Shafted*, published for the 35th anniversary of the miners' strike. It will be available in April and on sale on OTJC stalls. If you would like to order a copy (£10.50 inc P&P) contact CPBF(North) at cpbfnorth@outlook.com

The cover is by artist Harry Malkin, a former miner from Fryston pit, who started painting after the pit closed. He explains the painting:

'Monday morning and shifting Everest with a banjo' is really about my father. He was a ripper at Fryston when I was growing up and when I started there he was working his way out, as was the thing with mining. You worked towards the face for the money, then worked out as you got older. Anyway, he would always get on about having to go to work and shift a load of muck as big as a house every day. It wasn't until I started there as a fitter and saw the men regularly doing this day in day out that I appreciated what he had to go through.



North East Derbyshire District Council's proud display of former pits in its area.

## Art served on a plate

During the 1984-85 strike a range of artistic talent was unleashed by those working in the Derbyshire mines. Lynda Straker takes a look at some of them

THEY sit in a row, five china dinner-size plates displayed along with scores more as you walk into our house. They are, if you like, our proud family 'photos'.

Williamthorpe sits on the left, my husband and one of his brothers; Glapwell, two of my other brothers-in-law, follows; Shirland, Pleasley and Parkhouse (Cathy) are my late father-in-law.

These are the north Derbyshire pits they all once worked at but, unlike the reality of their dark underground working lives, these plates shout colour, wit and passion.

That's just the front. Turn them over and you get a potted history and fascinating facts about the mines and those who worked in them, until exhaustion or the '84 strike hit. A piece of art and literature all in one, and if it carries the name of an artist or writer you know, that's a bonus.

The plates sprang up across the country during the strike to help raise desperately needed cash and also the profile of the communities involved. We had our banners and badges, and now we had our plates, most of which had a limited run of around 250.

In this area, Brian Martin was the man to go to for your plates, and although this

Ogreave veteran and active NUM member is sadly no longer with us, his legacy lives on. His words are on the back of many plates, and he initiated public displays of them seen by visitors to Clay Cross Hospital and at North East Derbyshire District Council's offices.

And, just like friends and family, there are favourites. For my son, born in the autumn after the strike, it is the Bevercotes NUM plate with its striking image of an arm bursting through the earth and wielding an axe alongside the words, *Loyal To the Last*.

For those not familiar with Bevercotes pit, it lay in Nottinghamshire; it's a powerful image that fittingly pays tribute to the bravery of those miners who stayed out on strike, including my son's uncle.

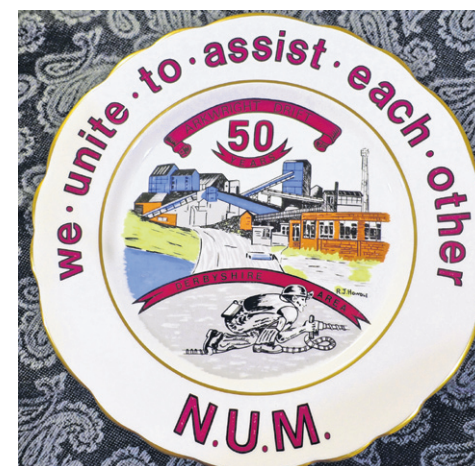
Recently, I took part in a research project being carried out by Middlesex University focusing on women in the strike, and I was asked to bring along a significant object from that time.

For me, it had to be a plate or, rather, a photo of one that's too precious to physically take anywhere. It's one that still brings a lump to my throat and sometimes a tear to my eye.

It was given to me in 1985 by its artist, Rob Howdle, back in the days when he



Powerful Bevercotes.



Personal favourite, Arkwright Drift.

was a young striking miner and neighbour with a toddler and another on the way. His plate, Arkwright Drift, has no words on the back, but I'll never forget the words he spoke and the pride he felt in giving me that plate.

What he couldn't have known was that Arkwright was the pit I regularly used to picket in the early hours of that long winter.

If the aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things but their inward significance, then these plates are priceless treasures.



Family pride.