

Press release: 'Gentleman Jack' – in need of the Coal Authority

Television's latest great Sunday night heroine – 'Gentleman Jack' – would have found her life a great deal easier if the Coal Authority had been in existence.

Based on Anne Lister, the West Yorkshire landowner who defied the social conventions of the time, the BBC 1 series shows her battling with neighbours over her coal mines. This was in the 1830s – at a time when coal mine abandonment plans were not centrally held.

Today, the owner of Shibden Hall near Halifax, could have checked on any local underground coal workings by visiting the Coal Authority, the non-departmental government body that's working to create a better future from our mining past.

Over 120,000 abandonment plans are held in temperature-controlled rooms in its Mining Heritage Centre in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. Dating from the 1760s, these are still used and accessed on a regular basis today to help protect people and the environment.

Problems encountered by Anne Lister in the programme – such as coal seams at different levels and the management of underground water – are all still relevant, with abandonment plans continuing to play an important role in managing Britain's coal mining legacy.

Abandonment plans for the country's former coal mines feature on rolls of parchment, linen and aluminium boards, with some measuring 6 feet high. Among them are the original plans for the Lister family mines around Shibden Hall.

Often labelled "the first modern lesbian", Anne Lister was a highly intelligent woman operating in what was then a 'man's world'.

She opened a pit in the area after she inherited Shibden Hall in 1836 from her aunt. Although Anne's original plans are not held by the Coal Authority, it does hold a total of 7 different abandonment plans of collieries owned by the Lister family in the Shibden area.

One of the 7 abandonment plans of collieries owned by the Lister family

These early coloured plans for the Lister pits name several of Anne's relatives, such as John Lister, Esq. Another plan dating from 1886 is marked with the name of Mr. Lister and Mr. N. Brooke.

You can see the Lister plans close up at our Mining Heritage Centre or [contact us for more information](#)

Press release: Statement from Harriett Baldwin on Ebola in Uganda

Responding to the confirmation of Ebola cases in Uganda, International Development Minister and Minister for Africa, Harriett Baldwin, said:

It is devastating to hear that cases of Ebola have now been confirmed in Uganda and tragically a child has lost their life.

The UK government has been the leading donor for Ebola preparedness in Uganda, training health workers on the ground and providing medical equipment to deal with this virus.

We stand ready to provide further support, but are also calling on the global community to step up. It is more important than ever that we work together to end this deadly outbreak.

Background

- The Ugandan government has confirmed three cases of Ebola in the country. A five-year old boy has died as well as his 51-year old grandmother. The authorities have also identified eight contact cases.
- Since 2000, Uganda has had five Ebola outbreaks. In the last outbreak (2012), there were 24 reported cases and 17 deaths. Efforts to strengthen Uganda's health system to be prepared for such outbreaks, including through UK support, means Uganda should be well placed to manage and respond to these new cases.
- UK aid has funded Uganda's preparedness effort since the current Ebola outbreak began in August 2018. This has involved training for health workers, the provision of eight ambulances and sixty-three motorbikes to support the management of suspected cases, including in refugee settlements.
- As a leading donor, the UK is coordinating other international donors to support Government of Uganda's plans to limit the possible spread of Ebola. This has included working closely with the EU, US and Ireland.
- UK experts have provided on the ground briefing to donor partners, using extensive knowledge of the disease to advise and guide the use of resources to prevent the spread of the disease.
- Public Health England (PHE) continues to assess that the risk to the UK from the outbreak is negligible-very low, even after the confirmed cases on the border between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
- DRC is battling the second largest Ebola outbreak in history and the first-ever in a conflict zone, with more than 70 armed groups operating in the east of the country. The number of cases has surpassed 2,000 and

the death toll has reached 1,390.

ENDS

General media queries (24 hours)

Press release: Waste site director given suspended sentence for operating illegally

Connally, 68, of Chaceley, Gloucester, was the sole director of the company that operated a waste treatment facility on the QinetiQ Industrial Estate in Long Lane, Pershore. In a case brought by the Environment Agency, Worcester Crown Court heard that between March 2013 and December 2015 he ran the site without the necessary environmental permit.

He was sentenced to 12 months' custody suspended for 18 months and also ordered to complete 160 hours' unpaid work in the community.

The cost of making the site, which is around the size of 3 football pitches, compliant would have been about £450,000. But in not doing so, Connally avoided those costs, plus more than £17,000 in fees to the Environment Agency. After the company was dissolved and the site abandoned, the cost of clearing it was in excess of £100,000.

Connally registered waste exemptions, which allowed up to 500 tonnes of waste to be stored at the site at any one time. During one of several site visits, environment officers estimated that nearly 9,000 tonnes of waste was illegally stored on site. Receipts showed that between April 2013 and August 2015, the company had invoiced a total of over £338,000 for the waste it had received and sold.

An inspection by the Environment Agency also found that the site posed a fire risk and that without proper drainage, water used to tackle any fire would have entered the Piddle Brook through highway drains. Plastics residue and pesticides from a cleaning operation also had the potential to cause pollution.

The site posed a fire risk

While Connally said he would apply for the necessary permits he never did and he also continued to operate when the Environment Agency and Worcestershire County Council served enforcement notices, until the site was abandoned in 2015.

In sentencing, the judge said he was in no doubt that the offending was deliberate and there was a long history in which Connally operated illegally, despite advice and visits from the Environment Agency. The clean-up costs were significant and the operation had taken up an enormous amount of regulatory time. He said that those who operate in the waste industry must understand that they must comply or risk prosecution.

The judge accepted the defendant's remorse, steps taken to remedy the site and that he was of previous good character and gave him credit for his guilty plea. He directed that the case also be adjourned for consideration of confiscation proceedings.

Speaking after the case, an Environment Agency officer in charge of the investigation said:

We tried to work with the company for two and a half years in an effort to get them to operate in a safe way and legal manner. By ignoring our advice, activities on the site posed a significant risk to the environment.

This prosecution shows that we will take action on reports of unlawful waste activities on sites that we regulate, and will pursue non-compliant operators through the courts.

Press release: FCO performing above the Civil Service Average on wellbeing

- Publication of first ever FCO voluntary report on staff disability, health and wellbeing shows positive picture.
- FCO scores higher than civil service average on wellbeing, and lower than civil service on stress levels.
- Reporting period covers preparation and planning work for EU exit.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has today published its first voluntary report on staff disability, health and wellbeing. The Civil Service as a whole reports against the framework already, following the Stephenson-Farmer "Thriving at work" report, but this year individual departments are publishing information for the first time.

The FCO faces specific and unique challenges that could potentially impact on wellbeing, which other departments do not have to deal with. These include staff working far from friends and family, in difficult or even hostile environments, and the possibility of moving location to anywhere around the world at short notice.

The report finds that:

- FCO employees had a PERMA (Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, sense of Meaning, and sense of Accomplishment) index score of 76%, higher than the median score for the Civil Service as a whole (74%).
- A stress index score of 27%, lower than the Civil Service average score of 29%.
- All FCO scores have shown small improvements over recent years.

Sir Simon McDonald Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, said:

“For the last three years we have worked hard on the UK’s exit from the EU. This year we temporarily relocated some staff to key locations across Europe to support British Nationals and business. I am proud that we continue to improve our wellbeing scores. The well-being of staff throughout our global network is a priority.”

The report also sets out how the FCO is supporting disabled staff and details of the FCO Wellbeing Strategy, which was launched in May 2018.

The full report can be found [here](#).

[News story: Inquiries Review: Notification of inquiry as preferred procedure now required 10 days prior to appeal submission](#)

At the Planning Summit held in London on 14 May the Minister for Housing, Kit Malthouse MP, endorsed our Action Plan to implement the recommendations of the Inquiries Review. As we have previously announced, we have begun implementing some of the recommendations and this update summarises the latest step forward.

Recommendation 3 advises streamlining the procedure used by appellants when they request an inquiry, recommending they notify the relevant local planning authority (LPA) at least 10 working days in advance of the submission of the appeal, ensuring they also share the notification with the Inspectorate at the same time.

How to notify

With immediate effect, you should notify the Local Planning Authority and also the Planning Inspectorate by email inquiryappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk at least 10 working days before

submitting your planning appeal.

In the notification, we request that you include:

- Appellant name
- The Local Planning Authority that the appeal will be against
- Reason for appeal
- Site address
- Description of development
- Planning application number; and
- Likely submission date of appeal.

[Download the template](#) to attach to the notification email.

We have also asked local planning authorities to provide this instruction to applicants in the decision notification.

For clarity, this only applies to planning appeals that follow the inquiry procedure.

Next actions for the inquiries review

In the next few weeks, we will publish guidance on new arrangements for the statement of case and statement of common ground. Appellants and local planning authorities should familiarise themselves with the guidance once published.

Keep informed about the changes

As we implement the recommendations of the Inquiries Review, we will publish updates on [Inquiries Review page](#) of GOV.UK. [Subscribe to email notifications](#) to keep updated on progress and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).