

128 TRAPPED IN PIT DISASTER

Knockshinnoch Castle colliery, near Gannock, Ayrshire, is the scene of the greatest rescue operation in Scottish mining history, when earth subsidence traps one-hundred-and-twenty-eight men below ground. A long vigil faces those who wait - a vigil all too familiar to those whose menfolk win their livelihood in the bowels of the earth. The men went down to work here. Behind them this land, undermined by floods, subsided into the tunnel. From the old Bank colliery working rescue crews plan to cut through 30 feet of coal to reach the men. Above ground others are throwing material into the huge crater to stop further falls of mud and slush which might fill the working and drown the trapped men. Nearby fire-pumps pump out the swollen stream which caused the trouble. Anxiety grows when gas is reported. A giant air pump is brought into action, but rescue can't wait. It must be a respirator rescue. So teams go down to show them how to use them and bring up three at a time. Thanks to the rescue crews, many homes are happy again.