

QUEEN AMONG THE MINERS:

At Rothes Colliery, Fifeshire - one of the most modern in the world - an old mining superstition is ended for good - and it's the Queen, in a white boiler suit and black gumboots, who ends it, as she receives her check number at the pithead. Miners used to believe it was unlucky to let a woman go down a pit - but there's not a whisper about that today. Queen Elizabeth the Second, is the first reigning British monarch to go down a mine since George the Fifth in 1912 - and she wants to know all there is to know about everything.

After a thorough inspection of the pithead buildings, the Queen enters the cage for the 1,600 ft drop to pit bottom. Rothes is the first of four new sinkings the National Coal Board is making on the Fife Coast, to tap the immense reserves of coal that lie around and under the First of Forth. At the level which the Queen is visiting, coal is already being produced in quantity, while a lower level is under development. The Queen comes "outby" after half an hour underground, during which she walked three-quarters of a mile to the coal face, splashong through puddles and talking to the miners.

Never did miners abandon a superstition more cheerfully than they have in favour of this young Queen who can make a boiler suit glamorous!