The workings of the Mauricewood pit are situated in the parish of Glencorse, county of Edinburgh.

The mine is owned by the Shotts Iron Company Ltd and has been in their possession since the year 1875. The Shotts Iron Company own other collieries and mines in the counties of Lanark and Edinburgh; and have blast furnaces in operation at Shotts in Lanark.
Mauricewood Today
Shottstown is built to house Mauricewood miners

About a mile away, at Fieldsend on the Edinburgh side of the little paper-making town of Penicuik, they built a Company suburb, Shottstown, its streets all proudly named after Company Directors. Walker, Lindsay, Leslie and Manderston. Fieldsend also housed miners who worked at Mauricewood
Fieldsend and site for new co-op
Local Builder John Dennis. Builds Houses at Shottstown

Other Dennis buildings were probably Penicuik Post Office (now Pen y Coe Press), Clippens Oil Co Headquarters (at Straiton Sainsbury Roundabout), Glenkinchie Distillery, **as well as miners housing all over the Lothians.**
Shottstown from Above
Four Rows totalling 49 brick built houses
Let me turn to the housing policy, or lack of policy, of the National Coal Board. No one can blame the Board for the deplorable property that they were compelled to take over on the vesting date. That was its inheritance from private ownership. Places like Butlerfield, Sherwood, Poltonhall, Dalhousie, Loanhead Westend and Shottstown are places which I think would earn the condemnation of the most broad-minded.
Description of Shottstown

Shottstown, the area the Miners Social Club stands sentinel over was once a tight-knit community of tiny, cramped, overcrowded terraced cottages; almost the entire adult male population of which was employed at either Mauricewood or one of the several other collieries and mines nearby. The definition of adult applied to males here in 1889 would have indicated an age of about 10 years of age upwards.
Washing Day

Each row of cottages usually had at least one wash-house, used without fail when the turn came around. The clothes were washed in a coal heated iron boiler, wrung out and then hung out to dry. After the clothes had been washed, the children of the house might get their bath in the remaining hot water. This reconstruction shows the washing process, one of the many for a miner's wife.
Census 1881 Shottstown
WILLIAM MEIKLE AND TWO SONS KILLED IN FIRE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROAD, STREET, &amp;c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE.</th>
<th>NAME and Surname of each Person</th>
<th>RELATION to Head of Family</th>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>AGE (last Birthday)</th>
<th>Race, Prof., or OCCUPATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 The Mill</td>
<td>William Meikle</td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
<td>ache m east -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mary A. S. Meikle</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Schooler -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William B. Meikle</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John B. Meikle</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John B. Meikle</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William S. Black</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James W. Black</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William S. Black</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elizabeth S. Black</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James S. Black</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William S. Black</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William S. Black</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total of Houses... 4
Total of Males and Females... 19
Mauricewood “Edge Coals”

Mauricewood was, in fact, not one, but two mines. Perpendicular pit shafts had been sunk here and at nearby Greenlaw Mains to a depth of more than 146 metres (almost 475 feet) and these were connected by a level roadway between the two. From the bottom of the Mauricewood shaft an incline had then been driven downwards at an angle of 50 degrees for a further 293 metres (over 950 feet) - an incline of 8 in 10 - and this represented the only access to and from the actual mine-workings which spread off eastwards and westwards for distances up to 366 metres (nearly 1200 feet) Seam called “Union Coal” but was in fact part of the “Great Seam” (2.5 – 4 ft thick).
Mauricewood Colliery suffered a bad fire on 17 December 1886 when wood lining in part of the mine ignited and flames spread to a nearby coal seam; it was eventually extinguished by closing that section and dampening it down for four days. At that time 77 men and boys were working underground, and 63 of them died. The mine had been owned by the Shotts Iron Company since 1875.
5 September till March 1890

“Everything went well till about ten minutes past twelve o’clock, when the pony driver, Richard Hamilton, a boy of about 17, came past the engine house, and shouted to me that he saw sparks. I tried to find the underground manager, but could not. I looked back, and saw sparks, and I sounded for the carriage. Before that I had shut the engine-house door, and also the trap to the blast door at the bottom of the incline, with the view of preventing a draught. I jumped into the carriage, and as it ascended and passed the other engine-house half-way up the incline, I shouted to the man Gall for God’s sake to warn the men in the mine that fire had broken out. Then I got up to the top and gave the alarm, and afterwards went down several times with the rescuing party. From my knowledge of the mine I have little or no hope whatever of any of the miners escaping with their lives. Robb was so thoroughly exhausted with the events of the day and the fatigue he had undergone that he could add no further details”.

William Robb, aged 39, married, and residing in Shottstown working at 160 Fm Level
START OF FIRE UNDERGROUND. Incline only way out of 120/160 levels
It was maintained on behalf of the miners that the main incline constituted a shaft in the sense of this enactment and that from the foot of the main incline at the 160 fathom level there was no second or separate means of ingress or egress available supplied with proper apparatus for raising and lowering persons.

The Fatal Accident Enquiry on 26th December, 1889, found that the shafts and outlets of the Colliery conformed with the regulations and that there was no breach of the law by the Shotts Iron Company.
Mauricewood Disaster Memorial Scroll

The Shotts Iron Company's

Mauricewood Colliery

In which a fire occurred
on 5th September, 1888,

Causing the death of
Sixty-three workmen.

In Memoriam
5th September 1888.
Gravestones at KirkHill and St Mungo's, Penicuik

George Pennycook (14 and 40)

Robert Dempster (14 and 37)

William Hunter (51) David Penman (27)

Robert Hunter (44)

James Stark (19)

T Foster (17) M Hamilton (16) R T Tolmie (14)
Recording of the Death of Three Miners at Mauricewood (Suffocation)

Also Alexander McKinley (28) and David Wallace (22)
Robert Hunter (44), Hugh McPherson (60) and Thomas Foster (17)
The Widow of Robert Hunter

Margaret Learmonth Hunter and grand-daughter, Peggy Hook, 1924
Memorial Stone at Mauricewood

46 victims came from Shottstown 63 in total
Details of the burials of miners killed in Mauricewood. The interment register is kept at the Kirkhill Cemetery and was opened for me to photograph by Kenny Ireland, keeper of the Cemetery. Kenny has also noted the places were miners buried. Majority do not have gravestones due to cost.
Relief Fund

On Monday evening, the 9th September, a meeting to organise relief and solicit subscriptions for those whose breadwinners had perished in the disaster. Sir Charles Dalrymple, Bart., M.P., Messrs. John Cowan of Beeslack, C. W. Cowan of Loganhouse, A. W. Inglis of Loganbank, John J. Wilson, banker, and the Reverends S. R. Crockett, R. Thomson, J. M’Kerrow of Penicuik, and J. Thomson, of Roslyn Chapel, took part in the proceedings.

The result of the appeals by the county and city committees was that about £20,000 was contributed by a generous public; and this sum was finally placed under the control of a joint aggregate committee, with a secretary and treasurer in Edinburgh, and a local secretary and treasurer in Penicuik. It is satisfactory to record that about £1200 of the total amount collected was contributed by the parishes of Penicuik and Glencorse.
Manager, John Love, at Mauricewood. Census 1891

"The manager Mr Love met the oversman George Muir on the surface when he came up for breakfast about 10am. Muir returned to the mine about 11:15am."  5/9/1889.
“New” pit opened with 200 Men

1891

In 1900 United Collieries took over the mineral rights. Final closure came in May 1902 due to cost of haulage at the bottom of the pit and cheaper iron ore from Spain and at Loanhead. Shotts Iron Co had moved operations to the Moat in Roslin.
A New Phase in Midlothian for the Shotts Iron Co

By 1901 the Shottstown Iron Co had the mineral rights for most of Midlothian. Although work at Loanhead and Roslin had been in place prior to this.

The Ramsay Pit had been working since 1850 and employed around 350 men, and the Burghlee Pit had started operations in the 1860s and employed about 770 men.

1866 Blackband Ironstone being mined at Loanhead (1,500 tons)

In 1901 sinking operations started in Roslin at the Moat pit. By June 1903 the pit was at eighty fathoms deep and it was planned to extract large amounts of household coal.
Miner’s brick cottage at Shotts Town, Penicuik, Midlothian, 1928
(Houses demolished in 1950)

Robert Weir is in the doorway of his father’s house with his sister Mrs Jean McColl, standing beside him holding her baby Andy. (Scran)
Miners in Penicuik 1950's

“Penicuik Town Council in them days brought 45 families through from the West. And then they had 45 families in Shottstown and there were 90 houses built in Glaskill in Penicuik. And that was a mistake they made.”

“After the Second World War Shottstown more or less died away and a’ the housin’ schemes up at the top o’ Penicuik - Cuiken right way roond, Glaskill and a’ that - they a’ came from the west.

“The paper mill workers in Penicuik thought theirsel’ a wee bit above the miners. Tae me, the miner wis more treated as a sort o’ lower ignorant man. But the miners had a compempt for the paper mill workers.

“They were good people, good people. And they were doin’ a job that a job that thousands wouldnae do.”

These are comments from “Through the Mill”. Recollection of Penicuik Mill Workers
Cuiken and Glaskhill 1956. Houses built for miners, mainly from the West of Scotland. House with red door, bottom photo, was my mum and dads house.
Memorial Stone at Mauricewood

46 victims came from Shottstown    63 in total