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On the 19th of November 2010, New Zealand suffered the terrible blow of the mine explosion at Pike River Coal mine with the loss of twenty-nine men.

At the time of the disaster when the news came filtering through the chaos of that day, my immediate thought was how could such a disaster occur in a new mine complete with up to date methods in this day and age.

To our company the explosion and consequent receivership of Pike River together with the flow on effects onto other businesses on the West Coast has seen us write off a substantial debt along with the yearly business of \$500,000 per annum. Our financial loss cannot ever be compared to the heartache and emotional losses of fathers, sons, brothers of the families of the West Coast.

Much has been speculated as to the cause of the explosion and we await the findings of the Royal Commission on this. One thing is for sure the ever-present presence of methane will have played a part in this tragedy.

As a tribute to the brave men who mine "the bowels of the earth" to extract its black riches, I commissioned our workshop boys to make a replica of the original Davey Miners Safety lamp invented by Sir Humphrey Davey in 1816.

Mitch Pennell, the workshop manager of Tauranga Engineering and his Team machined the brass base, Jason Valois and Kasey Dovaston of our welding and fabrication team fabricated the mesh and brass loop handles and assembled the lamps, and the entire project was supervised by Peter Berriman of our E.J.S Division.

Few in the mining industry have not heard of the Davey lamp, less know about the man. Our group represents Gilbert Gray mining lamps and I am, indebted to them for some of the information pertinent to the man and the invention.

The year James Cook discovered Australia was the year Sir Humphrey Davey was born in Penzance, Cornwall. Great changes were taking place, the Industrial Revolution was underway.

It was the age of invention, sowing the seed for what we reap today. Couple this with the galloping demand for pig iron and coal – an uncanny coincidence with what is happening 300 years after the industrial revolution.

Davey was apprenticed at sixteen to an apothecary, a forerunner to a chemist, where he acquired his love of the test tube. He discovered the effect of nitrous oxide (laughing gas) paving the way for future developments in anaesthesia. He was the first to isolate potassium hydroxide and sodium, he discovered that oxymuriatic acid was a simple substance and coined the name chlorine.

Turning back to the subject of coal mining, coal made cheap iron. It also made lots of methane. This was ignited frequently by the open flame lamps of the day. This in turn ignited coal dust suspended in the mines atmosphere.

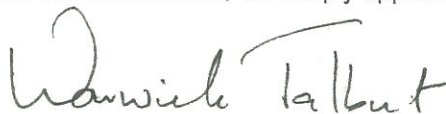
The death toll was in the tens of thousands and in 1815 Sir Humphrey Davey was asked to consider the construction of a miners safety lamp. The lamp was in service by 1816, a considerable achievement when, in these enlightened times it could take longer than that just to have it "approved".

The Davey lamp worked on the principle that if a piece of metal gauze is interposed between a flame and an explosive gaseous mixture, the heat is absorbed and conducted away by the metal mesh so that the gaseous mixture does not explode.

The most amazing aspect was that Davey refused to take a patent out "dedicating his lamp to humanity".

In the same spirit as Sir Humphrey Davey I would like you to have one of these replicas made by our young tradesmen, of whom I am immensely proud, in memory of those at Pike River who lost their lives.

Thank you so much for your business over this difficult time, we deeply appreciate it and look forward to being of service to you in the future.



Warwick Talbut
Group Managing Director