



10 Years of Walking Together

As part of the **10 Years of Walking Together project supported by National Lottery Heritage Fund**, Creative Writer Lynn Ludditt and a number of Markham Vale Heritage Group volunteers delivered creative heritage workshops with the community. The following pieces of creative writing are a sample of those produced during the workshops.

Mr Geary

Mr Geary was a miner - he lived on Lime Avenue. He was married with a wife, son and a daughter.

His daughter's name was Joan. This is what she told me.

She said her dad always took an apple to work for the pit pony. On this particular day he forgot to give the pony the apple at the start of his shift.

When the shift was over instead of making his way to the cage he turned back to feed the pony. Sadly he was caught up in the explosion and was killed.

If he hadn't turned back he would have survived. Joan was only seven years old.

Submitted by Kathleen Crofts

A Scary Incident

The incident that I am going to relate only happened to me once in all my 35 years in mining.

At that time I was working as a M/G Ripper - that is I was working in a team of four advancing the main roadway that follows the coal face with the conveyor belt.

It was a normal afternoon underground. We had nearly finished our shift when the phone rang. It was the overman asking us if we would work

overtime. This was not unusual for us as we normally did overtime on afters because there was about three hours between shifts. The work he asked us to do was to go to another face and timber up a roof cavity so the night men could start cutting coal straight away at the start of their shift.

When we reached the face we found a large cavity 2m high and 5m long in the roof about 60m up the face from the air gate or return roadway air way.

We got on with the task and after a while we had filled the cavity with timber. We had just climbed back over the conveyor and under the hydraulic roof supports when there was a loud rumbling and the roof and floor began to shake like an earthquake. It was quite scary.

It was a usual thing for the waste behind the face to come down with a bang but this was something different.

We decided to stay where we were as the hydraulic supports had been tested to support many tons of weight and we thought it safer than going off the face and risk a prop or a girder at the face entrance falling on us. The shaking continued for a few scary minutes but at last it stopped. Some of the timber on the face had fallen down so we put it back and came off the face.

Submitted by Ken Burrows.