

Walking Together

Markham Vale Mining
Memorial Heritage Trail



www.markhamstorymine.org

About

The 'Walking Together' project aims to remember each of the miners who lost their lives in the three major disasters of 1937, 1938 and 1973 with 106 sculptural steel figures. The concept was developed by artist Stephen Broadbent with guidance from the community and the route symbolises a miner's journey to the pit - and back home again. Each figure will bear the name of the man who died, his age, occupation and the year of the disaster.

A parallel project called 'The Story Mine' has unearthed stories of mining life and the men who died in each of the major disasters shared on a new website markhamstorymine.org. This resource was supported by Heritage Lottery Fund and Derbyshire County Council, and project managed by Beam.

The 3 Major Disasters at Markham Colliery

1937

On Thursday 21st January 1937 at 2.45 pm an explosion happened just when the men were changing over from the day shift to the afternoon shift. A flame which escaped from a faulty covering plate on the coal cutting machine caused a build-up of gas and ignited the coal dust. Seven men were killed at the scene and two men died later in hospital. Four men were seriously injured. The accident happened in the Black Shale seam - the deepest part of the pit and the furthest away from the pit bottom about one and a half miles. (The nine men who died have all now been commemorated as part of the Walking Together project.)

1938

At 5.30am on Tuesday 10th May 1938, the night shift was coming to an end, some of the men had already started to make their way back to the pit bottom. This was the Black Shale seam, the deepest and the farthest away from the pit bottom. In the pit yard the men on the day shift were arriving ready to start work at 6am. Suddenly, underground, a tremendous draft got up followed by a terrific bang. Black coal dust and smoke filled the pit and a wall of fire swept through the seam. There had been an explosion of gas at the coal face. Some tubs carrying coal ran out of control and smashed into an electric joint box causing sparks which ignited the coal dust. 79 men were killed and 40 men were injured. All 79 men were buried on Saturday, 14th May in 13 cemeteries.

1973

On Monday 30th July 1973 a terrible disaster happened when the cage carrying the miners to go underground into the pit failed to stop. It was the start of the day shift and by 6.20am 105 miners had already been lowered into the pit. Then, the overlap rope cage carrying 15 men on the top deck and 14 men on the lower deck began its descent. Sparks were seen coming from the brake cylinder by the engine winder who then slammed on the emergency stop button. Nothing happened and the cage crashed down to the bottom of the pit some 1320 feet below ground. The ascending cage crashed through the winding house roof. 13 men died at the scene and another 5 men died later in hospital. The other 11 men in the cage and one rescue worker were very seriously injured and were taken to hospital at Chesterfield.

Markham Colliery History

In 1863 Richard Barrow, owner of Staveley Ironworks founded the Staveley Coal and Iron Company and invited his friend, Charles Markham, Chief Engineer at the Midland Railway in Derby, to come to Staveley as his Managing Director. Richard Barrow died in 1865. In 1882 Charles Markham, then owner of the company, leased 5000 acres of coal reserves from William Arkwright and by 1885 the new Sutton Estate Colliery, later renamed Markham Colliery, was in full production.

The Staveley company built the colliery villages at Duckmanton, Staveley, Arkwright, Warsop, Barrow Hill and Poolsbrook for the workers and their families.

Markham Vale

The former Markham Colliery area has now been reclaimed and is home to the County Council's £94m Markham Vale regeneration scheme, which is working to create 4,100 jobs on site for local people and is underpinned by a philosophy of sustainability, accessibility and quality. The public-private sector partnership of Derbyshire County Council and Henry Boot Developments Ltd understand the significance of the site to local people and are committed to supporting the delivery of a memorial led by the community. Fundraising to complete the Markham Vale Mining Memorial Heritage Trail is ongoing.

Further Information
markhamstorymine.org



beam



THE STORY MINE
Unearthing and Sharing Stories from Markham Colliery

'Walking Together'

Markham Vale Mining Memorial

TRAIL ROUTE

A MINER'S MEMORIAL WALK FROM
THE SITE OF THE PIT HEAD TO
DUCKMANTON VILLAGE

Located in 4 marked areas on the map

1. The Environment Centre
2. The Underpass
3. Enterprise Way
4. Robertson's Avenue

