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NEWSLETTER

Hello All,

Can I take this opportunity of thanking you all for all the hard work and support you have given to and continue to give to Chatterley Whitfield Friends - CIO. It has not been a very good twelve months as we have been unable to offer tours and access to the Heritage Centre. As a result we have seen a dramatic reduction in membership and the revenue associated with it. The Thursday Club remained very active until the Lockdown in December. Lots of things to do, but unable to do them ! Since the beginning of the year we have maintained regular site checks, recording all visits and conducted weekly Zoom meetings. Time to move on and look towards the lifting of the CoVid restrictions on the 26th June 2021.



As chair it is a pleasure to have such a great dedicated team.

Nigel Bowers
Chair
Chatterley Whitfield Friends CIO - Registered Charity 1183093

Proposed Opening

It has been a long year, with no members of the public on site enjoying the tours and the Heritage Centre since March 2020. If everything goes to plan and the restrictions imposed due to Covid are eased we will open to the public on Saturday 26th June 2021.

We need to look at access still to the Heritage and Deployment Centre but the SAFE ROUTE on the site should be OK. This also means that Heritage Open Weekend Tours will go ahead in September 2021, but may have reduced numbers.
SO AS THEY SAY WATCH THIS SPACE !

CoVid
Update
We plan to
OPEN to the
general
public
26.6.2021

Great news - PIT HEAD BATHS ENTRANCE



We have managed to secure a grant to stabilise the entrance to the Pit Head Baths and work has started. They have removed all the old wooden boarding which was 'holding' the roof up, which was suffering from the metal tie bars corroding and bring down the concrete. It has already transformed the place and exposed a skylight. The steels are NOW in and the next phase will be the roof and then a wait for the place to dry out....



The Friends have been thinking long term and would like to see the old canteen being brought back into use as a Community Hub and the work on the entrance will make it possible. That is when we can get funding to do the rest.

Already onto the Heritage Lottery but are also in the process of setting up some Crowd Funding. Liaising with Lisa from Support Staffordshire for best option.

*HERITAGE CENTRE
UPDATE*



NOT a very good start to the year when we have had another flood due to a pipe joint giving way during a frosty night. Had switched the heating off as it was getting milder, bad night as it froze the heating system as well. Luckily water although spread throughout the building was only effected the carpets. Used a Vax to remove surface water and then council supplied a dehumidifier. All dried out now, no smell and no damage....

GOOD NEWS

Planning application gone in for external security shutters, progress being made on having insulated ceiling fitted, and the heaters are now working.



Years of neglect has turned it into a giant pigeon's home, so all the dropping will need removing and also IT WILL NEED making water tight and intruder proof.

Major issue with water egress, due to bad building management by the council after the museum closed.

Plenty of work to be done to this Grade Two Star Listed Building.....



NEW ADDITION TO THE NEWSLETTER - MEMBERS PAGE

We thought i would be a good idea to ask some members what were their connections to Chatterley Whitfield ?

Our thanks to Michael Ansell for this contribution

My Dad worked at Whitfield for 46 years from 1942. He left school at age 14 on Friday and the following Monday started at the pit. He was a surface worker in the boiler house with its bank of 10 Lancashire boilers. I went with him, before I was old enough to go to school, back in the 1950s, to collect his wages on a Friday when he was on the "wrong" shift. He continued to be employed by the National Coal Board at Whitfield beyond the closure of the mine in 1977, into the era of the mining museum. At the end of his time in the 1980s he could be the only person on site overnight, working the remaining boilers relocated in the fitters workshop, as well as carrying out security duties. I sometimes accompanied him on his round then into the eerily quiet Pit Head Baths. So I've known Whitfield all my life, as a working mine, a museum and, as it is today, an amazing heritage asset and with great potential for change from polluting industry to a thriving eco-led environment. Back in the 1950s the draw was seeing where Dad worked in the boiler house, the mine working "full blast" and especially visiting the ponies in the stables. We always got a lift down the lane in the cab of a lorry,

then took the bus (top deck, front seat if it was a double-decker) over to Biddulph to have dinner at my grandparents house. Very happy memories!

I've been a member of Chatterley Whitfield Friends for about 5 years. I'm particularly interested in the archives and history of the site. There are numerous archives which need sorting and saving for posterity. We have a collection of several thousand photographs as well as thousands of 19th and 20th century documents, not to mention the fabulous artefacts and machinery that remain, everything from winding engines to the Sylvester ... a tool used to safely remove pit props. Over the last couple of years (covid permitting) myself and other Friends have been dealing with the collection of maps and plans that we hold again, thousands, many outsize - some over 3 metres in length - that we are cataloguing and photographing for posterity. We try to demonstrate our on-going archiving tasks during Heritage and other open days, as well as accompanying visitors during their tours of the mine. Chatterley Whitfield Friends is a charity (a Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and I was involved in the application to gain charitable status from the Charity Commission. There is continuing on-going reporting to the Commission about the work that we do to benefit the community. With other Friends, Historic England, Stoke on Trent City Council and the architects, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, I'm also involved in the production of a Vision for Chatterley Whitfield for the next 5 to 10 years. We are also liaising with Keele University to undertake a project about the decommissioning of major industrial sites of the 20th century. We are very keen to work with the local universities, colleges, schools and the community on a wide variety of projects such as the production of virtual reality experiences to the history of coal mining. In order to further our aims, we are always on the lookout for grant aid! We have recently been successful in obtaining an Historic England grant to do repairs to the Pit Head Baths entrance, which we intend will be a catalyst to bring other areas of the Pit Head Baths into use for the Friends and the local and wider community.

Michael Ansell



Some of the Thursday Club waiting to get back on site.....

WE ARE AIMING TO EXPAND

The rapid progress the Friends have made over the past few years at Chatterley Whitfield requires us to think about expanding our number of volunteer members.

There are **LOTS** of things happening at our Heritage Centre - on a weekly basis and we have the support of Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Heritage England, our MP - Jonathan Gullis and several local councillors.

Many local companies and friends have also, kindly, helped us on our journey to date. For this - we sincerely thank them all.

An important and long-term vision plan for the site is currently under construction. Watch this space ...

We are always looking to grow our group of willing people who share an interest and passion for preserving our coal-mining heritage, in this proud City which developed around "Pits and Pots"

Assistance and expertise is desirable in the following roles/areas:

Map-restoration and archiving. We have an active team with a lot of experience who dedicate vast amounts of time to this vital area of our work.

Gardening. We are seeking a person, or persons, to assist in our Garden of Remembrance and Reflection. Light-work only. You will be able to view our Memorials and the other tasks currently underway.

Modelling. We are continually adding to our collection of mining-related items which have been produced with care and attention to detail. A model pit-railway is in its infancy and needs developing.

Brickwork and general construction. Help and advice as needed.

Woodworking and metalworking. We currently have several members with skills in these areas. Help us expand our team, or come along and learn from us! A great opportunity for young people wishing to gain some voluntary work-experience.

Library skills and clerical assistance. We have a vast collection of mining books and information in our base and the workload is currently carried out by one Friend. A great job he does too!

Painting and decorating.

Advertising. Help and support.

Architecture. Contacts for advice and guidance would be very welcome

General support on-site.

Trainee Guides and assistants.

Ex-Miners. Always very-welcome. Come along and meet our existing team of knowledgeable members. You might meet someone you know or someone you worked with. One thing is for certain - you will have a great laugh and go home a happier person!

New skills. As we grow, our skill-set needs to expand and diversify too. See what you might offer us!

THINK ABOUT JOINING US!

We encourage people of all ages, interests and abilities to come along to our Heritage Base to find out a bit more about what we do as Chatterley Whitfield Friends.

Our History - Our Vision (and Dreams!) - Our Mission-Plan.

Find out about our plans to make our Vision become a Reality. We are already on our way!

View our site and see the "fruits of our efforts"

Find out what we do on a weekly basis.

Meet the friendly **TEAM**

Eat bacon butties, (biscuits and cake for vegetarians) and drink lots of tea and coffee. we are very good at this!

Socialise and learn from each other.

Help keep our Industrial Heritage alive and accessible to all - for many generations to come.

Do what you can - when you can.

Do a little or do a lot.

Whatever you might choose to do - **IT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

Thank-You,

Alan D

CHATTERLEY WHITFIELD FRIENDS CIO GIFT AID MEMBERSHIP/ DONATIONS

We are a charity and if you are a UK taxpayer, we can reclaim 25p for every £1 you give us. Gift Aid is a government scheme where charities can reclaim money on your contribution from the HM Revenue & Customs.

Making a Gift Aid declaration:

If you are a UK taxpayer, a member of Chatterley Whitfield Friends CIO, or have made donations to the Friends, you could increase the value of every £1 you give to £1.25, by joining the Gift Aid scheme. And it's at no cost to you.

Gift Aid allows us to reclaim from the Government the tax that you have already paid on your membership subscriptions and donations. If all our members agreed to Gift Aid we

could claim more money each year and raise vital extra funds that would help us in our important work.

To make your subscription worth even more to us, all you need to do is download the declaration form attached with this Newsletter and return it via the internet to:

Chatterley Whitfield Friends - CIO E Mail:

membership@chatterleywhitfieldfriends.org.uk

More about the scheme

- We can reclaim a quarter of your membership subscriptions and/or donations
- Anyone who is a UK income or capital gains taxpayer can make a Gift Aid declaration
- One Gift Aid declaration covers your future donations and membership subscriptions, and can be back dated to when we became a charity in April 2019
- Gift Aid is not a method of payment so you still pay your subscription in the usual way
- You can cancel your Gift Aid declaration at any time simply by contacting our Membership Secretary.

WORK ON SITE DURING COVID



We have had a lot of issues with Urban Explorers and more recently youngsters getting onto site, pushing fences over and more recently vandalising the 100 year Lamp House. We have been working very closely with the City Council and Staffordshire Police and now have meetings on Zoom to discuss issues.



One worrying factor is we now have graffiti appearing on some of the buildings.

I know the site is 'monitored' by the council's CCTV system and very have developed a very good working relationship with the operatives - BUT

Some things are being missed.....

We check the site every week and all incidents of fences being pulled over, unclamped etc are photographed. Our newest weapons are Trailcams which have been picking up intruders as early as 04.30hrs in the morning..... All information been sent to the Police.



REMEMBRANCE - MEMORIAL GARDEN

It has been all stop on the garden, since the second Lockdown. We are ready to get started again and have had a very productive meeting with Rachel from Unitas - Looking at unused building material presently stored in building 23.



The two memorials looking resplendent in the April sunshine. A credit to the members who built them.



The tub railway still looking good. Thanks to Apedale who supplied us with additional track so the circuit could be completed. The lads tell us there is a bit more work to do.

BUT what about the rest of the garden.

WE HAVE A PLAN !

When we get back the World War One Memorial needs to be finished by the 16th July. **WHY?** - Well it will be one hundred years since the original war memorial was unveiled and dedicated by Col George Hesketh in Ball Green.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.flipsnack.com/chatterleywhitfield/whitfield-colliery-war-memorial.html>

OUR SOCIAL NETWORK

<https://chatterleywhitfieldfriends.org.uk> was launched in 2013 at the same time we went onto Facebook with:

<https://www.facebook.com/ChatterleyWhitfield>

Spreading the Word



No we have not got a big bus, caravan or banners to promote Chatterley Whitfield, BUT we do have a secret weapon in the guise of our Deputy Chair Mark. He has donated a couple of display cabinets and will display some articles and information at near by Ford Green Hall. We still maintain our social media sites, and have a worldwide following.

The Way Head 2021 and beyond.....

In March 2020 Chatterley Whitfield Friends in effect closed down due to Covid restrictions, but behind the scenes we have never been so busy.

During the summer before the second Lockdown volunteers were on site and recorded 3,266 hours of work. Compared to the whole of 2019 when we achieved 4,224 hours. A credit to the team. This does not take into account the hours our Trustees put in and all the now established weekly Zoom meetings we have.

One of our archivists, Lloyd puts in around 100 hours a month. Then we have had numerous meetings re the Vision, and other projects we are involved in. So we may have not been active as much on site, it has been a very busy, and positive year.

Looking towards the second half of 2021, we have booked the dates for Heritage Open Weekends in September. We may reduce to number per visit from 30 to 20, no decision made yet and hopefully may be able to offer Access for All - Grant applied for to purchase ramps etc for persons with mobility issues.

We need to get 'cracking' on the Remembrance - Memorial Garden and the team are eager to get back.

Chatterley Whitfield was once described as the Stonehenge of the coal industry - In effect, Chatterley Whitfield is a moth-balled monument in decay. A very special place, that must serve the present. It is already a cultural asset, and with imagination and drive it can be recycled to become an economic asset again, serving its communities, local, regional and national.

We are looking forward to exciting time ahead.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT.....

