

NEWSLETTER



We may be on the tele later in the year.... BBC DIY SOS Nick Knowles and his camera team visited the Heritage Centre on Thursday 24th February. They were in the area with the BBC DIY SOS team creating a community garden for the Sylvester's Community Trust which was set up in 2017 to deliver food boxes and run workshops in the Fegg Hayes area. Nick chatted with some of the Friends, about Mental Well Being and what being part of the Friends meant.

The Friends gathered around our meeting table and then the chatting began.



Nick was given the star treatment and got a brew before Adrian.....



The Friends gather



Nick prepares himself for the Friends !!!!!

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR.....



Hello All

I know we have been shut over the winter period and are now getting ready to reopen to the public. The new insulated roof has transformed the Heritage Centre and we have been busy rearranging the displays. The Memorial Garden team have been busy and are presently working on a new mining display. We are also looking at adding another memorial dedicated to the lives lost at Lidice in World War War Two. Negotiations are on going with the council to secure the Memorial Garden for future generations and hopefully

we may be in a position to erect the old Sports ground gates soon. We still have access to the main site, where we regularly check the buildings for damage and signs of access by unwanted visitors. Our tree management has been helped by a donation of £400.00 which enabled us to get a chipper on site to remove the brash. The chippings have been collected by friends from the Minnie Pit charity. We have been assured that the Vision commission by Historic England will be presented at Stoke on Trent Council at the of March, however we have decided to produce our own. A small team are working on it now.



The LAST shift at Chatterley Whitfield was on 25TH March 1977 as seen from this photograph of the miners and manager Doug Dorn (Centre).

Although we have been closed, we have been visited by a couple of groups of young architect students from Bristol and London. We even welcomed a couple from Sussex and a family from Jersey. Then we were lucky to have a visit from BBC SOS DIY.

We want to reinstate our Saturday openings on the first of every month, but as you can see we are trying to aim to open to the public on Saturday 26th March 2022 - 45 YEARS after the colliery closed on 25th MARCH 1977.

But remember as members to can come along anytime on a Thursday and Saturday morning where we are open and busy with working parties.....

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

Nigel Bowers
Chair

SATURDAY 26TH MARCH 2022

We are OPEN to the general public
SITE TOUR MAY BE ARRANGED IF SAFE ROUTE IS AGREED
BY COUNCIL

Chatterley Whitfield Colliery - Closes 25th MARCH 1977

Chatterley Whitfield Colliery:



In 1976 coal-drawing at Chatterley Whitfield finally came to an end. The colliery closed in 1977.

The site today, is acknowledged to be **the most comprehensive survival of a deep coal-mine in England**, with a range of surviving structures and buildings unequalled in any other former, or surviving, coalfield site in Great Britain. It has been assessed by Historic England as Priority 'A', which means immediate risk of further rapid deterioration and loss of fabric.

In it's 2019 study, the Victorian Society listed it as one of the ten most-endangered buildings, (or group of buildings) in the country. The site includes a **Scheduled Ancient Monument** with many scheduled structures and listed buildings.

Chatterley Whitfield was a huge and significantly-important colliery in the North Staffordshire Coalfield, which can lay-claim to supplying vast amounts of coal to the nearby Pot-Banks, Steel-Works and other industries, which *owed their very existence* to this rich and plentiful supply of fuel. The area we now know as "**The Potteries**" was, indeed, founded on the "**Pits and Pots**"

During the momentous 1930s there were over 4000 workers, on this site, actively involved in the winning of coal; as one of **Britain's largest coal-mines** it became the **first colliery** to mine **1,000,000 tons of saleable-coal in one year**: A feat repeated in 1939.

Chatterley Whitfield is steeped in history and since at least the 1860s, generations of miners have left their mark on the mine landscape, through the buildings and the very shape of the earth itself. Today, the site is often referred to as a "**Sleeping--Giant**" A wonderful place to visit. ,,.,.,,

Come and see for yourself Help us wake it up!

MUSEUM DAYS



The Mining Museum, the *first underground mining museum in Great Britain*, opened in 1979 and attracted many visitors who were able to experience a deep section the Winstanley and Institute shafts. An authentic "Underground Experience" was created at a later point, when flooding issues affected the deep sections of the mine. This project entailed realistic reconstruction of underground workings and was located in the old railway sidings and concrete ventilation tunnels.

A substantial part of this remains and we

would like it to be brought back into use, as a paying attraction, to complement our Heritage Centre tours and visitor experience.

The Mining Museum once attracted over 70,000 visitors a year and existed until it closed in 1993.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE FRIENDS

Who we are:

At the beginning of 2001, in connection with the Regeneration Project, Stoke on Trent City Council held discussions about setting up a **Friends of Chatterley Whitfield Organisation**. These early members, some of whom are still active today, were instrumental in holding planning-meetings and working-parties, retrieving documents, artefacts and plans which had been left, upon mine-closure, in various buildings across the site.

The Friends grew in number and, with permission of Stoke on Trent City Council, were allowed access to the on-site **Deployment Centre** which provided a dedicated place to carry out a range of vital restoration and salvaging tasks.

In 2018 we were provided with an additional empty-building, which, in it's working- day was the base of the colliery Geology-Office. This off-site building has, in the last three years, been transformed to become what is now our *Heritage Centre*.



We are now known as the **Chatterley Whitfield Friends - CIO** (Charitable incorporated Organisation)

What we do:

Acting as **Guardians of the mine-complex**, including the *Ancient Monument*, we seek to preserve as much of the site as possible. The condition of many of the buildings are at a critical state and they need to be saved now, to stop further deterioration. We aim to pursue, as a priority, funding and other assistance wherever possible to fulfil this requirement.

We *actively promote* Chatterley Whitfield, through *Heritage Open Days* and to the general public through *tours of our Heritage Centre and the wider, Mine-Area* when Friends take on roles of Guides and Stewards.

Interest in the site is constantly increasing and the Friends assist Stoke-on-Trent City Council, with visits from, amongst others, Film and TV Companies, Universities, History Groups and Local Schools.

Involvement of the Local and Wider Community is one of our main objectives.



Members of the Friends are from various backgrounds and utilise a wide range of skills including Building and Construction, Welding and Fabrication, I.T, Photography and Gardening. Digitising and Archiving of historic plans and documents is central to our role; these are made available to the General Public for many various purposes.



We are fortunate that some of our Team Members are ex-miners, who bring a wealth of experience, knowledge and **Fun!** to the:

Chatterley Whitfield Friends TEAM.

Tireless Efforts, Active Members



Where and When we meet:

The Friends meet on Thursdays and Saturdays between 10.00am and 2.00pm at the Heritage Centre, Building 29b.

(Follow signage at entrance to the main site)

(You are welcome to come along and see what we do or even help us!)

Note: the FIRST Saturday of each month is available for Public Visits and Tours

(see Website and Facebook for availability)

OUR VISION *Overview* (Read alongside Objectives)



With a view to the future and with a *long-term Vision-Plan under consideration* by Historic England and the site-owners, Stoke on Trent City Council, to restore and re-purpose the Chatterley Whitfield site, the Friends aim to concentrate on further-developing the highly-successful, on-site, *Heritage Centre* and *Garden of Remembrance/ Reflection* where people can visit, learn, contribute *or just be.*

We aim to build upon *community links* and provide a *Hub* where people can meet to share life's experiences, share knowledge and build friendships.

The Friends wish to grow the already-developing relationships with educational establishments, and other Heritage sites who offer so-much in furthering our (and their) aims.

As the Heritage Centre and Memorial Garden continues to develop at a rapid pace, we wish to further our ambitions by acquiring more space and facilities, to house the ever-growing range of mining artefacts which come into our possession.

Whilst the "*Big Vision*," is under consideration and understanding that funding, safety and permissions will obviously play a part in the extent and scale of developments we would like to see happen, we hope to explore access and improvements within the Canteen Area, the Lamp-House and The Ken Salt Building (which houses a vast amount of important colliery items) Two other, ambitious aims would include access and improvements to the Hesketh Power House and the remaining section of the Underground Experience.

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>

<https://chatterleywhitfield.online>



We will be opening on the 1st Saturday of every month starting in April for the public, **BUT** remember as a member, come along on the Working Party days, which are every Thursday and Saturday between 10am and 1pm.