

CHAT WHIT NEWS

www.chatterleywhitfieldfriends.org.uk

General Meetings 2024

General Meetings Update

General Meeting were held on
Saturday 17th February 2024

and

Saturday 9th March 2024

When we open ?

The Heritage Centre,
Remembrance Garden and
Building 30 open every:

Thursday and Saturday between
9.30am and 1pm

Heritage Watch.

Historic England are using Chatterley Whitfield as a pilot for a national Heritage Watch scheme. This is as a result of the break-in we had in June 2022, which has not yet been to court. It is early days yet and we are still at the meeting stages, but we are working with Historic England, the Council, and Staffordshire Police.

Heritage Crime Risk Assessment

An ongoing project looking at the site security, funded by Historic England. YET more meetings.....

HOD Heritage Open Days in September

Confirmed as the weekends of 7th/8th
and 14th/15th



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

We extended our Christmas closure for a number of reasons as the heating broke in the Heritage Centre and also the roof started leaking more. The extended closure period wasn't received well, and it led to some interesting exchanges of views at the two General Meetings. The heating has now been fixed and the roof still leaks a little, BUT we are back open again. We have been having a few issues with the council who closed the site down due to Health and Safety issues just before the March tour. The tour had to be cancelled. We were also denied access to our Deployment Centre. There has been a lot of backroom work going on and access to the site has now been re-established. At the last General Meeting we decided on an Action Plan and one of the actions was to offer a place on the board of Trustees to a former miner. We had one nomination for the post but unfortunately the member did not have the necessary attributes to fill the vacancy of secretary. We continue to have visitors with a more recent gentleman coming all the way from Leeds.

So what does 2024 hold in store for us, WELL:

We are still waiting for the lease to be progressed so that we can start work in Building 30 compound; We are still actively looking at going forward and applying for Museum accreditation; Still looking for grants; Embarking on the mammoth task of auditing the artefacts we have on site; Looking at offering members only days so you can come and see what we do.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

Nigel Bowers BEM

The Underground Front

The story of the Bevin Boys miners has been largely untold; those many men who spent their war on the so-called 'underground front' went unrecognised for almost half a century. When Britain declared war in 1939, thousands of experienced miners left the mines to join the armed services or transfer to higher-paid 'war industries'. By the summer of 1943 over 36,000 men had left the coal industry. The British government decided that it needed around 40,000 men to take their places.

Ernest Bevin

In December 1943, Ernest Bevin, the wartime Minister of Labour and National Service, devised a scheme whereby a ballot took place to put a proportion of conscripted men into the collieries rather than the armed services. Every month, ten numbers were placed in a hat; two numbers were drawn out, and those whose National Service registration number ended with those numbers were directed to the mining industry.

These "ballotees" became known as "Bevin Boys".



So what has this to do with Chatterley Whitfield,

The first ever Reunion of the Bevin Boys was held at Chatterley Whitfield Mining Museum on the Remembrance Weekend of 1989. This was the culmination of many months of hard graft following an initial approach to the media by Jim Hutchinson, Director of the Museum and his Public Relations Officer Vivienne Slater.

Jim Hutchinson visited the Heritage Centre a couple of weeks ago, and we chatted about a memorial to the Bevin Boys. This is being discussed and looks like it will happen.

Monthly Tours are back !

THE TOURS ARE BACK ON.

***** **TOUR DATES** *****

SATURDAY 13TH APRIL 2024 – FULLY BOOKED – PLACES LIMITED

SATURDAY 4TH MAY 2024 – FULLY BOOKED – PLACES LIMITED



Site visits



Since reopening in February we have already welcomed around 50 students from Keele University who spent a morning in the Heritage Centre, Remembrance Garden, Building 30 and they had a look at the Hesketh on site. We also welcomed volunteers from Astley Green Mining Museum. They were given a site visit on the Safe Route and later dined with us on cheese and oatcakes. If you are up Manchester way pop in and see them. <https://lancashireminingmuseum.org>

We also had visits from Historic England, Jonathan Gullis MP and Ben Adams - Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner

Building 30 and Remembrance Garden Update



Waiting for a building survey before we sign for the five year lease. The building itself, still not useable in Bay 1 due to the condition of the roof. When it rains, the holes which are hidden by the plaster board let the water in resulting in the plaster board degrading and falling down.

So until we can come up with a solution to solve the problem we can not use that part of the building. We are trying to get a grant to repair

the brickwork. Looking forward, we need to improve the compound area in front of the building. Nothing set in stone yet, but would like to clear the area and possibly rearrange the position of some of the mining equipment.



We have also purchased some wooden picnic tables which will be ready for visitors to use very soon. We are planning a new area in the garden where we will site the picnic tables. It will require moving the pit tubs and then landscaping the area. Work in the Remembrance Garden never stops ...

The Heritage Centre

We continue to get donations and keep Lloyd Boardman and his team of archivists busy. Lloyd is kept busy digitizing material and has just finished a collection from the estate of the late David Caroline. His relatives donated his collection of Chatterley Whitfield books, which he bought at the auction in 1994

You never know what is going to turn up next, you get a phone call, and we are asked ' Can I drop something off'. It can be anything.....

Latest donation being a little demon single shot detonator and a petrol pump that used to be outside building 30 when it was the lorry garage.

We mentioned the audit earlier.....

Once the audit is done it will be in line with the requirements of the Museum Accreditation application. In the meantime it will give us an opportunity to look at the displays and perhaps change them round more often.



It has been suggested that we introduce QR Codes so people visiting us can get more information. So we have a project ongoing to look at this, as we have WiFi in the centre now.

So as you can see a lot of things going on.....

We continue to work on the maps and plans in the Deployment Centre, part of the Pit Head Baths Complex.

Jim Hutchinson (seen on the right) the last Museum Director checks out some of them.

The maps we are now displaying are copies of the originals.

Social Media

Keep up to date with what's happening at Chatterley Whitfield through our social media sites, which can be found on Facebook, X, Whats App, LinkedIn Instagram and of course searching via Google. We still have our established web site, but do not forget the site that Keele University created.

Here are some links:

Our website: www.chatterleywhitfieldfriends.org.uk

Keele site: www.chatterleywhitfield.online

Next Newsletter due for publication in June