



WORK BEGINS!

Welcome to Riddle & Pick

from The Friends of Hemingfield Colliery

I hope you enjoy our first newsletter. We are very pleased with the project's progress. In the first 6 months assistance has come from a number of individuals and organisations. We work as a team but I want to start by explaining how I got involved.

I became aware of Hemingfield Colliery in 1995 whilst visiting Silverwood Colliery in Rotherham. I always made a point of asking if there were any satellite sites in the area, as these older, smaller sites were often particularly interesting. It was then I discovered Hemingfield was one of them.

After gaining official permission, I visited the site with Dennis and Mel of ECS Engineering Services, the organisation contracted by the NCB to manage their pumping stations and I was hooked! The small pit was intact with the winding equipment and controls complete; largely untouched for the last 70 years. I made many visits and took lots of photos, some are now historic because of damage and vandalism in the 19 year interval.

The frequency of my visits diminished until about 5 years ago. I drove past and saw the roof of the electrical building had been burnt

out and realised that the sites days were numbered!

Fast forward to August last year when I arranged to meet Richard King, Barnsley Council's Project Manager for the Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership (DVLP) on site to discuss what could be done with the pit. No sooner had we met on site than Glen Shepperd, one of the residents of Pit Row opposite the site came to introduce himself (he was really checking what we were up to!).

The rest (as they say) is history. Glen and his partner Christine Cameron and I set up the Friends of Hemingfield Colliery (FOHC) as a company limited by guarantee and purchased the site, finally gaining possession on July 2014. Richard King and his colleague John Tanner have been immensely helpful getting FOHC moving and Richard has secured our initial part of DVLP funding for the restoration of the electrical building.

On behalf of Glen, Christine and myself, we particularly want to thank everyone who has turned out, braved the elements and primitive conditions on site to get us where we are today, with particular thanks to Scott, Chris, Keith, Alan, John and Phil.

Steve Grudgings
Chair - Friends of Hemingfield Colliery.

Riddle & Pick

Hemingfield Colliery
Newsletter



Issue 01 / 2015

IN THIS ISSUE

Sheffield Student Initiative

The University of Sheffield's School of Architecture (SSoA) collaborating with FOHC.

Page 2

Getting Involved

Find out ways to get involved with the clearance project.

Page 2

How the project began . . .

A potted history of the colliery.

Page 3

Volunteer Spotlight

A feature looking at the work of one of the volunteers.

Page 3

Hemingfield in Hansard

The 1926 tragedy.

Page 3

What's in a name?

The story behind the newsletter's original title.

Page 3

Fast Facts

A bit of useful trivia about the colliery site.

Page 4

How to keep in touch

Contacts details and ways to find out more on the web.

Page 4

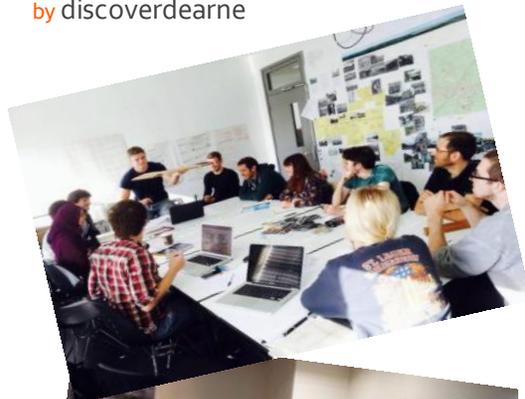


Dearne Valley
Landscape
Partnership



Sheffield Student Initiative

by discoverdearne



Getting Involved

By Christine Cameron

Hemingfield Colliery is a key project within the Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership and we are looking to support them in developing their proposals for the site and carrying out the work.

As we are just starting the work, we ask that people send any enquiries via the website or social media accounts (facebook and Twitter).

In 2014 students from Sheffield University School of Architecture worked with the Friends of Hemingfield Colliery as part of the Live Projects initiative to see how this historic site can be brought back to life. This group of year 5 and 6 architecture and conservation students developed proposals as part of their course but their work will also be vital in helping the Friends group move forward with their ambitious plans for the area.

This six-week project saw the students carrying out extensive research on the site and surroundings, primarily through community engagement. The project sought to improve the students' awareness and increase their understanding of the rich history and possible futures for this area. Their proposed ideas on how to reinvigorate the site, will aim to bring the community and the colliery together once again, linking closely with Elsecar Heritage Centre, Elsecar and Hemingfield villages.

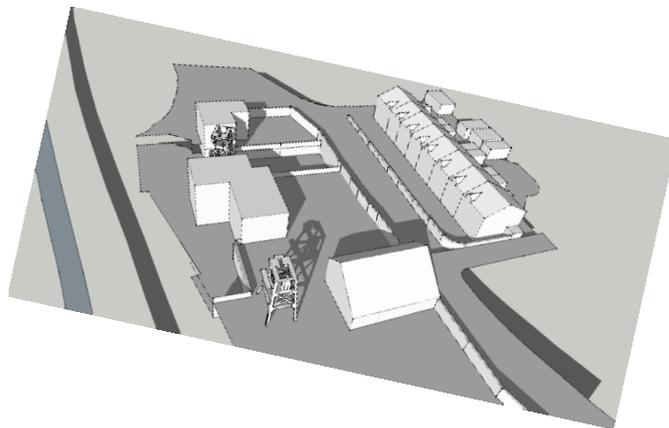
If you'd like to read more about the project, read Sam Diston's Project Diary at www.thehemingfieldcolliery.wordpress.com. There is also an account of the community engagement event at <https://hemingfieldcolliery.wordpress.com/2014/10/27/the-future-of-hemingfield-colliery-ssoa-live-project-community-engagement-event/>.

Here's how you can extend your involvement with The Friends of Hemingfield Colliery and join us on some or all of the following:

- Researching the site's history and that of the wider area – some information is already available, but there is much more to be done.
- Site clearance and conservation – help clear the land of vegetation that has built up over many years.
- Industrial archaeology – understanding the site, its buildings and remains.

Picture – Site work by volunteers over the last month has cleared debris and vegetation from the site improving access to the buildings. Clearing vegetation from the brickwork is vital to protect it from invasive root systems.

Picture - This computer model will then be made into a large scale physical model which will be used throughout our design development process as well as during community events.



DEARNE VALLEY LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

In June 2014 it was confirmed that the partnership had been successful in securing £1.8m of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

CONTACT INFORMATION:
Richard King, the Landscape Partnership Development Officer, Barnsley Council.



Please note – at this stage the site is not open to the general public, so we recommend that visits are made during working party dates when the Friends of Hemingfield Colliery will be available to introduce themselves, explain the site, our plans, and what needs to be done.

Next Site Days – come and join in!
January 24th & 25th
February 21st & 22nd (also at Barnsley History Day on 22nd)
March 21st & 22nd
April 11th & 12th, 25th & 26th.

How the project began . . .

Coal mining made an important impact on the South Yorkshire landscape both socially, culturally and economically. FOHC was set up to acknowledge that contribution whilst working to create a new facility for today's Hemingfield community.

Developed by Earl Fitzwilliam in the 1840s, under the management of Benjamin Biram, the Hemingfield site consisted of 2 shafts – 1 downcast and 1 upcast. Hemingfield Colliery, also known as Elsecar Low colliery, was once part of a mining string that stretched from Elsecar to Park Gate, accessing the Barnsley coal seam.



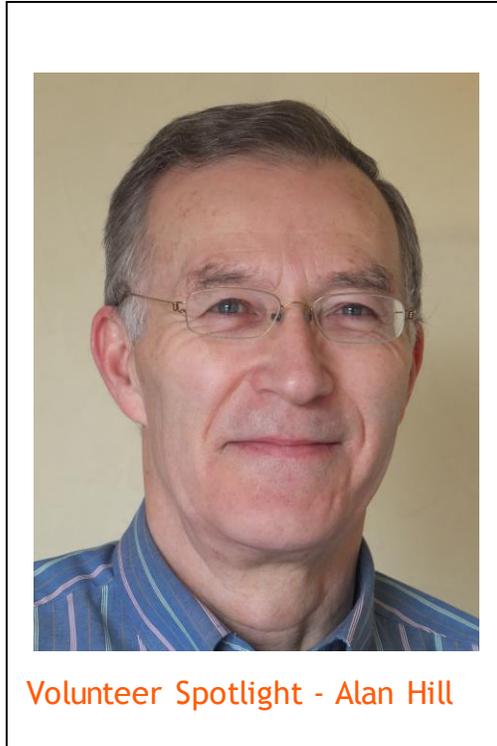
After UK Coal announced their bankruptcy in 2013, Hemingfield pit fell into the hands of the receivers. This led to the establishment of FOHC. In December 2013 the group made an offer to purchase the site to safeguard it but the transaction didn't complete until June 2014. FOHC is eager to press forward with its plans to repair, refurbish and redevelop the buildings and the site.

Hemingfield in Hansard

Hemingfield Colliery featured in a debate in the House of Commons when a rope snapped and claimed the life of James Gentry on 10 March 1926.

The heated discussion questioned whether safety checks at the colliery had been adequate. The Coal Mines Act of 1911 brought in specific safety measures. A specific question was asked by Mr G Hirst regarding whether these measures were instigated at the Hemingfield site. However it was determined that the act was not relevant to the case as the site had been reclassified as a pumping station. Read more about the case at

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1926/mar/23/old-hemingfield-colliery-fatal-accident>.



Volunteer Spotlight - Alan Hill

My interest in the Industrial Revolution and engineering history goes back about 40 years to when my involvement in industrial archaeology first took off. I was born and brought up in the North of England, living first in a shipbuilding and iron making town in south Cumbria and later on the South Yorkshire Coalfield.

Surrounded by heavy industry and the remains of the industrial revolution, I began visiting and photographing industrial sites. This "general" interest in industrial archaeology developed into a more specific interest in the history of the coal industry and development of related mining technology. To this end I wrote my first book, which was published in 1985.

Over the years this was followed by three further coal mining related books. At present I am

compiling a book on marine engineering. I still enjoy photography and wish that digital cameras had been around in my early days of photography!

My interest in Hemingfield Colliery stems from my having been brought up a few miles away and have known and visited the area over many years. I also have a particular interest in the development of ventilation technology, a subject in which Hemingfield and the surrounding area is particularly rich, due to the connections with Biram and Nasmyth.

I have lived in Birmingham for the last 40 years.

Alan Hill (alan.hill47@talk21.com)

The story behind the newsletter's title

Enos Bacon, "The Yorkshire Nightingale" wrote a poem called "Hemmingfield Mine" published in 1945. The poem's third verse begins:

"For mining the coal, done by riddle and pick,
And filling the wagon to brim,
Is such that the work is as hard as a brick
And takes all that's peppy from him."

FoHC wanted a title for the newsletter that linked to the history of the site. It was hoped the title would evoke specific links to industrial history and coalmining in particular. COGS was the first attempt, inspired by the idea of winching machinery. However it just didn't have that x-factor to make the title unique enough. After some searching Christine Cameron found the poem and suggested the title as it seemed to fit all the ideas.

FoHC would love to find more poems about the colliery. If you have any information please send it in and we'll consider it for a future feature.

FAST FACTS

468 feet

The depth of Hemingfield's downcast pit.

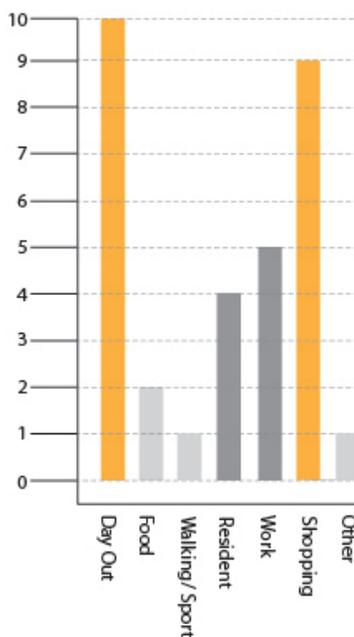
10 lives

The number of lives claimed by an underground explosion at 1.30 pm on 22 December 1852.

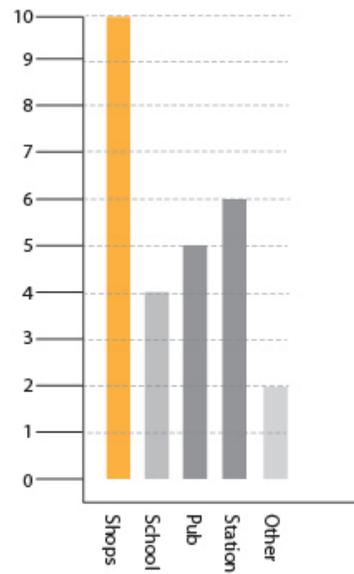
15 May

The day in 1920 when Hemingfield Colliery ceased drawing coal for Earl Fitzwilliam.

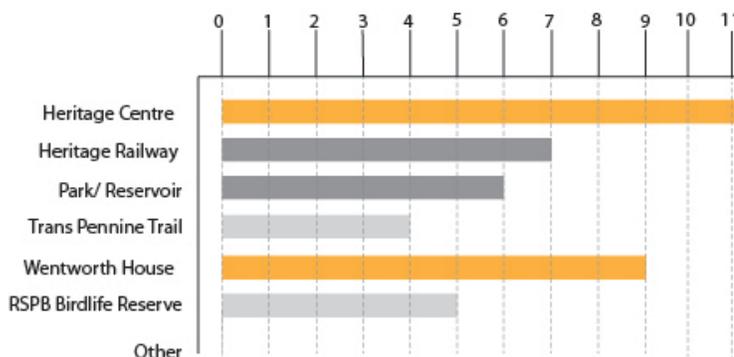
What brings you to the Heritage Centre?



What are the Typical places you visit in you town



What brings you to the Heritage Centre?



The graph shows the results of a survey carried out by University of Sheffield students in order to find out vital information about potential visitor priorities. The survey results will help devise a strategy for promoting the Hemingfield site as a visitor attraction.

Riddle & Pick

By post:
c/o 6 Pit Row, Hemingfield, Barnsley, South
Yorkshire S73 0NX

Website:
<https://hemingfieldcolliery.wordpress.com/>

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/Hemingfield.Colliery>

Twitter:
[@Hemingfield_Pit](https://twitter.com/hemingfield_pit)

How to find the Hemingfield Colliery site

By Train

Take the Northern Rail service to Elsecar Rail Station, from the station head right to Cobcar Street, turn right onto Cobcar Lane then turn left onto Wath Road (B6097). Hemingfield Colliery is on the left.

By Bus - From Elsecar Train Station

Turn left out of Elsecar Train station and cross to the bus stop on the opposite side of the road. Take the 72, 72A or 648 to Hemingfield, adjacent to Pit Row bus stop.

By Car - From South Sheffield

Head Northwest on the A6109, take the 1st exit at the roundabout onto the M1 ramp to Leeds/Barnsley, exit the motorway at junction 36 and take the A61 exit to Barnsley (South). Take the second exit at the roundabout onto the Dearne Valley Parkway(A6195), at the next roundabout take the third exit onto Hemingfield Road. Turn right onto Tingle Bridge Lane then turn right onto Wath Road (B6097). Hemingfield Colliery is on the left.