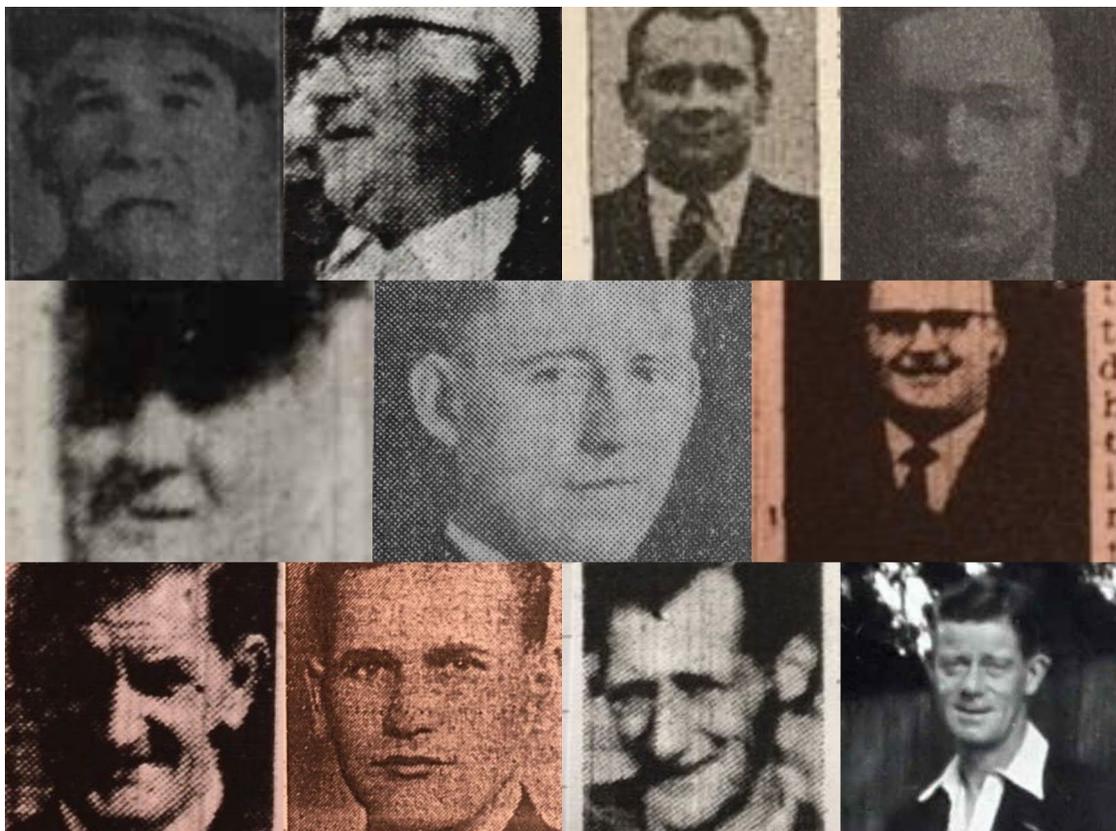


# 'Walking Together'

## Markham Vale Mining Memorial Heritage Trail



*'Walking Together'* – is a mining memorial artwork representing the miners tragically killed in three major disasters at Markham Colliery in 1937, 1938 and 1973.

Designed by artist Stephen Broadbent and commissioned by Derbyshire County Council, the memorial forms a trail across Markham Vale Industrial and Business Park on the site of the former colliery.

We are delighted to be installing 11 new statues this autumn, taking the total number to 88 along the trail, which will eventually feature one statue for every one of the 106 miners lost. After this installation we will have 18 statues left to fundraise for in order to complete the Walking Together trail and this installation sees the completion of the memorial figures commemorating those men who died in the 1973 disaster.

This group of figures has been generously supported by Great Bear Distribution with partners Reckitt Benckiser & Henkel; Derbyshire Environmental Trust through the Landfill Communities Fund; HBD; Family and community donations and Derbyshire County Council.

This group of figures commemorates:

## 1973 Disaster



### **Henry 'Harry' Chapman, 48, Deputy**

Pit Deputy, Harry Chapman, had worked in Derbyshire mines since he left school and moved to Markham after the shut-down of Morton Colliery. He began his mining career at Grassmoor. His main hobby was gardening and he was well-known in the area for his growing of chrysanthemums. He was a member of Holmgate Horticultural Society. He was survived by wife (Mary) and two children, Peter and Lynn.



### **Frank Stone, 53, Road Repairer**

Frank Stone had been a miner all of his working life except for a short time during the Second World War when as a 'Militia Man' he joined the Royal Army Medical Corps. He had been at Markham for two years having previously worked at Parkhouse and Oxcroft pits. Frank left a widow, Nora and son Murray and granddaughter. He was buried at Clay Cross Cemetery.



### **Jan Kaminski, 58, Development Worker**

A former corporal in the Free-Polish Army, Jan Kaminski, was demobbed in England in 1947, and became a miner at Williamthorpe Colliery where he worked as a face-worker until the pit closed and he was transferred to Markham Colliery. He was a quiet man and many of his workmates did not even know his name. Jan was married to his french born wife, Josephine and they had a son, Jan Frank.



**Lucjan Julian Plewinski, 59, General Worker**

Lucjan Plewinski came to the UK with the Polish Army in 1946 and was stationed at Hardwick Camp. He worked at Westthorpe Colliery for 23 years. He was a founder Chairman of the Polish Ex-Servicemen's Association in Chesterfield, and for three years running won Chesterfield Corporation's best-kept garden award for the Hasland area. He was survived by his wife Alice, and one son.



**Wilfred Rodgers, 59, Face Worker**

Wilfred Rodgers had worked at Markham Colliery for over 30 years and saw active service with the 8th Army in the North Africa campaign of 1942, including the decisive battle at El Alamein. He returned to Markham after demobilisation and was a keen gardener. He left a widow, a son and a daughter.



**Charles Turner, 60, Deputy**

Charles Turner had worked in the pit all his working life and was a deputy. He had been in mining since he was 14 and started work at Oxcroft Colliery. He had been at Markham for just four months. He left a wife and son.



**Alfred White 57, Deputy**

Alfred White was Area Sgt. Major of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and in 1970 was enrolled as a Serving Brother of the Order of St. John. Born in Sunderland, Mr. White moved to Derbyshire in 1954 and was employed as a Deputy at Morton Colliery until its closure, when he transferred to Markham. During the war, Mr White was Acting Sgt. Major in the Royal Engineers and received various decorations. He served with the Clay Cross special constables for 20 years, and was a member of the old Stretton Football Club. He left a widow, Mary.

## 1938 Disaster



### **George Whitley, 43, Ripper**

George Whitley was a former member of Staveley Woodthorpe Church choir when resident at Seymour. He had worked for the Staveley Company since leaving school. George Whitley was buried at Staveley alongside eleven of his workmates who died with him. He left a widow and a son, Geoffrey.



### **Fred Monk, 60, Timber Drawer**

Fred Monk had worked at Markham for a number of years and was formerly a resident of Whittington Moor. His son, Kenneth was working on the same shift and was injured in the blast. A joint service for Fred and his colleague and friend, Clarence Palmer was held at Hollingwood Church and then they were buried side by side at Staveley. Fred left a widow and several children.



### **Clarence Palmer, 39, Contractor**

Clarence Palmer spent all his working life with the Staveley Company. During the war he served with the Coldstream Guards. He died alongside his colleague and friend, Fred Monk and a joint funeral service was held for them at Hollingwood Church. They were buried next to each other at Staveley. Clarence left a widow.



### **Frank Jones, 33, Haulage Hand**

Frank Jones had been married for only a year and had a young child. His wife hurried to the pit on hearing of the explosion, and was relieved by the news that her husband had been seen going home on a bicycle. She returned home to find that he had not arrived and went back to the pit, hours passed as she kept anxious vigil, receiving no news. On Wednesday the truth was gently broken to her.

## **The Markham Disaster by Arthur Fox**

Bear with me as I tell this story  
A story of disaster, and very little glory  
An explosion that wrecked the black shale pit  
And lives of the miners that worked in it

I still remember that fateful day  
I was working at Ireland Pit, not two miles away  
With vivid memories of the tragic scenes  
When I was in my early teens

On our bikes we rode to Markham that day  
Maybe we could assist in some small way  
When we arrived hundreds were there  
Many of them ladies, with scarves on their hair

Standing amongst this silent mass  
Watching every stretcher pass  
Seeing the rescue teams go by  
And the tears that fell from every eye

Stories began to pass through the crowd  
Of relatives and neighbours, of which they were proud  
Someone mentioned a chap named Tony  
Another told of a lad found clinging to his pony

This tragedy is rarely mentioned today  
Though in our memories it will always stay  
The lives of loved ones this explosion stole  
What a price to pay for precious coal

**Poem by local miner and poet Arthur Fox, provided courtesy  
of historian Sandra Struggles who holds Arthur's extensive  
poetry collection, gifted by his family.**



With thanks to -



We would like to thank all of the volunteers from the Markham Vale Heritage Group for their continued support in helping to realise this ambitious memorial.

Special thanks to Netherthorpe School and student Leah Battley (Yr 8) for reading 'The Markham Disaster' by Arthur Fox in the short film commemorating this latest launch.



**THE STORY MINE**  
Unearthing and Sharing Stories from Markham Colliery

Read more about the mining heritage of Markham at [www.markhamstorymine.org](http://www.markhamstorymine.org)