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# Heritage School Case Study

Producing a film: 'Exploring Your Coal Mining Heritage'

KS2 pupils worked with a group of ex-miners and a film company to produce a film to encourage schools across England to explore their coal mining heritage

**Where: Telford & Wrekin, West Midlands**

**Who: John Randall Primary School and Priorslee Primary Academy**

The project was an extension of the Heritage Schools support for schools studying their coal mining heritage. In 2015, a group of ex-Granville Colliery miners first began visiting schools, with their equipment and kit, to tell pupils about coal mining in Victorian times and describe their own mining experiences.

Given the success of some of the school projects, Heritage Schools commissioned the film director, Nick Fogg, to produce a film to encourage other schools, around the country, to study their own local coal mining heritage. The aim was to stimulate interest by showing footage of the miners' school visit and highlighting key themes, such as the working conditions and dangers miners faced and how technology and safety standards later improved.

The first filming session was with Year 5 pupils from Priorslee Primary Academy. They visited Priorslee Village to look at the cottages built for the Lawn Colliery and the houses built for the mine managers. The footage showed the pupils sketching the cottages and looking at details in the buildings.

The miners were filmed presenting to a class of Year 5 pupils at John Randall Primary School. The pupils asked questions, tried on the miners' equipment and imagined what the life of a child miner might be like. On the same day, the pupils joined the miners in the nearby graveyard of St Michael's Church, in Madeley, to see the Memorial to the Nine Men of Madeley and learn more about that mining disaster. A group of pupils were then filmed giving their views about what they'd learnt, before a final day's filming on location at the pit top, at Blists Hill Open Air Museum and at John Randall primary School.

**Intended Outcomes:**

- To stimulate interest and inspire other schools to book visits and explore the mining heritage in their own localities
- To enhance the learning experience of the schools directly involved and to create an approach and structure of key themes so that other schools could follow
- To highlight the value to schools of making links with local miners' groups

**What we did:**

- We arranged initial planning meetings with all partners involved including: film company, miners, schools, National Coal Mining Museum for England.
- We filmed pupils and miners on location including Priorslee Village, John Randall Primary School, Blists Hill Open Air Museum.
- We worked with the film company to review footage and produce a final edit.



### Challenges:

- Arranging filming times that were mutually convenient for all partners: film makers, schools, miners and filming locations. The film took slightly longer to complete than initially envisaged
- Filming underground at the Caphouse Pit, National Coal Mining Museum for England
- Ensuring the film would be relevant nationally – not just to the area we filmed in
- Finding an effective way to show that mining spread all across the country, using a map and symbols

### Successes:

- The spirit of collaboration between the schools, miners, film makers, heritage partners and those responsible for filming locations, such as the National Coal Mining Museum for England and Blists Hill
- The positive, enthusiastic and professional attitude of the pupils involved
- The outcome – the final film reflected, very closely, the original idea
- The responses of those who have seen and used the film so far

### Resources and web links:

- [Exploring your Coal Mining Heritage Video](#)
- [National Coal Mining Museum for England Website](#)
- [Blists Hill Open Air Museum](#)
- [The Nine Men of Madeley Project](#)

### Next steps/extension activities:

- To share the Vimeo link with as many schools, in former coal mining areas, as possible.
- To work with the Coal Authority to collect images and information to prepare generic resources to accompany schools' mining studies.
- To investigate potential for creating a resource for KS3-5 students based on emerging technology and modern careers based on managing the legacy of coal mining.
- To establish an equivalent group on miners, prepared to visit schools, in another part of the country.