
HIVE GALLERY PRESS RELEASE

HIVE GALLERY
Elsecar Heritage Centre
Wath Road, Elsecar, Barnsley,
S74 8HJ, South Yorkshire,
United Kingdom

Telephone: +44 (0)1226 743122
Email: info@hivegallery.co.uk
Web: www.hivegallery.co.uk

BLACK GOLD

23 January - 7 March

Private View 28 January 7 - 9pm

The exhibition's title, Black Gold, references the historical impact and value that coal had to Barnsley in terms of its industrial history. Barnsley became known as the heart of the South Yorkshire coalfield. Past generations toiled and risked their lives to pull this black rock from the ground. As time and regeneration have covered signs of this industry it still impacts our landscape both mental and physical and we continue to live its legacy. This exhibition features work by 5 contemporary artists based in Barnsley.

Patrick Murphy / John Ledger / Jo Pearson / Mikk Murray / Barrie Jones

The work on show reflects their own personal relationships with the town and its history. For more information on individual artists or any other aspect of the exhibition please email info@hivegallery.co.uk.

Notes to Editors

HIVE GALLERY is situated in Elsecar Heritage Centre, Barnsley which is located within the former ironworks and colliery workshops of the Earl Fitzwilliam. The Fitzwilliam family were key figures in the early days of coal mining in the region. The Centre was later bought by the NCB (National Coal Board) and is now owned and managed by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. HIVE GALLERY is an independant gallery run by Creative Barnsley.

By the late 17th century coal was in demand as a domestic fuel. There was a considerable amount of coal beneath Barnsley, enough to supply the town's needs and export elsewhere. At the turn of the 20th century coal was the most important industry in Barnsley and by far the largest employer. The profitable Barnsley seam had been virtually worked out by the end of the 1940s but coal was still to be found in 24 seams throughout the Yorkshire coalfield. The demise of the coal-mining industry followed hard on the heels of the 1984-85 Miners' Strike, and by 1992 only two pits remained open in the Barnsley coalfield: Grimethorpe and Houghton Main. These too were nominated for closure by the end of that year.

Many workers relocated to the area to take up jobs in the mines. Massive peaks and troughs in demand for fuel (much of it was exported) meant that work and, therefore, income would vary widely across the year and many miners and their families, particularly in company run mines, were reduced to living in poverty with few rights. In the mid 1940s the National Coal Board (NCB) took over running of the mines from private companies and wealthy estates and provided a more democratic and structured way for miners to work and be represented.

There has always been a strong dichotomy in our relationship with this industry; it is true that it created communities and engineered a pride and community spirit as well as large scale employment, but it is also true that it was always a dangerous occupation with many deaths through mining disasters. It is also the case that there is a legacy of mining related illnesses

For further information and images please contact:

Call +44 (0)1226 743122 or 07958 367808
or email info@hivegallery.co.uk
