



DURHAM
In Time

Sacriston Colliery - Timeline

by Lawrence Claughan

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| 1839 | Sacriston mine opened |
| 1882 | Sacriston and Witton pit linked underground |
| 1902 | Workmen's club opened |
| 1903 | Inundation T. McCormick and J. Whittaker drown. W. Richardson rescued after being entombed for 92 hours |
| 1923 | Memorial Institute opened |
| 1940 | Sacriston disaster 5 men killed at Sacriston Colliery |
| 1947 | Nationalisation of pits |
| 1984-85 | National strike |
| 1985 | Sacriston Colliery closed |

Sacriston Colliery Disasters

History of Sacriston Colliery, their disasters and fatalities to try and remind the village of its culture and heritage for posterity.





DURHAM *In Time*

When I worked as a miner in earlier days and whenever there was a local mining accident or fatality, older miners always talked of disasters and fatalities long ago or what their fathers had told them that the true facts were not always told and how vulnerable men were called to the managers office to sign declarations carefully prepared by Management and Officials to “cover up” the true facts to protect the owners and management from prosecution and remove any liabilities of compensation for the deceased family.

After perusing through the “Sacriston Miners Lodge Minute Books” certain events have come to light, which may be worth perusing and be added to what local history has been established.

Sacriston Colliery Disaster, 17 November 1903

The discovery of contract prior to the Scariston Lodge Minute Book of 4 December 1940 and the report of when five men were fatally injured by a huge ball of stone in the 2 north, 1 east, Busty Seam. The fatal cases were George Scott (fore overman), Joseph Welsh (deputy), John W Britton (deputy), William Richardson (pipe man) and William Smith (stone men).

Only Smith and Welsh are mentioned in the Durham Mining Museum’s ‘In Memoriam’ of Sacriston Colliery. Further pages 81-85 mention the fatality. On page 86 a meeting held on 19 December 1940 depicts “a letter from W. Lawther (Durham Miners Agent) enclosing a copy of a letter received from the Divisional Mines Inspectors about the recent fatality stating that he was taking up with the Colliery Company the matter of the landing being so near the ‘Goaf’ and had given his staff to pay special attention to this matter throughout the district.”

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