



Chesterfield & District Local History Society

NEWSLETTER August/September 2022

Our next meetings

September 19th

The Holywell Street Excavations

Tristram Glover

October 17th

100 years of music in Chesterfield

David McPhie

Meetings are held at the St Thomas Centre, Chatsworth Road. Doors open 7pm, for a start at 7.30pm.
Members free, visitors £3. Light refreshments are available before and after the meeting.

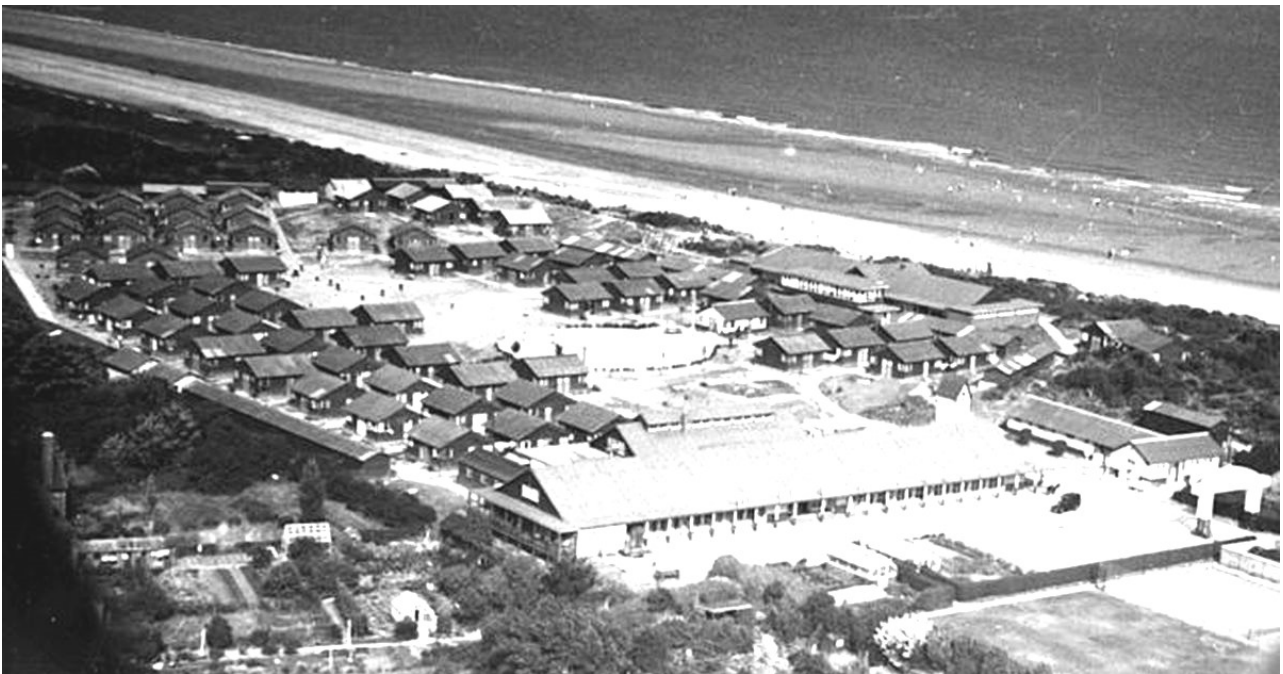
Derbyshire Miners' Convalescent Home and Holiday Camp at Skegness



The Derbyshire Miners' Convalescent Home at Skegness had its origins in the Ilkeston and District Convalescent Holiday home opened in 1894 by the financier Ernest Terah Hooley, who was declared bankrupt in 1898. The home continued as the Midland Counties Convalescent Home until it was taken over by the Derbyshire Miners' Association in 1904 and it became the Derbyshire Miners' Convalescent Home. Funding was a continual problem but in 1915 efforts began to raise money for a new purpose-built convalescent home. Four acres of land was purchased from the Seely family on generous terms.

The architect for the building was originally Percy Houfton of Chesterfield, but he died in 1926 and Mr F A Bromhead, also of Chesterfield, replaced him. The home with beds for 124 men and 34 women was finally opened in 1927. A total of 110,000 came from the Miners Welfare Fund: £50,000 for the building and £60,000 to establish an endowment fund to contribute towards the maintenance costs.

In 1937 the Derbyshire Miners' Association negotiated with the Ministry of Labour for the introduction of a Holiday Savings Scheme, which would enable miners in Derbyshire to take holidays without a loss of earnings. A holiday camp was built in the grounds of the Convalescent Home. Accommodation was provided in some 73 large wooden chalets each divided into four separate rooms providing basic sleeping accommodation for four married couples. Flanking the married couples' chalets were rows of 115 so-called "cubicles" for teenagers and single adults. The wooden panels were prefabricated at the site of Vic Hallam Ltd in Heanor and the company's men built the camp during the winter of 1939/1940. Along the sea front were a series of large communal wooden buildings housing a children's theatre, lounge and a billiard hall.



These were destroyed by fire in 1949 and replaced by more permanent structures. In early 1953 much of the lowland on the east coast was devastated during the East Coast floods. Fortunately a warning came in time for busloads of more than 100 men from the three Markham Collieries to be brought to Skegness to build a sand bag wall to help save the camp. Following the Hungarian uprising in 1956 the camp housed around 900 male refugees, many of them recruited in Vienna by the National Coal Board for the sum of £8 6d per week.

In 1975 a new building complex consisting of the Drifters Club, supermarket, amusement arcade, disco and snack bar was opened. The camp was closed in the late 1990s following the contraction of the mining industry and the popularity of holidays abroad.

The home closed in 2018: the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation, the charity which ran the home, blamed its closure on falling visitor numbers and increased costs. It was purchased the following year by a local family who promised to renovate it.

Chesterfield Library coffee morning 25th August

You are invited to bring along your memories of the Derbyshire Miners' Holiday Camp and to view a display of material from the library archives and some beautifully restored images. Tea and biscuits will be available between 10am and 11:30 am.

Francis Henry Hart 1767-1867

A headstone in Spital Cemetery marks the final resting place of Francis Henry Hart. He was born in Devonshire and joined the 39th Foot in 1805. He was awarded the Military General Service Medal, with an impressive eight clasps, for actions at Toulouse, Orthes, Vittoria, Nive, Albuera Nivelle, Busaco and the Pyrenees during the Peninsular War. In 1812 the regiment was sent to America before returning to England in 1815. In 1825 he retired on half pay with the rank of Captain retiring with the rank of Major in 1844. He settled at Yatton Somerset so why was he buried in Spital Cemetery?



The monument on the adjacent grave provides a clue. It records the deaths of Ernest Phipps and Harry Vernon, twin sons of Gratian Charles Barry and his wife Marry Anne Hart, aged 3 months in 1863, followed by the death of Mary Anne, beloved wife of Gratian in 1865 and finally the death of Gratian's son, Gratian Charles Barry Hart, in 1871 aged 10 years.

In the 1861 census Gratian was recorded as a surgeon living on Holywell Street. It would appear that he had come to Chesterfield following the opening the new Chesterfield and North Derbyshire hospital in 1860. His father would have moved to Chesterfield to live with son. Having lost five members of his family in such a short time Gratian moved back to the West Country where he died in 1900.

Chesterfield Museum Revealed



Once planning permission was received for the refurbishment of the museum in March this year the Museum closed and the staff began the mammoth task of packing all the museum's collection ready for transport to off-site stores.

The last area to move was the staff work area on July 19th one of the hottest days of the year and work started at 6am!

Some of you might remember the lending library before the new library in the Pavements was opened in 1985. The Museum opened in 1994 and the area was used for temporary exhibitions.

The other photograph shows a museum store area. Past users of the local studies and the reference libraries will remember the set back entrance.

To find out what the Museum staff are doing during the closure follow the Museum's Facebook page.

The museum store which houses some of the larger items from the Museum's collection at Unit 1 Calow Brook Drive will be open on Saturday 10th September between 11am and 12 noon in connection with Heritage Open Days.

The Revolution House is open on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays until 18 September 2022.



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