

History Subject Knowledge Bank Year 5: Coal mining in Selby

<u>Vocabulary</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Trend	Change or development in a certain direction
Legacy	Long lasting impact of a person or event
Drift	Coal mine where coal is close to the surface.
Shaft	A coal mine where the coal is deep underground
Chronology	tells us what happened when.
Contribution	The refusal to accept or comply with something
Perspective	A particular point of view.

Timeline of coal mining in Selby

1976- British Coal opened mines in Selby.
 1983- production begins
 1994- production was 10 m tonnes per year.
 1999- the mines were making a loss.
 2000- production had declined to 4.4 m tonnes.
 2004- all Selby mines closed. 5000 people lost their jobs.



How and why is coal mined?

- Coal has been mined for thousands of years. In England, it became a major industry during the Industrial Revolution in the 19th Century.
- Coal was used to power steam engines, heat buildings and to generate electricity. There were over 3300 mines in England in 1900.
- Coal mining still happens in England but on a smaller scale.
- **Drift mining** - Coal is close to the surface so it is dug out and conveyor belts are used to get it to the surface.
- **Shaft mining**- Dig underground to get to the coal. Sometimes the shafts are miles deep.

Why did the miners go on strike in 1983?

- In 1983, the Government, led by Margaret Thatcher, wanted to close many coal mines in the UK. They argued that mines were no longer as profitable, production rates were falling and the costs of mining were increasing.
- They stated that coal could be bought from other countries more cheaply than it could be produced in this country.
- Additionally, the environmental impact of coal mining was also a consideration.
- The Government also wanted to reduce the power of the Trade Unions in the UK.



Where were the Selby coal mines?

- There were 5 mines: Wistow, North Selby, Riccall, Stillingfleet and Whitemoor.
- All the coal was transported by tunnels and conveyor belts to Gascoigne Wood, where it was processed and distributed by rail.
- There was an estimated 600 million tonnes of coal in the Selby seams.
- In October 2004, the final lump of coal was retrieved from the Riccall mine, one of the 5 pits which made up the Selby mines.
- After 121 million tons of coal had been mined from under Selby the mines finally closed, leaving millions of tons underground.
- The closure of the mines was a controversial move by the Government and there has been much discussion about whether this was the best decision.

How did Black and Asian people contribute to coal mining?

- Many men came from the Caribbean and SouthEast Asia after WWII and worked in collieries in Doncaster and Leeds.
- After WWII, coal mining was heavily affected by a labour shortage. So, Britain made an appeal overseas for additional workers.
- Many had no prior mining experience or training but soon found jobs at the colliery, mainly as coal face workers, deputies and miners' union representatives. They settled into mining communities.
- Hundreds of black men worked in deep coal mines across the country to help the UK economy.
- Some died in the process and many now have life-long injuries and industry related diseases. A new project has discovered that while racism was accepted above ground, deep underground there was no divide.