
45 Hartley New Pit

Theme: Heritage and mining

Location

The New Hartley memorial is just northeast of Seaton Delaval [NZ 312 767]. The obelisk is at Earsdon [NZ 321 726].

Description

This small, tragic, memorial to so many lives lost is just one example of why it would be impossible to overstate the influence of coal and mining on the culture, economy and heritage of Northumberland. That influence extends from the coast, to the Tyne Valley, to the Pennines.

One of the worst accidents in the exploitation of coal in Northumberland took place at New Hartley. The disaster took place on 16 January 1862. 204 men and boys died when the beam of the pit's pumping engine broke and fell down the single mine shaft, blocking it and trapping the miners. It is hard to remain unmoved by the long list of names of the dead, their ages, and their family ties.

A second memorial was opened on the site of Hartley New Pit (also known as Hester Pit) in 1976. The dead are buried in Earsdon churchyard where the obelisk records their names and ages. The coal seams that Hartley New Pit mined are, like the rest of the Northumberland and Durham coalfield, Carboniferous and are around 320 million years old. After the disaster the pit was closed.

There was one very significant positive outcome of the Hartley disaster. No colliery would in future be allowed to have only a single shaft; all collieries would by law have to have two shafts.

Photographs

(Photo 45-1) Hartley New Pit memorial.

(Photo 45-2) The memorial obelisk in Earsdon churchyard.



(Photo 45-1) Hartley New Pit memorial.



(Photo 45-2) The memorial obelisk in Earsdon churchyard.