

**We Return to the darkness
To reclaim our voice**

**Community Voices on closures and the 1984
Miners' strike**

Partners

Northern Corridor Community Volunteers - leading local heritage and nature conservation projects

Cardowan Community Meadow - local charity led by the daughters of local miners

Moodiesburn and District Retired Miners Branch - continuing the fight for justice and pensions

Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life

Why?

At the start of the 1980's the Northern Corridor villages were home to Lanarkshire's last two coal mines Bedlay and Cardowan Collieries. When the political decision was made that Scottish Coal mines would not return sufficient profit and a series of pit closures was announced, at first Bedlay and then Cardowan many lost their jobs leaving families without local income many others were forced to travel daily to Fife to put food on the table.

Unjust Transition

As the closures accelerated it became obvious to miner's across the UK that their whole industry was under threat culminating in a year long national strike - characterised by police brutality, demonization by an aggressive right wing press, but also community resilience, solidarity and movements to this day that continue to advocate for workers rights,

Representation

Communities were clear that current offerings in Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial life fail to capture all the elements of their lived experience.

The drift mine captures early mining and the cottages portray a harsh but fair life, celebrating the area as an industrial heartland but failing to mention the de-industrialisation which has left the villages affected by poverty and deprivation

Negotiations

Former miners and their families were welcomed to a museum visit to see the current offerings and the artifacts not as yet on display.



Lived Experience

The visit and further meetings with the groups emphasised what people really want to see reflected in both local offerings and interpretation at the Museum.

Their lived experience - the clear sense of belonging that comes from growing up or working in a mining community.

The Museum also wishes to capture this and so negotiations on the project plan were able to move forward with that shared goal in mind.

Visits and Postcards

The retired miners visited the Before and After Coal exhibition in Cumnock - which helped firm up the stories they wanted to tell.

Seeing the exhibition also fired up the wish to include their own stories in a very placed based way, and a miners' postcard style photography element was added to the project outcomes.



Banners Project

An important early element

Enabling the Retired miners' branch to have a marching banner they could be proud of to display at the annual commemoration of the AUchengeich Disaster. The Memorial Committee now also have a banner- and production of a full size reproduction of the Cardowan Banner is underway.



Films

Films capturing memories of Cardowan Colliery will be made to be run on a new screen next to the Cardowan Winding Engine which sits at the heart of Summerlees Displays.

In addition a short documentary will capture the life story of the Auchengeich Memorial - built by striking miners in 1984 highlighting how the community of Moodiesburn came together and continue to come together annually to remember the 47 men killed in one of the worst mining tragedies in Scotland's history

Engaging the wider community

We have been reaching out and engaging young people in the project through a series of weekend activities - discussing collective voice and community building through banner and badge making and by decorating miners' helmets - this has proved popular - thank you Minecraft



Modern Relevance and Context

Some people might ask why this project remains relevant today

March 2026 - Announcement of Orgreave official enquiry to evaluate police brutality.

October 2024 - Historic injustice reversed as 112,000 former coalminers finally have £1.5 billion from their pension scheme transferred to them, boosting their pensions.

July 2022 - Miners' Strike (Pardons) (Scotland) Act 2022

Next steps

As we work to get the films made, capture more community stories, create more marching banners and reach out to more people who want their stories told, We continue heritage activities and in a parallel project 'Thriving Tomorrow' which brings creative arts and conversations around climate breakdown, quite a tricky topic for communities once at the beating heart of fossil fuel production.

Northern Corridor Eco Museum

For NCCV our next five year project our very own Eco Museum - a project which brings together our heritage, climate action, nature conservation and active travel holistically under the strapline - Learning from the past and sharing today to build a better tomorrow.

Northern Corridor ECO MUSEUM



Learning from the past and sharing today to
build a better tomorrow

Solidarity and the Global Context

The impact of communities globally of continued extraction of natural resources, abuse of local labour and damage to the environment sadly has not gone away.

Even in Scotland exploration licenses are being sought for rare earth minerals, and globally this will impact marginalised communities ill equipped to defend themselves and their lands from global profiteering so as communities who have experienced this extractionism we call for:

Health and Safety for workers everywhere, their natural environment, just transitions and retaining wealth in local communities

Keep in touch

We believe partnership working and collective voices are key to overcoming the challenges communities and the community sector continue to face, together we can demand real meaningful inclusion not just in the heritage sector but in all elements of community planning. Let's stop being 'Seldom Heard Voices' and reclaim all our rights.

Thank you for listening and please do stay in touch

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