

## Underground Tour

# Meet a Miner



Meet a Miner is a miner-guide led underground tour at the National Coal Mining Museum for England. We suggest that each accompanying adult read these notes carefully before your visit.

If you have any questions about the tour, please contact the Museum's education team by telephone on 01924 848806 or by email at [education@ncm.org.uk](mailto:education@ncm.org.uk).

## Before going underground

The underground tours at the Museum will take you through genuine former underground workings at Caphouse Colliery. The following rules are for the safety of you and your group, as well as for that of our other visitors and staff.

- **Make sure you arrive at the lamp room at least 5 minutes before your tour is due to start.** Your tour will last about 1 hour and 20 minutes, including time taken to put on cap-lamps and hard-hats. If you miss your tour, you may lose your slot.
- **Remember that there are no toilets in the lamp room or underground.** Teachers are advised to make time for a comfort break before going to the lamp room.
- **Each tour will be led by an experienced miner-guide.** Stay with your guide at all times. It is essential that group-leaders supervise their pupils whilst underground.  
*If a guide feels that the behaviour of a group is threatening their own safety or that of our other visitors or staff, they will be brought to the surface immediately.*
- **There is a maximum of 17 children in each tour group** and each tour should be accompanied by at least two adults from the school (including teachers, classroom assistants or parent helpers).
- **No contraband is allowed underground.** This includes all items with batteries such as watches, cameras, mobile phones, mp3 players, flashing shoes, portable electronic games, central-locking key-fobs, etc. Also, there are no smoking-related items permitted underground, including matches and lighters.  
*Schools are advised to discourage pupils from bring these items, or to leave them on the coach or in lockable storage cupboards whilst you are underground.*
- **Sensible clothing and footwear is strongly advised.** This is a former industrial site and underground roadways can be uneven. The temperature underground is a cool 12°C all year-round; in summer this will feel quite cold.

## **Underground activities**

### **The Cage**

The ride in the cage to get underground takes a few minutes. It starts with a slight jolt and will be dark. It can sometimes feel a little crowded, but doesn't last too long. Younger or more sensitive pupils may need a little reassurance.

### **Pit Bottom**

The guide will talk about use of air doors, ventilation in mines and will point out the emergency exit, via the drift.

### **Furnace Shaft**

You will get the chance to look 140m up the shaft to the glass ceiling in the lamp room. The guide will talk about the history and use of the furnace shaft.

### **Nineteenth-Century Family & the 1842 Act**

The guide will talk about families working together before 1842. Everyone will be asked to turn their lights out to show how dark it is. Adults should assist pupils in doing this.

### **The Deputy**

Here the guide will explain about the flame safety lamp and the detection of gases.

### **The Ripper & Short-wall Mining**

The guide will tell you about the job of a ripper and the early days of mechanisation.

### **Shot-Firing**

The guide will explain the use of explosives in the coal mine to bring down the stone or coal.

### **Signalling and the Haulage Engine**

This area shows how tubs were transported using haulage engines and the system for signalling underground.

### **The Transfer Point**

Your guide will talk about other roles in the pit, about conveyor belts and about 'snap' time.

### **Roof Supports**

Here you will learn about different methods of roof supports from wood, to props and bars and powered supports.

### **The Face-line and Roof Bolting**

The guide will show you a modern method of roof support used throughout coalfields today and show you some machines used for cutting coal.

### **Heading Machines**

Your guide will explain about the large machines used to create roadways (tunnels) underground.

### **The Pit Bottom**

Here you will wait for the cage to take you back up to the surface.