

Sam/Sally Fletcher, It's a Hard Life

Duration: 30 minutes

Available: Monday-Friday

Group size: up to 17 pupils per session

Cost: £30 per workshop

Location: Victorian Gallery

Basic Information

Pupils travel back in time to meet Sally/Sam Fletcher and find out what working conditions were like when men, women and children worked together underground. The workshop highlights the work of a significant individual, Lord Shaftsbury, in bringing about change with the introduction of the 1842 Mines Act.



Breakdown of session

Pupils are taken back to the 19th century by one of the Living History team who will meet you in the 1842 Gallery and will be in role as Sally/Sam Fletcher. Through a combination of interactive storytelling and role play pupils will learn about the daily routines and working life of a child miner. Pupils will find out about the different jobs done by families and become part of the story as they take on the roles of a trapper, hurrier or thruster. Pupils are introduced to the Royal Commission and get to question Sally/Sam as inspectors. Sally/Sam explain how the Mines and Collieries Act in 1842 stopped women and boys under 10 working underground and pupils consider the consequences of this Act.

How can group leaders help?

It would be helpful if group leaders can encourage pupils to ask and answer questions and take part in the role play activities. Your enthusiasm and participation is appreciated.

Links to topics

- Coal mining history
- Local heritage
- Industrial Revolution and the Victorians
- Child labour

Learning Outcomes

Pupils will:

- Know the different jobs women and children did underground and how a family had to work together.
- Know and understand the working conditions underground in the early 1800's
- Empathise with the children who worked underground and make comparisons between life then and now.
- To consider the implications of the 1842 Mines Act and how it affected the lives of mining families.

KS3

- Develop analytical and interpretive skills by using live interpretation as a source of evidence

Links to curriculum

KS1/2 History

- Local history study (significant aspect of history or site from period beyond 1066)
- Changes within living memory
- Significant people and places (miners and pits) in their own locality
- Historical enquiry skills

KS3 History

- Ideas, political power, industry & empire: Britain, 1745-1901
- Local history study (historical perspective: connections between local/national history)

Other places to visit on site

Pit Ponies and Stables: Meet our ponies and find out what important jobs pit ponies did and what their life was like underground..

Technology Gallery: Find out about the problems that miners faced underground, the tools they used and how men and coal were transported. Look out for the C19th sled and corve basket.

Steam Winding Engine House: Find out how this C19th mechanism moved men and equipment up and down the shaft

Mining Lives Exhibition: Find out about home life, disasters and how miners spent their leisure time.

The Pithead baths are an original pit building dating back to 1938, where miners showered at the end of a shift. Before they were built miners had to wash at home, usually in a tin bath with water heated on a coal-fired range.

Suggested Pre Visit Activities

- Find out what coal is and what it is used for? Why was it so in demand in the 19th century?
- Have a discussion about child labour.
- Find out what an Act of Parliament or a law means.
- Prepare some questions you would like to ask Sam/Sally.
- Borrow our [Victorian home and work loans boxes](#) to introduce the topic. (free of charge).

Suggested Post Visit Activities

- Use the [Learning Resources](#) relating to the 1842 Royal Commission, Victorian working conditions and jobs.
- Write a job description for a trapper, hurrier and thruster.
- Write a day in the life of a Victorian child miner.

- Find out about the Huskar Pit disaster.
- Recreate the parliamentary debate that led to the 1842 Mines and Collieries Act or role play an interview with Lord Shaftsbury.
- Look at the drawings and illustrations from the Royal Commission. Why would they have had such an impact? Based on what you have heard and seen at the Museum, draw your own illustration to show what jobs children did in the mine.
- We worked with the English Folk Dance and Song Society to produce a fantastic music and literacy resource, including folk songs you can sing and play along to: www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/coal-mining-with-folk-arts-and-poetry

These folk songs are also recommended:

- The Testimony of Patience Kershaw - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmhACB1ZPQM>
- Trimdon Grange Explosion - <http://www.joe-offer.com/folkinfo/songs/176.html>
- The Gresford Disaster - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJhmuUnsXWI&feature=kp>