

Background

The National Coal Mining Museum for England (NCM) aims to keep coal mining alive by collecting and preserving the industry's rich heritage and through creating enjoyable and inspiring ways to learn for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

The Museum is based at the site of Caphouse Colliery in Overton, near Wakefield, England and consists of a coal mine, associated buildings and museum spanning a 45 acre area. It opened in 1988 as the Yorkshire Mining Museum and was granted national status in 1995. The museum offers guided underground tours where visitors can experience the conditions miners worked in and see the tools and machines they used as the industry and the mine developed through the years. Above ground there is a museum which uses the nationally significant collections to tell the story of mining and offers a programme of temporary exhibitions related to the industry and the people and communities connected with it.

NCM is part way through delivering a four-year National Lottery Heritage Funded (NLHF) project 'Coalfield Conversations' which began in 2018. The project was developed in response to a report which identified a demographic and generational change in the Museum's visitor base. Subsequent consultation highlighted the need for an improved aboveground offer across the site in response to a lack of engagement by visitors beyond our underground tour.

NCM's vision for 'Coalfield Conversations' is that it will be the agent of change and the engine for driving the Museum forward. At its heart is the permission for visitors, staff, volunteers and communities to engage in conversations. By listening to what is said, what is wanted and responding to those suggestions, existing relationships will be strengthened and new ones formed. We will learn how to tell our stories better, in more powerful ways and inspire participation, involvement and activism.

The four key aims of the project are as follows:

Aim 1: To give our visitors a warm and open welcome

Visitors should feel the site is welcoming, exciting and appealing. Whether the visitor engages with friendly staff/ volunteers, online content or onsite interpretive material the friendly tone of the site must be established immediately and consistently. All internal and external messaging must support and focus on the friendly, approachable and inclusive approach.

Aim 2: To give our visitors the tools to fully engage with the site and its stories

A basic introduction to the concept of coal mining and its importance will underpin the displays and interpretation that will follow. Our key audiences are shifting from the traditional 'local and loyal' to a 'post-industrial generation' without the basic understanding of what coal mining means and the impact it has had.

Aim 3: To create meaningful conversations that leading to social experience

Human interaction will become an integral part of each and every visit. All staff, volunteers, community supporters and stakeholders will be part of and committed to what is fundamentally a

new approach. They will be given the skills, confidence and sense of ownership to deliver it effectively.

Aim 4: To up-skill staff and volunteers

A cornerstone of this project is a shift in our culture onsite and online, both in the increased way we work with volunteers and how we engage more directly with the public.

The project

The impact of COVID has meant that we have had to reimagine the way we deliver 'Coalfield Conversations'. For most of 2020 the Museum remained closed to the public or subject to strict social distancing measures. As a result, our engagement with visitors, communities, and our volunteer team, for the most part, moved online.

The 'NCM Banner' project has been conceived as one way that we can deliver 'Coalfield Conversations' during the pandemic. We want to continue to utilise volunteer skills, consult with our various audiences as well as encouraging participation in mining heritage beyond the Museum door.

This will need to be an adaptable project that can be delivered remotely but also account for potential onsite elements, depending on the fluctuations of the pandemic. The 'NCM Banner' project will involve working alongside the Museum's two NLHF funded Visitor Engagement Coordinators and a small project team of volunteers.

We are seeking to cocreate a mining inspired banner which will be a major outcome of our 'Gala Day' exhibition and which will go on to be a usable resource that Museum staff and volunteers can use to engage the public with mining stories.

Ultimately, we see the process of creating the 'NCM Banner' as the blueprint for visitor and community engagement at the Museum in the future.

There are two key 'Coalfield Conversations' objectives that we want to achieve through the 'NCM Banner' project. These are:

1. Expanding, supporting and upskilling the volunteer team (including the recruitment of 'expert' volunteers)
2. Developing the range and scope of visitor experiences through face-to-face and digital interactions.

NCM has a responsibility to convey the power of our story to anyone that might cross our threshold (online or onsite). We need to be able to engage our increasingly post-industrial audience, who are not equipped with contextual coal mining knowledge. Whilst providing deeper engagement opportunities for existing audiences, including former coalfield communities.

For this reason, the process of creating the NCM banner should provide the following outcomes for the Museum:

- Giving permission to our audiences to engage and contribute to the Museum and its future
- Conversing with our audiences continually to ensure our relevance both today and moving forward
- Sustaining the support and allegiance of our loyal and local audience

- Providing a quality visitor experience for those who cannot or do not wish to go on the underground tour.
- Inviting and encouraging the active involvement of people with coal-mining connections, including English coalfield areas beyond Yorkshire.
- Increasing access to and understanding of our collections

The 'NCM Banner' project's key aims are:

1. To create a mining inspired banner that will support the Museum's aboveground, online and offsite offer.
2. To create opportunities for volunteers to contribute skills and support decision making at the Museum, both remotely and onsite.
3. To create opportunities for communities to engage and contribute to the Museum, through sharing stories and skills.
4. To provide opportunities for the Museum to consult its diverse audiences to support increased engagement with the Museum's stories and collections.

This project has been made possible by reallocating existing NHLF funding from 'Coalfield Conversations'.

What we are looking for

NCM is seeking to commission an artist with experience working on community led projects to design and produce a banner using the collections and the history of mining banners as inspiration to produce a banner which will showcase stories from across the English coalfields. The artist will work alongside the Museum's two Visitor Engagement Coordinators and volunteer project team to develop and make decisions on the design and creation of the banner. This team will be supported by the Museum's Curatorial and Marketing departments.

The banner design will need to be inspired by the materials, techniques, language, imagery and symbolism of traditional mining banners. The banner will also need to reference stories, gathered from the public, from across the English coalfields, as referenced in **Figure 1** below. The design should reference the George Tutill silk, painted banners (please see **Figure 2**, further visual inspiration and research will be provided once appointed) and be instantly recognisable as a mining banner.

A team of remote 'makers' will need to be recruited to create individual sections that are designed and ultimately used to construct the final banner by the artist. We would also consider ideas for additional onsite visitor involvement in this process. Mining banners were historically created from a vast range of materials, mass produced banners often employed oil paint on silk (**Fig.2**) while others, more often homemade banners, used applique (Please see **Figure 3** below). For this reason, we are open to the use of different mediums including paint and various textile techniques and possibly a mixed medium banner.

The artist will need to produce 'a work in progress' or large scale design to be displayed throughout the exhibition which opens this summer. We would like this to provide opportunities to consult with onsite visitors on a predetermined element of the design e.g. the motto, the story from the Yorkshire coalfield or the background color, based on interpretation created by Museum staff and

volunteers. The banner will be displayed at the celebration closure event of the Museum's upcoming 'Gala Day' exhibition in February 2022

Post-exhibition the banner will become part of the Museum's handling collection to be used by the Museum's staff and volunteers onsite and offsite to engage with the public. For this reason, the banner will need to be durable, easy to clean and able to withstand poor weather. It will also need to be easy to store, transport and display.

The project is likely to require the community artist to:

- Cocreate a banner design with the project team
- Source materials
- Coordinate a team of remote 'makers'
- Provide ongoing advice and support to the team throughout the project
- Create online videos/ guides to support remote 'makers'
- Deliver online or onsite sampling sessions & workshops for 'makers', and potentially for onsite visitors.
- Creating templates/ patterns to scale
- Preparing resource packs for remote 'makers' (including postage and return postage)
- Working with our marketing department to promote the project.
- Assembling the final banner and ensuring contributions are of an acceptable standard.

Deliverables:

- Develop a banner design with the 'NCM Banner' project team.
- Produce a one- or two-sided banner with a maximum size of 207cm x 162cm.
- Design a banner inspired by classic banner imagery and the NCM collections which captures the stories from various Coalfields.
- Create a coherent final banner, cocreated with remote 'makers'
- Provide support for remote 'makers' in the form of resource packs, online support and workshops (online, but with potential to move onsite if COVID restrictions allow)

Intellectual property rights

- NCM will require EITHER a perpetual assignment (or transfer) of copyright OR a perpetual exclusive license to use the banner including digital copies specifically for NCMME's purposes
- If copyright is assigned to NCMME a royalty-free, non-exclusive license will be granted to the supplier for demonstration purposes for clients/portfolio
- The supplier will be responsible for rights clearance of all content used that is owned by third parties, including documenting and recording these permissions in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and supplying this information to NCMME

- NCMME will be responsible for clearing copyright of content supplied from its collection
- The banner will belong to NCMME after the project commences and will be added to its collection

Interview / selection process

In line with the project's aim to involve volunteers in our work and decision making, the 'NCM Banner' project Team will be involved in both the shortlisting of expressions of interest and the interview sessions for this commission, with support from NCM staff.

Budget

There is a total budget of £5000 (exclusive of VAT) available for this project including all artist fees, production costs and expenses.

Key dates / schedule for tender

- Banner commission brief distributed: **Tuesday 27th of April 2021**
- Expressions of interest returned by email to imogen.walsh@ncm.org.uk: **Tuesday 18th of May 2021**
- Shortlisting and shortlisted artists notified: **w/c Monday 24th May 2021**
- Shortlisted artists invited to interview by a small panel most likely using digital platform Teams: **w/c Monday 31st of May 2021**
- Successful artist notified: **by Friday 4th June 2021**
- Successful artist works with the 'NCM Banner' project team on developing and producing the banner: **June 2021 – end February 2022**
- Delivery date of 'work in progress' display by **2nd of August 2021**
- Delivery date of final banner by **1st of February 2022**

The deadlines outlined above are subject to change due to the ongoing uncertainty created by the Covid-19 pandemic. The project timeline may need to be adapted and we may require some flexibility to work beyond these dates.

We are aiming to start sharing the outcomes of this project from Summer 2021 but we will look at creative ways to do this digitally if the museum remains closed and physical installation of a 'work in progress' and final banner are not possible.

Expression of interest

If you would like to submit an expression of interest, please return a document containing the following information to Imogen Walsh at imogen.walsh@ncm.org.uk by **5.00pm on Monday 17th May 2021**:

- Full contact details

- Relevant examples from your portfolio
- A statement outlining your understanding of the brief and why you want to work on this project
- A proposed timeline of development and delivery planned to meet the brief by the deadlines outlined above
- An outline of how you would divide the budget between your fees and other costs

If you have any queries or would like to discuss this further, please contact Imogen Walsh at imogen.walsh@ncm.org.uk

As an equal opportunities employer, we welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons.

Figure 1. Map of the Coalfields of Great Britain (please note that the NCM does not represent Scottish or Welsh mining)

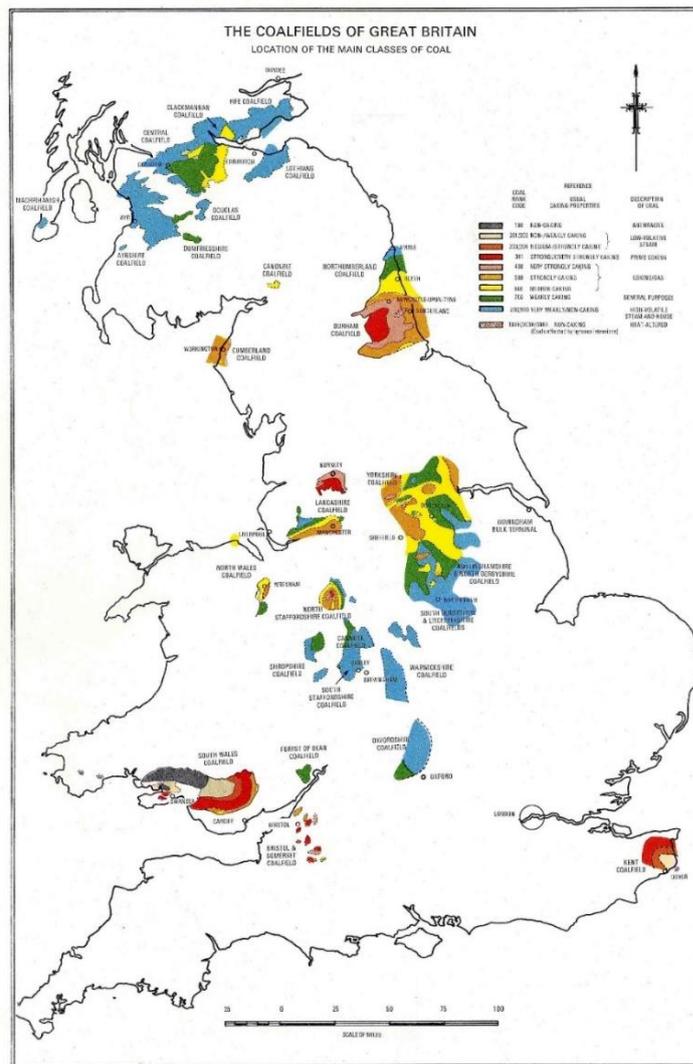


Figure 2. Example of Tutill Banner



Figure 3. Example of Applique Banner

