



Northumberland
Wildlife Trust

Hartley New Pit



What will I see?

A memorial to one of the most tragic accidents in the exploitation of coal in Northumberland - a disaster that took place at Hester Pit, New Hartley on 17 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.

How old is it?

This 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 an obelisk records their names and ages. The coal seams that Hartley New Pit mined are Carboniferous and are around 312 million years old. After the disaster the pit was closed.

Did you know?

That 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.

Why it is here?

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.

And wildlife?

The memorial at New Hartley is a small formal garden, the churchyard at Earsdon where the obelisk stands is now almost totally overgrown.

Where is it?

Where is it? At New Hartley Just north east of Seaton Delaval [NZ312767] and at Earsdon [NZ321726].



Want to know more?

- Mine research
- NNP Geodiversity Audit
- Onshore GeoIndex
- iGeology
- Geological history of Northumbria
- Carboniferous rocks

