

## First World War Memorial Park

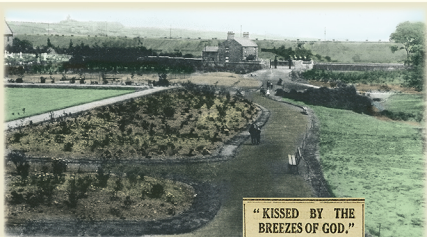
Once the Armistice had been signed thoughts turned to commemorating those who would not return. Virtually every town and village in the country erected memorials to the men and women who died during the Great War. The South Moor Colliery Company offered to donate the land for a public park and pay for its laying out in memory of its employees. On 13 May 1919 Stanley Urban District Council accepted the offer and work began. The park was formally opened on 10 July 1920:

*"The Park which the South Moor Coal Co. Ltd have generously given to the public of Stanley and South Moor, as a memorial of the men from the Colliery who fell in the war, is situated in Stanley Burn Dene and is ideal in situation and beauty for the convenience and pleasure of the residents of the whole of South Moor."*

Stanley Burn runs right through it and within its 16½ acres are a pavilion, band stand, three tennis courts and a bowling green, whilst the long stretch of picturesque landscape from near South Moor Church to the Shield Roe Drift is all included in the gift.

Naturally a genuine beauty spot, the Dene has been improved by the efforts of a band of workers under the superintendence of Mr Alf. Routledge, surveyor to the Stanley Urban District Council to whom every credit is due for his skill in beautifying the layout of the Park.

The cost of laying-out, approximately £4,600 had been entirely borne by the South Moor Coal Co. Ltd and the gift is one which will doubtless be appreciated by present and future generations".



Looking towards park gates, Hedley Pit tramway in the background (see map of the Memorial Park, p.16)



Memorial Park on the 1939 Ordnance Survey map

Robert Watson Cooper, the chairman of the colliery company, hoped the park would fulfil a twofold purpose, firstly as a means of recreation, and secondly to remind the inhabitants and himself and others of the sacrifices of no less than 222 men who were at one time employed at the colliery, and who gave their lives in the war. The company also hoped to erect a tablet inscribed with the names of the brave men (Stanley News, 15 July 1920).



In July 1921 two name plaques were unveiled, on either side of the wrought iron memorial gates which had been made by Bayliss, Jones and Bayliss Ltd of Wolverhampton.



Memorial park gates, 1920 (photograph courtesy of the Stanley Urban District Council)

### "KISSED BY THE BREEZES OF GOD,"

Memorial Park at South Moor Officially Handed Over.

SOUTH MOOR COAL CO.'S GENEROUS GIFT.

The area previously reserved for the opening ceremony in connection with the handing over of the Memorial Park at South Moor to the public, was held on Monday, July 13th, 1920, when the company, which was very largely attended, had no other special than that the land was given by the company of the South Moor Coal Co. Ltd, and the land was handed over to the public.

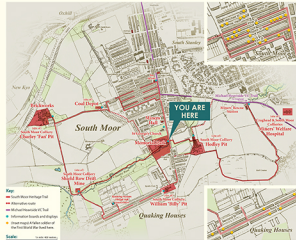
Stanley News, 15 July 1920, page 5 (click for full view)

### Peter Goggins 'Shot at Dawn'

One name that did not appear on the plaques in 1921 was that of Peter Goggins. Peter was a South Moor miner who had enlisted with the 19th Bantam Battalion Durham Light Infantry and was sent to France in February 1916. Just before he left, he married Margaret Rowley, who set up home at 38 South Street, near the corner of Hustedown Road. Peter was court-martialled for desertion on Christmas Eve 1916 in spite of evidence he was following orders given by a retreating sergeant. He was one of three soldiers from 19th DLI executed by firing squad in January 1917 for deserting their post. All 306 soldiers of the First World War who were shot at dawn for cowardice or desertion were granted posthumous pardons in 2006.



Peter Goggins, 1916 (photo)



### South Moor Heritage Trail

South Moor and Quaking Houses were typical colliery villages that developed before and just after the First World War, around four collieries of William Hedley's South Moor Colliery Company.

South Moor Heritage trail is a five mile circular walk around key eight heritage sites of South Moor and Quaking Houses that existed during or soon after the First World War. Each site is marked by an interpretation board detailing the significance and heritage of the site. Each interpretation board is linked via a QR code to a South Moor heritage website providing further information about the history of the site. Rights of way between the eight sites along the trail are marked by 'way markers' to keep you on the right path.

Over two hundred miners from South Moor and Quaking Houses were killed in the First World War. Their names are engraved at the gates of the First World War Memorial Park. The Heritage Trail marks the former colliery houses in which they lived with a fallen soldier plaque - can you find them in the colliery terraces?



Colliery House, 1916 (photo)



This Billy Pit (also called the Hedley Pit) was built in 1916



The Hedley Pit (also called the Hedley Pit) was built in 1916



South Moor DLI in 1916 (photograph courtesy of the Stanley Urban District Council)



Looking west towards South Moor and Hedley Pit (photograph courtesy of the Stanley Urban District Council)