

## Charley 'Fan' Pit and Brickworks

### Charley Pit

This is the site of the Charley Pit. The pit, sunk in 1845, is the second of the deep mine pits on this trail. It was operated by the Thomas Hedley & Brothers Coal Company, founded after William Hedley's death in 1843 by his four sons, Thomas, William, George and Oswald. This pit has also been known as 'Quaking House Pit' and 'West Shield Row'. The original mine workings reached a depth of 310 feet (94.5 metres) to reach the Brass Thill coal seam.



Charley Pit sinkers, 9 August, 1893, soon after mine was sunk.



Men and boys at Charley Pit Brickworks, some of the first to work there.



The new fan house built to replace the waddle fan, seen in the background, 1918.

A ventilation shaft was added in 1893. This second shaft was deeper than the first at 460 feet (140 metres) and included a 30 foot (9 metre) diameter 'Waddle' centrifugal fan. In 1918 Thomas Greener, the colliery viewer, reported that a new Charley Pit fan had been installed. The 'Sirocco' type fan ventilated all the South Moor collieries, replacing the Waddle fan and all the boilers used to create an updraught in the mine. With the boilers laid idle the manager expected to recover the £4,000 cost of the new fan in under two years.



Charley Pit on the 1905 Ordnance Survey map.



Charley Pit buildings, including the Waddle fan.

### Brickworks

Charley Pit Brickworks was established close to the colliery buildings in 1901. The clay came from a quarry between the colliery and the main road to Annfield Plain. Originally the bricks were made to supply needs of the colliery, but as production increased (3.8 million bricks in 1914) the South Moor Colliery Company was able to sell bricks to local contractors, as well as building colliery houses. Aerial cables transported the bricks from Charley to the housing site at Quaking Houses where they kept costs

down. The path of this flight is marked on the 1920 edition of the Ordnance Survey map. Although the wartime shortages of manpower and fuel left the brickworks standing idle in 1918, reconstruction was soon underway in 1919.



Charley Pit and Langley View colliery office houses, viewed from Stanleyburn Farm.

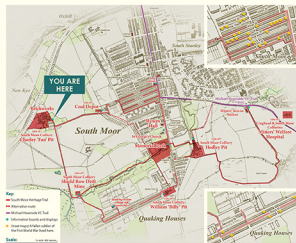
### Wartime working

Within weeks of war being declared in 1914 the South Moor pits, which employed about 4,500 men, were reduced to four-day working. The Stanley News of 27 August described the all too frequent sound of buzzers announcing that the pit would be idle the next day.

George Clayton, a fireman at Charley Pit who was interviewed by the Imperial War Museum in later life, remembered a notice being put up on the pit heap. 'Miners urgently wanted for the Western Front'. He was one of about 30 miners from the South Moor collieries who volunteered. The colliery manager treated them to a pint of beer at Newcastle station before they set off for London.



By early 1915 so many men had left the Hedley and Charley Pits on military service, and the outputs were so reduced, that it became obvious that it would be more economical to draw the combined outputs of the two pits at Hedley Pit. Thomas Greener had reported in the previous year that the two pits were practically one colliery and that sooner or later they would probably be combined. On 25 October 1915 coal drawing at Charley Pit stopped and the surface workers were transferred to other pits.



### 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?



St. George's Church, a landmark in the village.



The Sibley Pit, also known as the 'Sibley' Pit, was one of the four pits owned by the South Moor Colliery Company.



The Hedley Pit, one of the four pits owned by the South Moor Colliery Company.



South Moor Colliery, one of the four pits owned by the South Moor Colliery Company.