



## *2 Heroes Underground*

### *NOTES FOR TEACHERS*

#### **The purpose of this activity is to:**

- Understand that mining in the early twentieth century was an important but dangerous occupation
- Recognise the importance of mining to the village and community of High Spen
- Appreciate how Thomas Young and Frederick Dobson were shaped by mining life

#### **Skills to be developed**

##### **In history**

- Place events, people and changes into correct periods of time
- Use dates and vocabulary related to the passing of time
- Make choices from an informed position
- Identify and describe reasons for and results of historical events, situations and changes in the period studied

- Use sources of information including ICT to find out about events, people and changes

##### **PSCHE**

- Develop a shared responsibility for one another

##### **In ICT**

- Classify and check sources for reliability and accuracy

##### **In literacy**

- Analyse text
- Detect persuasive writing elements
- Explain and convey opinions and research findings
- Listen and respond through questioning of other's ideas and views
- Be able to locate and use ideas and information

##### **In Geography**

- Demonstrate an understanding that coal is a non-renewable resource
- Understand the impact of the use of coal on the environment



**In Technology**

- Make a model mine shaft and test the components for efficiency

**In Music**

- Learn traditional mining songs
- Compose a piece based on the sounds associated with the mines on non-percussive instruments

**In Art**

- Colour and composition (based on the pitman painters of Ashington)

**Activities**

*For Discussion*

- Ask the pupils to work in groups and how they might find out about the life of miners in High Spen about 100 years ago. What are the range of sources they can come up with?

*For Research*

- Can they find any references to High Spen 100 years ago on the internet? They should find Alex Johnson's site *'High Spen 100 Years Ago'*.

[www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DUR/HighSpen/Part3.html](http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DUR/HighSpen/Part3.html)

[www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DUR/HighSpen/Part2.html](http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DUR/HighSpen/Part2.html)

*For debate*

- Divide the class into 6 groups. Each group will be given an extract from his memories about mining life in the village:

The Mine - *What change did the colliery(mine) make to the village?*

The Miners – *Did miners have a hard life?*

Miner's hobbies and Pastimes – *Why did miner's have these hobbies?*

Working conditions in the Mines – *What were working conditions like for miners?*

Miner's Wives – *Miner's wives had a much easier life than their husbands?*

Miner's Daughters- *Girls were treated much better than the boys?*



Each group presents their findings to the class and illustrates the main aspect for a display. They must focus on answering the central question on each aspect and support their answers with evidence. The last two aspects could be given to higher attaining pupils.

- The higher attaining children may be able to discuss the reliability of the sources with the following questions:

*Alex Johnson's memories mainly came from the 1920s, about 20 years after Thomas Young and Frank Dobson had been young miners. How might this make his account unreliable?*

*Is there anyway of checking whether his version is accurate or not?*

#### ***For Reflection***

- How has life changed in the village since the time of the VC heroes? Do you think all the changes are better?
- How do you think Thomas Young and Frederick Dobson's lives prepared them for the battlefields of the First World War?