

11. MUSEUM OF CANNOCK CHASE

Welcome to the Museum of Cannock Chase - one of the five Cannock Chase visitor centres, and the hub of the Cannock Chase Heritage Trail.

The Museum

By 1982, most of the local pits had closed and the Training Centre had closed, too. The site was taken over by the Council and in 1989 the Valley Heritage Centre was opened.

Renamed the Museum of Cannock Chase in the mid 1990s, it tells the story of local coal mining and illustrates the social, industrial and domestic history of the Cannock Chase area.

The top of the museum site leads to Hednesford Hills. You can find out more about the hills inside the Museum and along the Cannock Chase Heritage Trail.



Valley Colliery.

The Mines Rescue Station

The Mines Rescue Station was originally based in nearby Victoria Street but moved here in 1972, where it remained until the service was relocated out of the district in 1991. In 1997 the building became a public house, but was later pulled down after most of it was destroyed in a fire started by vandals.

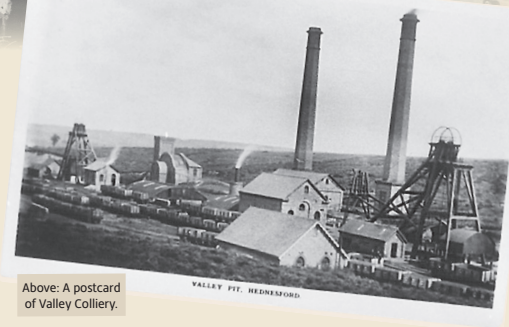


John Scott holding a canary cage used in mines rescue training. He was Station Officer at the Rescue Station here. Image reproduced by kind permission of Mr Ivan Ellis

The Winding Wheel and Mine Car

The winding wheel outside the museum is from Lea Hall Colliery in Rugeley, which closed in 1990. When at the colliery, the wheel was unused and was left in place to give the headframe a balanced appearance. It is one of three remaining winding wheels from the Cannock Chase coalfield.

The mine car at the front of the Museum is from Littleton Colliery, in Huntington. It was used to transport coal from underground to the pit surface, where it was emptied onto conveyor belts.



Above: A postcard of Valley Colliery.

The Mining Training Centre

The Coal Mining Training Centre for the Cannock Chase, Shropshire and South Staffordshire coalfields was here at the Valley Colliery site. It opened in 1946, just before new legislation was introduced that meant miners had to receive training before going underground.

The colliery corn store (now the museum's main building) was converted for training. New recruits were also trained in five Nissen huts from World War Two, which stood beside the museum. Near to what is now our main car park, surface training facilities that replicated underground conditions were built.

By the 1960s, they were being used to train 15 year old boys who had just left school. Because the boys weren't permitted to start work underground until the age of 16, these surface training galleries provided the only opportunity for them to learn the necessary mining techniques.

Over 17,000 trainee miners passed through the Mining Training Centre, many of whom have revisited the site since it became a museum. When coal extraction from Wimblebury Colliery ended in 1962 the colliery buildings were used only for training.

CANNOCK CHASE HERITAGE TRAIL

Cannock Chase Heritage Trail is a 10-mile route linking the towns of Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley. It passes through, or close to sites of historic or environmental interest, with interpretation boards along the way that tell the story of each location. Intended to support a healthy lifestyle, the trail is a facility for walkers and cyclists, offering walks and off-road cycle routes. The trail was initially funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and several project partners in 2008.

The trail passes close to wildlife sites of international importance. Cycle wheels, horse hooves, and feet, can severely damage these sites, and out of control dogs disturb wildlife. Please help us to protect wildlife by remaining on designated routes and by keeping dogs under close control.

Remember to follow the Cannock Chase Code.



Scan the QR code to download an interactive map of the Cannock Chase Heritage Trail

Cannock Chase



Take on the
Cannock Chase Heritage Trail Challenge
with the **Cannock Chase Can App!**

Cannock Chase Can is an exciting health and wellbeing programme to help you make healthier lifestyle choices. It hosts a variety of wellness challenges which can be undertaken as an individual, group or family. Here's how you can get involved...

Download the App for **FREE** today by visiting **Google Play** and the **App Store** and searching for '**Cannock Chase Can**'.



Scan the QR codes on each interpretation board to bring to life elements of the Trail. Content has been created by local schoolchildren alongside professional artists and The Birmingham Repertory Theatre.



Collect all the QR codes for each themed trail to complete the challenge and gain points and rewards for your efforts.