

# My Life and Memories

## Extract from Jim's story

.....My family's history is very important to who I am now. Just after the depression, my grandad, James, and his brother in law, Fred, made their way by bicycle from Flimby in Cumberland to Hickleton Main Colliery in South Yorkshire, looking for work. They'd heard that Hickleton pit was taking on men and they wanted more security than they'd had in their old pit, which was hard to mine and running out of fresh seams.

When eventually they reached Hickleton they were lucky enough to get set on at the pit. The seams were much deeper than they'd been used to and much easier to mine. In their Workington Colliery the coal was under the sea and the seams very thin. It meant a lot of belly work, on your belly all shift. Here the pit was more modern. The cages down to the coalface were large and newly installed, and mostly there was headroom when walking and working at the face. No more belly work.



*Jim's great grandad and brothers*

Even though they'd only travelled a few hundred miles, the dialects they and the locals spoke were very different indeed.

Right up until his death I remember my grandad always called the table a "chabble" and flowers became "floors". I picked those little bits of his language up from him and I also adopted his habit of drinking his tea from a saucer but my ma beat both out of me. Language in Cumberland is spit out with a rapid fire action of a machine gun while South Yorkshire has a flatter lazy speech, coming from the back of the throat and is deeper.

The broadness of the local South Yorkshire dialect was complicated with biblical references for addressing each other. The men used thee and thou and said things like "thou wilt" and "tha do'st". The h at beginnings of words was never spoken by the locals and the use of it immediately identified a soft southerner.....

It often feels strange to think that I have, though fate, become one of those soft southerners.