



TRIMDON GRANGE DISASTER

17TH FEBRUARY 1882

Yesterday afternoon, disaster struck the small village of Trimdon Grange. An explosion tore through the coal mine just before 3pm. Over 70 miners, including many children, were killed.

Many of the men and children killed in the explosion were related. Lots of families have unfortunately lost several generations in one fell swoop. With so many dead in such a small community, it is unlikely that anybody in the village will escape without personal tragedy.

Our reporters spoke to one anonymous young lady who was due to marry one of the deceased this weekend. Another of the miners was working his last shift before emigrating to America.

There have been concerns about safety in the mine for some time now. Regular reports of dust building up in the shafts have been confirmed by the mine managers. It is common practice in mines to water down the dust every day. However, this doesn't appear to have happened in this case.

Davy lamps, a form of mine lamp, were in operation within the mine. These have been designed to be safer around gas build-ups. They aren't thought to be the cause of the explosion.

The explosion occurred in a region of the mine called the Pit Narrow Board District. There were 94 people working in the area at the time. This includes 25 boys. 69 of those in the area lost their lives. A further 5 miners were killed by the after-

damp (a noxious gas that swept through the mine following the explosion).

One survivor who entered the mine to rescue the others said, "As we ran, the dust was so dense that it was like to smother us." He added that it soon became evident that nobody except the people who had followed him in could be saved. The people they found were already dead.

An inquest will be carried out in the next few months, but the cause of the explosion appears to have been a build-up of gas pressure caused by a collapsed roof in the north of the mine. This pressure built up to such a point that it exploded the coalface in the Pit Narrow Board District.

Funerals for those who lost their lives will be held over several days to allow the bereaved time to pay their respects.



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VOCABULARY FOCUS

1. Find a phrase that tells you lots of people died at the same time.
2. Which word tells you that the name of somebody is unknown?
3. What does “emigrating to America” mean?
4. Find a phrase that tells you something is done by most people.
5. Which word has a definition closest to “somebody in deep sorrow after a loss”?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

R

What was the date of the explosion?

I

Why is it unlikely that any family will escape without personal tragedy?

R

How many boys were working in the area of the explosion?

E

Why has the reporter included a quote from a survivor?

S

Summarise the key points of the article.

Answers:

1. One fell swoop
2. Anonymous
3. Leaving to live in America
4. Common practice
5. Bereaved

R: 16th February 1882

I: Because the village was small and so most people were related to or knew somebody who worked in the mine

R: 25

E: It gives a first hand recount of what it was like in the mine

S: Look for summaries that are concise but include key information about the cause and impact of the event including deaths. More able answers will know to ignore information about types of lamp and dust etc.