Relations within the Mines

It is important to look at the intricate relationships built by miners whilst working in the pits. Many ex-miners describe it as an experience unlike any other, largely comparing it to the jobs they had once the pits closed. Pit humour, nicknames and the ultimate reliance on one another for their safety created a unique atmosphere which many men still miss. This is an important topic as the relationships formed in this working environment created bonds which resonated beyond the pits.

Community since the Closure of the Mines

All of the mines in the South Derbyshire coalfield have been closed for over 25 years, yet people in the area still very much identify with the pits which once dominated the landscape. Many people who have family in the area are linked to the mines, including myself. Miners still congregate to reminisce in Swadlincote, a place which is still trying to recover from the loss of the pits. Some of the sense of community is still visible but this research aims to investigate what is left of the once thriving mining community.

The impact of the 1984-85 strike and pit closures

Although the strikes in the South Derbyshire area were not as well documented in the media as those in Yorkshire, they did have huge local importance. The South Derbyshire area was one that faced a tense split in union membership between the NUM and UDM. This is something which is likely to have impacted on community relations, with passionate reasons behind individual choices. Ultimately in the years following the strike, the area's pits began to close and the mining community was no longer rooted in the actual occupation of mining, changing the dynamic of relations in the area.