Delves Lane Primary School.

Consett Steelworks - Children's Research & Community
Project













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The following anthology was created by the children of Delves Lane Primary School throughout the 2021 summer term. It was due for completion in the summer of 2020, to mark the 40th anniversary of the steelworks closure, but sadly it was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The children developed their creative writing, poetry, art, photographic, communication and historical research skills in bringing this anthology together.

They researched the lives of those who worked at Consett Steelworks known as 'The Company', between 1840-1980, and developed their understanding of the impact that the steelworks closure had on the town.

They used primary and secondary evidence such as original film footage, newspaper reports, company magazine archives and photographs to develop their understanding of the period and to come to their own judgements about the positives and negatives of life in a 'Steel town'.

The children's' research also included a visit to Beamish Museum, and interviews with former steel workers, and community members, who grew up in the shadow of the steelworks and have seen Consett change over time.

The students presented their findings in this anthology of work in remembrance of those who lost their lives working at the steelworks and in recognition of the contribution that the steelworks made to their community, for better or worse, over 140 years.

The project was delivered by Building Self-Belief CIO and was kindly funded by the Sir James Knott Trust and a County Durham Community Foundation Arts and Culture Grant.

We hope you enjoy their work!



Historical Biographies

We carefully researched the lives of those who worked at Consett steelworks, as well as those who grew up and experienced the effects of its closure upon the town, as both children and adults.

We researched the history of the steelworks and the impact that its closure had on the town in 1980. This included interviewing Arthur a bricklayer at the steelworks for 10 years and also a member of the local residents group the 'Consett and District Heritage Initiative'.

We also interviewed Alan a local historian who trained and worked as a Metallurgical Technician at the company for 16 years.

We then quizzed local residents, Andrea and Stephen, about their childhood memories from the time of the steelworks closure and the ways in which the local area, has changed since then.

This is what we discovered...



Arthur's Story

As a child, Arthur was born in Templetown in 1937. He was the eldest of four children, went to Consett School and loved playing in the fields around his home as a child.

He worked at the steelworks for 10 years from 1953-1963. He started working at the steelworks at 16, as a bricklayer. He put bricks in the massive blast furnaces to stop the metal heating up when it melted the steel.

Arthur also covered the coolers with bricks. He earnt £7-13 a week, which was

a lot back then. In one year, he received around £1000 in total!



Although he only had a protective cap and mask, he loved his job there. He was just pleased he did not have to wear a uniform. Surprisingly, Arthur never felt claustrophobic in the tight spaces he worked in.

Arthur started working at the Steelworks three years after the 1950 disaster. It could be a dangerous job, one day at work someone poured liquid metal down one of the furnaces where he was working, burning both of his legs. Arthur also lost two of his toes whilst working at the steel works. That just proves how dangerous working there really was!



His brother, father and uncles also worked at the steelworks. Arthur was never seriously affected by the red dust but it did irritate him, but others were not that lucky. For him, red dust was just normal, but he does remember the smell of sulphur in the air.

Arthur made many unforgettable and lifechanging memories working at the steel works such as meeting the love of his life, his wife. She worked at the steel works too, in an office as a typist, like many other women at the time.

Arthur worked there for 10 years, for 8 hours a day, and his wife worked at the steelworks for 6 years.

Overall, Arthur loved working there, Arthur said "Even though some people hated the steelworks, I loved working there as the friendship and community spirit was great. I met many friends there'.

By Jason, Aston, Evie, Tyne & Aleksandra

Alan's Story



Alan started working in the steelworks in 1964. He worked as a metallurgical technician in the steelworks lab. He had to train for 5 years before he was qualified. There was a 'Buddy system' which helped you to learn from others. He said that the managers at the steelworks were 'very firm but very fair'.

Alan worked at the steelworks for 16 years but in 1980 he was made redundant and that was when his time at the Steelworks ended

When Alan got his redundancy money, he decided to start his very own business and researched how to make better products in the future. He set up his own business, using the skills he learnt at the steelworks. His business was called M.I.S. It was very successful and

lasted quite a while and he then retired at 53.

All these years later, he lives locally in the same house as when he worked at the steelworks. After it closed down, lots of people left Consett and moved to find work, but he wanted to stay.



Alan enjoyed working in the

steelworks very much and overall, he liked it better when the steelworks was there. Although, he said 'Consett is a way cleaner place now then what it was when the steelworks were around.' Some of his family worked at the steelworks, including his sister for a small period of time, but she did not do the same job. His dad also worked there.

Alan also said that when the steelworks closed down people either spent all their money (which they got because they were made redundant) on cars or houses and some used it to move away from the area to find work.

He also said that after the steelworks closed down, he lost the chance to socialise with the many friends that he had made at work, which he had really enjoyed.

Alan preferred Consett life when the steelworks were open, but he doesn't want the pollution in the sky and air like there was then. Overall, he very much enjoyed working at the steelworks and enjoyed the good friendships that he made.

By JJ, Daniel, Katie, Charlie & Abbie

Andrea's Story

Andrea was born in Crookhall and moved to Delves Lane when she was 5.



Andrea's memories were really interesting because she told us what it was like as a child, when the Steelworks was still open.

Some of Andrea's best memories of being a little girl was playing games like 'Leavo' and 'Watch the Cat'. 'Leavo' is a game where the girls chased the boys and Andrea remembers playing this with her friends. She liked to sing

lots of songs and loved the open spaces and the freedom to play in the fields. She enjoyed her childhood in the area very much.

Andrea was only 15 years old when the steelworks closed, she said that if she could go back in time, she would go to the time when Consett had the steelworks again and she would enjoy the fact that there was no iPads or social media.

Andrea and her family were really upset when the Steelworks closed down in 1980, because it was a very difficult time for the local community. Andrea's father worked for the National Coal Board and then locally at Amoco Fabrics, which used to be called Patchogue Plymouth. Her mother worked at Owen Brothers Shop and The Empire Theatre in Consett.

Andrea said that she likes Consett now because it is all so new and modern, but she also liked the community then, and how everyone was always outside whatever the weather.

Andrea told us that Consett looked altogether different back when she was a little girl and she liked going to the Plaza Cinema which has now gone. Andrea thought the red dust, created by the steelworks, was completely normal. Also, none of her family was affected by the red dust so she did not feel that she had to worry. Andrea said, 'I was not afraid to breath in the red dust because I did not believe it could harm you.'

Andrea likes her job helping to bring new business to Consett as this has helped the town.

She said she would like to go to school now more than in the past as it 'looks more fun nowadays!'

By Ethan, Liam, Holly, Amelia & Danyl.





Stephen grew up in Templetown and moved to Medomsley Road, Consett when he was a child. Some of Stephen's best childhood memories were playing with his friends in the local fields. He can remember when he used to play games such as: 'Knocky-Nine Doors' and would always get told off!

Stephen went to Blackfyne School and was 14 when the Steelworks closed down. When he left school, it was extremely hard to find work. His dad had worked at steelworks too and he also lost his job which was difficult for the family.

Stephen said that although the steelworks closing was bad for jobs, he was happy when it closed down as it was better

for the environment. He loves Consett now because back then when the steelworks was open, Consett was dirty and the steelworks also made lots of noise. He also remembers that there

was red dust everywhere which he didn't like.

Stephen loves the north east, but he had to leave Consett to find work. He set off on a journey around the country and had many different types of jobs. He ended up in London and stayed there for 2 - 3 years. It was very crowded and busy, but he enjoyed it. He loved the north east more than London



though and he moved back to Consett, and lives in Blackhill.

Stephen said that Consett has changed a lot since the closing of steelworks. Houses were knocked down and more new houses got built in Consett. Without the steelworks, there is no more red dust in the air we breathe and that is really good for everyone's health. People have learnt how to be more environmentally friendly, and the town is much cleaner and more modern.

He is involved in local politics but doesn't follow a particular political party. He likes to have his own opinions, and believes it is very important for young people to get involved in their local communities and make them better places to live.

Beamish Visit

The children visited Beamish Living History Museum. They used their historical research skills to analyse records linked to Consett steelworks.

They also handled artefacts that went back to the origins of steel making in the Derwent Valley, including swords made by the famous German sword makers of Shotley Bridge!









National Clean Air Day

The 17thJune 2021 was National Clean Air Day, this was also Day 1 of our project.

The children thought about the impact that Consett's famous 'Red Dust' from the steelworks had had on the lives of local residents. They read news reports about the serious illnesses that were caused by it, the legal fight for compensation for those affected.

As part of their research, they interviewed residents from the time and looked at photographic evidence. They also reflected upon current proposals for a new waste incinerator and 50 metre chimney, to be built 1.4 miles away from their school.

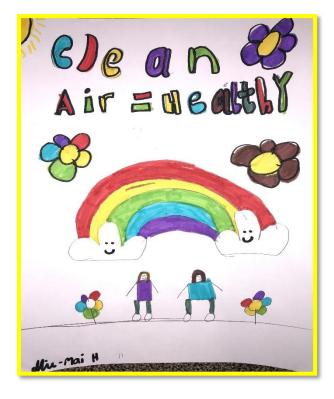
They used all of their research, the experiences of pollution that the Consett and the Delves Lane area had over many years, to create their own posters.



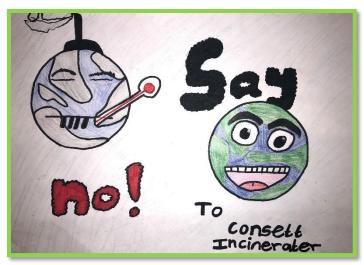




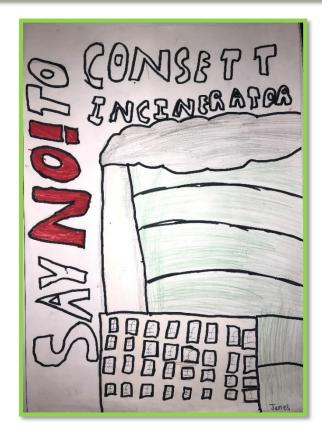




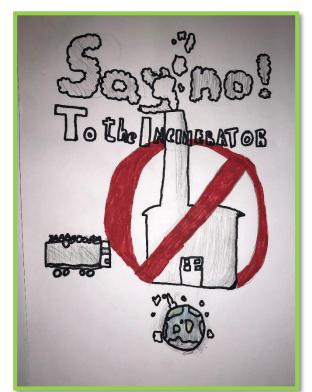


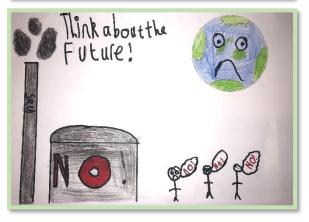




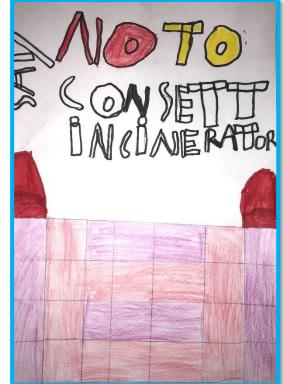


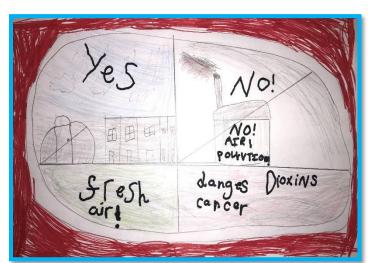








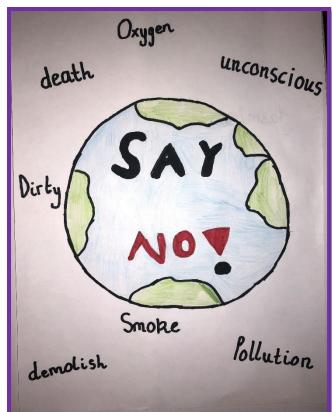






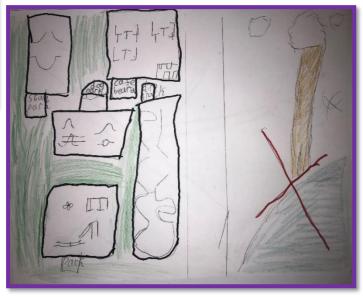






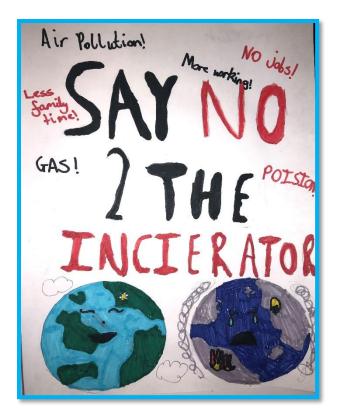






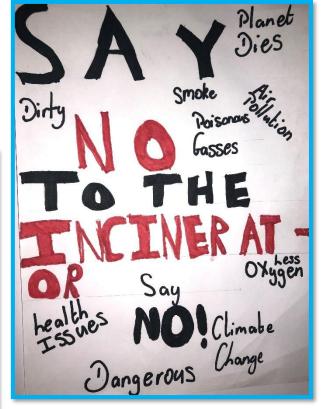








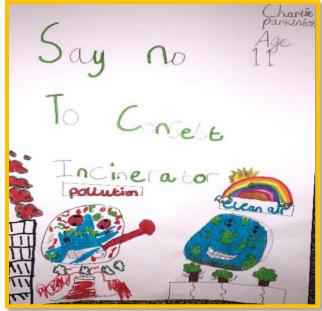


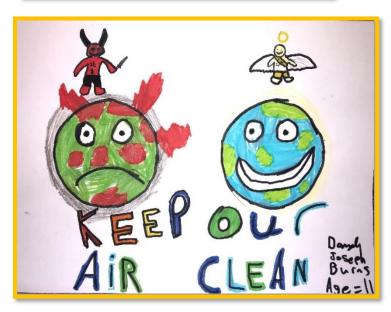






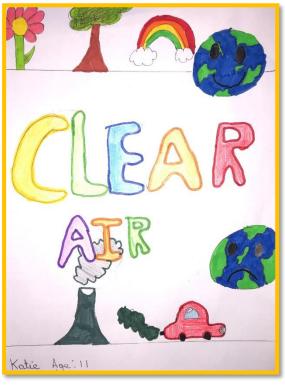






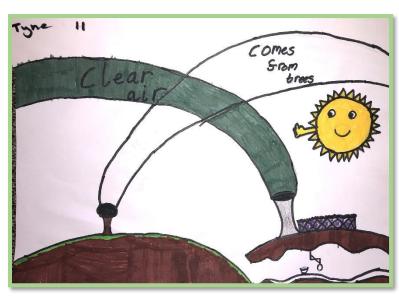


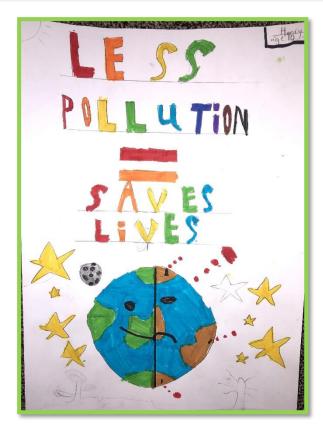






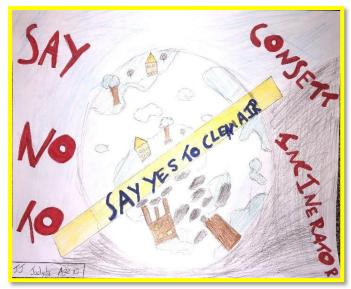


















Creative Writing & Poetry

We studied creative writing and poetry that related to the effects of industry upon the land. This included a novella called 'The Iron Man' by Ted Hughes, and poems such as 'The Steelworks' by Owen Sheers, 'Nothing Gold Can Stay' by Robert Frost and 'Jerusalem' by William Blake.

Nothing Gold Can Stay by Robert Frost

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf,
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day
Nothing gold can stay.

We thought about the ways that Consett steelworks was such a part of the local community in both positive and negative ways.

We analysed poetic techniques, and the messages that the poets were trying to express about the clash between the cycle of nature and industrial development.

We hope you enjoy them!

The Day the Steelworks Closed

On the day the steelworks closed, Mother nature turned the land gold, The air is fresh the pollution ended,

From the day the steelworks closed, The Red Dust has gone, The town is mended.

By Henry

The Story of Nature

On the day the Steelworks closed, Mother nature spread its warm arms once more.

The gold of nature rose once again. She decided to fight for the grass, flowers, trees and the rivers. For everything that was hers.

By Danyl B

The Return

The Consett Steelworks polluting day and night.

'Red Dust' everywhere.

All the food in the market was red,

The snow was red,

The windows were red.

It was normal then, but it went away.

After forty years the air is clean

And the land is green.

Although it couldn't come back.

Could it?

By Jack

Every Day

Every day, I woke up feeling frightened because of the lava. Mixed emotions every day got in my way Molten lava Tattooed on my skin Tattooed on my mind No way out, my job for eternity 40 years later Happy 'n' proud No more pollution to engulf my lungs From our generation to the future generation We ask you, we plead with you. Keep our land green and gold

By Jason



The Steelworks

The steel works is a place where steel is made.

A place where smoke billowed into the atmosphere.

But those days are gone now.

Animals passed the steel works, looked left and right.

They made sure that it was safe to cross the road.

Because cars zoomed past on a morning

Inside the steel works lots of men are working.

Hours on end in front of molten lava. The beating heart of Consett makes the most important thing from Consett – **Steel!**

The final hour - they all get ready to go home.

People zoom out of work.
All the animals get ready- it is their time now.

By Ethan Goodfellow

A New Threat

On the day the steel works closed plenty people were pleased.

Toxic pollution was strong, life changing smoke inhaled, people were gone...

Consett steel works the mothership,
Spewing clouds of red dust,
Choking people who;
cannot see,
cannot hear,
cannot breathe.

September 12th in 1980 the steel works closed, No more red dust choking the air! We can see, we can hear, We have cleaner greener air to breathe.

We cannot let, future threats Ruin our clean air.

By Evie W

Pollution

The steelworks pollute the whole day, Making us live in grey, The dreadful plumes polluting Consett.

The fire so hot and bright,
The steelworks so ginormous,
Polluting all of Consett.
The Works, sparking and scary,
Fires as hot as the sun, inside like hell.
Pollution making people ill.

Nature is dead.

Just the steelworks,

Surrounded by houses.

Now forty years later,
The town is cleaner,
It is safer now,
The town is greener,
It has safer jobs,
No more pollution surrounding us.
We can breathe air safely,
Nature is brighter.
The sky is blue,
The air clean,
Everything is safer.

But pollution can return,
The sky would not be blue anymore,
The air would not be clean to breath,
Nature will not be blooming and
bursting out.

We want the wildlife and green fields to stay.

And for that we must hope and pray.

By JJ

The Steelworks

On the day our steelworks closed, Our great and wonderful mother nature rose, Up from the dead and was reborn.

On the day our steelworks closed was breath taken.

Lots and lots of people lost their jobs.

They were sad - the best steel producer in the world - GONE!

Now the red dust has settled – no more pollution.

A beautiful place to live.

But it isn't over.

There is an incinerator creeping closer to Consett.

The local schools and the people are objecting. No pollution, No return to the past. No return to hell.

By Rafal

The Beating Heart

The steel was the beating heart of my life,
Because it supplied me with a job and money,
It helped me buy food and water for my family,
The people who worked there were oh so nice,
It made ships, boats and cars,
But it all ended when it shut...

By Emma

The Day the Steelworks Closed

On the day the steel works closed,
Mother nature first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold,
There was a chance to fight back,
The nature glows brighter than ever,
Hope it will be that way for ever,
Hope it will be that way for generations,
Hope it does not repeat itself over
again,

We must stand back up my friends, And fight against disaster once again

By Charlie Parkinson

Consett Steelworks

On the day the Steelworks closed, The red dust that was not good for me, Started to disappear. Steelworks SHUT. Pollution going.

Then, 40 years later,
Consett is now full of houses,
Thriving and beautiful.
We have cleaner air now – we can breathe!

Please do not revisit the past.

By Abbie Harris



The Steelworks

The steelworks opened up in 1880, It closed in 1980, Those days are in the past, Those days are now artefacts, Steelworks, the monster, eating flames, Spewing red dust across the land.

Gone, gone, gone, never to return. No pollution, no red dust, no bad air, Those days are thankfully old.

40 years have passed, the pollution moved out and died.
Green fields have moved back,
Sheep can play happily.
People breath clean air,
Kids can play happily.
The monster is slain.
Consett can live happily ever after.

By Holly

What the Steelworks Made

The steelworks made many jobs but made much pollution,

It made the town and destroyed the town.

We had the natural resources but destroyed the green.

40 years later the pollution has finally lessening.

The ground is green. plants flower and trees bloom

We are finally counting our blessings.

But, over time new enemies emerge, And may worsen our lives. Consett full circle.

Pollution will turn the plants blacker. Pollution will fill the air we breathe Pollution will enter the food chain.

Save our land, save our air, save our lives.

By Liam



The Beating Heart of the Town

Consett Steelworks! The beating heart of the town.

Consett Steelworks had its own ships and trains.

Consett steel was shipped around the globe.

Consett Steel, the best in the world!

Making steel was the beating heart of the town.

Consett Steel made Blackpool Tower.

Consett steel paid for the children to go on trips and enjoy days out.

The works donated money to people to help the community out.

Consett Steelworks, the beating heart of the town.

On the day the Steelworks closed, the heart of the town stopped.

Forty years on, the town back to life, We can now see the positives; People will not die of red dust.

By Ellie-Mai

The Iron Man

On one day the workers in the huge works were working, making iron into a person! They made iron for hours and hours, made iron into blocks.

The workers made a human body – they could make it big or small, short or tall. What was it like to make an Iron person? Said a reporter.

Being in the hot furnace was intense, and it smelled like a dog that did not take a bath.

Suddenly, the building started to fall apart rip by rip by rip, roar by roar by roar. Then silence.

He said 'ruuuuunnnnnn!'

The iron man tried to save everyone. Everyone died - but iron man survived.

By Sarah



The Steelworks

Everything and everyone was red. The furnace fires rose from the dead No one in town knew how to live any other way

Others thought better to just stay away

We lived with the red dust
And worked because we must
Pollution spread and we were proud
But was the steel worth the cloud?

And for those that will be here next Please read my text Make sure our air is clean And make sure the land stays green.

By Amelia

The Steelworks

Every day, every night I am permanently in fright. The red dust has taken over the bright.

Some say it will stay some say it will go. But me? I am scared of the fall. Pollution eats the air I breath. When will our air be free?

The red dust has gone, a beautiful town is unveiled.

Keep our animals safe.

Keep our air clean.

Keep our land golden and green.

Save the health of the next generation.

By Daniel Daly



There Was Once

There was once a world with quite different powers,

This monstrosity was ours,
It was quite unusual,
Far from the usual.
Back then there were monsters,
Torturing the youngsters,
There was even an evil red dust dyed red,

There was even an evil red dust dyed red,
A dust that made us all want to stay in bed.

Now we own hills,

Fields full of mills,
We live very different days,

Totally different from the unsettling, polluting greys.

There was once a world with quite different powers,

This monstrosity was all ours, It was quite unusual, Far from the usual. Please do not ruin it.

Please do not send your men.

Do not build the terrible incinerator and pollute our air once again.

By Aleksandra

The Steelworks

Lots of red dust
Doesn't look good with rust
Making money
And earning crusts
Itchy eyes with bad trust

By Bailey

The Smoky Steelworks

It was bad it had red dust everywhere It was good it made the best steel It was bad it had fumes pollution the town

It was a good community sports and different social events
It was bad it had smoke that killed.
In hindsight, it was good that it closed.

Back to nature, great community, no pollution.

By Callum

The Steelworks

The steelworks provided jobs
Some felt that it also robbed.
I think it was good
And just misunderstood.
It provided Consett with money
So that the future could be sunny
Families had a roof over their head
And they were given a bed

But the steelworks is now in the past It was never here to last

By Mason

Consett, The Red Town

The wind was red
The houses were red
The cars were red
The workers were poor.

Work, Work, Work

Our town, the red town.

By Harvey

Consett Steelworks

They worked all day,

They worked all night,

The steelworks never turned off the lights

As molten metal flowed,

The red sky glowed.

Dust laying over the old town like a blanket of red snow on a cold winter's day.

Now, 40 years later the Steelworks have gone. Consett is a much happier and healthier place.

By Sophia



Nature is Back

Nature is good because Bee's make honey and other food.

Nature is bad because wasps sting you. Nature is good because it has fresh air. Nature is bad because it can be too vibrant

Now that Steelworks are gone, Nature is back!

By Jasmine

Save the World

Nature is good because bees make us food

Nature is bad because wasps sting you Nature is good because it creates fresh air

Nature is destroyed because people don't care

Start to care.

Stop the pollution.

Save the world.

By Kacey

Consett Steelworks

Consett steel, the pride of Consett. Thousands worked from morning 'til night. Steel is a big deal but it polluted the fields,

From 1841 to 1981 people created Consett steel.

But now, the steel making days are over. Steel was a big deal but it polluted the air.

Red dust polluting for miles around,
Dawn goes down today,
luckily for us the red dust has gone away!
Steel was a big deal!
Now our air is clear and our fields are clean.

By Isabella

Praying Day and Night

The dust as red as blood
The smoke as thick as lion skin
The smell was like the depths of hell

For hours and hours the workmen worked

The furnace was hot it burned and burned

The town was covered day after day To the people that would pray and pray for hell to go away

One day it all went away
Revealing the beauty of nature
The people had prayed and prayed
It worked, it finally went away

By Dion



No More Steelworks

It was the best steel in the world But it smelt bad, It was dangerous And you could die.

The pollution could kill people that had asthma.

The red dust got everywhere.
The liquid metal could kill you if you fell in.

The men that worked there got well paid though.

They work night and day.
They work in red hot conditions.
It would be very noisy.
NO MORE...

There are more green fields There are more animals. There is no more smoke. There is no more red dust.

The town is happy there's no more pollution.

Consett is a greener and more beautiful place.

By Kieron

Painting the Town Red

All the air was red And a tear would be shed For all the lives that were lost As families paid the cost

When the steelworks shut Consett when to muck But after a while The town got back its smile

In the future maybe
The town might get shady
But working as a team
We can make it clean

Now that nature has returned And nothing was that burned All the animals have moved back in To start their life again

By Miley

THE STEELWORKS

As the steelworks grew, So did the pollution, It was making people ill and they knew.

Some jobs involved extreme heat, Down in the furnace and up on the filter, These jobs were not neat.

The community was great, They had lots of clubs, And they had lots of mates.

The Legacy of the Steelworks
Great community spirit
Beautiful surroundings that are a definite perk.

By James



Returning Back to Nature

Working all day, hard work Sleep for a couple of hours Waking up early saying goodbye To my family while walking out the door

Going through the pain of being burnt

Pumping iron under strip lights All for our monster of the town All for Consett

We will never forget about the steelworks
In our future we do not want anything similar back
Respect nature forever and always
Nature is a precious life

By Bobbi

Saving Consett

We are killing the earth, but no one believes us because we are young. The forest is turning into ash. If we do not save it, we will need to Dash and dash far away from this place! Far, far, far away this place will go until it will be all gone into ashes.

The forest will be all gone,
The grass will be all gone,
The plants will be all gone,
The animals will be all gone,
The buildings will be all gone,
Life will be all gone.....

Steel works are gone we have saved Consett!!
The steel works are no more no more

By Emillie

pollution for Consett!



The Dragon Slayer

Consett steelworks, a dragon spewing out fire and dust.

The red dust was snorted across the town.

It covered:

- -houses
- -cars
- -washing

Everything!

One day, in 1980, the dragon was slain! No more dust No more pollution No more hell for people to live in, but still sadness.

Today, we love the countryside as it is. We don't need pollution.
Our town is green and it's golden.
That is the way we want it to stay.

By Ryan

The End of an Era

The industry was strong, the community even stronger, The monster Steelworks, destroying mother nature. Red dust swarming like a hive of bees, covering houses and polluting

Years had passed,
The Steelworks grew,
Then downhill it went,
To them the news was a blow.
What was the date?
September 12th, 1980

Now there are plans to build an Incinerator.

Ruin our chance to make nature better.

It will destroy all our hard work, We ALL need to stop nature from perishing again.

By Safia

trees.



The Present of Steelworks

Red dust used to infect the air, Like it didn't care, It could turn the white clothes you wear red.

Steelworks made steel, It was a good deal, The jobs were for a steal.

But when it closed down, Most people gave a frown. The furnaces no longer made a blast.

Nature came back, the red dust was not destined to last.

Then Consett turned around, the

Then Consett turned around, the community back together, The bad times had passed.

By Demi

Consett Steel

Consett steel was the best in the world, as strong as a tiger.
The steel works provided lots of strong steel like a weightlifter that lifts.
Some great things come to an end.
Some people were happy that the steelworks were closing.
Some people were sad, less money, too few jobs.
But there is less red dust when there is

But there is less red dust when there is less red dust there is less smoke. There will be no more pollution. Everyone agrees that no pollution is a good thing.

By Alfie

There Was Once

There was once a world with quite different powers,

This monstrosity was ours,
It was quite unusual,
Far from the usual.
Back then there were monsters,
Torturing the youngsters,
There was even an evil red dust dyed red,
A dust that made us all want to stay in bed.
Now we own hills,
Fields full of mills,
We live very different days,
Totally different from the unsettling,

There was once a world with quite different powers,

This monstrosity was all ours, It was quite unusual, Far from the usual. Please do not ruin it. Please do not send your men. And pollute our air once again,

By Aleksandra

polluted greys.

Consett, Past and Present

They worked all day
They worked all night
The Steelworks never turned off a light

Red dust covered the town like a Blanket of snow covering the Real beauty of Consett

Now, green fields surrounded the Town like a blanket keeping Us safe, secure and warm No pollution, no dirt, no red dust.

By Esme

Working in Consett Steelworks

As the molten metal evacuated The pollution grew in the sky. Climbing up through the chimneys Climbing up really high.

The red dust gets in your eyes
It almost feels like you're going to die.
The problems make you want to cry.
When I am finished working
I can't wait to say goodbye.

But the next day, when I start work again, I always do a big sigh.

The heat inside always makes me want to cry

I have no choice, this is my life, I can never say goodbye.

By Maddison

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