

THE HISTORY OF MANVERS WATERFRONT BOAT CLUB & LAKE

Once the largest contaminated site in Europe,
the regeneration of the Dearne Valley has been
truly remarkable.

Along with the steelworks, the pits were the industrial backbone of Britain, and for decades dominated our landscape. Now they have all but disappeared and in their place have sprung up nature reserves, business parks and bustling retail centres.

This is true of the Dearne Valley and until the 1980s it relied almost entirely upon coal-related industries. One of the largest of those collieries was Manvers Main which incorporated what was at one time the biggest coking plant in Western Europe. It was the largest contaminated site in Europe in the 1990s and the transformation of the area has been a triumph.

OLD MANVERS

Manvers was a complex comprising the original sinkings known as 'Old Manvers', later sinkings known as 'New Manvers' and a coke and by-products plant. The first shaft was sunk in the late-19th century followed by the second shaft, sunk between 1900 and 1901, and later a third shaft was sunk.



Aerial view 1995

REGENERATION BEGINS

The site remained derelict until the mid-1990s, when Rotherham Council started a regeneration programme with funding from the European Regional Development Fund and Derelict Land Grants. Manvers, Wath Main Colliery and the Wath railway marshalling yard were demolished, cleared of contamination and landscaped. Manvers Lake was created. In addition to its amenity & recreational value, the lake also serves a functional purpose as a balancing lake forming part of a sustainable urban drainage scheme for the surrounding residential and industrial developments.

MANVERS WATERFRONT BOAT CLUB

In 2009 a multi-activity club was set up for members of the local community, called Manvers Waterfront Boat Club (MWBC). Their mission is to promote community participation in healthy recreation by providing facilities for:

Paddlesports, Dragon Boating, Angling, Cycling, Running, Sailing, Swimming, Triathlon, Windsurfing and Model Boating to the communities of Rotherham, Doncaster, Barnsley and the surrounding areas.



Aerial view 2020

1900



Aerial view 1950

1950

THE SOUTH MANVERS COMPLEX

With rationalisation in the South Yorkshire coalfield, from 1950 to 1956, Manvers became the centre of coal output from the collieries known as the South Manvers complex that were linked below ground. They were Wath Main, Barnburgh Colliery and Kilnhurst. Each colliery retained its individual identity but the coal was wound to the surface at Manvers; this was done to protect the loyalties and friendships of the local pitworkers at each mine. The colliery complex was closed on 25 March 1988.

1990

2008

THE BOAT HOUSE

In 2008 the British Canoe Union took a 250-year lease on Manvers Lake. A boat house complex with a cafe, slipway and parking soon followed.

2009



Aerial view 2010

2011

CHARITABLE TRUST IS FORMED

Manvers Lake & Dearne Valley Trust Ltd, a charitable company was formed in 2011. The core activities of the Trust are:

- Maintaining and developing the Boathouse and Manvers Lake
- Delivery of a comprehensive weekly programme of activities
- Providing an Outreach Programme to schools and other group users of our facilities
- Offering support and advice to the public on matters related to water sports and other associated sports.