



## Retirement from sport

The lack of financial benefit to being a sportsman in late 19th Century Britain meant that once Arthur retired from his sporting career, like other working class athletes of his time, he needed to find work to survive. Unsurprisingly, he became a miner and went 'down the pit' like so many men during that time in the North of England.

### Arthur the Home Guard

During the First World War (1914-1918), Arthur also became a soldier and served as a corporal in the Reserves (the Territorial Force), acting as a Home Guard, rather than serving aboard.

### Arthur the Miner

When he retired from football, Arthur spent around 20 years working in the coal mines of South and West Yorkshire.

Despite his tiring job, he continued to play cricket. Many mines at the time employed hundreds or thousands of men and most had their own football and cricket teams. As Arthur is known to have played cricket for Denaby Main in 1905-6 and 1909: he may well have worked at Denaby Main Colliery at that time but no record has been found.

The 1911 census shows Arthur as living in Moorthorpe, South Elmsall, West Yorkshire, and his occupation is given as a 'collier (hewer)'. This would have been a very physical job cutting coal from the seam. It's likely that he worked at either South Kirkby Colliery or Frickley Colliery nearby.

Arthur spent the last 15 years of his life living in the village of Edlington near Doncaster, and working at Yorkshire Main Colliery. Here he worked as a haulage hand until his death in 1930 at 65. This was a dangerous and physically demanding job, involving hauling full coal trucks weighing 1.5 tons each.

It's likely, as Arthur was a member of the Yorkshire Miners' Association, that he will have taken part in the General Strike of 1926. Many miners were on strike for seven months in protest at plans to increase their hours and reduce their pay. Terrible hardship and poverty was experienced in mining communities as a result.



## Arthur Wharton: 1865 to 1930

The World's First Black Professional Footballer

[www.arthurwharton.info](http://www.arthurwharton.info)

### Arthur's death

Arthur died in December 1930 aged 65 'after a long and painful illness', (Doncaster Chronicle, 19/12/1930). The main cause of death was said to be cancer of the upper lip. The last known photo of him as a miner clearly shows the growth on his nose. He died at Springwell House Public Assistance Institution, Balby, Doncaster and was buried in an unmarked pauper's grave in Edlington. The Doncaster Gazette reported that at the funeral there was "a fairly large attendance which was representative of all the sports and organisations he had been connected with".

In an interview for BBC Two's Black Britain (1997), local Edlington resident, Alwyn Tatum, recalls seeing Arthur when he was a lad, physically fit in his sixties, running laps in the colliery sports ground. He recalled:

*"There was no fat on him, it were all muscle. It were like looking at a greyhound. They always used to say he could catch pigeons"*