

## **5 April 1922. Ipswich City Colliery, West Ipswich.**

On the morning of 5 April 1922, Thomas Felix aged 32, and his mate Sylvester Walter Roberts had begun what should have been a routine day's work at the Ipswich City Colliery. Barely an hour passed before disaster struck.

Their task was to cut a side rib into the coalface so that a prop could be set in place under a crown. At the time of the disaster, Sylvester Roberts had turned away to dump a quantity of cut coal into a skip. He heard the ominous sound of a coal fall and quickly turned back to the face to discover that his mate Thomas had been completely buried by a fall of soft roof coal. Later estimates noted that more than 3 tons of coal had fallen onto Thomas.

Records show that willing hands were quickly at work and amazingly, it took just ten minutes to uncover Thomas's body. Dr Patterson pronounced Thomas dead, cause of death being suffocation. Later that morning, mine owners HG Noble Ltd sent their general Manager Mr W Blanis, who joined the Qld Govt Inspector of Mines, Mr J Stafford to inspect the scene of the accident. Mine Manager Mr Brown stated that Thomas Felix had always been a careful miner, that the usual safety precautions had been taken and that although it was a faulty roof, there did not appear to be any sign that a fall should occur so suddenly.

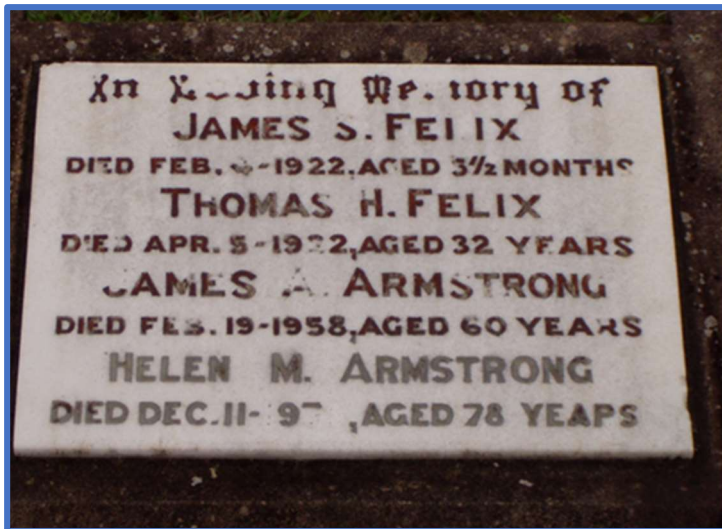
Thomas Henry Felix was buried in the Ipswich general cemetery, Presbyterian B section on Friday 7 April 1922.

He was mourned by his wife Helen Martin (nee Steel), his young son NT Felix, his parents Thomas and Mary Anne Felix and fellow miners from the Ipswich City Colliery.



Thomas's brother, born at Merthr Tydwel in Wales, had passed away on 3 October 1921, just six months before Thomas. His parents Thomas and Mary were now mourning the loss of two sons.

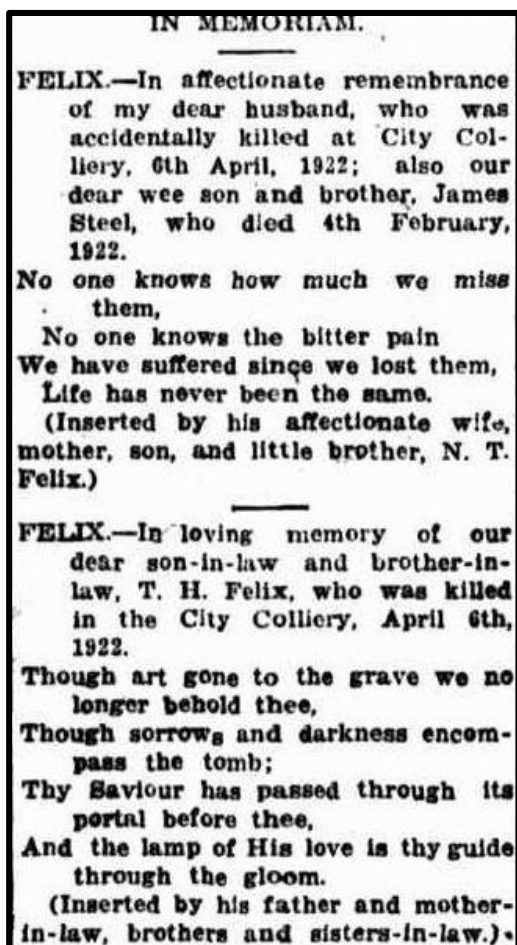
Tragically, Thomas Felix's wife Helen was also mourning two deaths - her husband and her infant son James Steel Felix who had passed away not two months earlier aged 3 and a half months. Hopefully their surviving son NT Felix was a consolation to Helen in her grief.



A notice in the Qld Times dated Saturday 6 May 1922 shows that predictably, the Ipswich community gathered

to support the Felix family:

*Mrs Felix and Mrs Steel, of Tivoli, desire to thank their neighbours for their assistance and also all kind friends who sent cards, wreaths etc or otherwise showed their sympathy with them in their recent bereavement.*



Memorial notices were published by Thomas' family one year later in the Qld Times, 6 May 1923.

Ipswich Mining Warden Mr J Stewart Berge presided over the Inquiry into the accident. The court found: *"That on the 6<sup>th</sup> April at Ipswich City Colliery, Thomas Felix met his death as the result of the rib coal which supported the lower end of the crown giving way. As the roof was soft Felix was buried beneath the fall and asphyxiated, but the deceased was preparing to put a prop under the crown at the time of the accident.*

*If a temporary prop had been put in it is probable the accident would have been averted. We recommend that where the coal is tender or the seam is thick, both ends of the bars or crowns should be supported by props forthwith".*



## Report from the Dept of Natural Resources and Mines (Qld):

**REF: Qld Government**

**Natural resources and Mines**

Fatalities in the Queensland Coal Industry 1882 – 2001

MINE: Ipswich City Colliery, IPSWICH

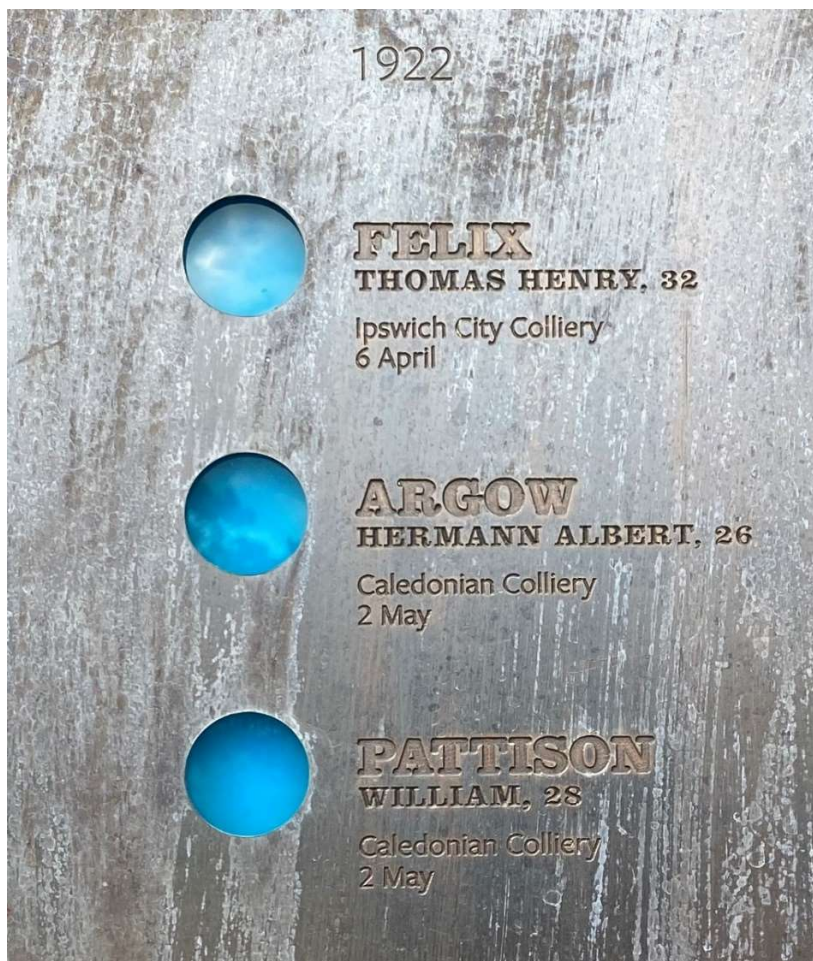
DATE OF INCIDENT: 6 April 1922

NAME: **Thos FELIX**

ACCIDENT LOCATION: Underground

INCIDENT: Fatally injured from asphyxiation whilst cutting a rib side to make a place to set a prop under a crown, the rib gave way, liberating a quantity of soft roof coal burying him.

### Ipswich Rosewood Coal Miners Memorial – Wall Record for 1922



This Record was Prepared from Research by Geoff Nimmo, Hugh Taylor & Maxine Jones of Ips Historical Society inc. and compiled with Great Thanks to Maxine Jones.