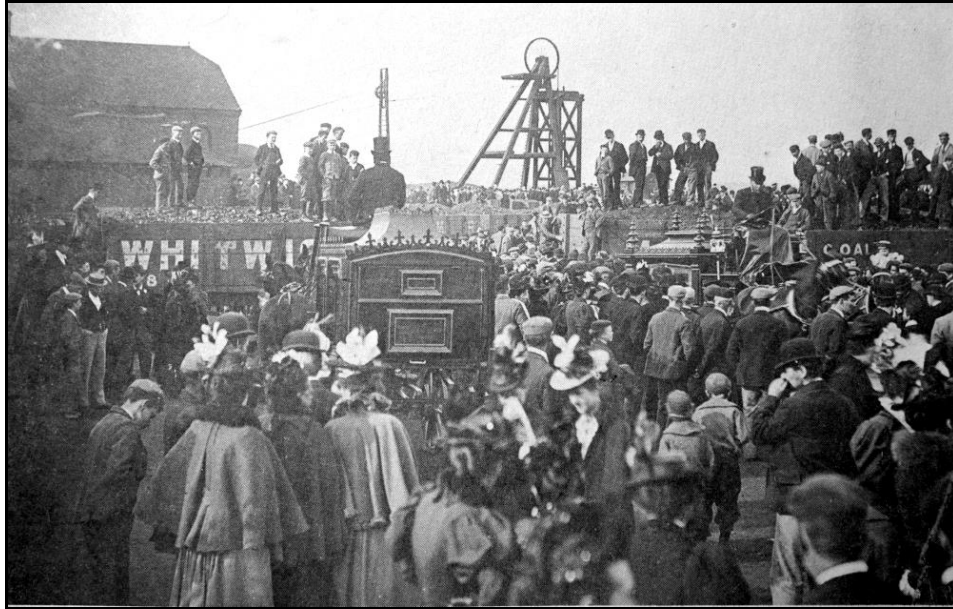


THE WHITWICK COLLIERY DISASTER APRIL 19TH 1898 - BY SAMUEL T STEWART

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM DAVIES, FROM PEGG'S GREEN WHO LOST HIS LIFE WITH 34 OF HIS COLLEAGUES. HIS BROTHER JOHN JAMES' BODY WAS NEVER RECOVERED. WILLIAM WAS BURIED IN GRIFFYDAM WESLEYAN METHODIST CHAPEL GRAVEYARD IN HIS FATHER'S GRAVE



An extraordinary amount of interest was shown in the burial of the unfortunate victims who were recovered from the pit on Friday April 22nd

The bodies recovered were :-

Charles B Clamp, 27, unmarried - Coalville
Joseph Shaw, 24, married - Whitwick
William Davis, 29, married – Pegg's Green, buried in Griffydham Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Graveyard (his brother's body John James was not recovered)
William Limb, 20, unmarried - Whitwick
John Elliot, 43, married - Whitwick
Joseph King, 29, married - Whitwick
William T Belcher, 31, married
John William Platts, 23, unmarried – Swannington, buried in St. Georges Church cemetery Swannington
Thomas Greasley, 29 - Coalville

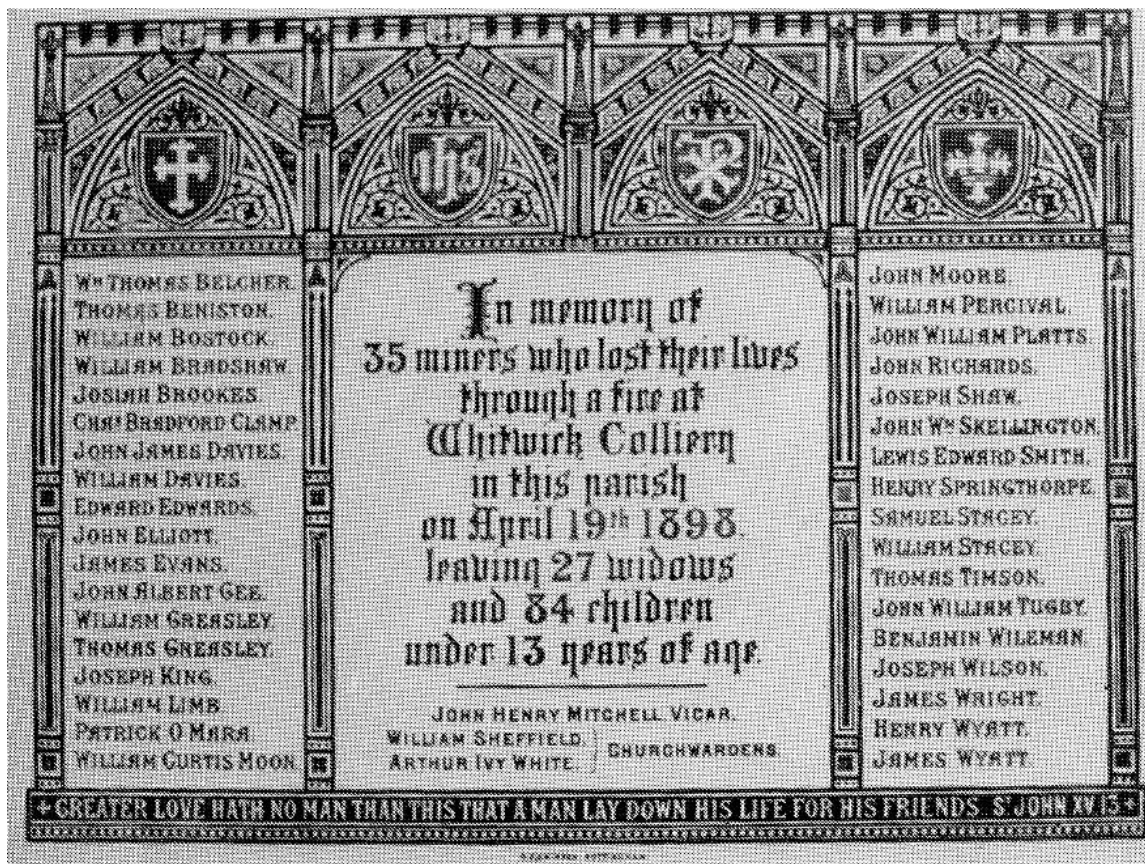
The bodies which had been enclosed in elm coffins, remained throughout Saturday and Saturday night in the band house (where the Coalville Town brass band practiced), and in order to facilitate matters as much as possible it was arranged that all the funerals should start from the colliery, and call for the relatives of the deceased on the way to the respective burial places.

Crowds of people visited the colliery during the early morning, and when at half past twelve, the first two coffins were brought out and placed in the open hearses waiting to receive them, a large crowd had had gathered in the vicinity of the bandhouse.

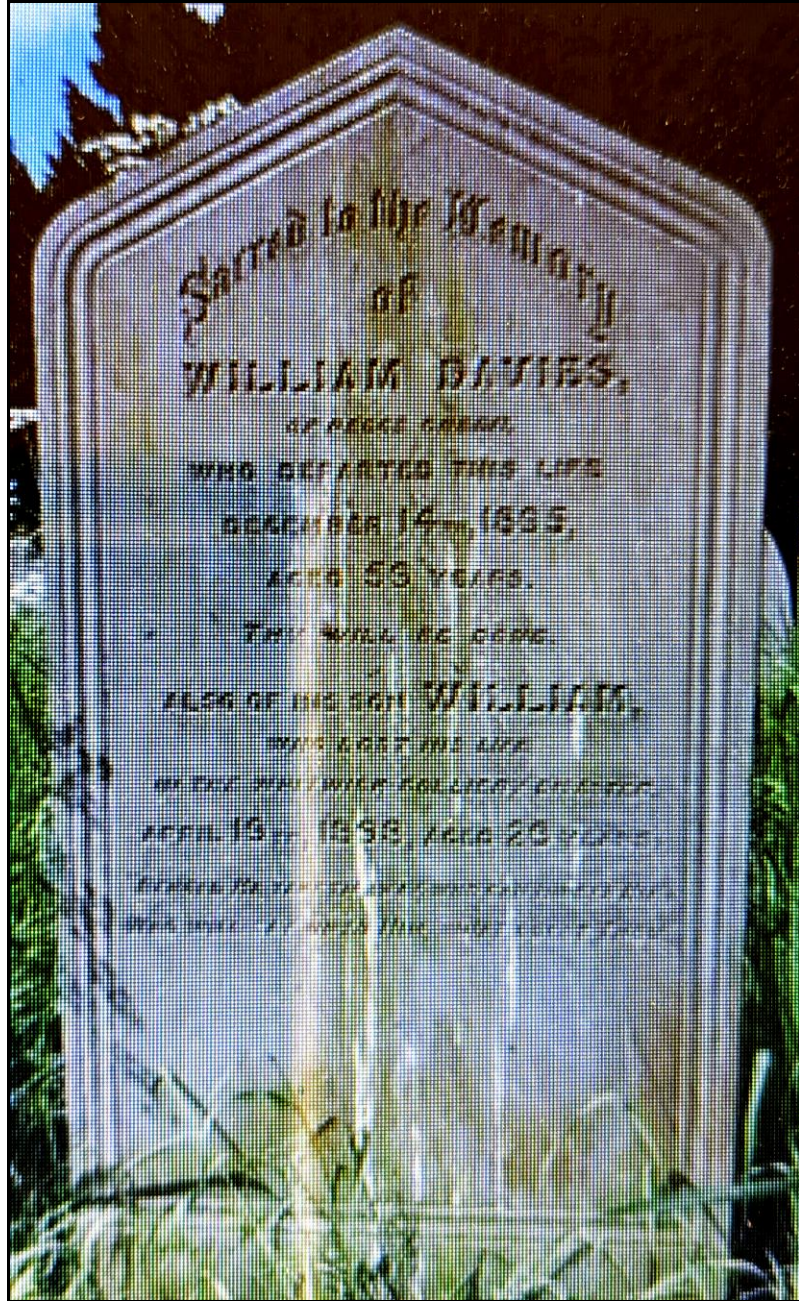
The first two bodies were those of William Davies of Pegg's Green and John Platts of Swannington – encased in coffins made in elm, and ornamented with brass furniture, bearing an inscription stating their names and the date of their deaths – and with as little delay as possible the sad little procession was formed, with the two bearers in front, followed by carriages containing the officials and others connected with the colliery.

Before the time came for the burial of the two victims, the crowd at the colliery had assumed enormous proportions and the preparations for the conveyance of the remains of the hero of the dreadful calamity "Tie" Clamp (Charles B Clamp) were watched with the deepest interest. Through the delay in the return of the officials from Swannington and Griffydam, the procession was over half an hour late in leaving the colliery but when it eventually set forth, led by the Coalville Town band playing the "Dead March" in Saul, an enormous concourse of people followed in its wake.

The above is taken from a report in the Derby Mercury dated April 27th 1898.



A memorial in Whitwick Parish Church to the 35 miners who were killed in Whitwick Colliery fire of April 1898.



Photograph of the grave in Griffydham Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Graveyard of William Davies Junior (aged 29) who was buried with his father who had pre-deceased him in 1895 aged 59

43	80	1	Florey	80	Pruss							80	80
			William Davies	Head	80	55			Coal Miner	X		80	Castle Donington
			Sarah	Wife	80	54						80	Coleorton
			Elizabeth	Daughter	80	27						80	80
			William	80	21				Coal Miner	X		80	Peggs Green
			Herbert	80	21				Smith's Wagon Works	X		80	80
			Walter	80	21				Smith's Wagon Works	X		80	80
			Margie	80	21							80	80
44	80	1	Richard Colliott	Head	80	55			Coal Miner	X		80	Workington

An extract from the 1891 Pegg's Green census

William Davies, born in Castle Donington, a coal miner and former farm labourer, was the father of both William and John James, who were killed in the Whitwick colliery disaster. Although William, aged 21, is recorded in the 1891 census, John James is not recorded, so it is presumed he was not living at home at the time. William senior died at the early age of 59 and William junior was also buried in his grave following his death in the Whitwick coal mining tragedy (see the preceding photograph of their grave)

William senior was married to Sarah (aka Sally) Wardle a local girl born in Coleorton, who was an only child. They had a total of eight children together. Sarah's father was a trained carpenter and worked on the Beaumont's Coleorton Estate for a period. He was also a shaftsman at the Califat Colliery (Coleorton No.2. Pit).

Amongst the children were twin boys aged 13 who were both employed at Stableford's Waggon Works in Coalville and Walter worked there until near retirement age when the 1930s great depression resulted in its closure.

Walter married Sarah Wilton the daughter of William and Bessie Wilton of Pegg's Green. Sarah died at the age of 39 leaving Walter and four daughters - Sally, Elsie, Emmie and Gerty. Walter married a second wife, Sarah Morley They had no children.

The reader can find a detailed history of the Wiltons on the author's website under Publications / Griffydham and Pegg's Green, and then going to the publication entitled "Turning Back The Clock (in the vicinity of Zion's Hill, Pegg's Green)" .