

**SOME COLEORTON 'HAND ME DOWN
HEARSAYS' FROM A SERIES OF FIRST HAND
COLEORTON INTERVIEWS** published in the
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writer in italics where appropriate)**

BY SAMUEL T STEWART - SEPT2026

No Plough Monday or May Day celebrations were kept up in the village, but the clubs used to walk in procession, and a German Band would come through occasionally. The village has never been dull, for it possesses all the ingredients of a fairy tale, with a flying dragon thrown in as make - weight.

Here are fairy tale cottages attired in leaves, and straw bonnets . One of these is inhabited by a villager whose grandpa's great-great-grandfather built the cottage, and it has not been out of the family since. the cottage had a mud floor then, and Grandma used to go into the fields and collect enough clay to make a yellow colour wash to freshen up the walls.

'The Moor was all gorse when grandpa was alive, and people living down the Moor gathered the famous honing stones on Whittle Hill (*in Whitwick*), and sold them in the village. *This industry known as whetstones making was carried on in the village from these special stones.*

Old people made lace which went by carrier to Nottingham and much of the 'Yellow Ware' at the Lount Pottery (*actually Coleorton Pottery within Coleorton parish*) was made by Coleorton people.

The first coal mine worked in Leicestershire was the old pit at Coleorton (*not true*). When the pit was first opened, it was dubbed 'The Bread and Herring', because the miners were so poorly paid. Over 50 years ago, 'a Sankey and Moody man (*American Christian evangelist movement*) used to hold services in the shed before the men went down the mine. The second railway in England, that to Swannington, (*not true*) passed through this district (*the old Coleorton railway*). The old track is grass-grown now, and villagers today who go that way, and say they are going to cross' the old acadock.' (*This was from the bridge that carried the railway over Aqueduct lane and the term is still used by the older generation including myself*).

People were superstitious in those days - 'Gabriel and his hounds' used to be heard at the Coleorton cross roads, with a cracking of whips and howling of dogs.

Then there were the mysterious ' seven whistlers'. Whenever seven shrill whistles were heard, the miners would turn for home again, for the dreaded whistles betokened an accident at the pit.

An important villager industry was run by people who lived at the Inn. This was known as the bauble shop (*on Workhouse Lane*). With 14 lathes and an engine house, this Derbyshire Spa manufacturer used to sell to America and English seaports, all manner of ornamental baubles made from Cellistone stone, beautifully polished and often hand - painted.

Another villager remembers the Windmill grinding corn for Miller Kirby. (*At Swannington*).

There was an old brickyard here then, and as a girl she would help to set and draw the kilns. Clay bricks were made in moulds and dried in the open.

A villager of 82 remembers Coleorton was a 'Wool-combing place and old ladies sat spinning yarn.

There has always been a post woman at Coleorton. The post girl of today wears a uniform and loves her open air life.

The widows of the Alms houses have many tales to tell - of nights when they had to sit up knitting socks as children - of walking miles to carry water - and of the Alms House women of their childhood who went to Church in black bonnets and white aprons.

They tell how the dragon of Griffydam used to fly between Griffy Well and the Cunnery at Coleorton and how one night some men shot it. (*totally fictitious*)

But the best loved personality here was the Lady of the Manor during the War. At the Hall she entertained 800 Australian soldiers. She arranged plays and concerts and delighted the villagers by giving them access to the beautiful gardens. Every week the village mothers met in the picture gallery of the dining room hall, while she, the fairy godmother of the village, sat reading to them. Her many kindnesses are repaid by a lasting affection. Her sunny memory is one of the ornaments of Coleorton - and Coleorton is one of the ornaments of England.