

# WILLIAM STENSON

(b. 1771 - d. Nov 27<sup>TH</sup> 1861)

**A NATIVE OF COLEORTON WHO BECAME  
KNOWN AS THE FATHER OF COALVILLE TOWN**



**BY SAMUEL T STEWART - FEBRUARY 2022**

## **FRONT PAGE PHOTOGRAPH**

A Lithographic portrait from a drawing by H. Denham  
July 5<sup>th</sup> 1841 (copyright Leicester County Council Museums)



**Oil painting of William Stenson held at “Leicester New Walk Museum and Art Gallery”. Gifted by Mr. J. Stenson Turner in 1960.  
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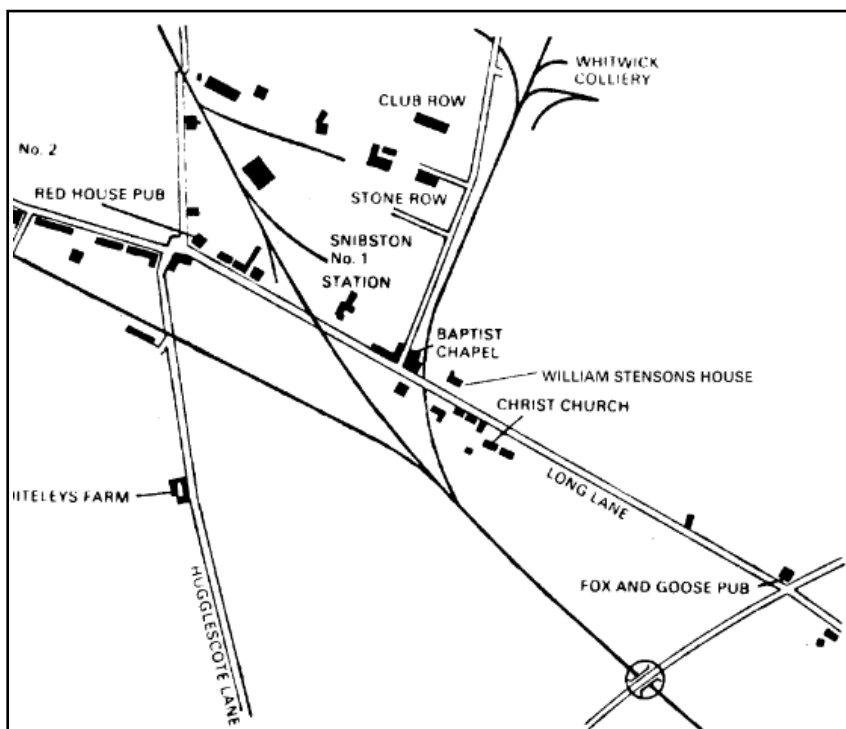
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## LOCATION MAPS



This extract from the 1835 O/S map shows the location of Whitwick Colliery and the settlement that had developed around it at this time. The name of the town of Coalville had clearly become established by this time



This diagrammatic sketch shows some key features that existed in the area c.1841, some of which are referred to in the following text

## INTRODUCTION

### **The coming of the railway age, resulting in the re-surgence of existing coal mining in the local area, and the development of a new coalfield.**

The ten years from 1824 to 1833 were unquestionably the most significant in the South Derbyshire and Leicestershire Coalfields in that they witnessed the appearance of four totally new mining centres and the construction of the area's first locomotive-powered railway from Leicester to Swannington. If the railway had not been built, it is most unlikely that the exploitation of the concealed coalfield to the south of Swannington would have proceeded so extensively and rapidly. On the other hand, it is likely that the railway would not have been constructed so early, had it not been for some tentative efforts to open-up the new part of the coalfield and to demonstrate its considerable potential.

Credit for bringing the two together must largely go to William Stenson, a colliery proprietor, who was born in Coleorton. Details follow of this important figure in the Leicestershire coalfield, and his contribution to the building of the "Swannington Leicester Railway", which later provided the opportunity for the horse drawn "Coleorton Railway" to be built and linked up with the Swannington Railway at Swannington Incline cannot be underestimated.

#### **Jeffrey A.G. Knight wrote the following in the "Leicestershire Historian" (Vol 3 No 4 1985/6) :-**

The role of William Stenson in opening up the North West Leicestershire coalfield was paramount, but to date has been relegated as secondary to that of George Stephenson. This was almost inevitable, given the fact of Stephenson's overall contribution to the nineteenth century. Samuel Smiles, who published his "The Life of George Stephenson in 1858," did as much as anyone to portray the development of this coalfield as being solely due to Stephenson's arrival in the area for the planning and building of the "Leicester and Swannington Railway." He wrote of Stephenson's success, when a depth of 166 feet had been reached, in boring through "a dyke of fused granite," which was a formidable difficulty . . . , one which had baffled former sinkers, and deterred them from further operations. Previously, contemporaries of both Stephenson and Stenson who were present during the development of the coalfield were painting the picture of its foundation being solely due to Stephenson's efforts. George Vaughn, who was the Stephenson's trusty steward of the Snibston collieries from their inception in 1832 to his retirement in 1874, commented at the 1845 Annual Meeting of the shareholders of the Leicester and Swannington Railway that..... "it was certainly owing to Mr. Stephenson's energy, that the Leicestershire Coalfield was opened".

So less than twenty years after William Stenson had established Whitwick Colliery, his efforts as the founding father of the coalfield of North West Leicestershire were being neglected and forgotten.

### **THE FOLLOWING IS AN ATTEMPT TO PUT THE RECORD STRAIGHT**

## WILLIAM STENSON

### GENEALOGY

William Stenson was clearly a mining engineer of some talent and repute. Only limited fragmented information about his life is available, but his roots were in Coleorton where he was born. William was a non-conformist, and following his death, he was buried in a vault with his wife Hannah in the old Baptist cemetery at Hugglescote near Coalville, having died at his home in Coalville on Nov 27<sup>th</sup> 1861.

The following information regarding William Stenson's marriage and children has been put together with the help of descendants' genealogy information recorded on the internet.

William Stenson was born in Coleorton c.1771, and he married Hannah Varnham in Coleorton on July 25<sup>th</sup> 1796. She was born on Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> 1777 in Coleorton, and died on Nov 12<sup>th</sup> 1843 in Heather, Leicestershire. Her parents were Thomas Varnham and Rebecca Varnham (nee. Bonser).

William and Hannah are recording on descendants genealogy websites as having had the following children:-

<b>Rebecca Stenson</b>	b.1797 Coleorton, d. March 1873 Coalville, Leicestershire.
<b>Ann Stenson</b>	b.1798
<b>John Stenson</b>	b. circa.1799
<b>William Joseph Stenson</b>	b.1800 in Thringstone, Leicestershire d.1851 Birmingham
<b>Charlotte Stenson</b>	b.1801
<b>Hannah Stenson</b>	b.1803 Shipley, Derbyshire, d. May 3 <sup>rd</sup> 1870 Coalville, Leics.
<b>Thomas Alexander Stenson</b>	b.1804, Derbyshire, d.1867 Coleford, Gloucestershire.
<b>Thomas Alexander Stenson</b>	b.1804, Derbyshire, d.1867 Coleford, Gloucestershire.
<b>William (Towndrow ?) Stenson</b>	b.1807, Shipley, Derbyshire, d. Feb 9 <sup>th</sup> 1870, Coalville, Leics
<b>Selina Stenson</b>	b.circa 1808 Riddington, Derbys d. circa.1889 Ashby-De-La-Zouch, Leics.
<b>John Forester Stenson</b>	b.1811 d.1863.
<b>Caroline Stenson</b>	b. circa.1813 Coleford, Gloucestershire, d. Oct 12 <sup>th</sup> 1862 Donnington-Le-Heath, Leicestershire

## WILLIAM STENSONS EARLY WORKING LIFE

Colin Owen's book on the Leicestershire & South Derbyshire Coalfields, suggests that William Stenson trained as an engineer in the North East coalfields, but no proof of this has been found by the author.

There is, however, good reason to think that in the early 1800's, he was working for David Mushet who had moved from Scotland to Derbyshire to become manager of the Alfreton Ironworks in 1805. By 1808, Mushet was involved in the design and supervision of a major rebuilding of the "Whitecliffe Ironworks" near Coleford, Gloucestershire, having been approached by Thomas Halford, a wealthy investor from London to carry out this work.

In 1809, William Stenson was working as a "mine bailiff" at Bixslade near Coleford, Gloucestershire and employed by Thomas Halford and David Mushet. This implies that Stenson was working for Mushet in Alfreton and was invited to work in their coal mining venture. In a letter dated Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> 1809 from Thomas Halford to Mushet, he states..."*would not Derbyshire people proceed with more activity at Bixslade than our foresters*". In 1814, Stenson was resident in Coleford, where he leased "Mill Cottage" from George Dew, and there is a record of a schedule of deeds for this property made out to William Stenson by the solicitors in 1821. **William's daughter Caroline was born in Coleford in 1815.**

In 1816, a William Stenson of Coleford, Gloucestershire was granted a patent for an "Improved Engine," this is listed in "A Descriptive History of The Steam Engine" by Robert Stuart.

In Volume 19 of Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons & Command, it records that William Stenson and Samuel Hewlett were awarded a license on Nov 25<sup>th</sup> 1817 to erect and continue 2 steam engines to be called "Old Mill Engines" at the "No coal and Church way coal veins" for a period of 31 Years from Michaelmas 1817.

In 1818, Stenson became a "coal master," when a colliery was opened in Bixslade in partnership with Arnold and **William Willis Bailey of Coleorton**. Willis Bailey was a mining surveyor of some repute in Coleorton and the locality. Bailey probably knew Stenson, having both spent their childhood in Coleorton, and in the partnership articles he described Stenson as a good friend.

There is evidence that William Stenson was active in the Heanor, Derbyshire area prior to 1820, even though he was apparently still resident, or kept his house in Coleford. The Derby Mercury of Oct 4<sup>th</sup> 1820 gives details of a "festival" at the opening of a new coal mine in Shipley, Derbyshire owned by E. M Mundy Esq:-  
*"A noble steam engine of 120 horse power, constructed under the direction of Mr. Stenson, now wields its ponderous limbs on the spot in mighty aid of manly labour."*  
*At the party (where they got through 400 gallons of ale), "Mr. Stenson the Engineer, was chaired."*

In 1823, William Stenson was requested by the Rev. Whinfield to sink another mine in the Heanor, Derbyshire area with a view to taking out previously waterlogged coal, but following disputes about boundaries etc., the Rev subsequently gave up his interests.

## **WILLIAM STENSON ESTABLISHES WHITWICK COLLIERY**

In the early 1820's, William was active in the local area, and carried out trial borings into previously unexplored coal reserves at Long Lane, shown in the sketch on page 4. William Stenson established what was to eventually become Whitwick Colliery c.1826, and in 1827 the "Leicester Chronicle" reported that two shafts had reached a depth of 26 yards. It was initially known as "Long Lane Colliery" but then became Stenson & Co., and was operated / owned by James Whetstone and William Stenson.

## **NEW PARTNERSHIPS & LAND TRANSACTIONS ETC.**

William Stenson was in his late 50s in April 1827, when he entered into partnership with James Whetstone of Dudley, Staffordshire and Samuel Smith-Harris, a coal merchant of Leicester, as colliery owners to form "Stenson & Co". A contribution of £2,700 of initial capital was made in the ratio of three ninths for William Stenson, four for James Whetstone and two for Samuel Smith-Harris. James Whetstone then sold two of his shares to his nephew Joseph Whetstone, who was a yarn spinner in Leicester. Stenson agreed to live close to, and manage the colliery for a salary of £200 per annum, plus a percentage of between 10% and 15% of the profits depending on the output.

**It is worth mentioning at this point that no actual proof has been found by the author that Willam Stenson was related to the business people and land owners in Whitwick named Stinson, although much has been written to suggest that was the case.**

The land on which the colliery was first sunk, was owned by a wealthy hosier from Coleorton named **William Sherwin**, who had become the sole surviving trustee of the will of John Bonnet of Whitwick who had died in 1823. The deeds to this land showed that in 1808 a Samuel Towndrow of Leicester had interest in these lands, and a further indenture, dated 1816, shows Edward Towndrow as a party to a transaction concerning the land. William Stenson had a son with the middle name Towndrow, which presumably indicates that William Stenson had some involvement in the purchase or lease of this land on which the colliery was sunk. In January 1833, he did in fact purchase the Bonnet lands for £1,590, through a mortgage funded by **William Sherwin**, for which he charged Stenson £1,100 to do so. The mineral rights, however, still remained in the ownership of **William Sherwin** as he was trustee of the Bonnet will.

Further leases were purchased in the 1830's. In 1832, 15 acres (including mineral rights) near to the "Red House" and adjoining Long Lane were leased from Thomas Stinson of Whitwick for 31 years at an annual rent of £100 per acre, plus £4 per acre for any surface land used or damaged by the mining. In 1832, 30 acres were leased near the "Red House" from **William Sherwin** of Coleorton for 40 years at a rate of £160 per acre for all coal not exceeding 180 yards in depth, and a further £20 for coal below this level. Early in the following year, **Sherwin** agreed to sell the partners 30 acres of coal under Whitwick Waste for £1,590, while a further 160 acres were leased from Messrs Peake and Chapman.

**Stenson apparently became stretched financially and was forced to sell shares in order to meet his share of the required company capital, and eventually Joseph Whetstone became the single most powerful partner in the colliery company.**

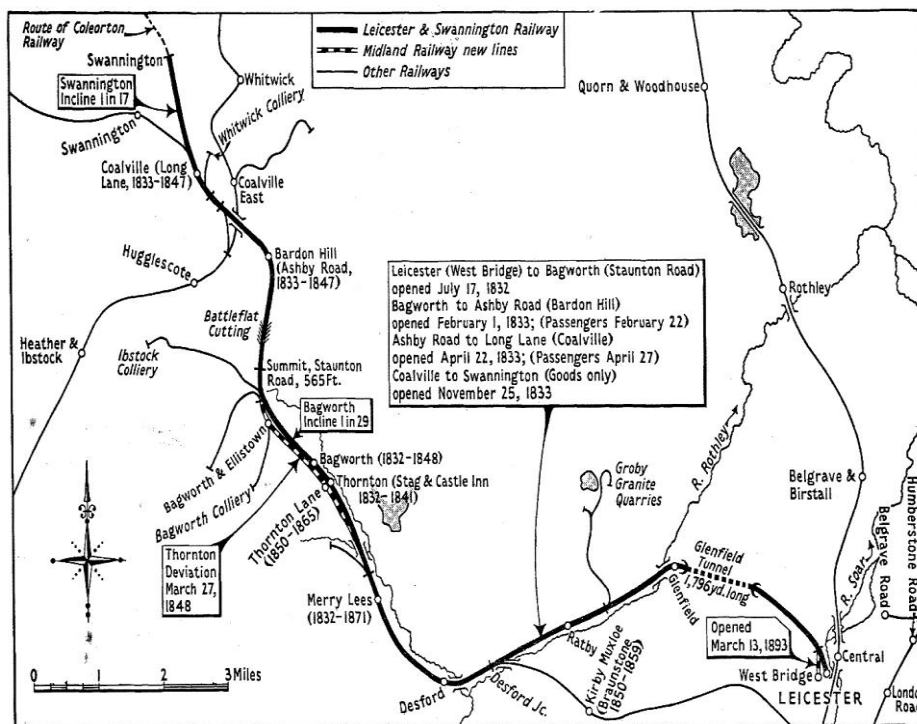


By April 1828, the “Minge” seam, 3ft 6ins thick, had been reached at Whitwick, some 100 yards below ground, and later that month, a waggon laden with Whitwick coal was drawn about Leicester, preceded by a band. In May 1834, the main coal seam was reached at a depth of 780 feet, and great celebrations were held at the “Railway Hotel” on Long Lane. This heralded the official opening of Whitwick Colliery, and it was reported that 50 gentlemen dined, and 200 colliers ate roast beef and plum pudding, with due allowance of ale. The celebrations were further enlivened by music and cannons! In support of the above success, an agreement was made with Samuel Bonnet of Whitwick in 1835 where he agreed to sell Whitwick Colliery Company 140 acres of coal below the former open fields of Whitwick for £1,350. This purchase basically completed the first phase of the company’s development, for which they had secured possession of nearly 700 acres of land.

## THE LEICESTER TO SWANNINGTON RAILWAY

Soon after founding the Whitwick Colliery Co, and during a visit to the North East of England, Stenson saw the new Stockton and Darlington Railway. He immediately realised the potential in the Whitwick area for this revolutionary mode of transport to take coal to Leicester. He therefore contacted George Stephenson with his proposal, who invested £2,500 in the enterprise, and Stephenson’s son Robert, was appointed the railway’s engineer. Robert Stephenson and Thomas Miles subsequently surveyed the route of the railway, and presented their findings to the railway promoters at the Bell Hotel, Leicester on June 24<sup>th</sup> 1829. Following this, the “Swannington and Leicester Railway Company” was founded.

The railway eventually reached Long Lane from Leicester by 1833, and enabled Whitwick coal to be sold at a profit in the city. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 1833, the first coal train to run from Whitwick Colliery, arrived safely at Leicester. See the following map for further details of the railway. The building of the “Leicester to Swannington Railway” was followed by the construction of the horse drawn “**Coleorton Railway**”, which joined it at the incline in Swannington.



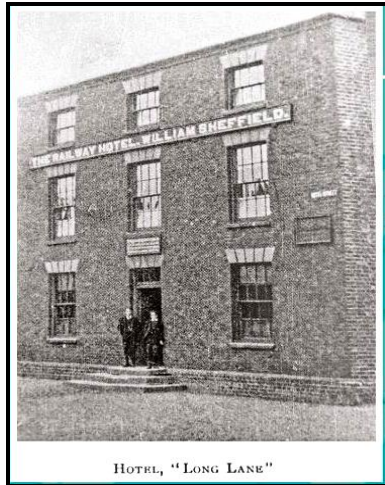
Route of “Leicester and Swannington Railway”.



**The arrival of the first train at the opening of the “Leicester and Swannington  
Railway” which arrived at Bagworth on July 17<sup>th</sup> 1832  
By John Fernley  
Oil on paper on canvas support  
© Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service**

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Platforms for Railway Stations were not provided in those days, and nearby Inns were often used for railway business. At Long Lane, the "Railway Hotel" served this purpose. A local businessman and historian Edgar Hawthorn recorded in the 1950's, that a room to the left of the front entrance was used for the issuing of tickets, whilst a bell fixed behind the front door gave warning of an approaching train to intending passengers. This arrangement lasted till 1848 when the "L&S Railway" was sold to "The Midland Railway", and a new station named "Coalville" was built.



**Original Railway Hotel**



**As it is now**



**Railway Hotel and Station**

## THE EMERGENCE OF THE TOWN OF COALVILLE & WILLIAM STENSON'S RETIREMENT

It was thought that Coalville was named after William Stenson's house named "Coalville House" (described later) but the following evidence certainly discounts that theory:-

Examples of records found of the name Coalville first being used are:-

- **An advertisement in the Leicester Chronicle dated March 4<sup>th</sup> 1836** – *"All trains from Coal-Ville or Long Lane would now convey passengers throughout the summer"*.
- **In the Leicester Chronicle dated the 4<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> February 1836** - *a wedding between John Stenson and Elizabeth, daughter of James Stephenson at Coalville is reported, and also an advertisement for the sale of a bakery near to the "Red House" in Coalville.*
- **In the Leicester Chronicle dated 16<sup>th</sup> November 1833** – *Owing to the traffic which has been produced by the Railway and New Collieries on Whitwick Waste, land which twenty years ago would not have fetched £20 per acre, is now selling in lots at £400 to £500 per acre, for building upon. The high chimneys, and numerous erections upon the spot, give the neighbourhood quite an improved appearance. We hear it is intended to call this new colony "COALVILLE" – an appropriate name.* The area referred to, is undoubtedly the Collier's Cottages referred to in "Coalville Place" described below.
- An advertisement announcing that 'All trains from Coal-Ville or Long Lane would now convey passengers throughout the Summer' appeared in March 1836 in the Leicester Chronicle - 4 March 1836

Even though William Stenson was having difficulty in meeting his existing financial responsibilities, he continued to operate independently of his colliery partners in the development of land in the fledgling town of Coalville. **In 1839, William Sherwin's son, William Jnr., conveyed him twenty seven perches of land, which was to become the site of "Club Row", "Stone Row" and Mamoth Street in Coalville Place.** This area was situated between Whitwick Colliery and Snibston No.1 Colliery, and all these streets were recorded in the 1851 Census of the Coalville Ecclesiastical district.



**Club Row undergoing demolition in the 1950s.  
Refer to map on page 3 for location.**

Stenson profited by selling off individual plots of the land to developers who built on the plots, and then let the houses to tenants, who were mostly miners working at Whitwick Colliery Co. James Cort, an ironmonger of Leicester, and John Field, a shopkeeper of Whitwick, were typical of the trader and merchant class who brought plots from Stenson.

In 1841, following the poor financial situation of Thomas Cooper of Thornton, who had large land holdings in Hugglescote Parish, he was forced by his creditors to sell a large parcel of land fronting Long Lane which totaled over eight acres. Stenson obtained a further mortgage of £500 towards the purchase price of £600. The mortgage on this occasion was provided by his old associate in Coleford, Thomas Halford of Leicester. This mortgage was not paid off till August 1860, presumably from the settlement obtained on his retirement from Whitwick Colliery Co. This land, which then formed part of the main street of Coalville during the 1860s, was later sold as prime building plots as directed in Stenson's will.

In 1852, it was reported to the trustees of "Wyggeston Hospital", a charitable institution which owned land in the Swannington area, that about 575 acres of the Main Coal had been leased to William Stenson, which again confirms his willingness to go it alone.

William Stenson was clearly a man of some standing in the coal mining industry, and appeared to have been well off financially, although the aforementioned does not always bear that out. In 1860, Stenson, now in his ninetieth year, and house bound and infirm, retired from the colliery company partnership, and was paid a sum of £6,750 for his share in the estate and interest of land in Stenson & Co., and Whitwick Colliery Company. In addition, he was to receive one ton of coal per week delivered to his house.

Following William Stenson's development of Whitwick Colliery, George Stephenson saw the potential for mining in the area, and Snibston No.1 and No.2 mines were sunk, which is another story.

**William Stenson is rightly credited with initiating the birth of the mining and industrial town of Coalville, which developed around these local mines, and which he lived to see.** He was later to become known as "The Father of Coalville Town". The "Trade Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland" 1846 by William White, states that "*Colliery-owners such as Whetstone and **Stenson** (Whitwick) and the Stephensons (Snibstone) contributed towards the erection and upkeep of Methodist chapels and schools*", presumably in the well founded belief that Methodist teaching propounded the virtues of honesty, conscientiousness and sobriety.

William Stenson built his own home on land next to where the Council Offices on London Road now stand. This reportedly had a stone plaque on the front with the name "Coalville House" carved in it. Unfortunately, the house was demolished in the 1950's. In 1999, the plaque shown below was unveiled on London Road, Coalville at the site of "Coalville House" in William Stenson's memory, by his family.

**The Loughborough Monitor of the day described William Stenson as follows on his retirement.....***"A master warmly respected by his numerous workmen; and although strict and apparently occasionally harsh in his demeanor, he was at all times a sincere friend of the working man".*

**Cont'd on next page**



**The Plaque states :-**

Site of Coalville House  
1770-1861 (*born / died*)  
Here Lived  
William Stenson  
Mining Engineer  
Founder of Whitwick Colliery  
And  
Father Of Coalville Town  
Erected in Loving Memory  
By His family  
July 1999

## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE "NEIMME" - FATHER AND SON**

William Stenson was a member of the "North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers" (NEIMME), although the date of his actual election is not recorded. He appears in their lists until c.1860, when he retired from Whitwick Colliery.

According to the NEIMME records, his son, William Stenson Jr., was elected to the NEIMME on Aug 5<sup>th</sup> 1853. Both father and son appear together in the listings until c.1860, when William Snr. retired, and his son took over as manager at Whitwick Colliery. William Stenson Jr., died in Coalville in 1870. He clearly inherited his father's engineering talents, as it was recorded in the July 24<sup>th</sup> 1857 edition of "The London Gazette", that William Stenson Jr., of Whitwick Colliery, mining engineer, was granted a patent (No. 1182) on May 27<sup>th</sup> 1854 for "Improvements in Steam Engine Valves".

## **THE DEATH OF WILLIAM STENSON SENIOR & HIS FUNERAL**

William Stenson died sixteen months following his retirement. On Nov 27<sup>th</sup> 1861, he died at his house in Coalville, the town which he had been so instrumental in founding. As a final tribute to this great man, the Loughborough Monitor published the following obituary:-

***The whole country knows that Mr. Stenson was the originator of Whitwick Colliery many years ago, what he made it, and how celebrated he left it; and thousands have, through him been provided with daily bread, and thousands more to this moment continue to enjoy a warm fireside.***

***No man can question but what he was the founder of Coalville, or that Whitwick, directly or indirectly, through him has grown into importance and profited greatly.***

*At length, full of years, he was called away, and this great man, in common with all others had to obey the summons. On Wednesday week a solemn paraphernalia stood before his door, the house which once knew him, knew him no more, and the mournful cavalcade, consisting of the hearse containing the body, eight morning coaches containing his family, his grandchildren, Joseph Whetstone of Leicester, one of his respected partners, with a few friends and long procession of coal miners, and the tradesmen of Coalville, slowly and sadly wended their way to Hugglescote, where he was interred in the vault that had received his wife 18 years ago. The deceased for several years had been a rigid adherent to the doctrines of Calvin, and was instrumental in rearing a chapel at Coalville, in which the gospel continues to be preached. It provides so much satisfaction to find that the aged deceased was respected for the firmness and consistent views he professed, combined with a sense of his own utter unworthiness and unbated trust in the Saviour who sustained him in his dying hours.*

*Rev. Mr. Foreman, in the evening preached the funeral sermon, the Baptists kindly lent the use of their Chapel, in order to accommodate the very numerous congregation. The preacher ably discharged his last office for him. To say the deceased had no faults or failing would be a mistake; both sides were fully expiated on; not a word of exaggeration or suppression relating to his character was supplied or omitted, and the congregation were satisfied with the impartiality of the oration.*

*In concluding our observation we can only hope that many men may still be raised up to serve their day and generation as well and as faithfully as Mr. Stenson has done.*



**William Stenson's and his wife Hannah Varnham's vault in the old Hugglescote Baptist cemetery (photograph taken August 2014)**

### **Inscription on Vault**

THIS MONUMENT  
IS ERECTED TO PERPETUATE THE MEMORY OF  
WILLIAM STENSON OF COALVILLE THE ESTEEMED FOUNDER OF  
THE WHITWICK COLLIERY. HE DIED IN PEACE NOVEMBER 27<sup>TH</sup> 1861  
AGED 90 YEARS  
BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD. ALSO  
HANNAH, WIFE OF WILLIAM STENSON OF COALVILLE CENT.  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE NOVEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup> 1843  
IN THE 66<sup>TH</sup> YEAR OF HER AGE  
IN HER CAPPAICE ? ( CAPACITY ?) SHE WAS PLAIN, FRANK AND OBLIGING  
AND A WILLING WIFE. A MOST TENDER AND AFFECTIONATE MOTHER  
AND EVER KIND AND BENEVOLENT TO THE POOR  
TO WHOM HER MEMORY WILL LONG BE DEAR  
I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH



**EXTRACT FROM "THE CHILD EMPLOYMENT  
COMMISSION 1842 -  
INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM STENSON OF WHITWICK  
COLLIERY & MICHAEL PARKER OF SNIBSTON COLLIERY**

One might assume that by this time, the working conditions in coal mines had improved considerably, however, much to the contrary, and the following has been included to give the reader an appreciation of just how diabolical conditions were.

A "Children's Employment Commission" was established in 1842, and the following extract is taken from a report by James Mitchell, Esq., on the employment of children and young persons in the mines of the Warwickshire and Leicestershire coal-fields, and on the state, condition and treatment of such children and young persons. The following text and illustration are taken from the report:-

The following questions were put to **William Stenson** (No.80):-

***You are an engineer and have the management of the Whitwick colliery? - Yes. Having read the evidence of Michael Parker respecting the Snibston colliery, will you be so good as to state if the same will apply to your colliery? - To a considerable degree the same. We have 110 boys under 10. We support a day-school, to which the children under 10 go, and we have a Sunday-School also. Men who act together as butties (similar to agents who employ several men to whom the men are responsible) get great wages, as much as 28s. a week. We do not put the boys to push or draw the trains. We employ horses and asses. We do not use iron chains but flat ropes, which we consider much safer. Ropes will tell a tale before breaking. Our people begin work about seven, and leave about seven at night. In other respects, the description of Mr. Parker will apply to us.***

The following questions were put to **Michael Parker** (No.77) of Snibston Colliery:-

***What occupation do you follow? - Ground bailiff to the Snibston Collieries.***  
***At what age do children commence going down the pits? - Some at seven and all ages afterwards.***  
***How are boys under 10 employed? - Opening doors, sweeping railroads, driving ponies and asses, according to a boys activities.***  
***When do they begin to fill skips? - About 18.***  
***Why do they not go to this work sooner? - Our coal is all in large pieces, and they are not equal to the work.***  
***Are other boys employed at other employment? - Some work at what is called putting the coal, that is pushing and drawing the coal from the face of the work to the crane at the horse-way. Two boys are able to draw a train, or the one draws and the other pushes. A large basket is put on the train and the basket is filled. It will hold about seven cwt.***  
***When do they take the pick in hand to dig the coal? - About 20, but some much sooner if very active. Our coal is very hard and some young people are not capable of doing it.***  
***Do the baskets when once loaded go all the way to the shaft, and afterwards are they lifted up without being emptied? - When the trains arrive at the horse way, the baskets are lifted up by a crane and put on the great horse-wagon and then are conveyed to the foot of the shaft.***  
***Do the boys enjoy good health? - Exceedingly good.***  
***To what age can a man hold out to work? - Some work well at 60 years, but some***

are knocked up at 50 and 45. 50 may be the average.

**What is the cause of a man being knocked up as early as 50?** - The severe labour, and on some constitutions the bad air takes considerable effect.

**Are the mines much exposed to bad air?** - Only at chance times. The wind is carried through the mines.

**What are the hours of work?** - The holers (shot firers?) go down at two in the morning, and return about two or three in the afternoon. The others begin to go down about half-an-hour before six and are ready by six to go to work. They finish at six and take half-an-hour to come up.

**How many go down together and come up together?** - About four men, and if all boys, five or six. They go in the basket. We have had no accidents in our pits going up and down.

**To what do you attribute freedom from accidents?** - To have good tackling and taking care. There is a man whose duty is to see the boys safe in the skips coming up and that there are no more in numbers than four men, or more than five or six boys. They are particular to have a steady man at the engine.

**What precautions do you take against fire-damp or choke damp?** - Strong ventilation.

**What time do the men take their meals?** - The engine stops about half-an-hour at one o'clock, then the people all rest.

**What are the wages of the fillers?** - 3s. a day, no beer and the company allows 10 cwt. or 12 cwt. of coals in the month and the men have free cottages and gardens or a very small rent of 1s. a month.

**Are they often out of employment?** - Some time in the summer when there is a small demand for coals.

**Are the people tractable, and is there a good feeling between masters and men?** All quite friendly.

**Do the people attend public worship?** - Most of them do.

**Do the children go to school?** - They in general go to day-schools, and all go to Sunday-Schools. Mostly all learn to read and many to write.

**Have they a Field-Club?** - Yes. They pay 8d. a-month and receive medical attendance and 7s. a-week when sick. The boys pay 4d. a month, and receive 3s. 6d. a-week when sick. If the fund falls short the company makes it good. There are few accidents from the falls of stone or coal from the roof. We have not had any such for years past.



**A girl draws along a truck load of coal by means of a girdle and chain.**  
**“The beast of Burden” is naked, there are no rails for the truck and some of the passages are no more than 16 to 20 inches high**