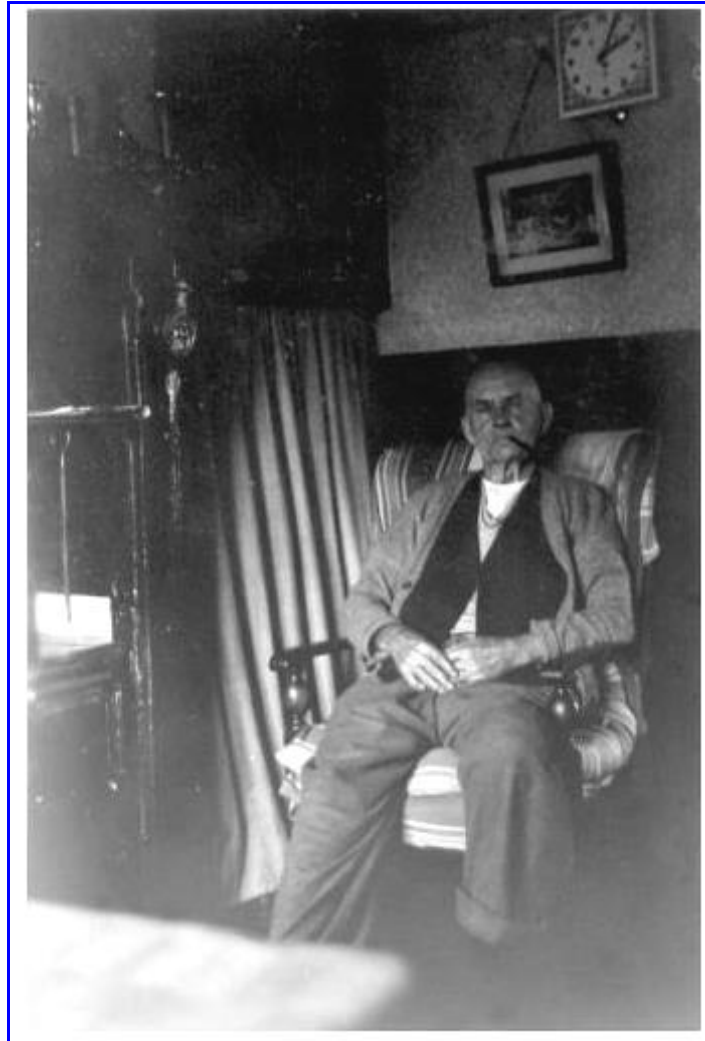


GRANDAD STEWART'S PIT WATCH AND CASE



SAMUEL STEWART, AGED 71, IN HIS CHAIR AT IVY COTTAGE, STONEY LANE, COLEORTON - at the side of the black leaded great & boiler



BY SAMUEL T STEWART - SEPTEMBER 2024



Photographs of the watch and case Samuel Stewart used when working at New Lount Colliery

Coal Miners were allowed to take pocket watches underground, provided they were in a brass case, as brass was considered safe as it cannot cause a spark and possibly ignite firedamp. The ring on the top was originally brass before it was repaired by Sam, and he still used it after finishing at the pit.

Samuel Stewart (1879-1955), granddad of the author, was born in Lount at the Stewart family farm. He went to work at New Lount Colliery after Coleorton Pottery, where he was a dish maker, closed. He received a bad leg injury during a fall, whilst working on the pit bank, which forced him to retire from the pit.

Following his accident, he established his own cottage industry from where he sold carbide to the miner's for their lamps, and repaired bicycles. Presumably he sold carbide bicycle lamps as well. Times must have been hard financially for him and granny, but the Stewart families living adjacent in Stoney Lane took care of them into their old age. Both Sam and his wife Ada are buried together in Griffydham Wesleyan Methodist graveyard.

Although Sam, a staunch Methodist, could not get to the Coleorton Primitive Methodist Chapel in his old age he used to stand outside his cottage and watch other worshippers pass by on their way to the chapel. I think he probably had a check list.

As another side line, Sam was the local secretary/agent for the "Independent order of Recobites", which was a mutual savings and lending schemes society. His copper plate hand writing in his account registers was impeccable, and fascinated the author as a child. This, together with his carbide and cycle business, brought numerous villagers to the cottage of course, and everyone new "our Sam". Eric Rowell once related to the author that his dad, Wes Rowell, who was one of the few locals in the area to own a car, used to call at Sams' to pay his subscription, but he spent so long there talking that Eric used to get out of the car and walk home to Peggs Green.

During his Wednesday afternoons off from Ashby Grammy School, the author, post 1953, would mow and clip around the cottage front lawns for which payment was more often a three penny bit, but on the rare occasion, Granny would dig deep into her leather purse to find him a silver joey (sixpence). Happy times though !!