

# GELSMOOR COAL MINE (SUGGESTED NAME)

## INTRODUCTION

In September 2024 I became interested in the network of Turnpike roads surrounding the local area of Griffydam, Pegg's Green, Gelsmoor, Newbold and Coleorton. Research material discovered in relation to this provides ample evidence that a coal mine once existed in the last quarter of the 18th century in the north of Gelsmoor. *The name, 'Gelsmoor coal mine' has been chosen for the mine at this stage as no other evidence of its name or existence has been discovered by the author.*

As far back as 1340, it was recorded in the 'Garendon Enspeximus' that Isabella de Hastings was responsible for the workings of both coal and iron ore at **Gelsmoor** in Breedon parish where coal seams outcropped.

In an inquisition of Sir Henry Beaumont's former possessions in 1608, a coal mine at Gillesmore (Gelsmoor) is recorded.

Sir Thomas Beaumont who died in 1625 left to his successors various coal mines including at Gyllesmore (Gelsmoor) and Outwoods valued at £13 6s 8d.

From the above we can see that Gelsmoor has a significant history related to coal mining, and thereby requires some research to be carried out into its history.

## AN ONGOING RESEARCH PROJECT FIRST DRAFT

BY SAMUEL T STEWART - JUNE 2026

## **INFORMATION REQUEST**

The author would appreciate any information or photographs from readers who may have any knowledge of the history of this coal mine that once existed at Gelsmoor in the last quarter of the 18th century.

## **COMPLIMENTARY READING**

'Turnpike Roads in North West Leicestershire' is free to download on the author's website [samuelstewart.com](http://samuelstewart.com) under subsection 'Transportation'.

'The Sion Baptist Chapel - Pegg's Green' under subsection Religion

## **RESEARCH SOURCES**

Leicestershire & Rutland Record Office.

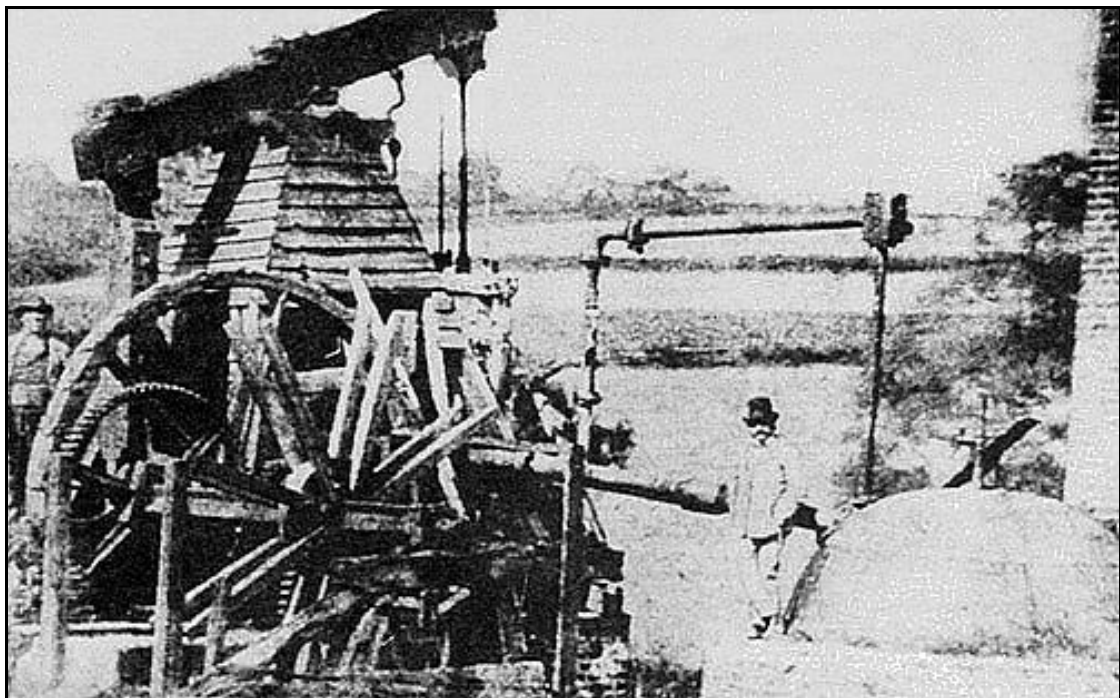
The 'Leicestershire & South Derbyshire Coalfield' by Colin Owen

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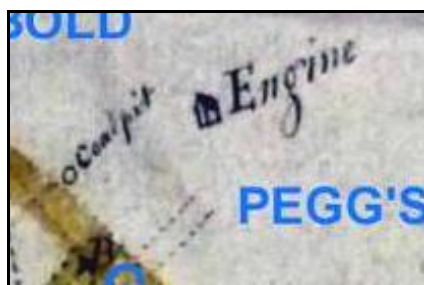
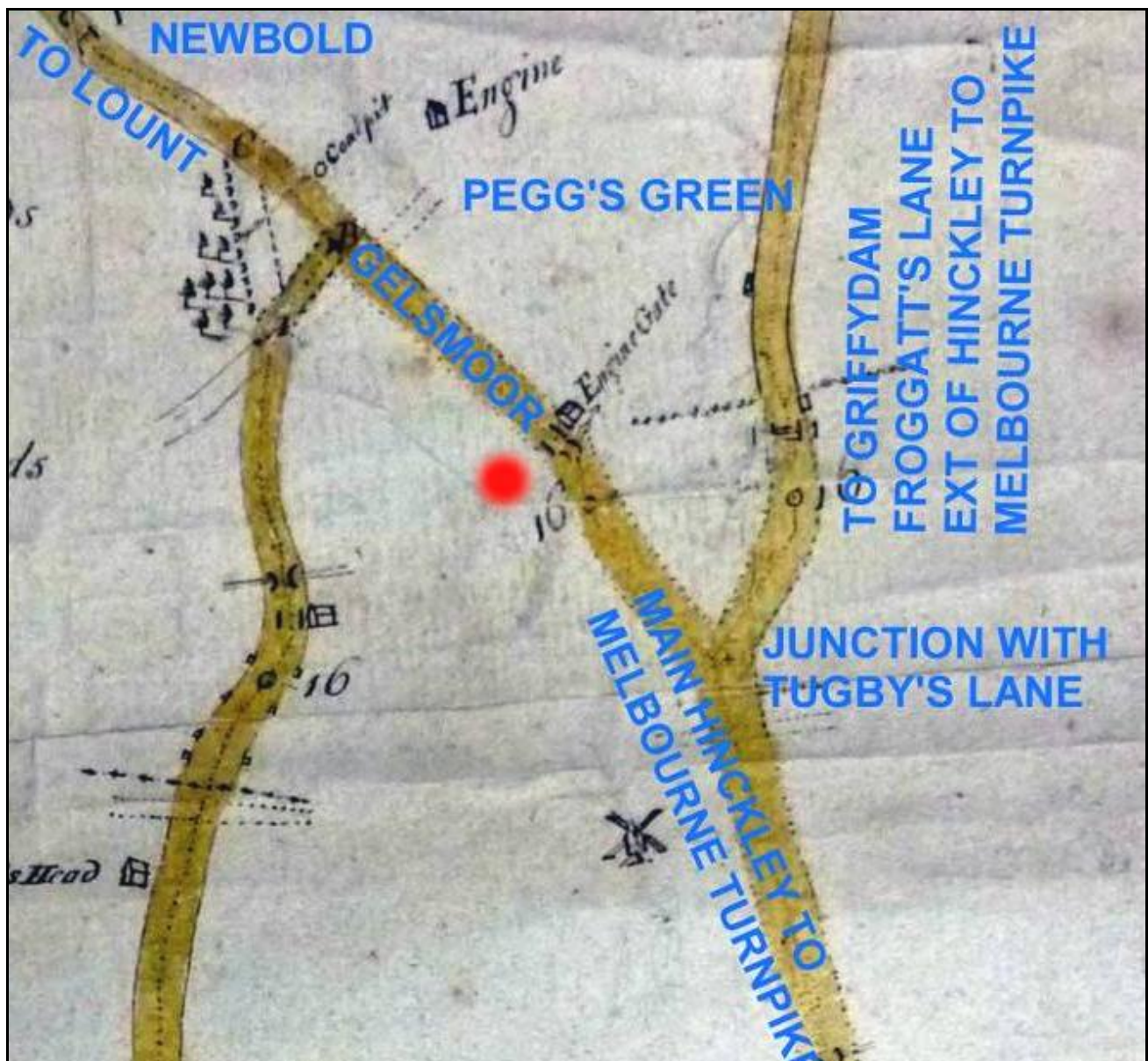
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Careful examination of the over page map includes key features relating to coal mining at Gelsmoor such as a 'Coal Pit shaft' (adjacent to Gelsmoor road) and an 'Engine' (presumed to be a steam pumping engine often referred to as a fire engine on old maps). It is suggested that this engine would have been used to pump water out of the coal mine into Engine brook which runs underneath the Gelsmoor Road at the bottom of Zion Hill and which forms the boundary between the parishes of Coleorton and Worthington. It is referred to as 'Engine brook' in that area in the 1920 Beaumont land sale documents and also John Holsworthy's 1796 document shown on page 6. This brook originates near to the locality of the old Coleorton 'Bug and Wink' colliery and flows via Coleorton Fish Pond on through Coleorton, Pegg's Green and Griffydam and eventually into the River Trent..

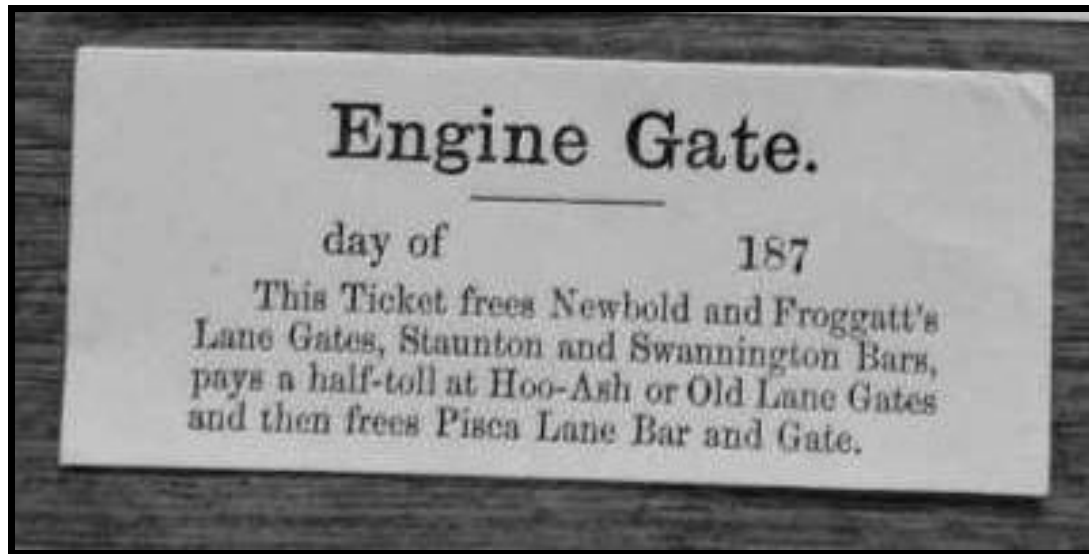
Some years ago, there was a plausible suggestion made to the author by the respected local historian John Crocker, that **Aqueduct lane** was named after a wooden structure which carried water from the coal mine pumping engine down to the brook. Unfortunately John didn't provide any evidence for this.



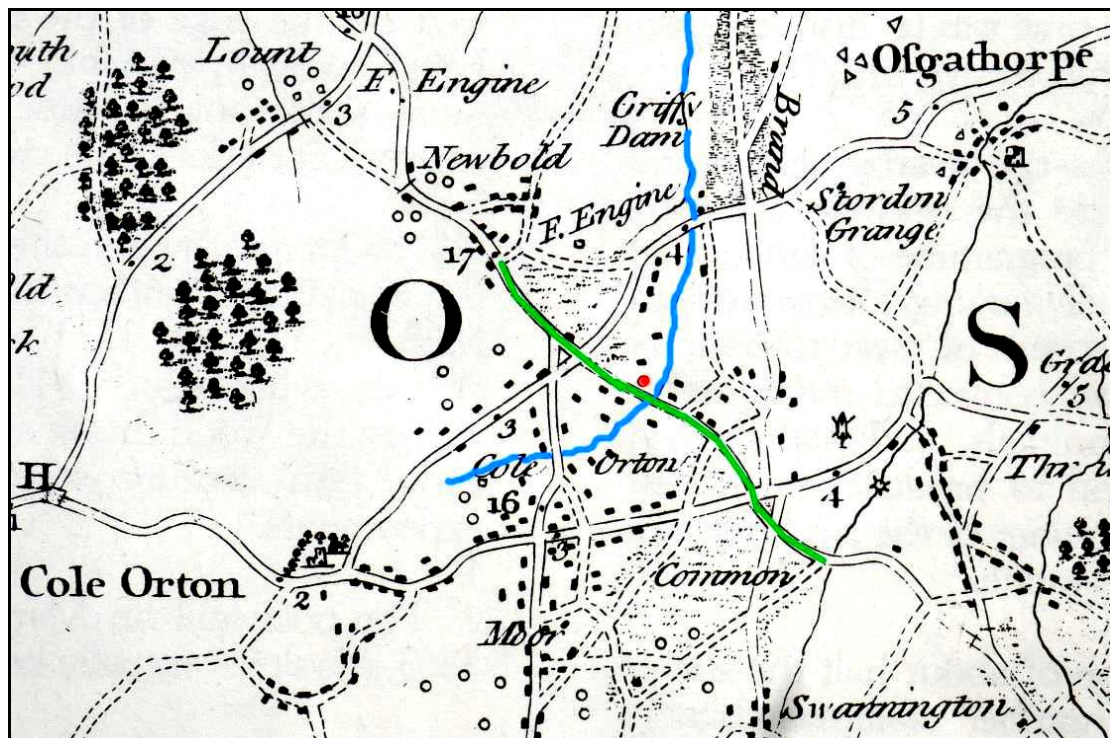
**An Old photograph of a Newcomen atmospheric water pumping engine. This would have been similar to the one indicated on the following map.**



The above extract from a badly out of scale and geographically inaccurate c.1807 local turn pike sketch map is somewhat difficult to interpret, but it suffices to show the main Hinckley to Melbourne turnpike road (now Gelsmoor road) with a coal pit shaft (designated 'o') and a pumping Engine. A tollgate named 'Engine Gate' is located where the brook passes under the road and is marked with a red dot. See the 'Engine gate' toll ticket over page.

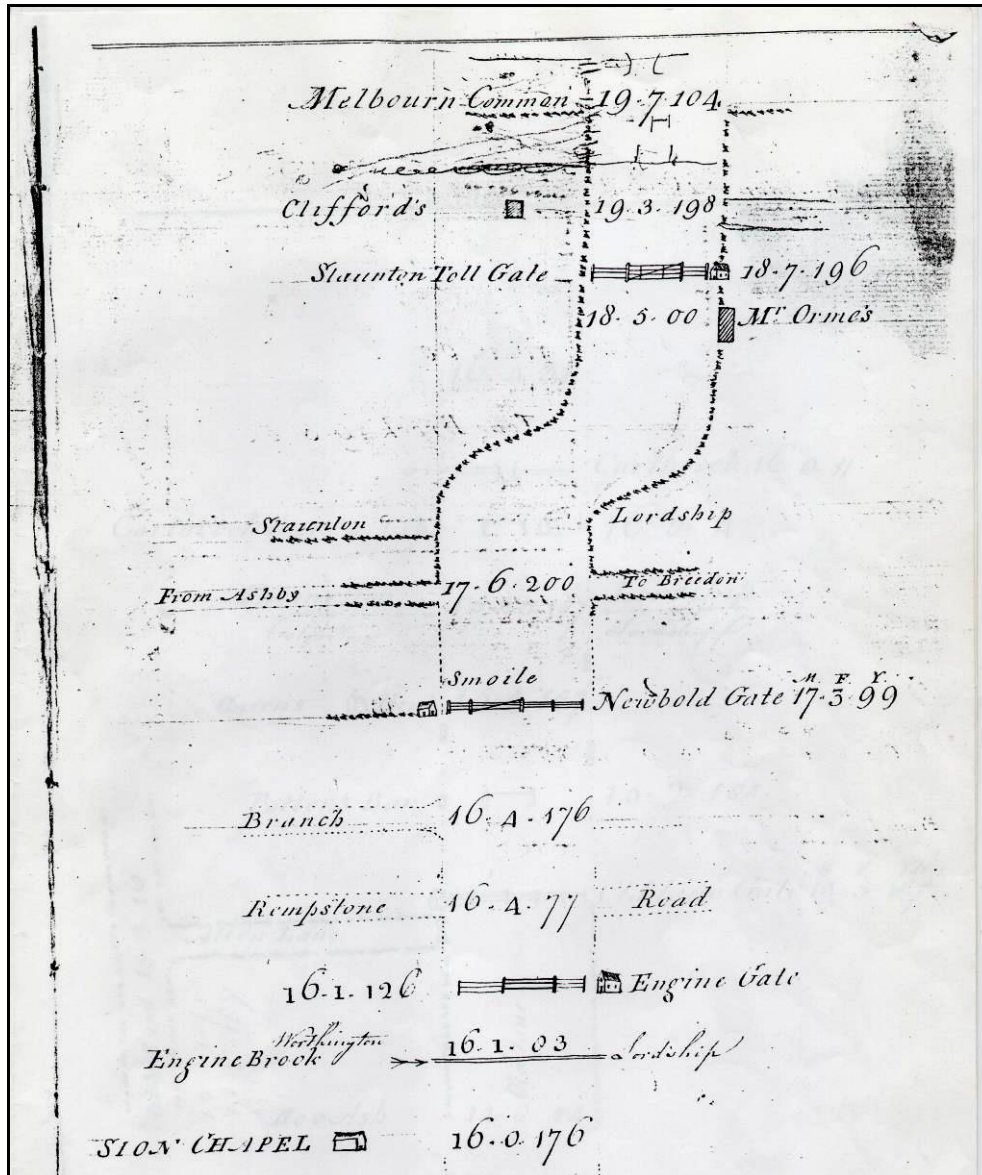


The above is a copy of an unused tollgate ticket for engine gate found at the Leicestershire & Rutland Record Office



The above extract from John Prior's 1777 map depicts a mine shaft marked by a red dot adjacent to the brook and Gelsmoor road, which is further confirmation of exploratory coal mining taking place in this area. The map also shows at least three buildings / cottages adjacent to the brook, two of which are on the Pegg's Green side. These do not exist anymore.

The author is of the opinion, that Richards fish pond, where he spent time fishing as a youngster was formed from subsidence caused by the collapse of underground mine workings.



**SURVEY BY JAMES HOLSWORTHY IN 1796**

The above extract of a document records 'Engine brook' and 'Engine gate', just north of Sion Chapel. A tollgate house sketched on the 1807 map would have been used to record and take toll payments for traffic passing along the Hinckley to Melbourne turn pike road . The building of an actual tollgate house suggests that a serious amount of traffic would have passed through this area.