

**THE LOYAL WILLIAM WORSWICK LODGE  
OF ODDFELLOWS M.U. (No.5393)  
Established 1865  
AT THE NEW INN, PEGG'S GREEN**



**BY SAMUEL T STEWART – AUGUST 2022**

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## INTRODUCTION

William Worswick was a wealthy property owner, coal merchant and contractor from Leicester, where he also owned the manors and halls of Normanton and Birstall plus extensive lands at Thurcaston and Syston.

He first became involved in the “local” coal mining industry in NW Leicestershire when he formed an association with Benjamin Walker at some time around 1840 in the running of Smoile Colliery near Lount which was owned by and situated within Sir George Beaumont’s estate and also the nearby Lount Colliery in Worthington Rough which had previously been run by two other members of the Walker family, Thomas and James, who had leased both the colliery and Smoile farm from Sir George Beaumont.

This resulted in William Worswick and Benjamin Walker both subsequently going on to develop two new collieries as partners on land owned by Sir George Beaumont at Coleorton between 1849 and 1856. The first shaft sunk was the Coleorton No.1. Colliery (known as California) and the other was Coleorton No.2. Colliery (known under various names as Califat, Alabama and Windmill pit). Following Benjamin Walker’s retirement c.1861, Worswick went on to develop three further collieries in the Swannington area as listed below, and by 1864, he either owned or had an interest in six collieries in the local area.

- A) **Coleorton No1. (known as California Pit)**  
**Benjamin Walker & William Worsick**
- B) **Coleorton No.2. (known as Califat / Alabama / Windmill pit) -**  
**Benjamin Walker & William Worsick**
- C) **Swannington No.1. (known as Calcutta)**  
**William Worswick**
- D) **Swannington No.2. (known as Sinope)**  
**William Worswick**
- E) **Swannington No.3. (known as Clink)**  
**William Worswick**

## THE LOYAL WORSWICK LODGE

Through his development of the local collieries, which provided much needed employment in the area, William Worswick became a much respected mine owner and businessman in the locality and "The Loyal Worswick Lodge of Oddfellows", Manchester Unity (No.5393), was established on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1865 in honour of him at the "New Inn" public house Pegg's Green. The New Inn still survives today as a public house, which in itself is quite remarkable. The Coleorton No.1., California colliery was established almost opposite the New Inn within a stones throw of it

A detailed newspaper record of the opening ceremony at the New Inn is appended at the end plus reports of three subsequent anniversary meetings following the death of William Worswick in 1871. Altogether they span a period of fifteen years.



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF “THE ODDFELLOWS”



### Coat of Arms with triple link symbol representing the motto – “Friendship, Love & Truth”

In the early 18th century, old English Trade Guilds were in decline. Many fraternal societies took their place and became firmly established to support workers with benevolence should they fall on hard times. This included the Odd Fellows – a society representing fellow craftsmen from an assortment of trades.

It was common practice to have a Branch (Lodge) Surgeon who provided medical treatment for members and their families from the earliest days right up until the establishment of the NHS in 1948. Print courtesy of the Guildhall Museum, London. *It is interesting to note that in the following newspaper record, a Branch / Lodge surgeon is referred to.*

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Government suspicions of societies that 'administer oaths and correspond by signs and passwords' reached fever pitch, triggered by the French Revolution. So much so, organisations such as the Oddfellows were deemed illegal and driven underground – exacerbating connotations of 'secret societies'. This resulted in government informers being paid to infiltrate Branches (Lodges). Signs and passwords were essential to secure the safety and security of members. Many are still used as part of the Order's business today, to honour the heritage. Following persecution in the UK's capital, "The Grand United Order of Odd Fellows" relocated its Grand Lodge (HQ) from its Old Wych St (Aldwych) location to Sheffield. The shift of power to Yorkshire unsettled members in other northern regions, including Manchester. The new Grand Lodge was established at the Bull & Mouth (or Boulogne Mouth) Inn, Lady's Bridge.

In 1810, a group of dissatisfied members from the Manchester District of The Grand United Order met in the Ropemakers Pub, Chapel Street, Salford. They established the breakaway society "The Independent Order of Oddfellows Manchester Unity". The order continues in operation using the trading name "The Oddfellows".

Public houses were often used as the base for regular Society business. When members met, they often 'took something for the good of the house'. To secure such lucrative trade, landlords were often willing to name their pubs after the order. The "Oddfellows Arms" remains a popular pub name to this day. *This wasn't the case with the "New Inn" which presumably retained its original name due to the fact that the "Old Engine Inn" was located nearby.*

In 1834 a reminder of 'illegal' status was served, despite prosperous growth. Six men, the 'Tolpuddle Martyrs', from another society were prosecuted and sent to an Australian penal colony. News reached Deputies at the Hull annual conference, resulting in many rushing home to burn 'treasonous' documents. Changes to ritual practices and the removal of oaths ensued.

In 1851 the 'illegal' status was overturned, as Branch Friendly Societies were declared legal. By this time, the Oddfellows had become the largest and richest friendly society in the world, spurred by the Industrial Revolution. By joining a friendly society, workers could protect themselves and their families against illness, injury or death.

## TRANSCRIBED NEWSPAPER REPORTS OF THE LODGE MEETINGS

**Loughborough Monitor – February 16<sup>th</sup> 1865**

**NEW INN – PEGGS GREEN**

**OPENING OF A NEW LODGE OF ODDFELLOWS, M.U. (No. 5393)**

A lodge of this Order was opened on the 4<sup>th</sup> instant, at the home of Mr. Thomas Cox, The New Inn, to be called the Loyal Worswick Lodge, in honour of William Worswick, Esq., of Birstall Hall, nr. Leicestershire, proprietor of the Swannington and Hoo-Ash collieries, and part proprietor with Mr. W. Walker, of the new Coleorton collieries. A splendid spread of "fatted calf" and other good things in the greatest profusion was provided by the worthy host, which, having been duly discussed and prepared for inward digestion, P.P.G.M. James Peters was called to the chair, who, after a short introductory speech gave her Most Gracious majesty the Queen and all the Royal Family: this being honoured in a bumper, the chairman gave a most elaborate statement of the principles of Oddfellowship, and their true practice, also instances where it had been found useful, and urged on all who had not already done so, to unite with this flourishing order, where its members were equally at home whether in the bosom of old England, or in the far off New Zealand or Australia, or in Turkey or at the Cape of Good Hope, and the benefits felt by all in its brotherhood. The Grand Master of the Order and Board of Directors was given and lustily responded to, after which Mr. John Grice sang a most appropriate song- "Help One Another". The next toast was the officers of the Whitwick district; responded to by Mr. T. Allgood, C.S., of the district; the next toast of the evening was the health of William Worswick, Esq., which was vigorously responded to. Other toasts and sentiments were given, also better health to Geo. Lewis, Esq., the manager of the colliery, who was prevented being present by disposition. The head bailiff, Mr. W. Pickering, was also toasted, and, after the health of Henry Toone, Esq., surgeon to the Lodge, the host and others, had been given, the happy brothers and friends sang God Save the Queen and dispersed.

**Leicester Journal – September 4<sup>th</sup> 1874**

The anniversary of the Loyal Worswick Lodge, No. 5393, Manchester United of Oddfellows (*now Independent order of Oddfellows Manchester Unity*), was held at host Thomas Cox's, the New Inn, Pegg's Green, Thringstone, on Monday last, August 31<sup>st</sup>. After partaking of a most excellent spread, W. H. Johnson, Esq., was called to the chair, and J. B. Johnson, Esq., surgeon, to the vice-chair. – The Chairman, in a few appropriate remarks, proposed the health of "The Queen". Song, - "Good Old Jeff" by P. G. Wm. Room. The next toast was "The Prince and Princess of Wales". Song "The Prairie Flower", by brother F. Hallam, who accompanied himself on the harmonium. – The Chairman, in an amusing speech, proposed the health of "The surgeons of the Lodge". Song, - "Just before the battle, Mother", by P. G. Wm. Cox. – Dr. Johnson, one of the surgeons, responded to the toast. – The next toast was "The Members of the House of Lords and Commons". Song, - "The Ploughboy", by Bro. Shorthouse. Toast, "Success to the Loyal Worswick Lodge". – P. G. William Room, in the absence of the secretary stated that the lodge was in a flourishing condition, they had saved over £40 during the last 12 months. Brother John knight also responded. Toast – "The Visiting Brothers", coupled with the name of Brother S. W. Hallam, jun", Charnwood Forest Lodge, Whitwick. Song – "I never saw before". – Brother Elveston. Brother S. W. Hallam responded, and concluded by proposing "The health of the past and present officers of the Lodge, coupled with the name of P. G. E. Ayre". Song, - "The Stolen Child", by Brother G. Walker. Toast – "The Chairman", who responded with usual ability. Toast – "The Host an Hostess". Song, - "The Wonderful Ducks", W. H. Johnson, Esq. he host responded on behalf of himself and his wife. With other songs, toasts and sentiment, brought a pleasant days enjoyment to a close.

**Leicester Chronicle – September 4<sup>th</sup> 1875**

**PEGG'S GREEN**

The Loyal Worswick Lodge, No. 5293, M.U., recently held their anniversary at host Cox's, the New Inn, Pegg's Green. Dr. Partrick, assistant to Dr. Johnson, Whitwick, was called to the chair, and Brother S. William Hallam, Charnwood Forest Lodge, Whitwick, to the vice-chair. After dinner, song and sentiment brought a pleasant day's enjoyment to a close, all being well satisfied with the holiday.

**Leicester Chronicle – May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1880**

**ODDFELLOW'S DINNER.** – On Monday the members of the Loyal Worswick Oddfellows Lodge assembled at their club house, Mr. Cox's, the "New Inn", and proceeded thence to St. George's Church, headed by the beautiful silk banner of the district order. The fine band of the Snibston Colliery, under the leadership of Mr. George Locker, was in attendance, and played to the church in a style that was highly gratifying to the lover's of good music. The vicar, the Rev. F. T. Pearson, preached a most practical sermon from the words "Go to the ant thou sluggard". At the conclusion of design service, the lodge, to the stirring strains of the Snibston band, marched to the parsonage of St. George. Here the band played an excellent selection, which the ladies of the parsonage seemed fully to enjoy. After enlivening Thringstone and Griffydam, the lodge returned to the "New Inn", where Mrs. Cox had a splendid dinner awaiting them and for which the forest air had amply prepared them. Amongst those present were the vicar, the Rev. F. T. Pearson, D. Hatchett (Ravenstone), Mr. Pickering (Heather), J. Johnson esq, &c. After the withdrawal of the cloth, the usual toasts were given, the band supplying appropriate music. During the evening there was some capital singing ; the health of Drs. Donovan and Hatchett, being most heartily drunk with musical honours, as well as the toast of the host and hostess. Mr. George Locker and his band deserve a deed of commendation for their performance throughout the day.