

**A DRIFT SHAFT (FOOTRILL) FROM THE
DISUSED COLEORTON NO.3. COLLIERY
TO NEW LOUNT COLLIERY**

200ft. down



THE BATTLE AGAINST THE MUD goes on at the face of
the drift tunnel being constructed at Coleorton.

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

A photograph of men working down the drift shaft in August 1952. Unfortunately the names of the men cannot be confirmed but are thought to be either David Harley, Jim Belton or Jack Healey.

PREFACE

Eventually, the high cost of extracting the lower coal seams at the Coleorton No.3. Colliery (Bug & Wink) after the main coal reserves had been exhausted forced it's closure, and it was eventually sold to the Leicestershire Colliery and Pipe Company of Ashby (owner's of New Lount Colliery) in 1933 with the view that they would :-

1. Acquire some 2,000 acres of land, with the associated mineral rights, which would safeguard the life of New Lount Colliery.
2. They would use the "Bug & Wink" site as a pumping station to keep the New Lount seams free of water.

There were 500 men working at Coleorton Colliery when it was closed, and not one person was reportedly transferred to New Lount Colliery.

Unfortunately, very soon after they had acquired the site, the Bug & Wink shafts collapsed, making it impossible to use the site as a pumping station. In 1953, the NCB installed a drift (fostrill) at the Bug & Wink site, in order to improve the air circulation system at New Lount. This was used by the colliers who lived at Coleorton to access the New Lount Colliery. In 1975, the Bug & Wink mine shafts were sealed, the buildings demolished, and the area reclaimed for pasture land. In 1991, the site was planted with trees.

There follows a transcribed newspaper report about the construction of the shaft drift / fostrill.

© **Samuel T Stewart - December 2021**

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by means, electronic, mechanical or otherwise without first seeking the written permission of the author.

NOTIFICATION OF CLOSURE OF COLEORTON NO.3. COLLIERY (BUG & WINK)

**Transcribed from the Leicester Evening Mail - Wednesday 26th July
1933**

500 MINERS IDLE THROUGH CLOSING OF ANCIENT COLLIERY

Over 500 miners are thrown out of work by the closing down today of Coleorton Colliery one of the oldest pits in Leicestershire. Today the men were seen fetching out their tools and many were standing in groups in the village, ruefully discussing the calamity

Coleorton Colliery which was owned by Messrs. Checkland & Co. Ltd., had been working for about 60 years, and there are old miners who have worked there practically the whole of their lives.

NOT TAKING MEN ON

The men employed at the pit had been under notice, but were not prepared for the developments of yesterday when an official notice, dated July 25th was posted at the pit head as follows:-

"All men are to fetch their tools out of the pit tomorrow. The terms of employment with this company cease as at midnight today, and the purchaser's of the colliery will not be taking on any of Checkland & Cos., employees.

For and on behalf of Checkland and Company.

S. Bellard
Agent

It is understood that Coleorton Colliery has been purchased by the Leicestershire Colliery and Pipe Co., who are the owners of the New Lount Colliery but no information is to hand as to future developments, which appear to be uncertain

Locally, Coleorton Colliery has for many years been known by the peculiar name "Bug & Wink."

CONSTRUCTION OF THE DRIFT SHAFT / FOOTRILL

**Part Transcribed from the Leicester Evening Mail -
Saturday 09 August 1952**

LIFE AGAIN FOR 'BUG AND WINK'

WORK AT DISUSED LEICESTERSHIRE PIT

The derelict pit yard of "Bug and Wink" mine at Coleorton, abandoned a quarter of a century ago, and its quaint colloquial name, almost forgotten in the Leicestershire coalfield, have come to life again. Mining engineers of the NCB have started the construction of a sloping shaft from the deserted pit yard to drive downward for a quarter of a mile at a gradient of 1 in 4 to reach the present workings of New Lount colliery. The shaft, only the third of its type to be so made in Leicestershire, will be similar to one started at Measham about eight months ago. The only drift shaft at present actually in use in the county is at Merrylees Colliery adjoining Desford.

The construction of the shaft will enable the entire ventilation system of New Lount colliery to be improved. It will also give an additional exit and entrance to the New Lount workings, both for supplies and for increased safety at this isolated pit of the Leicestershire coalfield. Additionally, miners residing in Coleorton will be able to walk to work at Lount via the drift.

PREDICTION

Old miners, who in their youth worked at the old abandoned "Bug and Wink" pit, which employed about 500 men at its closure, predict that engineers driving the shaft will encounter a great deal of water during operations. they recall that before the pit was suddenly closed, it was notorious for flooding. *Engineers hoped to defeat the intrusion of water by the modern method of refrigerating the tunnel as it is constructed. However, this didn't appear to be successful as pumping was employed.*

YARD A DAY

The work has brought discomfort, rather than danger, but the 18 months task of driving the tunnel at about a yard a day goes on. The three men doing the spade work at the spear head on one of the shifts are muscular Irishmen with experience of varied types of mining - David Harley, in charge, with Jim Belton and Jack Healey in support.

Rock barriers are blown down with high explosives and as the workers shovel the mud and dripping stone from the face, a specially intalled conveyor belt takes it endlessly to the service. As much as 40 tons of drenched and water heavy material may be moved from the face in one day.

Also fitted in the lengthening tunnel which has a 1 in 4 gradient is a rail track for trucks to carry loads of concrete, reconstruction stone, slabs and iron rings to build the tunnel arch and floor.

Water is constantly pumped from the working face to the surface to prevent the work from entirely being bogged down.

In the reasonably near future, all other pits in the coalfield - Whitwick,, Snibston, South Leicester, Elliston, Bagworth, Nailstone, Desford and Merrylees, which lie in close association will be interconnected with underground roadways, now being driven by heading teams. New Lount, however, is likely to stand apart from the general network of the coalfield for many years.