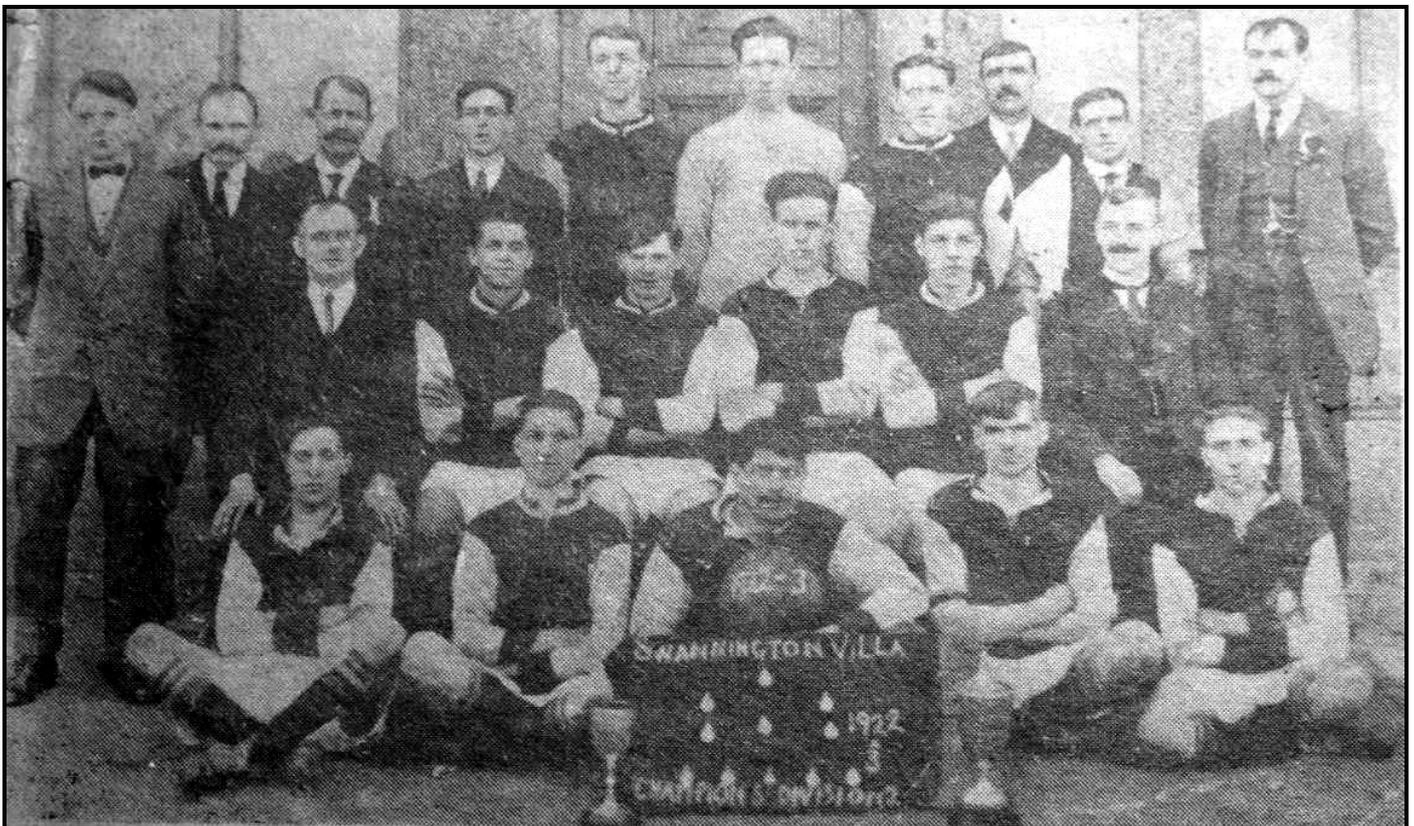


BRIEF HISTORY OF SWANNINGTON FOOTBALL CLUB, VARIOUSLY NAMED AS - SWANNINGTON ROVERS, SWANNINGTON INSTITUTE, SWANNINGTON VILLA, SWANNINGTON ST. GEORGE, SWANNINGTON ROBIN HOOD & SWANNINGTON SPORTS.

AN ONGOING PROJECT



**SWANNINGTON VILLA FOOTBALL TEAM - 1922
CHAMPIONS OF COALVILLE & DISTRICT AMATEUR LEAGUE DIVISION 2 IN 1922**

BY SAMUEL T STEWART - MARCH 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Little information has been recorded on the activities of Swannington football club and the author would welcome any further knowledge that local people may hold, particularly with regard to the names of the players etc in the front page photograph which could then be included in an update of the publication. The fact that the original Swannington Club went under various names throughout their c. 25 years existence which were not always recorded in any logical chronological order added to the complexities of the research They were variously referred to as 'Swannington Rovers', 'Swannington Institute', 'Swannington Villa', 'Swannington St. George' and 'Swannington Robin Hood'. In 1955 there is a newspaper record that a Swannington Football Club were still active and called Swannington Sports.

Many NW Leics villages had their own football teams who in the main became members of the Coalville and District Amateur Football League, as did Swannington. The Coalville & District Amateur Football League ran from the 1899 season until 1974/75. It consisted of teams from the Coalville area and the mining area of North West Leicestershire. The Coalville League started as a single division before growing to three divisions before the First World War. The league was suspended for three seasons during the First World War. Swannington were one of the oldest local clubs to register. They were in existence by 1881 based on several newspaper reports. It is not known where Swannington played their games but the **Swannington parish Council** website states the following:- *The playing field off Jeffcoat's Lane is leased from Wygggeston Hospital Trust. It is currently an informal space with goal posts. It has been played on historically by local teams.*

Earliest competition record found for a Swannington Football Club

Leicestershire Challenge Shield 1895-96

Leicester Belvoir-street beat Swannington St George's at Anstey to become the first Leicester club to win the competition. This was prior to the Coalville & District Amateur Football League being formed. There were 55 entries.

From 1954 to 1956, Swannington sported a football team, known as 'The Swifts' who were playing in division 1 of the Coalville Amateur Football league, and they were the winners of the 'Junior Cup North' in the 1953/4 season, beating RAF Cottesmore in the final. The Junior Cup was run on a regional basis from 1902/03 until 1973/74. Split into North and South regions the Junior Cup North was competed by clubs from the Coalville, Loughborough, Melton Mowbray and Rutland areas. This suggests that Swannington had a competitive team in the mid-1950s within the local amateur, coal-district scene.

The most famous local footballer who once played for Pegg's Green Victoria post war was centre forward JOE BRADFORD who was signed by Birmingham in 1920 and went on to play for England. He once scored 14 goals in a local match between Pegg's Green Victoria and Birstall Rovers. Hugh 'Hughie' Adcock who was born and lived in Coalville, also went on from local level to play for Leicester City and England.

Many of the teams, not surprisingly, used a local public house in their village as a home base including Swannington :-

Coleorton Rovers', formerly Coleorton United (The Angel Inn); Griffydham 'Swifts (The Travellers Rest); Peggs Green 'Victoria'(The New Inn), Swannington (Robin Hood). Lount Colliery had their own team named - New Lount Colliery Football Club who had their own facilities at Gelsmoor.

The above teams are all represented in publications on the authors website samuelstewart.com under subsection 'Sport' which are free to download and read.

Swannington appear to have started out in life with the name of Swannington St. George or 'Swannington Villa' and later became referred to as 'Swannington Robin Hood, thought to be at the time *Robert Lovett, the son of the Robin Hood's landlady Sarah Lovett became the captain in the 1881 season, having taken over from H. Glover. Robert apparently often brought his football team back to the Robin Hood for post match refreshments.*

A SELECTION OF RELEVANT NEWSPAPER REPORTS

Leicester Daily Mercury - Saturday 15 October 1881

SWANNINGTON

Swannington v Coleorton :— The members of the above football clubs played their first match for this season at Swannington. Some good play was shown on both sides, both teams working very friendly together. During the first "half-time" one goal was made from a splendid kick by R Lovett (Captain), the ball being passed through the goal by H Glover. At the call of "half-time" ends were changed, and some very fast play was shown, neither side scoring. At the call of "time" the home side came off victorious by one goal to nil. **Both teams adjourned to the "Robin Hood" where all enjoyed themselves.**

Swannington Players - H Glover (captain), R Lovett, S Glover, W. Glover, G Walker, W Robinson, G Swain, T Hibbert, G Jessop, H Adcock,

Coleorton Players : M Ball (captain) J Williams, G Whyman, A Matchett, G Griffin, C Bradshaw, S J Wardle, S Williams, H. Siddon.

Mr. J. Glover was the referee.

Ashby-de-la-Zouch Gazette - Saturday 22 January 1881

SWANNINGTON ROBIN HOOD V. IBSTOCK

A return football match was played between the above clubs at Swannington on Saturday last, the ball being kicked off at five minutes to four by one of the visiting team. After a few minutes good play the ball was quickly despatched through the visitors' goal. The ball was soon put in motion again, but the ground was in very bad condition for the players on account of the snow ; still both sides played well until nearly the call of half-time, when the home team secured for themselves another goal, which rather surprised the visitors.

Time being called for rest through the weather being cold, the ball was soon put in motion again, when some good play was shown by both sides, the visitors being nothing daunted, but neither sides could score the last at half-time. After one hour's good play, the Robin Hood team came off victorious with two goals to none.

Both teams then adjourned to the **Robin Hood**, where all enjoyed themselves well ; song, toast, and ' sentiment being fully appreciated by them. At seven o'clock the visitors returned to their respective homes, with three hearty cheers from the home team.

Players : **Swannington—R. Lovett (captain), J. Glover, H. Glover, J. Nichols, G. Frearson, J. Frearson, S. Sprigg, G. Smith, W. Smith, T. Smith, G. Wardle, W. Wardle, T. Richards, T. Taylor, W. Smith (goal keeper), and W. Wardle, sen. (umpire).**

Note – The captain, Robert Lovett, was the son of the Robin Hood's landlady Sarah Lovett. keen footballer Robert apparently often brought his football team back to the Robin Hood for post match refreshments.

Ashby-de-la-Zouch Gazette – Saturday 08 December 1883

SWANNINGTON FOOTBALL

The return football match between Swannington and Whitwick took place at Swannington on Saturday. At 3.40, the ball was kicked off by the Swannington team, and some good play was shown on both sides. The Swannington team made a very good shot at the visitors' goal, which was quickly handled by the goal-keeper.

At half-time there was a few minutes rest, and when the ball was put in motion again some fast play was given by both sides. Swannington secured the first goal, after which many attempts were made by the same team to secure another goal. It was all in Swannington's favour till close on time, when the Whitwick team secured a goal, and the match ended in a draw.

Both teams, well satisfied with the contest, then adjourned to **Mrs. Lovett's, the Robin Hood Inn**, where refreshment was provided by the hostess. Song, toast, and sentiment were the order of the evening, and the meeting broke up at an early hour.

Players : Swannington : R. Lovett (captain), Jos. Frearson, George Walker, William Wardle, Laban Glover, Josiah Glover, George Glover, Wm. Ward, J. Kendrick, J. Shaw, T. Richards, T. Williams, B. Frearson, and N. Siddons ;

Referee was W. Wardle.

By 1913 the the Swannington club are recorded as being named 'Swannington Villa' but in 1914 were referred to as 'Swannington Robin Hood' again, which had now presumably become their go to public house home.

LIST OF MATCHES FOR 1893-4.	
Sept.	16.—Ibstock Baptist, away.
"	30.—Moirs Rovers, home.
Oct.	7.—Burton St. Margaret's, away.
"	14.—Thringstone Ivanhoe, home.
"	21.—Swannington Rovers, home.
"	28.—Griffydham Swifts, away.
Nov.	4.—Moirs Rovers, away.
"	11.—Swannington Rovers, away.
"	18.—Heather Rovers, home.
"	25.—Overseal Town, away.
Dec.	2.—Ellistown Rovers, away.
"	9.—Overseal Swifts, home.
"	16.—Ibstock Baptist, home.
"	23.—Overseal Town, home.
"	30.—Thringstone Ivanhoe, away.
1894.	
Jan.	1.—Derby Wanderers, away.
"	13.—Whitwick Robin Hoods, away.
"	20.—Burton St. Margaret's, home.
Feb.	3.—Overseal Swifts, away.
"	10.—Whitwick Robin Hoods, home.
March	3.—Griffydham Swifts, home.
"	17.—Heather Rovers, away.
"	24.—Ellistown Rovers, home.

THIS FIXTURE LIST FOR THE GRIFFYDAM SWIFTS FOOTBALL TEAM 1893/4 SEASON, RECORDS SWANNINGTON AS 'SWANNINGTON ROVERS.

The following 1912 report refers to them as Swannington Institute but that is most likely a misquote **and most likely refers to their original club registration address**

Leicester Evening Mail - Tuesday 12th November 1912.....Mr. H. Lewis (Ashby) reported *Swannington Institute* for leaving the field without permission on Oct. 26th, at Pegg's Green. It was decided that the match be replayed at Pegg's Green, the league to take half the "gate" and Pegg's Green half, and to be arranged within 14 days. The matter of leaving the field would be dealt with by the L.F.A.

Another example of Swannington football club being referred to as Swannington Institute -

Melton Mowbray Mercury and Oakham and Uppingham News - Thursday 18 December 1913

The Coleorton v. *Swannington Institute* match was abandoned after a player named Geo. Brooks sustained a fracture of a leg. It was re-arranged for December 20th, on cup-tie terms, at Swannington.

FURTHER SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Coalville Times - Friday 27 October 1905 - PG Victoria fixtures

PEGG'S GREEN VICTORIA.

Oct. 28...Whitwick Excelsior,	away.
Nov. 4...Hugglescote United	home.
Nov. 11...First Round Junior Cup.	
Nov. 18...Swannington St. George's	home.
Nov. 25...Whitwick Excelsior	home.
Dec. 2...Hugglescote Athletic	away.
Dec. 9...Coalville Amateurs	home.
Dec. 16...Second Round Junior Cup.	
Dec. 23...Coleorton United	home.
Dec. 26...Measham United	away
Dec. 30...Elstow United	away.
Jan. 6...Ravenstone Rising Star	away.
Jan. 27...Hugglescote Athletic	home.
Feb. 10...Desford Athletic	away.
Feb. 17...Coleorton United	away.
Feb. 24...Ravenstone Rising Star	home.
Mar. 17...Ibstock Albion	away.
Mar. 31...Ellistown United	home.

The above 1906 Coalville league 1 chart shows Swannington St. George fourth from the top

Coalville Times - 19th October 1906

The Coalville League chart up to date is as follow :-

	p	w	l	d	f	a	pt
Moira United	4	3	0	1	10	4	7
Coalville Amateurs	4	3	1	0	12	8	6
Measham United	5	2	2	1	10	12	5
Coalville Excelsior	5	2	3	0	5	7	4
<u>Pegg's Green Vic.</u>	4	2	2	0	8	10	4
Ibstock Town	1	1	0	0	1	0	2
Ibstock Albion	1	1	0	0	3	1	2
Hugglescote United	1	1	0	0	4	2	2
Hugglescote Athletic	3	1	2	0	7	7	2
Swannington S. Geo.	4	1	3	0	4	7	2
Coalville Town	4	0	4	0	5	11	0

Swannington St. George are Second from bottom in the league

There follows a 1906 report of a match between Swannington St. George and their rivals Peggs Green Victoria, played at Peggs Green on their ground opposite the NEW INN.

Coalville Times - Friday 5th October 1906

THE COALVILLE LEAGUE

.....Then there was a battle royal at Pegg's Green, where the Victoria met their near neighbours and rivals, **Swanninton St. George's**. Under ordinary circumstance, a keen game might have been anticipated, but as each side were struggling, there was an added interest to the contest. Swannington had the best of matters till half time, but they failed to penetrate the home defence, and there was a clean sheet at the interval. Early in the second half, Pegg's Green took the lead in a somewhat lucky manner. One of the Swannington backs was clearing, when the ball went to Morley, rather by accident than design into the net. Pegg's Green were pressing again when one of the Swannington men handled the ball and Springthorpe gave them the second goal from the ensuing penalty. There was no further scoring, though Swannington were desperately near it on several occasions. Towards the close they completely monopolised the play. There was a big crowd present, and at times excitement ran high.....

In a meeting held by the 'Coalville and District Amateur League' at the 'Red House', Coalville in 1909, it was decided to include a third division in the League and in 1913, **Swannington Institute**, as they were then recorded, are shown in the following chart as being top of the new division with 19 points after 13 games played

The Coalville League started as a single division before growing to three divisions before the First World War. The league was suspended for three seasons during the First World War

COALVILLE LEAGUE.							
DIVISION 1.							
	p	w	d	l	f	a	p
Moira United	4	3	0	1	14	5	8
Ellestown St. Chris. ...	2	2	0	0	8	1	4
Ibstock Excelsior	3	2	0	1	5	5	4
Coalville P.S.A.	3	1	1	1	7	8	3
Coalville Swifts	3	1	0	2	3	8	2
Hugglescote St. John's	3	0	1	2	3	6	1
Coalville Town Res. ...	2	0	0	2	3	10	0

DIVISION 2.							
	p	w	d	l	f	a	p
Posey Green Vic.	8	6	1	1	37	7	13
Measham Town	8	7	0	1	35	7	14
Ibstock Wanderers	10	6	1	3	20	16	13
Ibstock Amateurs	8	5	2	1	14	8	12
Swannington R. Heads	6	3	0	3	12	7	6
Coalville Baptists	7	3	0	4	16	13	6
Bagworth Town	7	3	0	4	12	34	6
Karenstone United	4	2	1	1	7	5	5
Colcoerton United	10	2	1	7	16	28	5
Abby Hastings	7	1	0	6	8	23	2
Bagworth Amateurs	9	1	0	8	11	41	2

DIVISION 3.							
	p	w	d	l	f	a	p
Swannington Institute	13	9	1	3	47	15	19
Measham Town Res	14	9	1	4	41	20	19
Bagworth Albion	12	7	1	4	26	26	15
Moira United Res.	11	7	0	4	25	19	14
Ibstock St. Dey's	10	6	0	4	32	16	12
Pegg's Green Res.	9	5	0	4	30	18	10
Markfield Swifts	9	5	0	4	15	13	10
Nailstone All Saints	9	3	4	2	20	13	10
Stanton-u-Baron	13	3	2	8	18	27	8
Nailstone Wood	12	2	2	8	16	20	6
Radon Hill	10	3	0	7	16	45	6
Ibstock Excelsior Res.	11	2	1	8	15	38	5

The above records Swannington Institute as being top of the new third division in 1913.

DIVISION II.							
	p	w	d	l	f	a	p
Pegg's Green Victoria	12	10	3	0	34	5	22
Swannington Robin H.	12	9	1	2	26	13	19
Ravenstone United	11	7	3	1	35	12	17
Bagworth Town	9	6	0	3	29	14	12
Thornborough United	10	5	1	4	13	18	11
Ashby Hastings	11	3	2	6	19	21	8
Measham United	5	4	0	1	20	19	8
Coleorton United	10	3	1	6	17	27	7
Swannington Institute	12	3	1	8	12	38	7
Ibstock Wanderers	10	2	2	6	10	20	6
Ibstock Amateurs	10	2	1	7	11	32	5
Whitwick Amateurs	13	2	0	11	13	35	4

The above January 1914 chart records Swannington football club as 'Swannington Robin Hood'.

Leicester Chronicle – May 2nd 1925

CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHES

Pegg's Green, the team that reared Joe Bradford, of Birmingham and International fame, are champions of the Coalville League, and play *Swannington Villa* at Pegg's Green on Saturday, when the cup and medals will be presented.