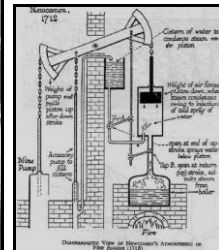
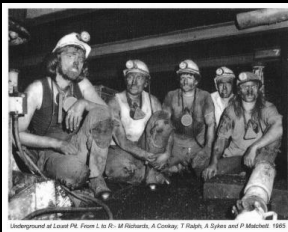
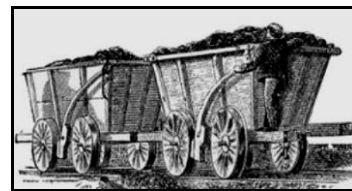
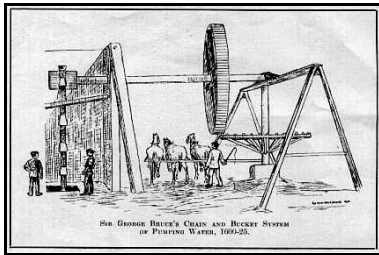
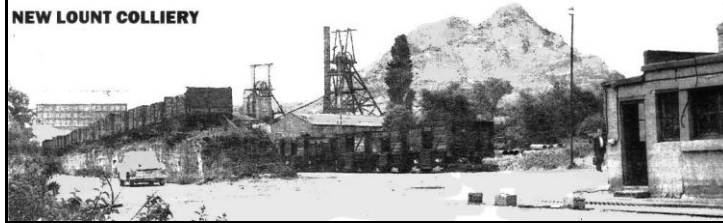
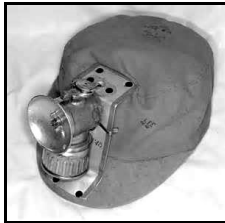
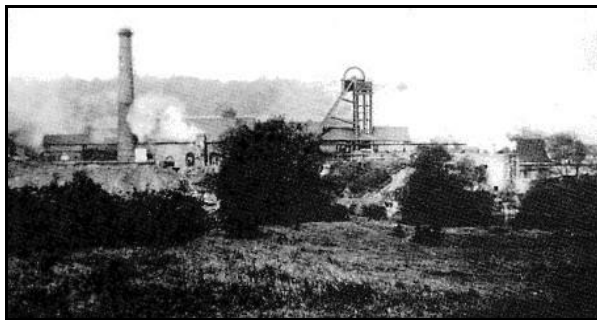
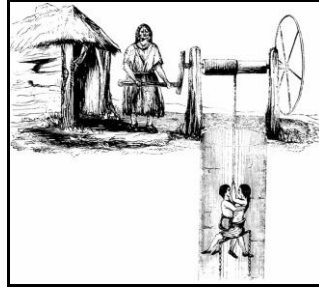
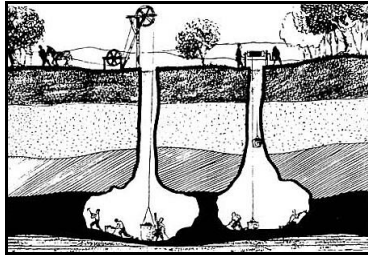


SWANNINGTON NO. 2. COLLIERY (SINOPE) 1861-1902 & SWANNINGTON NO.3. COLLIERY (CLINK) 1865-1877



BY SAMUEL T STEWART - UPDATED FEBRUARY 2022

PREFACE

Little recorded information is available on "Swannington No.2. (Sinope) or Swannington No.3. (Clink) Collieries.

No.2. was sunk originally at the extremity of Swannington Parish on a site that is now occupied by Park Homes. The hamlet of Sinope, adjacent to the colliery, became part of "Ravenstone with Snibston" Parish Council, thought to have been established in 1884. The parish includes Ravenstone, part of Snibston, and the hamlet of Sinope. There are numerous meanings given for Sinope, but the author cannot really offer anything plausible in that respect. Sinope was known locally as "Sarniper", and there are many references to the colliery with that name. The author, as a young man, only ever heard Sinope described by his father / grandfather etc as "Sarniper". The history is supported by numerous maps to assist the reader in identifying the location etc

No.3. colliery was sunk nearer to "Hoo Ash" and the actual location of both collieries, are supported by maps and plans of the site.

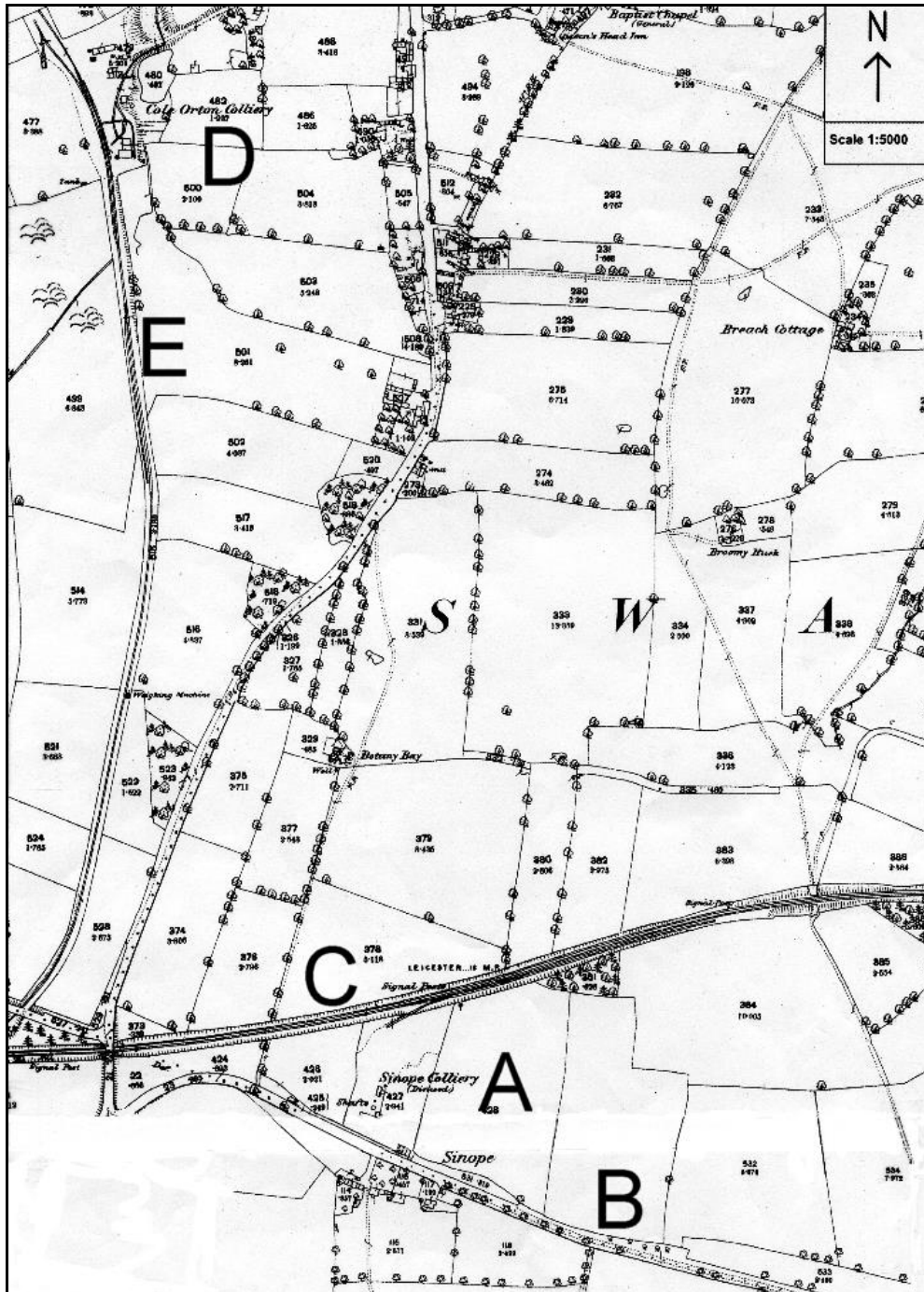
The author has included numerous reports (including coroner's reports where available) on various fatalities which occurred at these coal mines, some of which make harrowing reading, but serve as a memorial to our brave coal miners who risked their lives every day to keep the wheels of industry turning and domestic fires burning. "Lest we Forget"

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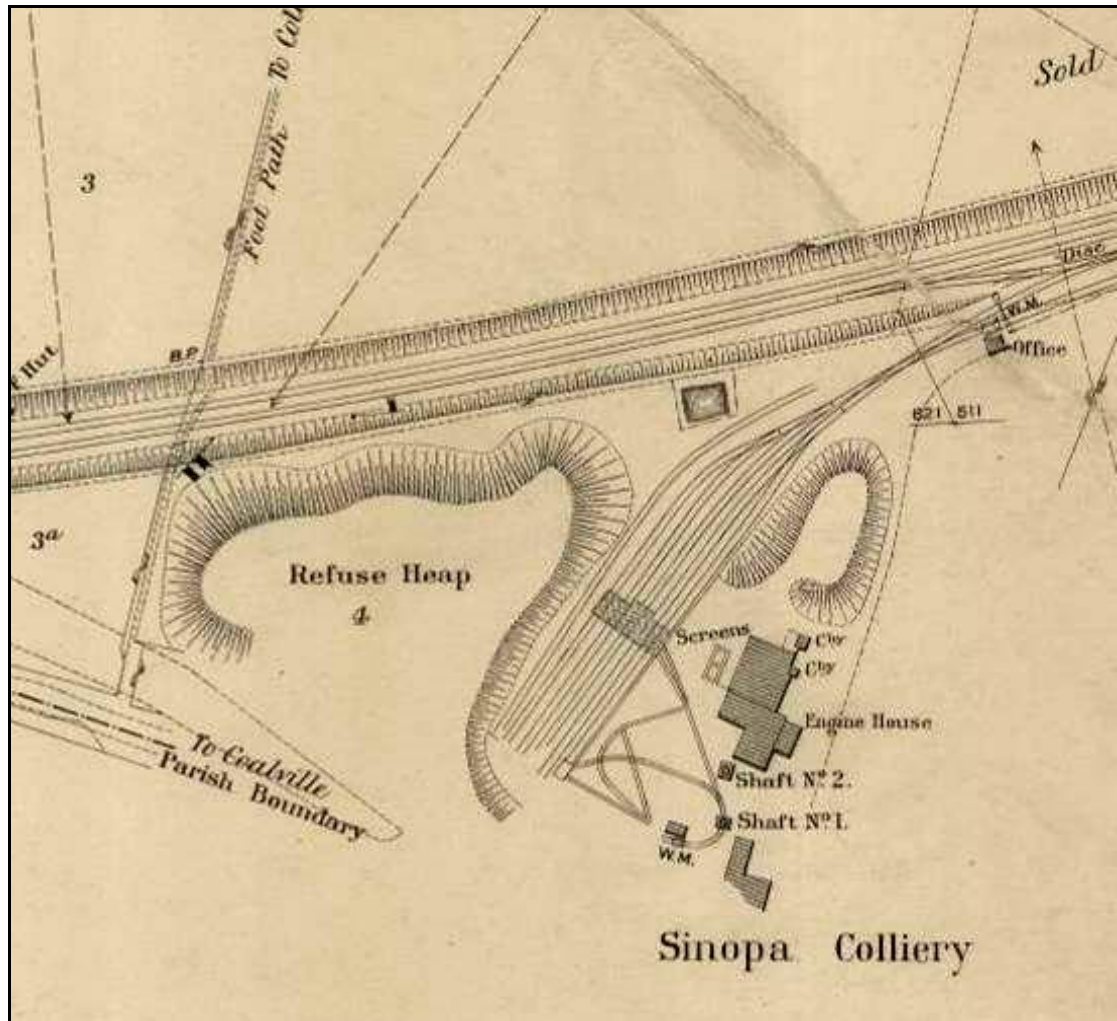
PART 1 - SWANNINGTON NO.2. COLLIERY 1861-1902

A SERIES OF EXPLANATORY MAPS



1881 SURVEYED O/S MAP SHOWING THE RELATIVE LOCATION OF NO.2 SWANNINGTON COLLIERY / SINOPE COLLIERY TO COLEORTON No.3. COLLIERY (BUG & WINK) AT D

- A – Swannington No.2. Colliery (Sinope)**
- B – Ashby-De-La-Zouch to Coalville Road**
- C – Leicester to Burton Railway (Midland line)**



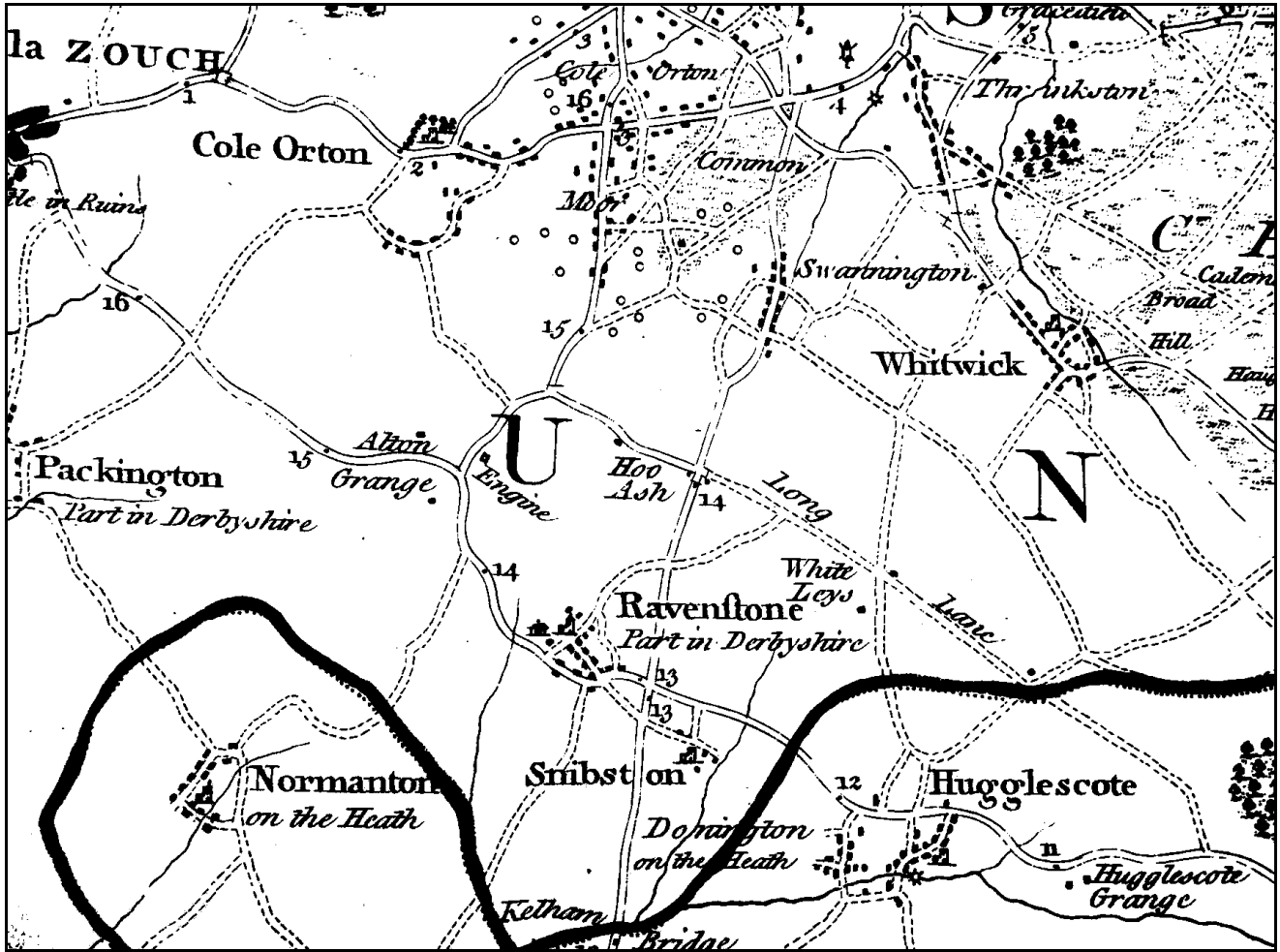
Extract from a railway map showing the layout of Swannington No.2. Colliery (referred to as Sinopa on the plan) with its 2 shafts

The colliery had sidings to the south side of the Leicester to Burton Midland Railway line.



This section from the First Edition 1835 O/S map before either No.2. or No.3. collieries were sunk shows a wider view of the area including the Toll Gates at Hoo Ash, and where the Hinckley to Melbourne turnpike extension turned down Coleorton Moor road

EXTRACT FROM JOHN PRIOR'S 1777 MAP OF
LEICESTERSHIRE (SEE NEXT PAGE)



The author decided to include John Prior's map as it contains a number of interesting features relevant to the area. Perhaps most importantly, that the name "Hoo Ash" had been established by this time. The enlarged view shows that there were two toll bars and toll houses at the junction of the Hinckley to Melbourne turnpike and Long Lane. It also depicts the Newcomen Engine at the Altons. Prior went to the trouble of showing locations of "Bell Pits" and the area to the north is covered with these.

Prior's map of Leicestershire was the 29th of 42 county maps to be published between 1748 and 1797, so it takes its place in a very extensive remapping of the country by private surveyors. It was such 18th century developments as the building of new country houses, the rise of industries, and especially the increase of travel on the new turnpike roads, that gave rise to a demand for maps showing these features.

John Prior was only incidentally a map maker. By profession he was a schoolmaster and clergyman, for most of his life at Ashby-de-la-Zouch. He was born at Swithland in August 1729, the son of a steward to the Danver's family. He went to school at Woodhouse, and did so well there that at the age of 15, he was appointed master of the same school. Following an extensive education, he also served as curate of Woodhouse and Quorn from 1755 until 1763, when he was appointed master of the Grammar School at Ashby, where he remained for the next forty years.

HOO ASH

The author has spent some time trying to find a plausible meaning of this long established name and focal point in the local landscape, which doesn't appear to be recorded anywhere.

This is a suggestion, and only a suggestion, that the name is derived from a "hoop of Ash trees" established well before the date of the Prior map, which were cut down at some point. There is a north American Ash tree called a Hoop Ash but that is not thought to be relevant.

PART 2 - SWANNINGTON NO.2. COLLIERY CONT'D

Swannington No. 2. Colliery operated by William Worswick, was sunk in 1861. The location is shown on the first map. The difficulties that Worswick had experienced at the Calcutta and Califat pits in Swannington apparently prompted him to look further southwards towards Ravenstone for fresh reserves of coal. In March 1861, he reached an agreement with Leonard Fosbrooke of Ravenstone Hall when he leased 59 acres of main Coal at £100 per acre. Two shafts were sunk to a depth of 189 feet, but before the shaft was completed and the colliery was opened a tragic accident occurred at the mouth of one of the shafts when three men lost their lives. There follows a transcribed newspaper report of the coroner's inquest.

Approximately two years following the sinking of the No.2. colliery shafts, Worswick sank further shafts near to Hoo Ash, to establish the Swannington No.3. colliery known locally as Clink Colliery. Both the No.2. and No.3. Swannington collieries were intended to work the remaining coal beneath Ravenstone and the southern part of Swannington up to the line of the Snibston barrier. By 1864, Worswick still had an interest in at least six collieries. When William Worswick died in 1871, his estates and collieries passed to his eldest son who exhibited little interest in the coal mining industry.

By June 1877, headings at Swannington No.2. and No.3. collieries had reached the Snibston barrier and it was therefore decided to close both pits. An un-worked barrier of coal had ostensibly been left in the Main Coal Seam as a protection for workings down the dip to the south. When the pumping engine at Calcutta Colliery failed in 1882, rising water in the old workings over-topped this barrier and flooded Snibston workings. A court case ensued in which allegations and counter-allegations were made that the coal barrier had been reduced (or perhaps breached) by illegal extraction. Snibston No.1 Colliery closed in the 1880's and never re-opened.

After 1890, there was a brief and abortive attempt by a small mining company by the name of "Cox and Turner" to rework coal in the Swannington locality. They owned Stockingford Colliery in Warwickshire at the time. "Cox and Turner" leased the Roaster and Middle Lount Seams from the Snibston Company at £20 per acre and also leased old surviving buildings at the Swannington No.2. and No.3 (Clink) collieries. By this time, Swannington No.2. had changed its name to Sinope Colliery which was locally referred to as "Sarniper". During 1891, efforts were made to work the main coal at Swannington No.2. using the existing shafts but it soon became apparent that there was little coal to be gotten. They considered sinking two new shafts but the cost did not justify this so the decision was taken to deepen the shafts of the Swannington No.2. Sinope Colliery from 189ft to the Roaster Seam at 348ft.

It was in September 1891, that Jesse Armson, who had been the under manager at South Leicestershire Colliery for upwards of 15 year joined "Cox & Turner" as the manager of their new venture as described in the following newspaper article on his SLC leaving presentation. He later moved to Coleorton Bug & Wink colliery:-

Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 19 September 1891

Presentation to Mr. Jesse Armson. — An interesting ceremony was performed at the National Schoolroom, Hugglescote, on Saturday evening. Mr. Jesse Armson, under-manager of the South Leicestershire Colliery, being presented by the officials and workmen of that company with a handsome marble timepiece on the occasion of his

leaving the colliery to undertake the management of Messrs. Cox and Turner's new colliery at Sarnipper. Mrs. Armson was also the recipient of a silver tea and coffee service. The timepiece bore the following inscription viz : " Presented, with a tea and coffee service, to Jesse Armson and his wife by the workmen and officials on his leaving the South Leicestershire Collieries, July 8, 1891, as a small tribute of respect and esteem for the unbiassed manner with which he has filled the positions of deputy and under-manager for 15 years." The tea and coffee service was inscribed as follows : " Presented to Mrs. Armson with a timepiece to Mr. Armson on his leaving the South Leicestershire Collieries, July 8, 1891." The articles were supplied by Mr. Peplow, Coalville. There was a very large attendance of the miners, many of whom were accompanied by their wives and daughters. The presentation was made by Mr. John P. White, managing director of the South Leicestershire Colliery Company. — Mr. White, who was cordially received, said for upwards of 15 years Mr. Armson had been in the employ of the South Leicestershire Colliery Company, and during those many years he could not remember to have received one complaint against him. (Cheers.) He always discharged his duties in a manner which won the approbation both of the workmen and his masters. Nothing better could have been written than the words contained in the inscription on the present, and it needed little from him to augment them. He wished Mr. Armson the heartiest success possible in his new sphere of labour. (Cheers.) He felt sure that the men under his control would always receive the same consideration at his hands as had been the case in the past. Mr. White then handed the articles to Mr. and Mrs. Armson. Continuing, he congratulated the miners upon the substantial rise in their wages of late. He advised them to be careful of their money, and to put a balance by for a rainy day. — Mr. Armson, who was loudly cheered, said he was thankful that the testimonial proved that his wife and himself had their good, hearty wishes. He had always tried to do his duty in such a manner that it would not be irksome to the workmen, and the testimonial showed that they had approved his actions. He would always try to do his duty to his God, his masters, and his men. He must always put his masters before the men, but he would endeavour so to act as to gain the esteem of both. — Mr. Melling (manager of the South Leicestershire Colliery Company) proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. White for attending to make the presentation. — Mr. Glover seconded the vote, which was carried by acclamation. — Mr. White, in reply, said he had been in that district 40 years, and when he first came the population was very small and scattered. Now the place was fast progressing into a town. Things were very different 40 years ago to what they were at present. Progress had been made, and very rapidly, too, and affairs had not reached a point where they must either make a retrograde movement or go forward. Six years ago they passed over a time of depression, during which the coal trade suffered more than it had ever done before. It was almost impossible to make a colliery pay, and they would remember that his shareholders did not have a dividend for years. It was very difficult for him to be liberal-minded towards the workmen at that time. The directors pulled the string tight, the shareholders pulled it tighter, and the men pulled it tighter still. (Laughter.) Under those circumstances it was hard lines for a man to be fair to all classes. He had, however, been blamed for many things which he had never had anything to do with. If anyone had formerly said that he was not a friend to the working men, they had done him an injury to which they ought to be brought to account. If it was a fact that the more he associated with the workmen the more he would become better known, he would certainly associate with them more in future. (Cheers.)

We now enter a period where the colliery was purchased by various people, but it never enjoyed any success. In a report in the Leicester Journal of December 1893 on the funeral of a Mr. L. C. Cox, of Ravenstone, it states that he had purchased "Sarnipper Colliery" which later changed hands. It is thought that this would have been prior to D. & J. Woolatt purchasing it. The Coalville Times in October 1893 reported

on a Bankruptcy case at Nottingham involving a Mr. George Percival, and records that he was Engineer and Manager at "Sarniper Pit" having previously worked at Trowell Moor Colliery. He was recorded as still being the manager there in 1894.

During this period, small quantities of the main and Middle Lount Seams were worked at a royalty of £30 per acre on each, but In March 1894, working was suspended, and the business sold to D. & J. Woollatt, coal merchants of Derby and Burton upon Trent.

D. & J. Woolatt then sold Sinope Colliery to the Swannington Colliery Company Ltd for £2,250 in 1895. A report appeared in the Coalville times in July 1895 regarding a court case brought by Woolatt against their solicitors Fisher, Jesson and Wilkins on the basis that an offer of £3,150 that had been made by South Leicestershire Colliery which had not been communicated to them by their solicitors. The judge found in favour of the solicitors.

The colliery lay idle for several years owing to a dispute between the Swannington Colliery Company Ltd and the Snibston Company over flooding.

An attempt was made to work the Middle, Nether Lount and Roaster Seams, but limited reserves finally brought an end to the colliery in July 1902.

A TRAGIC ACCIDENT FOLLOWING THE OPENING OF THE No.2. COLLIERY

Leicester Journal - Friday 13 December 1861

FATAL ACCIDENT AT SWANNINGTON COLLIERY.

On the 2nd instant, an inquest was held at Swannington, before John Gregory, Esq., coroner, on the bodies of John Bacon, George Stanley, and Abram Smith, who came by their death under the following circumstances:—

The first witness examined was William Richards, who stated that he was ground bailiff at No. 2 pit, at Swannington Colliery. On Saturday afternoon, the 30th of November, he was near the bottom of the shaft, when he heard a noise of something falling down, and on reaching the bottom with a light he saw the three deceased men lying quite dead, having fallen nearly from the top of the shaft to the bottom, being a distance of about sixty-three yards.

Bacon was about 39 years of age, Stanley 51, and Smith 21. Here the coroner suggested that the inquest should be adjourned to Tuesday, the 10th instant, in order to have the attendance of Mr. Hedley, the Government Inspector.

At ten o'clock on Tuesday morning the jury assembled, the Government Inspector being present, when the following evidence was given:—

Joseph Pearson deposed that he was engine driver at No. 2 Colliery, Swannington. On Saturday afternoon, the 30th of November, he was standing at the pit top assisting the three deceased parties, who were on a wooden scaffold about eight or nine feet down the shaft, trying the shafts in the pedestals. The scaffold was round one, and occupied nearly the whole space of the shaft, which was nine feet in diameter, and was slung by four chains over a waggon sole, placed on two trunks or tubs two feet high, and standing on each side of the pit mouth. After the scaffolding

was found to hang too low, two wooden blocks, about a foot square and two feet six inches in length, were put upon the sole, and the four chains were brought into a shackle at the top of those blocks and in the centre the upper one. That had been done about an hour before the occurrence of the accident, and under the direction of the deceased Bacon, who was the engine-wright of the Colliery, and had charge not only of those operations of all the former ones necessary in getting the colliery into working order. The three deceased men then went down by means of a ladder to the scaffold from the right hand side of the top of the shaft, and begun to try one side of the prop shafts to fit the pedestals. After about ten minutes they went to the other side of the scaffold for the same purpose, and while Bacon was trying the shaft in the pedestals the scaffold lowered about two inches on the side he was standing; the other two men were standing just behind him looking on. Witness heard Bacon say, "We must not all be on one side, or we shall be wrong," and he added, "You had better stand still a bit, and I will go up and see to it." The deceased Bacon then went to the other side of the scaffold, where the ladder which they had gone down by was still standing, leaving the two other deceased standing where they were! Bacon had gone up two or three staves when the scaffold on that side went down and canted up edgeways. The deceased Bacon fell down the shaft and the two others after him. The scaffold appeared to be quite secure when it was done, and none of the three men appeared to think there was any danger. When the scaffold canted over the two blocks fell off the sole of the waggon and went down the shaft, but none of the tackle broke. Witness had worked the Swannington Colliery about two years and Bacon had been the engine-wright during that period and he appeared to understand his work well, and the people about the colliery felt confidence in him. Stanley had only worked about a month at the colliery, but the other deceased had worked there ever since the colliery had commenced. Stanley had, however, been used to colliery work for many years. Witness did not know to what cause the accident was attributable. The weight of the scaffold and the men upon it would be about half ton.

George Lewin stated that he was engineer of the Swannington Colliery, and had been so for about nine months. The deceased Bacon was engine-wright when he first went, and remained so all the time since. His duties were to execute the works at the new colliery, which had not been opened, and included the putting up of the machinery generally at both Swannington collieries. Witness gave instructions which Bacon carried out He had great confidence in the deceased, and considered him a skilful and careful workman. He did not consider the mode of suspending the scaffold safe, more particularly as regarded the packing of the blocks upon the sole of the waggon. If that packing had been left out and the centre of the shackles spiked to the sole, he should hare considered it safe. Since the accident, the scaffold had been slung to the engine rope, and had been so that morning. In consequence of the engine being wanted to pump water out of the pit, the scaffold had been taken off the rope and fixed in the manner before described. It was not done in a hurried way, but a quite deliberate manner, and had been completed an hour before it was used. If witness had seen it he should not have allowed the men to have gone on it. Witness's opinion was that the scaffold canted over owing to the blocks shifting at the time Bacon was crossing the scaffold to go up the ladder. If Bacon had even put wedges in between the shaft side and the scaffold, it would most probably have prevented the accident.

The coroner having summed up the evidence, the jury after a short consultation, returned a verdict of "Accidental death."

Unfortunately two of the men left widows and their families to mourn their loss

MORE FATALITIES

Leicester Journal - Friday 24 April 1868

Colliery Accident.—An inquest was held at Worthington, on Thursday week, before J. Gregory, Esq., coroner, on the body of John Halfpenny. Deceased was a banksman at the **No. 2. pit of the Swannington Colliery**, and was 59 years old. On Tuesday afternoon, the 14th instant, he was engaged on some waggons which were about being removed to the machine house, and was standing on the top of some slack on the second waggon when the waggons were started, and losing his balance, he fell down, and the wheels of the hind waggon passed over his neck and chest, killing him on the spot. **The jury returned verdict of accidental death.**

Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 02 May 1868

On Wednesday, an inquest was held at Swannington, before Mr. Deputy Coroner Harrison, on the body of Solomon Siddons, deceased.

Deceased was a collier in **No. 2, pit Swannington Colliery**. On the morning of Friday, the 24th ult, he was working in the pit with an another collier, named Smith. A piece of coal became suddenly detached from the seam, and fell upon deceased. He was very much hurt, and was removed to his home, where he died on Monday morning, Mr. Hackett, surgeon, Ravenstone, who attended deceased, found him suffering from some contusions on the head and chest. Deceased had also several fractured ribs, and a fractured collar bone, besides internal injuries. Mr. Hackett attributed death to one of the lungs being punctured by a broken rib, and congestion of the other lung, caused by internal concussion. **Verdict "Accidental death."**

ANOTHER FATAL ACCIDENT WHEN COLLIERY WAS OWNED BY COX & TURNER

Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 18 February 1893

FATAL ACCIDENT TO A BOY AT SWANNINGTON COLLIERY - INQUEST

An inquest on the body of a boy Henry Upton, who was killed at Swannington Colliery on Friday, was held on Monday morning at the Engineers' Arms, Coalville, before Mr. G. E. Bouskell.

The first witness called was John Upton, who said deceased was his son, 15 years of age, and employed as a pony-driver at the Swannington Colliery. Joseph Haywood, residing at Outwood-lane, Coleorton, a pony-driver, said on Friday morning he and the deceased were driving in the main road, No. 21. Witness went out of the stall into the siding about 7.15 to fetch a hook, as there was not one in the tub to put the tally on. Just as he got the tally hook he heard something fall from the roof, and saw that Upton's tub had run off the road against a prop. He fetched some other boys, and they found deceased under some stone which had fallen from the roof. They could only see his right hand. The man in charge of the road told deceased in witness's presence on Thursday to go steadily round the curve, or else the tub would run off the line.

By Mr. Hewitt, inspector of mines : They used limmers for the tubs. They rode on the limmers, and had reins on the pony. The 21 road was undulating. They did not use

lockers, and if the pony was walking they could stop it anywhere. They were paid by the tub.

By Mr. Sharpe : He had never seen any lockers used on No. 21 road. The line of rail was half a yard to two feet away from the post the tub struck, which was just opposite the curve, which was a fairly sharp one. The tub had run off the rails and was standing up against the prop at the curve.

By the Coroner : He had seen the deceased coming round the curve at a faster pace than he dare drive.

By Mr. Sharpe : The deceased's tub went off the rails at the curve about three weeks ago. He had never seen him off the rails before. He did not know what pace the deceased was driving then, as he did not see him. Witness had trotted round the curve several times.

Edward Robinson said he was a miner at Swannington Colliery. On Friday morning last witness told him that Upton was under some stone. He went to the curve with Haywood, and saw Upton lying under a fall of stone which had fallen in front of the tub. They got deceased out, and found that he was dead. The tub was standing against the prop it had knocked out.

By Mr. Hewitt : He thought the accident was caused by the tub jumping off the metals and knocking the prop out. He did not see any other way how the accident could have happened. He had no control over the boys.

By Mr. Sharpe: He did not think the curve was a sharp one. He did not recollect a tub coming off that curve before. The stall that tub came from would be 80 or 100 yards from the curve. The curve was on the level. He did not notice how the prop was fixed or whether it was broken.

Harry Hubbard said he was the day-deputy at Swannington Colliery. It was his duty to examine the workings during the day. On Friday last he examined the road 21 about 7.5 a.m., and every thing was in order. There would be three full trucks pass the curve when the accident happened, including the one that ran off the rails. If there had been anything on the rails he would have moved it. He had warned some boys about coming round the curve too fast. He had been a deputy 18 months, and for the last three months he had had to inspect road 21 amongst others. He had never seen a tub come off the rails round the curve or heard of one.

By Mr. Hewitt : He did not think lockers were necessary on road No. 21. The road rises from the face to the curve. The pony which was drawing deceased's tub was a strong one, and could stop the tub anywhere.

By Mr. Sharpe : He had never heard any complaints that the roof was dangerous where the accident occurred. The prop which was knocked down was farthest from the line, and was about one inch in the ground. He had never seen a prop more than three inches in the ground.

James Wm. Kendrick said he was a " corporal " at the colliery. It was his duty to look after the boys who drove the tubs, and if he saw them driving too fast he would caution them. He had had to caution Haywood and the deceased against driving too quickly. He had seen them driving too fast down the road before they got to the curve. He had not seen them drive round the curve too fast. He cautioned the deceased one day last week.

By Mr. Sharpe : He did not think lockers were necessary.

By Mr. Hewitt : If there had been lockers to the tub the boy could have driven just as fast if he wished to, as if there had been none. Wyles Hardwick said he was manager of the colliery. He was fetched to the scene of the accident. He noticed that a prop had been knocked out, and that a bar had been let down. The props were tightly fastened at the top, and were quite safe if they were only a few inches in the ground. He had never had any complaints as to the pace at which the boys drove.

By Mr. Sharpe: The lines had been laid about eight months. He had never heard of any tubs coming off the rails at the curve. He considered the curve was safe.

*Mr. Jamie, surgeon, said he was called to see the deceased, but he was dead before he arrived. Deceased had sustained a compound fracture of the base of the skull, and his neck was dislocated, either of which was sufficient to cause death. **The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.***

Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 25 October 1890

*On Wednesday an accident happened on the Midland Railway between Swannington and Ashby to a young man named Thomas Robey, living with his parents in Derby street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch. It appears that Robey, who is in the **employ of Messrs. Cox and Turner**, colliery proprietors, was walking on the line towards Swannington, whither he was taking a parcel, when a goods train came behind him, knocked him down, and passed over him. Strange to say, Robey escaped with only slight bruises to his face and knees. When struck he fell between the rails and lay all at length until the engine and waggons had passed over him. He then got up and walked to the colliery, from whence he was conveyed to Ashby, where his injuries were attended to by Dr. Orchard, and he is now making favourable progress.*

A FURTHER FATALITY BEFORE THE COLLIERY CLOSED

As the following report gives Mr. Percival as manager of the colliery, it is assumed this must have been the George Percival referred to in the preceding bankruptcy case.

Leicester Chronicle & Mercury – Saturday, August 29th 1896

Fatal accident at Swannington Colliery (By the date given this would be Swannington No.2. Colliery)

At the New Inn, Whitwick, on Thursday, the inquest on the body of William Varnam, who was crushed to death in Swannington Colliery, was held before Mr. Coroner Deane, of Loughborough. Mr. H. R. Hewitt, Her Majesty's Inspector of Mines, of Derby, attended the enquiry, with Mr. Percival, the manager of the colliery, who produced a plan of the stall. – The deceased's widow gave evidence of identification, and said her husband's age was 34. – Henry Tindall, collier, of Coleorton, who appeared to be suffering severely from the effects of the injuries received at the time deceased met his death, said that on the 25th inst., he was at work about one o'clock with the deceased in the stall. Varnam, being charge man, knocked the roof, and proceeded to bar in the hole. Witness was putting the prop under the bar, when "down came the stone", and deceased was buried under the fall. That was all witness new beyond that he called for help, and assistance was soon at hand. – By the Government Inspector: After the deceased sounded the roof he stated that it was bad. It was usual to set props before the bar if they were wanted. Varnam evidently

did not think that props were necessary, as none were set. Varnam was in charge, and witness had nothing to do with the matter. – Samuel Smith, the day deputy at the pit, stated that he was on duty on the day of the accident. He had inspected No.9. stall about nine o'clock that morning, when it was in a safe condition, and sufficiently timbered. There was no work being done when the fall took place at the hour mentioned. At one o'clock he heard of the accident, and went to the stall, where he found the deceased under a fall of stone. He assisted to get him out, but he was dead when extricated. The deceased was an experienced man. He came to work at the colliery on the 10th February, and had been charge man at Coleorton and at the South Leicestershire Colliery previously. – By the Inspector: In witness's opinion, there was not sufficient timber used by the deceased. The men should have had a prop in front of them, and should not have had the space they had without timber. – Mr. Percival, the manager of the colliery, stated that he was in the stall shortly after ten, when the coal was safe. After the accident he went down and made an inspection of the stall, when he found a piece of roof weighing about two tons had fallen. He found the bar buried, with the deceased under the stone. – This concluded the evidence, and the coroner commented on the deceased not using sufficient timber for his own protection, and said the deceased went a great deal too far without a prop. The deceased obviously thought the coal hard and safe, and left a dangerous area which caused the fall. – **The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death".**

AN INTERESTING LOCAL STORY

Coalville Times - Friday 31 January 1902

SWANNINGTON COLLIER CHARGED WITH NEGLECTING HIS CHILDREN - HEAVY SENTENCE

Note - The NSPCC was founded in 1884

At the Police Court, on Monday afternoon. before Major Hatchett, Herbert Henry Freeman, Whitwick, was charged with having neglected his children. at Whitwick. within months of the 17th of March, 1899, in the parish of Swannington. He was summoned to appear at the court on the 39th of March, and failing, a warrant was issued, Inspector Barnes. of the NSPCC being the complainant. He was further charged with having assaulted Susan Webster, and also his wife Eliza on the 10th March last year.

On the application of Supt. Holloway the prisoner was remanded to Coalville Petty Sessions on Friday. He was arrested on Saturday night by P.C's Oliver and Truelove.

Defendant was again brought before the, magistrates to-day (Friday). Mr R. S Clifford (Loughborough) appeared to prosecute on behalf of the NSPCC - Defendant pleaded not guilty.

*Inspector Kirchin said the information was laid by inspector Barnes on March 17th. 1899, and the defendant was summoned to appear, but absconded. Freeman', wife said, she had been married to the defendant 22 years and she had had 10 children. She had not seen her husband for nearly 3 years. At the time her husband left her they were living at **Sarniper**. Defendant then worked at. the Sarniper colliery and was earning between £2 and £3 per week. He did not provide them with food, however, she had to depend on the charity of her friends and neighbours. Sometimes, when they had had food given them, defendant would come home and help to eat it. The defendant seldom came home sober, and if there was no food in the house, he used to turn her and the children out. When these summonses were*

served on the defendant, he burnt them, and afterwards smashed all the furniture in the house. He then went "swig". Complainant had worked early and late to keep herself and the children, without going to the parish for relief, but she had to have relief for a month when she was confined. When defendant went away, the children and herself were ragged, but they were fairly well dressed now. On one occasion, when the defendant turned her out, **she slept in the steam house, in the colliery yard**. There was a fat pig in the sty when defendant went away, but Mr. Hull had that for money owing : Complainant did not receive £1 per week from the defendant. She sometimes had money from the eldest boy.

Frederick Freeman (18), defendant's son said he had not seen his father for three years. Witness at that time worked at the colliery and earned 12 or 13s per week. He gave that to his mother. His father used to drink a good deal and did not provide them with food. They were badly clad and neglected.

Susan Webster, wife of Thomas Webster, said that in 1809 she lived next door to the defendant. Witness had given the children food.

P.S. Garton gave evidence of the apprehension of the defendant. He said the woman had worked hard for the children and they were much better off now than when the defendant lived with them.

Defendant said he went and offered his wife money last August but she locked the door and would not have him in.

There were six previous convictions against the defendant, two for similar offences. with respect to which he had been to prison for one month and three months respectively.

The Bench now sentenced the defendant to six month's hard labour.—The cases of assault were withdrawn.—On the application of Mr Clifford on behalf of Mrs. Freeman, the Bench granted a summons under the Married Women's Jurisdiction Act, for a separation order, to be heard when defendant came out of prison.—

Defendant : I don't. want that.—Mr. Clifford : maybe not, but your wife does.—
Defendant : I want to live with my children or I shall die in prison.—The Bench remitted the Society's costs.

PART 3 - SWANNINGTON NO.3. COLLIERY, KNOWN LOCALLY AS CLINK 1865-1877

Some useful information on the colliery plant is to be found in the "Plant Sales Catalogue" dated 26th July 1894 which is listed below. The colliery was located close to the Ashby / Coalville road and railway at "Hoo Ash" as shown on the following maps, which is only a short distance from the No.2. colliery at Sinope. The first shaft was sunk in 1865 and the colliery was closed in 1877? when it was only working the main coal. The Snibston Colliery Company Ltd had established a Snibston barrier which was not to be breached in order to prevent any danger of flooding. However, information to hand suggested that Worswick ignored this and actually created a hole in it which was gobbled up. This was strongly refuted by George Lewis (agent & Engineer) and his son, the latter having taken over responsibilities from his father in 1871. He had apparently reached an agreement with the neighbouring companies in December 1870 over underground coal barriers and drainage. In respect of the latter it was agreed that that the three companies should jointly control the pumping engine and shaft at Swannington No.1. colliery and share its working costs equally, and that the Swannington Company could withdraw in 1887 when its leases expired. By June 1877, the headings at Sinope and Clink Collieries had reached the Snibston Barrier and the decision was made to close both pits and dispose of the machinery by auction. However, this did not happen as Swannington No.2. (Sinope) was purchased from Worswick as explained earlier and did not close till 1902. As can be seen from the following the plant and machinery for Clink was not sold till 1894.

Worswick's only property remained in the maintenance and operation of the pumping engines and, in particular, the large engine installed at Swannington No.1. pit at a cost of £30,000 in 1877. It was the failure of this engine and the denied breaching of the Snibston Barrier that involved the Swannington Company in costly litigation in 1884 and 1891. This was a long winded case and the evidence is far too long to be include here, but in the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division), held before Mr. Justice Pearson, (Snibston Colliery Company v. Worswick and Worswick of the Swannington Colliery Company), a sum of £30,000 was being claimed by the Snibstone Colliery Company for damages. The author has not been able to find out what the final result was but it was still ongoing in 1891.

PLANT SALE CATALOGUE - 26th July 1894

The mine had two shafts. No.1. shaft (downcast) 9 feet in diameter, went 63 yards to the main coal and 93 yards to the Lount seam, with a sump of several yards at the bottom. The shaft was fitted with wood guides, and had two cages and landing props etc plus headgear etc.

No.2. shaft (upcast) was 7 feet in diameter, with a sump 10 yards deep which was connected with No.1. shaft.

There are a pair of horizontal winding engines, with 18 inch cylinders and 4ft stroke and a 10ft drum; also a pair of 10 inch horizontal geared Winding Engines; a Donkey Engine for feeding two Lancashire Boilers 30ft x 7ft-6ins complete with fittings; a portable engine for sawing; a large number of pit tubs, in good condition; Pit Bank, Landsale and rail weighing machines; a small direct acting Pumping Engine in the pit.

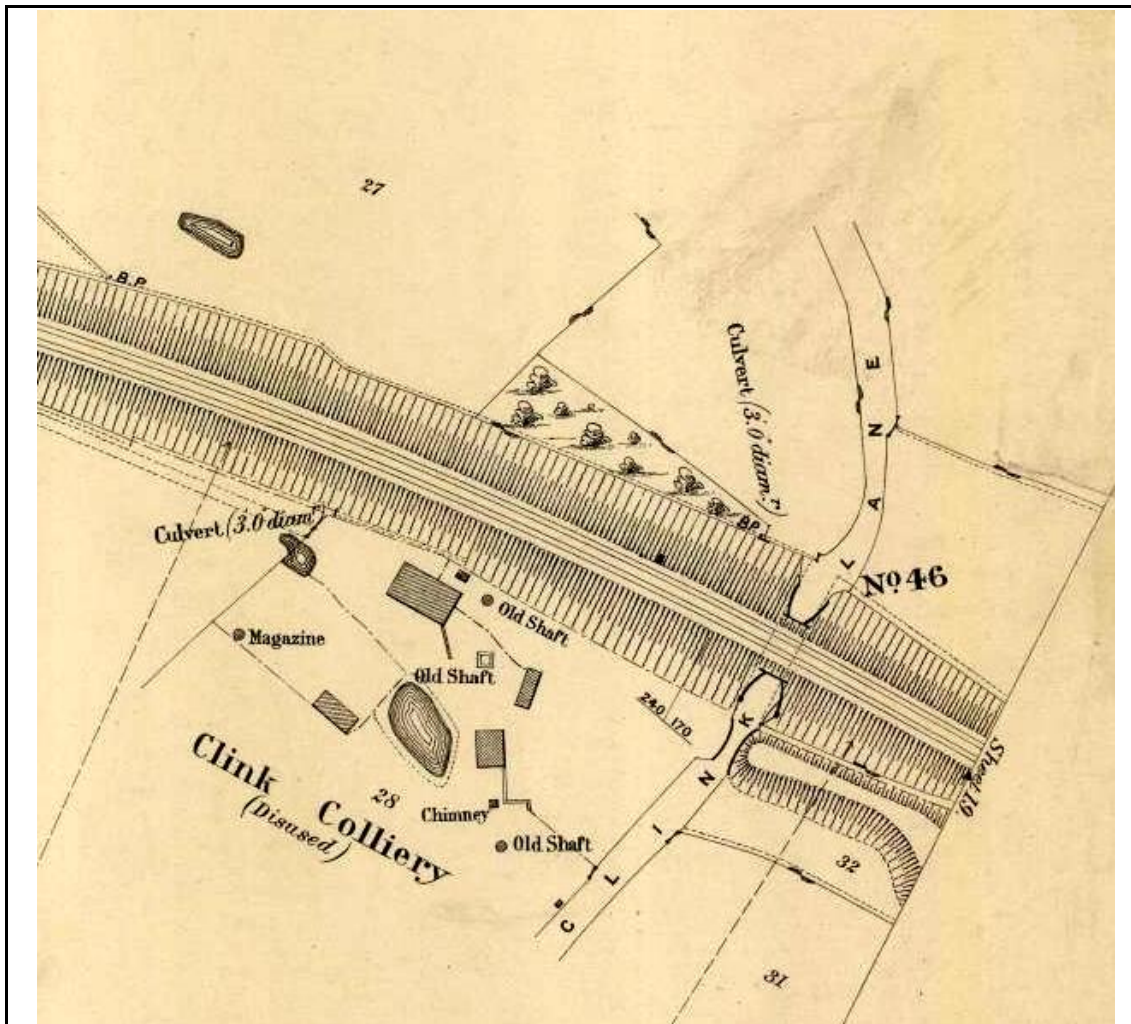
The buildings consist of Engine Houses, a capital block of offices, Smith's and carpenters shops, storeroom, Pit Bank and Workingmen's cabin, stable and Weighing Machine Houses etc.

There are eight Pit Horses and Ponies, and one Shunting Horse used in the sidings.

About 900 yards of railway is in the sidings, and 30 tons of steel bridge rails in the pit. There are also two one-horse carts and a colliery trap.

The erections are all in good repair, and the whole of the Machinery and Plant are of the best description and in excellent working order, being capable of turning out from 300 to 400 tons of coal daily.

The colliery was connected with the Midland Railway by a short siding, for which a maintenance charge is made. Such siding crosses a piece of land for the use of which a nominal yearly rent of £10 is payable.



Extract from a railway map showing the layout of Swannington No.3. colliery (Clink)



The above extract from the 1835 first edition O/S map shows outlined in yellow the location of Swannington No.3. Colliery and "Hoo Ash". Clink lane shown on the preceding plan can clearly be seen, and there is evidence of several "Bell Pits" worked at the end of the lane.

TWO FATAL ACCIDENTS DURING THE SINKING OF THE FIRST SHAFT

Leicester Journal - Friday 12 May 1865

Colliery Accident Coalville. —An inquest was held Coalville, on Monday last, before J. Gregory, Esq., coroner, on the body of Alfred Parker, 33 years of age, who was killed by an accident on Saturday last. From the evidence adduced it appeared that the deceased was engaged sinking a new shaft at Mr. W. Worswick's colliery, at Swannington, and on Saturday last, he was standing on the edge of the shaft removing some barrels of soil and water, which were being hoisted by the engine, when the bridge shot back, and the deceased was thrown into the shaft. In his fall he managed to catch hold of the barrel and sustain himself for a while, but he, unfortunately, could not maintain his hold, and he was precipitated to the bottom, hurting several men who were working in the pit. He was immediately picked up but life was found to be extinct —The jury returned a verdict of accidental death, and recommended that a spring catch for the bridge should be put down, which Mr. Lewis, the agent, promised should be done. Leicester Guardian - Saturday 13 May 1865

AN ALTERNATIVE VERSION

Leicester Guardian - Saturday 13 May 1865

FATAL ACCIDENT AT SWANNINGTON. A MAN KILLED BY FALLING DOWN A SHAFT 33 YARDS.

On Saturday afternoon, the 6th inst., a man named Alfred Parker, 33 years of age, a collier, whilst engaged with others sinking a shaft, for W. Worswick, Esq. adjoining the Leicester and Swannington Railway, preparatory to commencing a new colliery, fell from the top to the bottom, and was killed instantly. It was deceased's duty to receive the tubs containing the soil, water, &c., as they ascended the shaft from a man named Horobin, draw them away, empty them, and return them to Horobin, who had the management of the mouth of the shaft.

On Saturday last, about three o'clock, Horobin went into the hut to get his dinner, and whilst doing so deceased, contrary to his orders, attempted to take a tub himself, and in endeavouring to empty it, the bridge which covers the mouth of the pit, the wheel of which he neglected to scotch, slid back whilst he was standing with one foot on the bridge and the other on the bank, holding the tub, which immediately swung over the mouth of the pit, deceased clinging to it by his hands and feet, when it turned over and he went to the bottom, striking another man named Webster, who was at work at the bottom, on the shoulder with his head just before reaching the bottom. He was killed instantly.

THE INQUEST

An inquest was held on Monday last, at the Waggon and Horses Inn, Coalville, before J. Gregory, Esq., and a respectable jury, when the following evidence was adduced.

Joseph Holmes, the first witness sworn, said : I am a collier, living at Coalville, and am employed as a I sinker in sinking a shaft for a new colliery, in the parish of Swannington, belonging to Mr. Worswick. Deceased was also employed. He is 33 years of age. We had sunk about 33 yards. The soil and water was turned up in a barrel by an engine. On Saturday last I was at work with the deceased, who was on the bank. Horobin was striking over the sinkers, receiving the tubs as they came up, and emptying them out. Deceased helped to receive them, and took them away as they came up. About three o'clock in the afternoon I came up to send some things down that were wanted. I had just got on to the bridge, having come up with the barrel, containing a small quantity of water. I got off, and deceased was trying to empty the barrel as it hung on the rope. The water is emptied into a cistern. He stood with one foot on the bank and the other on the bridge. He could not turn the barrel over. I got on the bridge to help him, when all at once the bridge shot back by the weight of his pushing. He got hold of the barrel and held by his hands and feet. I told him to hold on. I tried to lay hold of him, but the barrel swung him away from me. He held by his hands a few moments and then fell to the bottom. The bridge had gone right back, uncovering the whole of the shaft mouth. There was no catch to the bridge that I know of. There were two men at work down the shaft at the time. Haley, the engine man, went down and brought Webster up first, who was hurt by deceased striking him in his fall, and afterwards brought up the deceased, who was quite dead. It was not his place to take the tubs off, and he had been cautioned not to do it. It was Horobin's place to be at the top of the shaft. We called out to him to fetch Horobin, and he said, " Can't I do as well", and we said "No." I then went up to help send the things down.

James Smith said I was one of the sinkers, and was at the bottom of the shaft at work when the accident took place. We had called for some materials we wanted, and Holmes went to assist to sending them down. Holmes went up on the tub, the bridge was put over as soon as the tub was up. I afterwards heard a rumbling on the bridge, and looked up and saw the deceased hanging to the band. I said to my mate "Oh, dear, he will drop and kill one of us, get out of way," but he was too frightened to move. I watched him fall from top to bottom. He came straight down the middle and his heel struck my mate on the shoulder. I went to him immediately, but he was quite dead.

John Horobin said I am engaged at the shaft, to mind the tub, receive the stuff which comes up, and send things down. When a tub comes up, I shove the bridge over the shaft top. The deceased's business was to take the tubs away and empty them and bring them back to me. There is no catch to the bridge, but we have a wooden scotch to put under the wheel which prevents it from moving. The bridge is about 14 cwt. When the accident happened I had just gone into the cabin to get a bit of dinner. I left Parker on the pit top to take my place, as he had done so before. I did not see the accident, but assisted in getting him out.—

By the Coroner : How do you account for the bridge going back? The scotch was not there, that is the only reason that I can account for it. The scotch is not always required, only when water comes up ; when the water is emptied the person who empties it stands with one foot on the bridge and the other on the cistern, the scotch should then be used to prevent its going back. I never knew the bridge to move before. This witness admitted that he had many times emptied water from the barrel without notching the wheel.

G. Lewis, Esq., engineer of the works, stated that Horobin's duty was to attend entirely at the top of the shaft, for which he was paid extra. Deceased had no business to receive the barrels, or anything else ; had it been known that he had done so he would have been discharged immediately. Strict injunctions had been given to Horobin, who knew his duty. The scotch should be used at all times. During the

The Coroner having gone through the evidence, said he thought the jury would have no difficulty in arriving at the cause of the poor man's death.

The jury immediately returned a verdict of "Accidental Death" and at the same time recommending that a spring catch should be substituted to hold the bridge instead of the scotch. They at the same time considered that there was blame attached to Horobin, who was called in and admonished by the coroner.

Leicester Guardian - Saturday 02 September 1865

At the sinking of shaft of the new colliery, now in course of erection, called Swannington No. 3, belonging to W. Worswick, Esq., on Saturday evening last, an accident of a very serious nature took place by the explosion of a charge of gun cotton used for blasting, by which one man, named James Smith (46), was killed, and another man named W. Birch seriously injured. At an inquest held on the body of Smith, before J. Gregory, Esq., coroner, at Coalville, the following evidence was given.

*Wm. Birch said I am a collier employed in sinking a new shaft at **Swannington No.3**, belonging to Mr. Worswick. I have been for some time at work with the deceased,*

who was about 30 years of age. He was the head man and had the management. Our usual mode is to drill a hole in the stony bine, and then put the powder cotton down it. We have an iron instrument called a needle, which is put into the charge, which is then rammed down with an iron rammer. We then draw out the needle, and put a straw down the needle hole filled with fine powder. We then put a piece of candle beside the straw, at such a length as we think will not blow up before we get out of the road by being drawn up. We never had anything wrong happen before. On Saturday night, about six o'clock, myself and deceased went to work. There was another man named W. Revel down the shaft at the time ladling out water. I drilled the hole to blow some of the bine down about a yard deep. Deceased put a small charge in first and then a large fuse to it, and it would not go down the hole. I wanted him to pull it to pieces as we always did when it would not go in: but he would not, but put the rammer down and tried to drive it with a hammer. I said "For God's sake Jim don't do so, we shall be shot, but he still kept on. He then got the needle, which would not go in, and began to hammer that in the same way. I told him not to do it or we should be killed. I was frightened and got back. The next instant the charge exploded. I was knocked back against the side of the shaft, and the flash burnt my face, and the stones bruised me. I was never insensible. It put out all the lights. I never saw deceased or heard him moan, or make any noise. They shouted from the top as soon as it went off, "are you all safe?" I shouted again, "no, we are not." They then came down with a light and took deceased up first, and then me. I could not see. The shaft is about 90 yards deep. The explosion must have occurred either from sparks flying from the top of the needle through being hammered, or from the point of it striking against the ironstone in the hole. I never saw deceased do such a thing before all the time I worked with him. He was not drunk, or had had say drink. He was a very sober man.

James Jarvis said: I am a banksman, employed at the **new colliery No.3**. I was on the bank at the time of the accident; I knew the men were preparing a shot, but heard no signal given for them to come up, but heard the explosion and felt alarmed. Joseph Harris called "I'm alright?" I heard a man call from the bottom of the shaft to bring a light. I jumped in the barrel, and went down with a light, and found deceased lying on his face at the contrary side of the shaft to where the shot was fired. He was insensible, and appeared to be dying; he was brought up and put into a cart, and died on the road home.

W. Revel, labourer, stated that he was at the bottom of the shaft, ladling water, about two yards from deceased, and when the accident happened shouted for lights, and Jarvis came down. Saw deceased lying against the side of the shaft. He was not dead, his left hand was blown off, and he was burnt about the face and chin. He did not speak afterwards, and died as they were taking him home in a cart.—J. Jarvis gave corroborative evidence.

G. Lewis, Esq., managing engineer of the works, stated that he had given notice of the accident to the Inspector of the district. Had examined the shaft, and was satisfied the accident was caused as stated, through the man's own carelessness, but not exactly as they thought. He believed it was caused by the friction of the needle through the closely compressed cotton. Deceased was considered the best man they had about the works, and he would sooner have trusted him with this sort of work than anyone else He had been employed to the same kind of work, both here and in **Prussia**, nearly all his life time.

The coroner, (J. Gregory Esq.), having shortly summoned up the jury immediately returned a verdict of "**Accidental Death**". - The death must have been almost instantaneous, as he appears to have had hold of the needle with his left hand, which

was blown off. The handle of the needle then struck him under the chin, and drove a portion of his jaw bone into the brain. Deceased was a very fine young man and had left a wife and one child to lament his untimely death. He was buried on Tuesday; his fellow labourers (shaft sinkers) carrying him to his last home on earth.

Hinckley News - Saturday 29 February 1868

FATAL ACCIDENT

On Saturday an inquest was held at Thringstone, before J. Gregory, Esq., coroner, upon William Horsley Foster, who was killed on the previous Thursday, in **No. 3 Pit, Swannington Colliery.**

William Griffin said deceased, who was forty years old, was employed in the pit above mentioned as a miner. Shortly after four o'clock on Thursday morning, deceased after some conversation about some work he had to do, remarked that four full tubs were left in the stall, and he would take them out, and by the time he had finished probably the witness would have done his work so that he could fire a shot. Deceased then went away, and in about three quarters of an hour he heard that he was killed by a full tub. He went to the place and found some men lifting deceased out of the way of the tub, in order to get it put him. The distance he would have to take the tubs from his stall was about 200 yards, and it sloped rather from the stall. Horses used to come about six in the morning to take the tubs down, but some times the men took them down when they came before that, as it was something in their way to do so. It was generally the work of two men to do it, one going before and the other behind the tub, but in this instance deceased was doing it alone. There was a lock-peg about a foot long which was put in one of the wheels, and the man if alone went in front, as he could hold more there than behind. The tub weighed about 3 cwt., and the weight of coals varied from 6cwt. to 8cwt., according to the height of the road. Deceased had taken one tub down, and it was the second which killed him. About thirty or forty yards behind the place he saw the locker which deceased had needed, and which had come out of the wheel. There was highish place in the rail there, and probably he was pushing in front of the tub and backed it to get over this high place, when the lock-peg fell out, and then the tub would be too much for him, and it forced him down and he was killed. He could have gone on with his work without removing the tube.

Augustus Platts said, a little before 6 he was going up the gate road to his stall, which was the same as deceased worked in, when he found deceased doubled up between the axles of a loaded tub about 130 or 140 yards from the stall, quite dead. He got assistance, and the tub was removed by unloading it, lifting it off deceased, and it was then found that his back was broken. No one saw the accident, but he believed as deceased was taking the tub down the rail his feet slipped from under him, and the tub came on him. He believed he had been pushing his tub back to start it, as the road was flatter where the lock-peg was found, and that in backing it up, the peg fell out, and when the tub got on the descent again it would progress too fast for him, and overcame him. He must have had his head against the tub from the position in which he was. One man could take a tub down if he went the right way to work.

Deceased had been a miner all his life, and had worked for Mr. Worswick for 15 years The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death," and unanimously recommended that the practice of one man taking a loaded tub down any incline in the pit should be entirely put a stop to.

Leicester Mail - Saturday 11 July 1868

Fatal Accident at Swannington Colliery.— On Wednesday, the 1st. inst., an inquest was held at Whitwick, before J. Gregory, Esq., coroner, upon the body of Matthew Martin.

John Fisher, miner at **No. 3 pit, Swannington Colliery**, said that on June 17th he had been taking stone down from the roof to heighten the road to stall. Deceased was working at the coal stall. There was piece of stone on the roof which appeared to neither of them safe, and they tried to pull it down with their picks. They got part of it down and thought the remainder was safe. About two o'clock he went away, leaving deceased and a man named Brooks at work, but in about five minutes the latter came and told him that deceased had got hurt. I went back and found the stone had fallen on him when in a stooping position, and hurt his back. The stone fell out from between the props, and was between 3 cwt. and 4cwt.—Mr. Henry Toone, surgeon, Whitwick, said he was called in to attend deceased on the 17th ult., and found him suffering from a fracture of the spine, Just below the shoulders. There was not the slightest hope of life, and he lingered till the 29th ult., when he died. —

Verdict: "Accidental death."

Leicester Journal - January 1st 1869

FATAL ACCIDENT AT SWANNINGTON COLLIERY

An inquest was held at Coleorton, before J. Gregory Esq., Coroner, on the 26th ult, on view of the body of Frederick Whitaker, who was a loader employed at the colliery, and was killed there on the previous Wednesday. Evidence having been taken on the identity of the body of the deceased, who was about 32 years of age, the inquest was adjourned till the 30th ult, when Mr. Evans, the Government Inspector was present. The circumstances under which the accident happened were described by a witness, Sam Martin :- I am a loader at **No.3. Pit Swannington Colliery (known locally as Clink)** and the deceased was also. We went to work in the pit as normal on Thursday 24th December; we were employed in No.25. stall. We noticed that little bits shivered off outside the stall at times, but below the place where the accident happened. We went on with our work till between eleven and twelve. We had then just finished loading a bit and were in the act of pushing it off the plate in the stall into the gate road, and the deceased, who was at one of the front corners of the tub, had just got to the gate road when a large piece of stone suddenly, without warning, fell from the roof upon him. I was within the stall going to shove the tub on. A lad was coming up with two empty trucks, and I sent him for Robert Lovitt, the corporal, who came with another man, and then other assistance came, and the deceased was got from under the stone, but he was dead. The stable road had been inspected that morning by all the storemen, as I was told, and I saw the lackyman, Blockley, trying a stone lower down in the gate road than the one which fell, but I did not see him try the one that fell. The width of the road is about 8 or 9 feet, and it is supported on each side by props from the headway to the stall. The stone broke away from between the props. **Evidence was called to prove that the pit had been properly inspected, and a verdict was returned as "Accidental Death".**

Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 18 September 1869

SWANNINGTON FATAL ACCIDENT

On Saturday, an inquest was held at Swannington, before J. Gregory, Esq., coroner, upon William Siddons, deceased

William Bott said, he was a loader in **No. 3 pit, Swannington Colliery**, and deceased, who was 18 years old, was a horse-driver there. On Thursday evening, between six and seven o'clock, he was returning to the bottom from his work, when he found deceased lying on the road flat on his face, and on raising him up found a wound at the back of the right ear. Blood was running from his mouth, and there was a great deal on the ground where he lay. He was put in a tub and taken to the top, and sent to his home. He died about twelve o'clock the same night.

John Gready said he saw deceased lying on the road, and about twenty yards before coming to him, met a horse walking towards the stables, but did not know whether it was the one deceased was in the habit of driving, it was supposed deceased received his injury by the horse kicking him.

George Richard Lewis, engineer of the colliery, said the horse was supposed to have kicked deceased: it had been used at the colliery for years, and had been down the pit for more than ten years. It had never injured any one before, but was sometimes in the habit of kicking. He believed that deceased was leaving off his work, and un-tackling the mare from the shafts attached to the tubs, and that he dropped them on to the mare's heels, when she turned round and kicked him. Deceased had driven the mare for three months.— **Verdict, " Accidental death."**

Leicester Journal - Friday 08 October 1869

Joseph Parker, of Coleorton, collier, was charged with having on the 15th September, at Swannington, whilst being employed in the **No. 3 Swannington Colliery**, violated one of the special rules then in force by wilfully leaving the stall in which he was working in the said mine in an unsafe state upon leaving his work.

Mr. Dewes prosecuted.—Mr. Lewis, the manager, produced copy of the certified rules, and said his attention was drawn to the stall in which the defendant had been at work. It was in a very unsafe and dangerous state through the defendant having omitted to remove a portion of the roof. The defendant some short time ago negligently left a stall in similar manner, and a death happened through it. He was at the time severely censured both by the Coroner and Inspector of Mines for his conduct.

Joseph Hodges, colliery bailiff, gave similar evidence.—The defendant did not appear, but his wife being in Court, asked the Magistrates permission to call witnesses to prove that the stall was not left in a dangerous state. The permission being granted, she called Thomas Thompson, who said he went into the stall on the following day and examined the roof; it knocked heavy, and was not altogether right, and should not have been worked in until some timber had been put up.—Another witness was also called by the wife, who said he did not see the stall and knew nothing about it.

The Chairman said it was a very bad case, and therefore the defendant would be committed to one calendar month's hard labour without the option of a fine.

Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 16 April 1870

SWANNINGTON - SUDDEN DEATH AT THE COLLIERY

*On Thursday, the 7th inst., and by adjournment on Tuesday, the 12th inst., an inquest was held at Swannington, before J. Gregory, Esq., coroner, upon Richard Barnett, deceased. - Christopher Hickling said, he was a "hanger-on" at the bottom of the shaft of **No. 3 Pit, Swannington Colliery**. Deceased was a "hanger-on" in the same pit, and was 19 years old. He and deceased were at work together at the bottom of the shaft. Deceased had put a full tub of coal on the cage which was drawn up to the top, and then he put another full tub on. Just as he had finished doing so, and before he could step back, two pieces of coal fell from the waggon at the top. Both pieces struck the cage, and one of them bounded off and struck deceased on the head and killed him instantly. If anything fell from the top, the man who pulled off there shouted to them, and then there was time to get out of the way. He did not hear him shout on the occasion, but was informed that he did so. There were two covers, one of wood and the other of iron, to protect those who were at the bottom, but the coal glided or glanced off the top of the cage. He never heard the coal coming down the shaft, but heard the lumber at the top just before it came down. The tubs had been leaded a long way from the bottom of the shaft, and were then drawn partly by an engine and partly by horses to the shaft at the bottom. He did not know of any other protection that could be given to those at work at the shaft bottom than they had.*

John Walker said, he was "puller-off" at the top of No. 3. shaft. About, twelve o'clock, on Tuesday, a full tub of coal was coming up, and when it had got about two yards from the top, two pieces of coal fell from the end. It had been loaded rather too long, which caused it to touch the frame below the top, and that caused the pieces to fall. He shouted in the usual way as soon as he saw them fall. As soon as he had shouted, he heard them strike the bonnet over the cage. Pieces fell off most days, and he did not know any of preventing it. The men were "hanging-on" at the bottom just as the tub got to the top. He heard the being put on at the bottom, just before he shouted. It made rather a louder noise than usual, which might drown the voices. — Verdict, "Accidental death," and the jury recommended that there should be ends in the tubs from eight to nine inches high. - Mr, Evans, the inspector, has suggested that it would be better not to load the "hanger" under the shaft at all, and Mr. Lewis the manager of the colliery, has promised to contrive if possible that this shall be done.

Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 11 March 1871

THE FATAL EXPLOSION

*The adjourned inquest upon Thomas Burbidge Webster, the man who was killed in the explosion at **No.3. pit, Swannington** on January 21st was held before Mr. J. Gregory esq., on Tuesday last. Joseph Hodges said, I am the bailiff of **No. 3. pit Swannington Colliery**, and was so on Jan. 21st." On that morning I went into the pit as usual at about half past four o'clock. and went into the cabin where the night deputy John Springthorpe was, and I remained there till the day deputies came, which they did at about twenty minutes to six o'clock. Two came named Bancroft and Bradley. The deceased came about five minutes afterwards. Alter Bancroft came he pulled his coat off and went to a box and took two or three candles out. He placed two of them on a table and lighted the other, and he went backwards towards a box on the floor where the blasting powder used in the pit was kept. He sat down on the*

box, and after he had been there about a minute the wick of the candle had become long, which he nipped off with his finger and thumb and dropped it on the floor between his legs. There happened to be some loose powder on the floor, which must have been spilt there in some way, but I do not know how, and the powder took fire and ran into the box. We then all tried to make our escape out of the cabin, but before we could do so the powder in the box exploded. I cannot say the exact quantity there was but it must have been many pounds in weight. The deceased, Webster, who was nearest the doorway, was killed on the spot, and myself and the three others who were in the cabin, and a man named Stevenson, another day deputy, who was just outside the cabin, were all more or less burnt. The powder was not kept loose in the box, but was in two tin bottles with corks or tops to them. The bottle had not been out that morning whilst I was there. The night deputy had used them during the night. The powder is poured out of the bottles into bags which the men have who use the powder, and it is given out in the cabin where the box is, but how the powder got on the floor except it was spilt when being given out, I cannot tell. The box in question is about three feet long, eighteen inches wide and fifteen inches deep. It was a strong one with bands of iron and a lid. I was not aware there was any hole in it. I have known it to be used for the above purpose for three or four years. It is not locked, but the cabin door is after the powder is given out. It is only at night that it is used. Two of the deputies have keys to the door, and the night deputy also. There was only one deputy that night and he was in the cabin when the explosion occurred. The bulk of the powder is kept in a proper magazine on the bank outside the pit, and some is sent down to the cabin to be used by men blasting the roads in the night, who are six in number.

Springthorpe said - "I am a night deputy of No. 3 pit. I was there on the night of January 20th. I had not given any powder out that night, but I had the night before to the men who use it during the night about 4 or 5lbs a piece. I poured it out of the bottle into there bags and I do it against the box in which the bottles are kept. I may spill a little sometimes when doing so. I sent one bottle the next morning to be filled. and a man named William Rose brought it. I told him to put it in the box and he did so. The bottle was not touched again before the explosion that I know of. I locked the cabin-door. I was in the cabin in the morning of the 21st. I saw Bancroft come in. He took out some candles to go to work with ; he lighted one and sat down on the box where the powder-bottle is kept, and he either dropped the snuff or nipped it between his fingers, and the snuff went on the floor. The powder on the floor amongst the dust caught, and in an instant the powder in the bottle exploded. There were some bags belonging to the men containing some powder which had been left in the box, and it must, I think, have been that which the powder outside first ignited."

James Bancroft said: "I am a miner and deputy employed in pit No.3. I went to the pit a little before six o dock on the morning of January 21st. We meet at the cabin every morning to get our candles, and I went there for the purpose that morning. I got some candles out of the box, and I lighted one from a candle which stood on the table. I then sat down on the box in which the powder is kept, and I was softening a piece of clay which I took off the table to put round the candle, when I tipped the candle and the wick went on the floor. Some powder on the floor took fire, and I tried to make my escape out of the cabin. I do not remember anything more. I was burnt a good deal and was under medical treatment for a long time."—

George Lewis said - "I am engineer of the Swannington Collieries, and have been there about ten years. During that time, and for years before then, it has been the practice to keep the powder in a magazine or fireproof tank, and to send small portions into the pit in tin bottles for those men who are employed in blowing down the roof and making the road by day work. The number of men varies from four to seven. The night deputy has charge of the powder sent down for that purpose, and

he deals it out to them as in his judgment they may require. We do so to prevent those men going to the magazine for it, and perhaps taking more than they would require. The cabin is under lock and key, and is entirely under the control of the deputies. There is a rule which says when gunpowder is used, it must be taken into the mine, either made into cartridges or in a bottle, and we do the latter. Since the accident, I have stopped the practice of powder being sent down into the pit, and every man who requires powder is compelled to fetch it from the magazine in a tin bottle and bags are entirely done away with."

Verdict - "Accidental Death", and the jury expressed their satisfaction with the alteration that had been made. The deceased was 31 years old and an assistant deputy.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 02 June 1877

SWANNINGTON CLUB ANNIVERSARY

On Whit-Monday, the members of the "Lily of the Valley" Lodge, Seraphic Order of Oddfellows, assembled at their lodge house, host Hicklin's, the Station Inn, and thence, headed by their beautiful banner and the band of the Snibston Colliery Company, proceeded to the Wesleyan Chapel, Swannington, kindly lent for the occasion.

The day being fine, the regalia of the Order, combined with the steady and respectable appearance of the members of the lodge, was a credit to the Order at large. A most admirable discourse was delivered by Bro. H. Fisher, of Barnsley, and was listened to with the deepest attention by all present. After divine service, they returned to their lodge house, where 104 members sat down to a most excellent dinner which reflected credit on the worthy host and hostess.

After ample justice had been done to the good things provided, the chair was taken by Mr. Isaac Gray, manager to the Swannington Colliery, and the vice-chair by Mr. George Chester. — The Chairman, in an able and loyal speech, proposed The Queen and the rest of the Royal Family, which was loyally responded to.— Song by Mr. Samuel Webster.— Dr. Hatchett, of Ravenstone, proposed (Success to "The Lily of the Valley Lodge," which was duly honoured.— Song by Mr. W. Waugh (one of the band), "Give me a grip of your hand"—Mr. Walter Brownelaw proposed the health of Brother Fisher, who had preached to them that morning a sermon from which he hoped, all would reap great benefit. The lodge should feel proud at having a brother like Mr. Fisher.— Mr. Fisher responded in suitable terms, and was loudly applauded. — A solo on the cornet by Mr. Humberstone, in excellent style, afforded much pleasure.— The health of the chairman and vice-chairman were drunk with musical honours, and duly acknowledged.- P.G.M. Charles Johnson proposed "The Visitors" in an appropriate speech, in which he paid a high compliment to Mr Gray, their manager, for his kindly consideration for them at all times, and expressed his sorrow that he was going to leave them as manager of the colliery. He would, however, carry with him their best wishes for his future prosperity and happiness. — The band then played a pleasing and varied selection of music, which proved a treat. The health of Dr. Hatchett was then drunk with musical honours, also that of the host and hostess for the excellent dinner they had provided. - The Secretary, Mr Wm. A. Norris, and the present officers were also thanked for bringing the "Lily of the Valley " Lodge to a sound and efficient state.

**"THE BEAUMONT RIFLE CLUB"
AT "SARNIPER" ON THE SITE OF THE OLD
SWANNINGTON NO.2. COAL MINE**



Transcribed from the Leicester Daily Post - Monday 06 May 1907

LORD ROBERTS AND RIFLE CLUBS

OPENING OF A RANGE NEAR COALVILLE

GENERAL ELLES AND COMPULSION

LETTER FROM LORD ROBERTS.

On Saturday afternoon, General Sir Edward Files fired the first shot on the miniature range at "**Sinope**," locally known as "**Sarniper**" a disused colliery in the neighbourhood of Coalville, in which thousands of pounds have been "sunk' without any prospective return.

The "range" is fifty yards or so in length, and a pit bank forms the butt, a perfectly safe arrangement.

Lady Beaumont (wife of the 10th Baronet of Stoughton), to whose initiative the movement is due, attended the opening, and in addition to General Sir Edmund Elles (who. by the way, is one of the British delegates to the forthcoming Hague Conference), **there were present Mr. and Mrs. Abel-Smith, of Coleorton Hall**; Mr Leonard Fosbrooke, Ravenstone Hall; Colonel Hamilton and Colonel Sturgess, (both of whom aided Lady Beaumont in the movement); Mrs. Geo. Millen and Mrs. Chas. Pratt, Ashby-de-la-Zouch; Dr. and Miss Jamie, Coalville; Canon Hugglescote; the Rev. and Mrs. Formby, Ravenstone; the Rev. F G. and Mrs. Copeland, Coalville; the Rev. H Robinson, Coleorton; the Rev. J. H. F.. Bailey, vicar of Swannington; the Rev. Cooper, Thornton; the Rev. —. Moore; Mrs. Ridley, of Bardon Hill; Mr. George Kennaway, agent to the Wyggeston Hospital Trusts; Mr A. J. Bette, Gracedieu; Mr. Johnson, Swannington; Mr. Williams, Osgathorpe; Lieut.-Colonel German, of the

Volunteers; Mr. T. M. Bott, Coalville; Recruiting-Sergeant Bachelor. Coalville; Mrs. Wittman, Mrs. Spencer, and Mr. Firth, Swannington, Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Creswell and Miss Creswell: Sergt.- Major Turnbull, of the Whitwick School of Arms and of the Leicestershire Yeomanry, and a crowd of probably two hundred.

Colonel Hamilton said that General Sir Edmund Elles, who had kindly consented to open the range, had a distinguished career. He had commanded several divisions in India, holding a high position in Tirol, and had had more experience in war than most generals of the present time. He had been a member of the Council of India, which was one of the highest positions which could be held by a man short of that of Commander-in-Chief, and he (Colonel Hamilton) was sure that the kindly interest the general had taken in the club and its opening would materially lend to its success.

General Sir Edmund Elles, who was warmly cheered. said that he accepted the invitation with some diffidence having no local claim. But as Lord Roberts was one of the patrons he felt that the best way to ingratiate himself would be to bring a message from Lord Roberts, who had written to him from Englemere, Ascot, under date 27th April, as follows :-

Dear Elles.—I write in reply to your letter of the 25th inst. to say how very glad I am to hear you are going to open the rifle club which **Lady Beaumont** has so kindly established. I know from what Colonel Hamilton has told me how much **Lady Beaumont** is doing to encourage rifle-shooting, and it is most gratifying to one to receive her help in a movement to which I attach so much importance. - If we could make all our young men skilled shots, we should have gone a long way towards solving the problem of our national defence, for shooting is the most important part of the training of a soldier, and rifle clubs give man the opportunity of learning the art, and of so far qualifying himself to do his duty to his country. I say "so far," because it must be remembered that though shooting is important, it is not all that is required to complete this qualification; and though rifle clubs are so useful, they cannot in themselves be looked upon as military units. To skill in rifle shooting must be added a knowledge of drill and a sense of discipline, and it is for this reason I am so strong an advocate for universal military training. "All good wishes for the success and prosperity of the Rifle Club."

Proceeding, the General said that there had never been a time when the question of national defeat had been before the public as at this present moment, and for this, there were three causes - Mr. Haldane's scheme, Lord Roberts advocacy of the principles of the National League, and the presence in the country of the Colonial Premiers who had been discussing the subject of National and Imperial defence. Mr. Haldane's scheme was an heroic effort to solve the almost insoluble problem on a voluntary basis.

They must pardon soldiers if they felt that the spirit of patriotism which they knew to be there might possibly come a little too late. It was surprising to hear that the word compulsory was objectionable to the Englishman, when all Laws were compulsory. Colonial statesmen took up a strong position with regard to compulsory training and Mr. Hughes, a Labour representative of Australia, was the first to advocate compulsory training for that country. Many in England relied on the, navy, but with a number of warships disabled, where would the second line of defence be? As to the range they were opening that day, he asked those who could not use it to give encouragement to the younger ones to take an interest in rifle shooting., and he also urged the members to submit to training and discipline.

Rifle shooting was the first step towards fitting themselves to take part in the defence of their country. It was strange to him that compulsion should be a bogey to the

average Englishman. Mr. Deakin, the Australian Premier, had said compulsion was the basis of all civilisation. There was one present at that assembly who would not pay Income-tax unless the law was behind him, and that was himself (Laughter.) Compulsion was a factor in education, vaccination, and other matters. The range had been generously and loyally provided by **Lady Beaumont** and they had in Mr. Sheppard a good safe manager, and he appealed to the crowd to take their part as players. He expressed a hope that rifle shooting would become a main national pastime; it used to be a national pastime since English bowmen were known and feared throughout Europe. They could obtain peace only by being ready for war, and they desired peace under one flag and one empire. (Loud applause.) Lieut. Colonel German spoke of the pleasure it afforded him to attend the opening of the "Rifle Range" which would enable the members to qualify themselves to defend their country in time of need. The establishment of such clubs in various parts of the country must be an immense boon. Shooting, they would find, was not only useful but a fascinating recreation; He hoped that the members would eventually join some branch of his Majesty's forces. But it was not the intention of the promoters of these clubs to engender militarism in an objectionable form; their aim was "Defence?". By these means, there was a better means of maintaining a better position in the councils of the world. He hoped the members would take a thorough interest in the club, which had been opened with such distinguished auspices. and that General Elles would be able to regard the "**Beaumont Rifle Club**" as one of the most promising of his children. (Applause.)

Colonel Sturgess, in proposing a vote of thanks to General Elles for opening the range, said he had had the honour of serving on the general's staff in India. and instancing what General Elles did during the Tirah campaign said that when a body of troops was well-nigh overwhelmed by natives, General Elles, taking in the situation, sallied out with a few staff officers, took command, and turned the position of affairs. His fame and name ranges throughout India. Colonel Sturgess hoped that the members of the club would take to heart the advice given them, and he again thanked General Elles for opening the range.

The vote was carried with acclamation, and General Elles briefly acknowledged the compliment. Canon Broughton spoke of the interest **Lady Beaumont** and Colonel Hamilton had taken in the formation of the club. The movement was like measles—it was catching. They were being called gingers and blood-thirsty wretches, but that was a mistake. He believed that in knowing how to use a rifle they were making for peace. Cheers were accorded **Lady Beaumont** and Colonel Hamilton, and the latter, replying, said that it had been little trouble to him. but it was a pleasure to help **Lady Beaumont** to establish the club.

The National Anthem was heartily sung and lbstock band engaged for the occasion accompanied.

General Elles fired the first shot, scoring "a bull."