

Colliery House at Snibston No3 - Sheila Kirk

The advertising for the Swannington Incline guided walk included an item in the Coalville Times on Thursday 28th July which described the walk and announced that an additional one was taking place in the morning to meet the demand.

The next morning the Trust received a telephone call from Sheila Kirk who had seen the article. Sheila explained that she used to live in Colliery House at the former Snibston No 3 coal mine.

At a meeting that afternoon Sheila unleashed a treasure trove of information and photographs. The star exhibit was a framed aerial photograph of the Colliery House and part of the former Snibston No 3 Coal Mine (1850-1880 & 1892-1895). As there is not any sign of where the railway



Opportunity for you to walk in Robert Stephenson's footsteps

BEFORE the Swannington Incline was built, the level of Coalville and the development of the town was very different. The railway opened in 1825 and was a major factor in the development of the town of Coalville.

The walk will take you to the former mine and the railway track which runs towards the bottom righthand corner of the photograph.

At the top of the picture, was the drive heading to the bottom left, before curving round to the front of the house. The route is now the public footpath leading to the former mine beyond this triangle of land the Trust owns.

Left of house are three former donkey stables. The toilet was in the north end of the left hand building. Eventually the house had an upstairs toilet. The vegetable plots were at the rear of house. On the right hand were the soft fruit bushes and fruit trees.

Sheila's grandfather Frank (Francis Thomas) Challoner was born in Narborough in 1874. He married his Peggs Green (then part of Thringstone) born wife, Sarah Billings.

At the 1911 census he was a coal miner hewer living at 178 Ashby Road, Coalville. Sarah had given birth to seven children, but three had died. Alice Ada, 13 years, helped her mother. Eight year old Frank and six year old Hilda were in school and Thomas was two months old. (William Cecil was born in 1916).

The Challoners moved to Colliery House in the early 1920's. Hilda grew up and married George Edward Walker (known as Ted). The couple moved to Ashby Road, Coalville near the chip shop opposite Ravenstone Road, as they were the first stewards at the West End club.

Sheila Walker was born in 1929 and was



used to cross the road, it would have been taken after British Rail removed the track in the 1950's or early 1960's. Top right is Spring Lane, with part of one of the three cottages (once known as Alexandra Cottages). Hedges surround the garden and the line of the hidden railway track runs towards the bottom righthand corner of the photograph.

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a baby when her parents moved to Colliery House to live with her grandparents.

Colliery House had been built for a mine manager. It comprised two front rooms, a kitchen and pantry (with cellar underneath), plus four bedrooms. All of the rooms were 12 foot squares.

Sheila started at New Swannington school, but changed to Swannington school as her parents did not like her walking across the fields.

The former colliery buildings were still in front of the house and were Sheila's playground as she grew up.

Coal trains went past the house taking coal to the Incline to be lowered to the Calcutta pumping station. The colliery chimneys were demolished in 1950 and William Hercock, Builders merchants of Leicester, resold the bricks.

Sheila went to the Regal cinema with a friend. Two boys sat next to them and relationships developed, which resulted in Sheila marrying Bernard Kirk in 1948. They moved to Hugglescote renting a house from a friend for 7s 6d a week.

Bernard completed a seven year plumbing apprenticeship with C V Lane. As Charles Victor Lane led the Coalville Home Guard, Bernard naturally joined them.

Sheila and Bernard regularly visited her parents and grandfather, who as miners had concessionary coal. Bernard used to carry a bag of coal back to Hugglescote, until he got so fed up that he became a miner and received his own concessionary coal.

Sheila's grandmother, Sarah, died in 1947. Her grandfather, Frank, continued to live at No 3 (or No 3 Spring Lane as the house was often called) until his death in 1957.

Colliery House was recognised as the best decorated house in Swannington for

'DEVIL AMONG THE TAILORS' WITH SNIBSTON CHIMNEYS

A 120-foot high chimney that has trailed no plume of industrial smoke across the Leicestershire coalfield since 1893 was felled today in the derelict and grass-grown pit yard of the old Snibston No. 3 Colliery in Spring-lane, between Coalville and Swannington.

Chimney-felling experts cutting a wedge into the base of the tall old stack worked from 8 a.m. When the monster started to sway, they dropped their sledge-hammers and ran. The moan of 200 tons of falling bricks was succeeded by a minor earth tremor as the chimney crashed its length on the ground.

A cloud of red dust rolled from the wreckage.

The fall had been carefully planned by Mr. Robert Kennedy, an expert, so that the chimney should hit another 40-ft. high stack.

Judgment was accurate



MR. FRANK CHALLENGOR

enough, but the little chimney bore the weight of the terrific blow, swaying but not falling. It will now have to be demolished by ordinary methods.

The felling of the two chimneys together with the old winding-house, has been undertaken by a Leicester firm, Messrs. William Hercock.

They want the bricks for processing and export, and will have about 50,000 from the main stack and many more from other structures.

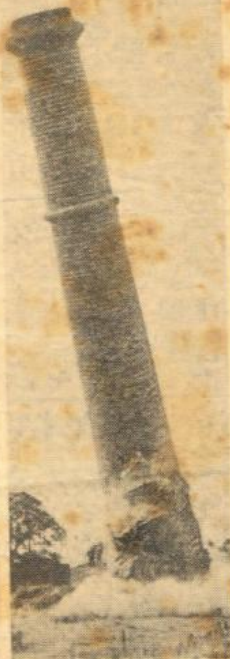
HIS VIEW IMPROVED

The most delighted of a small band of spectators was Mr. Frank Challenor, a miner for 60 years, who now, at 77, has retired.

The outlook from the back window of his house, almost in the old pit yard, was improved immediately the chimney hit the ground.

Snibston No. 3 pit worked

out its coal early in the 1890's, and had since fallen to ruin. The gaunt surface structures, completely useless for more than half a century, have finally fulfilled their destiny by helping the export drive.



CLOUD of dust breaks from the foot of the chimney as it falls.

Chimney brought down 1950

20 Worcester (official correction); S.P. 8-1, 5-2 (fav.), 100-7
230 Newcastle: 1 YODI, 2 Verite II, 3 Ballyrogue
S.P.: 7-4 (fav.), 10-1, 8-1
230 Gascott: 1 WENCESLAUS, 2 Godef, 3 Striping 1st Arm
S.P.: 100-6, 8-1, 8-1

Putting the names to the faces

OUR HOME guard picture seems to have got quite a reaction and we can now name virtually all the men! Until now, we only had names for a few, but Bernard Kirk, who is in the photograph himself, called into the Times office to tell us the rest. So, thanks to Mr Kirk's memory, the names are...



Back row (from left) Fred Locke (we were also given Jimmy), Dennis Bodek, Jim Weston, Ray Howard (we were also given Les, Bernard Kirk, Cyril Hagger.

Middle row Arthur Hale, Norman Hill, Les Sanderson, Terry Birch, Harry Brown, Percy Freeman (although Mr Kirk is not completely certain of the surname), Terry

Moore (Mr Kirk thinks this was his first name).

Front row Herbert Denton. Mr Kirk cannot remember this

man's name, Charles Victor Lane (also known as Dick or

Dickie), 7 Perkins (first name not known), 7 Rowell

(first name not known), Bill Wright.

Bernard completed a seven year plumbing apprenticeship with C V Lane. As Charles Victor Lane led the Coalville Home Guard, Bernard naturally joined them.



the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977.

The Walker's extended family had a jubilee party. Bernard Kirk is pictured bottom left organising the family for the photographs.

Sheila's parents were heart broken

