



Coalville Times Fri May 27th 1938

Swannington Rail Tragedy - Mother And Baby Killed

A young Swannington woman was killed instantly and two of her children and her mother seriously injured, in a terrible tragedy on Wednesday afternoon when they were run into by two railway wagons in the private railway siding at the bottom of the old Swannington Incline, and leading to the Swannington Pumping Station. The woman killed was Elsie May Horrobin, wife of Horace Horrobin, a miner employed at the South Leicestershire Colliery and residing in Main Street, Swannington. She was 34 years of age and the mother of nine children, whose ages range from 7 months to 14 years.

Mrs Horrobin was out for a walk with three of her children and her mother, Mrs Charlotte Kinton, wife of John Kinton, an unemployed miner, of Main Street, Swannington, with whom the Horrobin family reside. She had her seven months old boy, Horace, in a perambulator, and two other children, Sheila, aged 2 years, and Hilda, aged 5, were with her. They were walking along the line when two wagons came round a bend and ran into the women and children. Mrs Horrobin was terribly injured and the perambulator was smashed to matchwood. The baby's legs were cut off, the girl Sheila was cut about the head, but Hilda luckily escaped. Mrs Kinton was also knocked down and severely bruised about the head and face.

At the time of the accident Mr Horrobin, who had not been to work that day as the pit had been idle, was at home cleaning his bicycle. A little boy conveyed the news of the tragedy to him. The Dowager Lady Beaumont, whose residence is not far away, visited the scene and kindly lent her car to convey the injured child to the Leicester Royal Infirmary, where he has since died.

The other injured people were attended by Dr. A. Hamilton, of Coalville, who was summoned to the scene by telephone. Mr Horrobin told our representative that his wife and other villagers usually went for a walk that way, although it is stated to be private property. Mr T. J. Sales, secretary of the Whitwick Colliery Co. who was early on the scene, stated that there was no public right of way along the line, which serves the collieries maintaining the Swannington pumping station. While the woman lay dead on the line, Mr Sales stopped two boys walking along the track with a truck.

In an interview, Mrs Kinton said, "I was walking with my daughter (Mrs Horrobin) and the children when two wagons came round the corner. We tried to get the pram on to the bank, but the wagon caught it and dragged the pram and the woman underneath. It broke the pram all to bits. I was also knocked down." "As soon as I saw the wagons I shouted," said Mrs Kinton, "but it was too late." The news of the accident soon spread and many villagers rushed to the scene. One old lady, bare-headed, and with a shawl on her shoulders, kept vigil by the body until it was removed in the ambulance.

Two men who followed the wagons round the bend were Mr W. H. Rowse and Mr H. Matchett, both of Swannington, and Matchett phoned for the ambulance and police.