



## DREADFUL COLLIERY ACCIDENT, AT COLEORTON

Ashby News 17<sup>th</sup> October 1863

Coleorton, Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup>

This morning, about half past 11 o'clock, an alarm was given that water had broken into the Califat, one of the Coleorton pits, the property of Messrs. Worswick and Walker. An alarm was instantly given, and the men rushed to the pit's mouth, and as many as could be were drawn up.

Unfortunately the rapid rush of the water prevented all from reaching the spot, and six men are known to have perished front the piteous cries of their wives and mothers. How many more are lost it is it the present impossible to tell, as the roll had not been called over.

It appears that about three o'clock in the morning water was perceived coming through a side of one of the stalls in the workings, and between six and seven it was increasing so that several of the men refused to go to work, but upon an assurance being given that all was safe, and that if it increased an alarm would be immediately given, all went to work.

One poor fellow, J. Rose, a carpenter, of Belton, who has lost his life, was sent down to plug the holes through which the water was flowing, but about half past 11 the siding gave way, and the water rushed in with the greatest impetuosity; an alarm was given, and all made a rush for the bottom of the shaft. Fortunately there was a reservoir which received a large quantity of the water before reaching the bottom of the shaft, which gave the men time to ascend before it was upon them.

Six men, as far as can be ascertained, were unable to reach the coveted spot, and were overwhelmed in the relentless torrent. There names are Jeremiah Rose, of Belton, carpenter, who leaves a wife and six children ; Francis Doman, of Coleorton Moor, leaves a wife and two children ; Thomas Bird, foreman (or as he is called corporal) over the boys, etc., leaves a wife and nine children ; Thomas Bird, nephew to the above, aged 20, single; G. Marsden, aged 15; and H. Clements, aged 12. All the horses, 26 in number, were drowned.

An alarm was immediately given to the California pit, between which and this there is a communication, and the men and boys were immediately drawn up without further accident, there being large reservoirs between the pits, which checked for a time the progress of the water.

An attempt was then made to get the horses out of this pit, and was partially successful, but the water made such rapid progress that three horses were obliged to be left, making in all 29 horses. When the last was drawn up the water could he seen down the shaft seething and foaming like a whirlpool.

There were many narrow escapes amongst those that escaped. One poor bruised fellow told our correspondent that upon the alarm being given himself and son ran for their lives ; his lamp went out directly, and they were left in total darkness. They ran on striking their heads every now and then against projecting coal, and hearing the rushing of the water behind them, which did not seem more than two yards off.



They ran on and were all but exhausted before they got to the shaft. He was pushed on by his son who he repeatedly told it was no use, he could go no further. There were upwards of 200 men and boys in the two pits at the time of the accident.

#### **LATER PARTICULARS.**

**Front our own Correspondent.**

**Coleorton, Friday morning.**

Since writing the above, I am happy to inform you that great exertions were made by the men to ascertain the fate of those below, although it was considered impossible that any of them could be alive. The water, by continually rushing down into the other pit, had much abated, and the men who descended were unable to proceed far owing to the depth of water, then about six feet.

After shouting and waving their lights, they were answered by F. Doman, who had managed to get up into a hole ; he was immediately got out safe, as were also Thomas Bird, the younger, and Marsden, who had managed to get into a stable, thus making three saved. The dead body of Clements was also recovered. Owing to the foul state of the air no further attempt could be made. Some more horses were also recovered.

*The first part of this article was probably published on the 10<sup>th</sup> and then repeated with updates on the 17<sup>th</sup>. As is customary with live reporting during the chaotic aftermath of a major incident there are a few inaccuracies, but most of the report is verified by other newspapers.*

*Newspaper articles used paragraphs very sparingly, with columns of more than 100 lines of text without a paragraph break. Paragraph formatting has been added to make it easier to read and digest the article.*

**Wednesday, Oct. 14.**

Throughout Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, every exertion was made to recover the two missing men in the pit, but without success, in consequence of the choke damp. Air tubes, etc., were procured from Moira, by the aid of which the men were enabled to proceed a considerable distance, but unfortunately the engine broke on Monday night.; consequently the work was suspended until about three o'clock p.m. on Tuesday.

In the meantime the water towards the dip and in California pits had greatly increased ; it had risen at the bottom. of the shaft about 16 inches. Mr. Headley, the Government Inspector of mines, arrived yesterday, and under his superintendence active operations have again commenced ; fresh tubing has arrived and the men are again some distance from the mouth of the shaft, and if all goes on well, will most likely tomorrow reach the spot where the unfortunate men are supposed to have lost their lives.

(A full report of the inquest on the deceased persons, will be give in our next publication.)