



## A MAN AND A BOY KILLED AT THE COLEORTON COAL PIT

Leicester Chronicle 5<sup>th</sup> February 1853

An inquest was held on Saturday, at Thringstone, and by adjournment on Wednesday last, touching the death of **Henry Watson** and **Joseph Horn** - the former a collier, and the latter a boy employed in general work in the Coleorton pit.

On Friday morning, the two deceased, with **Thomas Horn** (uncle to the boy), got on the cage at the bottom of the shaft for the purpose of being taken up the shaft by the whimsey, having been at work all night. The men stood both at one end of the cage, and the boy was crouched down in the middle. Watson and the other man took hold of the crowbar when the cage left the bottom.

The cage went up about twenty or twenty-two yards, when it gave a slight jerk, and then another heavy jerk, and the elder Horn laid hold of the cross-bar with both hands. The cage then became stationary, and one end of it became higher than the other. Horn thought he heard a fall at the bottom, and missed the two deceased. Horn remained in the cage some time, being very much alarmed, and then the whimsey man came down to him, and took the iron shoes off the cage which slide up the rods on which the cage goes up and down.

Then he was let down to the bottom, and saw the two deceased. Watson was dead, but the boy was still alive. The general opinion is that the accident arose from the men being both on one end, and their weight causing the cage to go up rather endways, and caused the iron shoes at one end to press a little too much upon the lad, and so the jerks were produced.

There had been previous set-fasts, but they were owing to the coal being improperly loaded, so as to overturn one end of the box. The rods have been worn a year and a half, and are in proper working condition. It was so dark that it was impossible to see whether Watson had hold of the cross-bar at the time he fell, but he was in the habit of riding up carelessly without taking hold.

The engineer stated that after he had drawn the cage about twenty yards up the shaft, he perceived the rope to knock about from one side to the other, in an unusual manner, and he stopped the engine. In about a quarter of an hour, he went down, and found that one end of the cage was fast against the rods, and that the shoes on the other side of the cage were right out, the loose end being highest. The rod where the cage was set fast was split by the shoes.

The hanger on at the bottom of the shaft described the three leaving in the cage, and almost as soon as they were gone he heard a lumber in the shaft, and Watson fell to the bottom, the boy following immediately afterwards. Watson was dead, but the boy was not.

Both were taken up, and the boy died as soon as they got him into the cabin. Mr. Orton, surgeon, examined the bodies. In Watson there was dislodgement of the heart from its locality by the violence of the concussion caused by the fall, which would cause immediate death. The boy's thigh was fractured, and this, coupled with the shock to the nervous system by the concussion, would be sufficient to cause death. The Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Deaths,"