



A Coroners Inquest - Coleorton colliery death Robert Lakin aged 14 years

Leicester Chronicle 22nd April 1854

A CORONER'S INQUEST was held on Wednesday, the 12th instant, before **John Gregory**, Esq., at the George Inn, Coleorton, touching the death of **Robert Lakin**, a boy about 14 years of age, who was killed in the Coleorton pit on the previous Monday. The time and manner of his death having been proved, and also that a notice of the accident had been duly forwarded to the office of the Home Secretary in London, as the law requires, the inquest was adjourned till the evening of the following day. The same jury having again assembled, **Mr William Walker**, one of the proprietors of the colliery, produced a letter, acknowledging the receipt of his statement at the Home Office, and also a ground plan of the place where the melancholy casualty took place.

William Horne, who is a loader in the pit, worked in the same stall on Monday morning, where the stone fell which occasioned the death of the deceased, and another man who is a loader, named Matchett; there was also another boy named Frederick Richards. The business of the lads was to convey the tubs, with horses, to the bottom of the shaft; a large quantity of coal, got the night before, had been left on the ground; witness and Matchett were loading the tubs, one was filled, the other partly so, when deceased came up with his horse, which he left near the emptiest tub; deceased passed the witness, and went towards the coal about six yards further, part of which he began to throw towards the last tub; deceased had no right to go up to the coal, and had been repeatedly cautioned not to do so, there being a strict order in the pit that the boys should not interfere with the duties of the loaders.

Matchett was pushing part of the heaped coal towards the tub with an iron bar, when a stone fell from the roof upon the deceased (it might be three quarters of a ton weight), which instantly crushed him to death, and smashed one part of Matchett's feet to pieces, who was otherwise seriously injured;

witness tried to lift up the stone, but could not, and sent immediately for help; two men, named Bird and Brewin, came; they all assisted to remove the stone, but deceased was quite dead, his bowels being forced out.

The stone, in its descent, struck the witness on his left side, and "knocked" him out of the way. There was plenty of wood in the pit for propping; Matchett had tried the stone by sounding it with his pick two or three times, and the roof appeared to be perfectly safe; witness had also rapped it and believed it was sound and secure.

Thomas Bird, an overlooker of the boys in the pit, called a corporal, had visited the place where the accident occurred half-an-hour before, and was then of opinion that all was safe. There was wood at hand for props when they were wanted; he has frequently ordered the deceased not to go beyond his tub as he had done that morning.

The coroner having recapitulated the evidence, **the jury** returned a verdict to the following effect: "That the deceased, Robert Lakin, being a driver in the Coleorton Colliery On the 10th April instant, having, contrary to the orders of the colliery, and of repeated cautions given both to him and others, gone to a place in the stall, where he ought not, a stone accidentally fell upon him from the roof, by which he sustained several mortal injuries, his bowels being forced out; of which said mortal injuries the deceased did then and there die, his death being caused by accident and not otherwise." Matchett, the other sufferer by the same accident, has since died from the injuries he received. He was 32 years of age, and has left a widow and two children.

Correction 29th April

Coleorton - We are happy to be able to contradict the statement given in our last week's impression) of the death of Matchett, the man who was so seriously injured in the coalpit of Messrs Worswick & Walker, on Monday, the 10th inst. The poor fellow still survives, but is in a very precarious state.