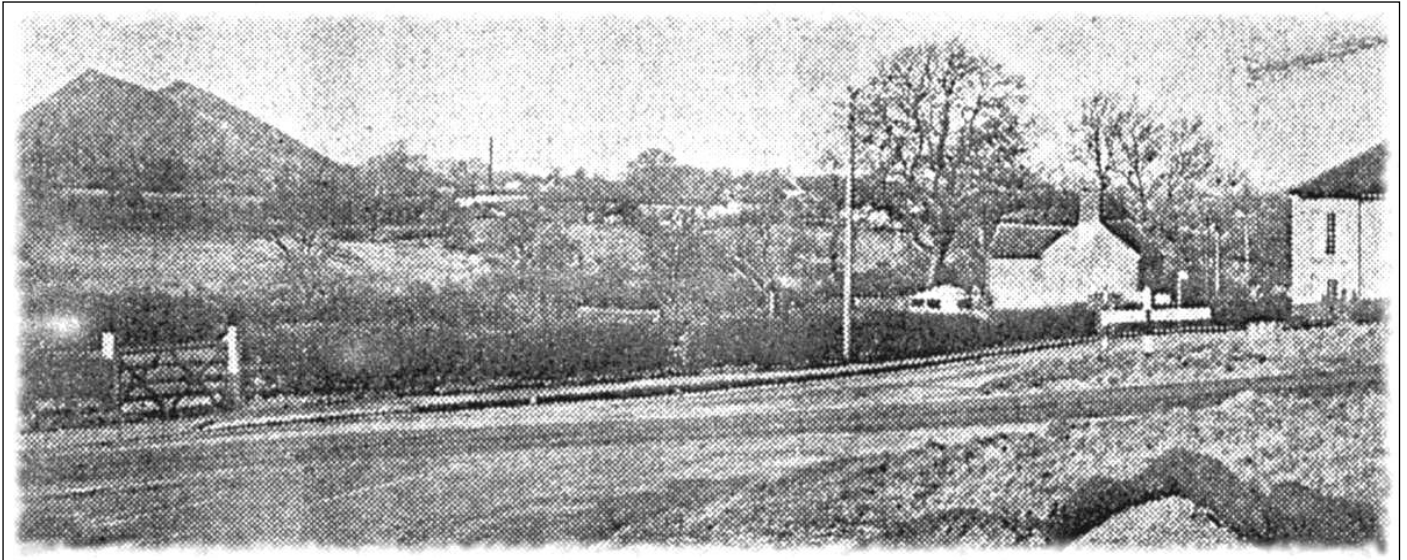


NEW LOUNT COLLIERY SPOIL HEAPS



A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN c.1970, TWO YEARS FOLLOWING THE CLOSURE OF THE COLLIERY. TAKEN FROM COLEORTON CROSS ROADS BEFORE THEY WERE RE-ALIGNED AND THE BY-PASS WAS BUILT

THE OLD BEAUMONT ARMS BUILDING (SHOWN BELOW) IS ON THE EXTREME RIGHT AND THE COTTAGE ACROSS THE ROAD IS THOUGHT TO BE MINERVA COTTAGE



1994

BY SAMUEL T STEWART - SEPTEMBER 2024

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Photograph taken from Stoney-Lane, Coleorton in 1947 from the author's home over looking the Woolrooms which shows the New Lount Colliery Spoil Heaps on the horizon.



Taken in 1962 from a garden on the Top Road, Griffydam

The New Lount Colliery Spoil Heaps, a local landmark, on which villagers spent many hours illegally coal picking, were levelled and planted with trees by Leicestershire County Council c.1975. Locals recall, that during World War II, there was concern that they would alert German aircraft because there was always a large fire-glowing from them due to the residue of coal combusting. The tips were known by the miners at one time, for obvious reasons, as "Sabrina Pass" after the 1950's well-endowed English glamour model.....a typical coal miners sense of humour..... the front page photograph is a good illustration.

TAKEN FROM THE 2ND VOLUME OF COLIN GRIFFIN'S BOOK ENTITLED 'THE LEICESTERSHIRE MINERS 1914-1945'

Des Jackson recalls working on the spoil heap at Lount, "a couple of hundred feet high. I had to put a light on it during the war for the aircraft (English) though you could see the heap glowing for miles around."

The spoil was taken up to the top of the heap by a bogey (hopper) travelling on rails to a 60 square foot steel plate at the top from which the spoil was tipped "down the mountain as it were". The tray had to be frequently advanced over the heap by means of a winch and the rail extended to fill the gap between the new position of the plate and the existing railway. Winching the tray forward was a back breaking job "everybody out of the fitting shop used to get on this winch because they used to have four each side and once round was enough and another eight, including the gaffers, would take over". Inserting additional rails was even worse because "the tip was all on fire at the top...we were allowed a new pair of boots for this job because by the time you had finished this job your nails would be out of your boots...it was red hot and the leather would be burnt away from the nails". Dust was added to the heat "we had to wear goggles because the wind used to whip the stuff up into your eyes and it still got under your goggles, we all used to have bad eyes. And the smell used to be absolutely terrible. It was sulphur you know. And you'd take it home with you, inside your body, and when you broke wind, which you had to do, that smell would be there".

Working conditions on the heap deteriorated still further when war broke out because flames had to be damped down to conform with the blackout regulations. Water and boiler flue dust were used to try and quell the flames but the heap continued "to boil like soup" whilst the men were nearly asphyxiated with steam and dust.

Such was the lot of some of the fitters at Lount, who worked periodically on the heap, but that of the "spoil heap man" was even worse. He had to travel up with the loaded bogey in order to empty it off the plate at the top and return with it empty. "He never used to stop up there because he could not stick it". On one trip he did not return, he slipped whilst emptying the bogey and fell to his death.

The following inquest report refers to the fatality related by Des Jackson in the preceding paragraph:-

Transcribed from Burton Observer and Chronicle - Thurs 09 May 1940

ACCIDENT INQUEST SEQUEL

Mr. H. J. Deane, coroner for North Leicestershire held an inquest at the Ashby Police Station last week on Ernest John Kirkman (35), of 14, Tamworth Road, Ashby, who met his death under tragic circumstances while following his employment at New Lount Colliery. There were also present H.M. Inspector of Mines, Mr. A. H. Steele of Nottingham, Mr. H. Dander for the relatives, and Mr. J. Moore of Leicester, for the New Lount Colliery Co. Mary Gladys Kirkman, widow, gave evidence of identification, and said her husband was employed at New Lount Colliery as a banksman. He never suffered from fits or giddiness. Dr. H. H. Silley, of Ashby, said on April 29th, about

7.30 a.m., he went to New Lount Colliery, and in the ambulance room saw deceased, who was unconscious. He found a slight bruise on the left side top of the head, and a small amount of haemorrhage in the mouth and nose. He ordered the removal to Ashby Cottage Hospital, and Kirkman died on the way, He made a post mortem examination and the brain was affected. This could have been caused by a fall. In answer to Mr. ?dander, witness said he had no doubt in his mind but that death was caused by a fall. Frank Stanley Richards, Traveller's Rest, Griffydam, a fitter employed by the Leicestershire Colliery and Pipe Co., Ltd., said about 7 o'clock in the morning he was working on the shaft of a "bogey; the left shaft had broken, with the result that the bogey had collapsed on to the frame, and the hopper had been thrown out of its place. This man and others were trying to get the hopper back into its proper position. Kirkman was standing on top of the bogey at the side and trying to lever the hopper into position with a crowbar. The weight on the bar overcame Kirkman, and hit him on the side, knocking him over, and he fell a distance of about 10 feet on to his head. In answer to the coroner, witness said the uneven rails caused a strain on the bogey, which was regularly Inspected each day by an expert. Thomas Charles Eric Hall, of Coleorton, said he did not see the bar hit deceased, but he saw him falling. The coroner said he was satisfied with the evidence, and his verdict would be that Kirkman died from congestion of the brain, and that he was so killed by accidentally falling on his head from a bogey at the New Lount Colliery.