

Illustrated London News

Saturday 6th. February 1858

No Headline

A Frightful Colliery Explosion occurred on Tuesday evening at the coalpit known as "The Diamond Pit," at Bardsley, a locality in the Knotts Lancs division of the parish of Ashton-under-Lyne, and about two miles north of that town. About two hundred men and boys are employed in the pit. The explosion occurred just as they were leaving the pit, and about one half the number had been drawn up. The force of the explosion was so great that, although the shaft is four hundred and seventy yards deep, the rope attached to one of the cradles was blown off the pulley at the "head-stocks," and the rope was at once taken off the drum. The conductors were also broken, and the utmost care became necessary in winding up and down with the remaining rope. As soon as it was possible to descend there was no lack of volunteers to go down and aid in bringing up the survivors. The confusion and the darkness prevented any regular muster or roll-call of the men and boys brought up before and after the explosion. It is feared that forty lives have been sacrificed. A great number of persons also have been severely burnt and otherwise injured.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 6th February 1858

Page 2 Cols. 5 to 6

No Headline

On Monday last, an attempt was made to open the Hollinwood Pit, with a view to getting out the bodies of the 4 unfortunate men whose lives were recently sacrificed therein, but no sooner had the stopping been removed, than the pit was found still to be on fire, and the persons employed in the operation were obliged for their own safety to leave the place. A cutting has since been made in the embankment of the canal, and the water allowed to run into the pit, in consequence of which considerable delay must take place before the working of the pit can be again resumed.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 6 February 1858

Page 3 Cols. 1-2

Meeting of the Chesterfield and Tapton Burial Board

Mr Barrow's Proposal

The Clerk intimated that in accordance with a resolution passed last meeting, relative to Mr Barrow's application to get and work Blackshale Ironstone under the cemetery ground, Mr Richardson had looked over the ground, and from the report which he had furnished to the Board it appeared that; First, with respect to the way-leave, considering the advantages that would accrue to Mr Barrow, by leading a road through the cemetery ground, Mr Richardson thought that that gentleman ought to pay to the Board £50 for the privilege of going through the two headings or driftways of sufficient width and length to make a good road for water and a roadway for whatever Mr Barrow might want to pass along the same, and as Mr Barrow would necessarily receive an annual benefit therefrom for a long term of years, Mr Richardson thought he ought to pay to the Board the annual sum of £20 for the next 21 years for certain, and so much longer as he used it by two equal half yearly payment of £10 each. With regard to working the Blackshale Ironstone under the cemetery ground, Mr Richardson stated in his report that as the Blackshale Ironstone laid in some many seams, the ground disturbed in process of working for from 16 to 18 yards in thickness, the consequent sinking of the surface both during the time of working, and for many years afterwards, rendered the ground unfit for burying in for 50 years. Taking these circumstances into consideration it was Mr Richardson's opinion that working the Blackshale Ironstone under the cemetery ground ought to be prohibited. With regard to the 4 acres called the reserve ground, Mr Richardson thought that the Blackshale Ironstone might be got under that part of the cemetery to advantage, under such stipulations and condition as below: The getter or lessee not be allowed to sink any pit or pits or to deposit any void or rubbish on the surface, and to pay to the Cemetery Board £120 per acre, and to pay for one acre every year till the whole quantity of 4 acres, or thereabouts is got, which would take 4 years to work, during which time the sinking of the surface would be seen and a better idea formed how far the same would affect the other ground under the cemetery.

After some little discussion as to the practicability of carrying out the recommendations contained in Mr Richardson's report a resolution was carried up in accordance, which was unanimously carried.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 6th February 1858

Page 3 Col. 4

Awful Colliery Explosion at Bardsley, near Ashton

40 lives lost

On Tuesday afternoon, about ten minutes past five o'clock, an explosion of fire-damp took place in one of the pits of the Bardsley Colliery (Messrs Wilde and Company) situated mid-way between Ashton and Oldham by which about forty lives, if not more, have been lost. The pit at which the explosion took place has no particular name except that the down-cast shaft is called the "Diamond Pit", and the up-cast, the "Peacock Pit". In August last the pit was inspected by Mr Dickinson, Government Inspector, who afterwards wrote a letter to the proprietors, informing them that he was afraid they were getting the coal too fast, and that the ventilation of the pit might be improved. The proprietors showed the greatest readiness to comply with Mr Dickinson's suggestion; and since that time have had a large blast furnace put in to the pit to improve the ventilation.

On Tuesday morning, as nearly as can be ascertained 183 men went down to work in the pit, and during the day Mr T. Whitehead, surveyor, Rochdale, accompanied by Mr James Wilde, son of the proprietors, Edward Holroyd, Edward Taylor, and Jonathan Wardle, firemen, had been engaged in dialling and surveying the pit: but providentially one-half the men who went down in the morning finished their days labour before five o'clock and ascended the pit, and so, in all probability, saved their lives. Very fortunately, too, Mr Whitehead and his party, with the exception of the fireman ascended the pit a few minutes past five o'clock, for they had not been up two minutes, nor left the pits brow, before a loud report was heard, and a cloud of dust and rubbish thrown up the shaft of the down-cast, placed it beyond doubt that an explosion of a serious nature had occurred. Such was the force of the explosion, that although the pit is 490 yards deep, the rope over the top, used for winding coals up, was blown off the pulley on the headstock, on which it works. It was supposed that there were about 90 men in the pit at the time, and as the news of the dreadful catastrophe spread rapidly the scene which soon presented itself around the mouth of the pit was truly harrowing. The display of feeling by the wives, children, and other relatives of many of those in the pit, can be more easily conceived than described.

Shortly after the accident there was no lack of volunteers to descend the pit to endeavour to rescue the unfortunate men below. But as the explosion had set the pit on fire in the vicinity of the up-cast shaft, their operations in commencing the search were retarded, for everything like active flame had be subdued before any attempt to restore the ventilation of the pit could be made. The whole of the air, too, in the pit was heavily charged with sulphur, and this made the difficulty of the task of the explorers all the greater, and it was not until two or three o'clock in the morning that the fire was extinguished, and the search, in the workings was able to be commenced. The search, however, was prosecuted with great vigour, and carried on without intermission during the whole night, and by twelve o'clock on Wednesday 23 dead bodies had been taken out of the pit, and about a score of others recovered who were alive, but more or less burnt or suffocated with firedamp.

Aa the dead bodies were brought to the mouth of the pit, they were placed on biers and conveyed, some to the Horse Shoe Inn, and others to the housed of their sorrowing families.

Such as were alive were conveyed as speedily as possible in cabs, carts, and other vehicles to their homes.

Between twelve o'clock and six, five other bodies were recovered; and one of them alive, Thomas Cooper by name, had died. It was also stated that five other dead bodies were collected at the eye of the pit ready to be raised to the surface. The catalogue of ascertained deaths is thus swelled to the fearful number of 34, and some 6 or 8 others are supposed to be still in the workings. The sufferings of some of the survivors are said to be most agonising, and in one or two cases death might be regarded as a happy release, and terrible rumours are afloat respecting scenes said to have been witnessed in the pit by some of those who have been most active in making the search. A considerable proportion of the deceased are young, some of them are mere children; but on the other hand, there are too many instances in which wives and large families are left to mourn the loss of husbands and fathers. Most of them, we understand, were found in the lowest working.

The following is the nearest approximation we can obtain to a correct list of those who have been recovered from the pit: -

Killed - By burning: William Lees, William Hargreaves, John Howard, Ralph Ibbotson, George Ibbotson, Thomas Robinson, Jonah Taylor, Joseph Bennett, Henry Bennett, Joseph Lomas, John Wardle, Peter Knight, John Brierley, William Yardly, Joseph Barber, James Bradbury, John Roberts, Thomas Stafford, Thomas Cooper. By Suffocation; Samuel Taylor, Joseph Taylor, Edward Taylor, James Dessert, William Quarmby, Ralph Madly, Isaiah Newton, Samuel Hampton, James Stringer, Samuel Ogden.

Injured - Amongst those burnt, or otherwise seriously affected by fire - damp, but still alive, are the following; - J Shaw, Samuel Stepney, I Stepney, Kavanagh, Moors, Jonah Grieves, Yardley, Ratcliffe, Henry Cooper, Isaac Parry, John Davies sen, John Davies, jun, Hopkins, P Howarth, David Robinson, John Robinson, John Grieves and Henry Ratcliffe.

Missing - The following are supposed to be still in the pit. Robert Davies, Thomas Rigby, James Winterbottom, Robert Hyde, Joseph Hall, Abraham Woodall, Samuel Leech, Benjamin Greenwood, John Schofield, Peter Dunn, jun., John Clark, and Edward Bradbury.

During the night of Wednesday the men engaged in clearing the works of the foul air succeeded in bringing out 5 more bodies - Joseph Wright, John Schofield, Edward Bredbury, John Dunn and John Clerk. Three of the persons who were got out alive had died from the effects of their burns, viz. Thomas Shaw, William Ibbotson, and David Dawson. There are now from nine to ten bodies in the pit, and it may take a few days ere they can be recovered, as the airways cannot be penetrated without considerable labour.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 6th February 1858

Page 4 Col. 4

No Headline

A frightful colliery explosion took place on Tuesday evening, at the Diamond Pit, Bardsley. Two men were killed by the accident, and fears are entertained that this is not the extent of the fatality. Singularly enough, the Government Inspector, Mr Whitehead, had only just before completed an examination, and declared that the ventilation of the pit was satisfactory.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 13th February 1858

Page 2 Col. 5

No Headline.

On Thursday last, whilst a man, named David Sillyman, was employed in laying the roads in the Hollingwood Pit, Staveley, a quantity of "bind" fell upon him, and he sustained such injuries as to render his recovery doubtful.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 13th February 1858

Page 3 Col. 4

Burglary At Staveley.

William Smith Dickens, shoemaker, Brampton, was charged with having burglarously entered and engine-house at Handley Wood, Staveley, belonging to Richard Barrow, Esq., and stolen therefrom a number of brass taps, a quantity of copper wire, and some leather, on the 24th ult., or the night of the 25th. Mr Radford, Superintendent of Police for the Borough, said that from information which he received on the 27th ult., of a robbery at Staveley and from his own suspicions, he went to the house of prisoner between three and four o'clock on the afternoon of that day and made a search. In that front room he found a small piece of leather, now produced, and on going into the kitchen he discovered a larger piece secreted under the fire grate. The prisoner was not at home, and he instructed police sergeant Milne to go and apprehend him. When in custody, he (Mr Radford) asked prisoner where he bought his leather, and he said he bought it at Harrison and Short's, Chesterfield. He then asked him if he could give any account of the two pieces found in his house, when he said "I brought it; that's plenty". Mr William Barker, enginewright to Mr Barrow, said that he had charge of the premises in question, and hearing of the robbery, he went and made an examination of on the morning of the 26th, and found that chests had been broken open and a number of brass taps, about 80 yards of copper wire, and a quantity of leather carried away. The two pieces of leather found in the prisoners' house, now produced, he positively swore to as part of the property stole. The prisoner was fully committed for trial.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 13th February 1858

Page 4 Col. 3

The Colliery Explosion at Ashton

The loss of life up to Monday by the colliery explosion at Bardsley, near Ashton-under-Lyne, was 49. During Saturday the men employed in searching the mine found 5 more bodies. Most of the bodies that had been seen by the coroners jury were interred on Sunday, 22 of them at Bardsley, and great numbers of people from the surrounding towns and villages were present to witness the sad solemnity. On Monday morning Mr W.S. Butler, coroner, resumed the inquest upon the bodies. So far as it had gone, the evidence gives no very reliable information as to the cause of the accident.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 20th February 1858

Page 3 Col. 2

Chesterfield and Tapton Burial Board (Part).

A letter from R. Barrow, Esq. Staveley, was read, in which he stated that he was not in a position either to accept or decline the offer of the Board in regard to the minerals and drift-way under the cemetery grounds, not having completed agreements with parties having minerals laying beyond such grounds.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 20th February 1858

Page 3 Col. 3

Police Intelligence (Part)

John Goodwin, engine tender, summoned Mr. John Clayton, owner of the Ingmanwell Colliery, in the township of Tapton, for 30.-0d, the amount of a fortnights wages. Dismissed, complainant paying 3-6d costs.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 20th February 1858

Page 3 Col. 5

The Late Colliery Accident at Bardsley.

On Monday the Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death", coupled with the following recommendations: First, Owing to the fiery nature of these mines, the Jury recommended that blasting with gunpowder be entirely discontinued. Second, . They considered the ventilation of the more remote works insufficient, and recommended improved air passages therein, together with such additional alterations as may secure this object. Third, They are further of opinion that greatly increased vigilance and care are absolutely necessary in the working of these mines, and, in order to accomplish this object they strongly urge the employment of underviewers of greater intelligence and scientific attainments.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 29th February 1850

Page 2 Cols. 3-4

Biggin V. Addy

Both parties reside at Coal Aston. The present action was brought to recover £16 for damage done to two grass fields, an oat field, and a quick set hedge by smoke from defendants coke ovens. Mr Unwin, of Sheffield, appeared on behalf of the plaintiff, and Mr Busby, the defendant.

Mr Unwin said he should make no remarks on the case and he should be able to bring sufficient evidence to clearly prove the claim to be a just one, he called,

Mr Joseph Biggin, the plaintiff, who said that he resided at Coal Aston, and that in the year 1854, Mr Addy erected 65 hard coke ovens, and 2 soft, without any shafts to carry the smoke away. The hard ovens were worked in the night, and the soft in the day, and when there was a east wind the smoke quite discoloured his oats. He had to put a cow in one of the fields, but in consequence of the herbage being so much injured it had nearly killed it. He gave £16 for the cow a short time before, and was glad to sell it again for £9 - 5 - 0d. The plaintiff here produced some hay which had been taken from a stack that morning which was much discoloured with smoke.

His Honour. This is rather a good colour for grass is it not ?

Mr Unwin. It has had an extra dose (Laughter)

Witness: The effluvia was sometimes so strong that if he closed the doors of his house it was impossible to keep it away. In 1855 he made an application for a remuneration for the damage he had sustained, in consequence of which 15 - 0d was awarded to him. He did not make a claim the second year, but the third year they awarded him £4. It was not so bad the first year, but since it had got worse every year.

Mr Greaves said he was a land valuer at Bradway. He was called in the year before last to estimate the damage done by the coke ovens to the fields, and thought that £6 - 8 - 0d was fair and honest sum.

A branch from the hedge was here shown to the Court having a very sooty appearance.

His Honour: This is what you term a "blackthorn" is it not? (Laughter).

Mr S. Kirk, land valuer, of Sheffield, said that Mr. Lister and him valued in 1857, and granted a sum of £4 - 1 - 0d. He thought that the smoke from the ovens was very injurious to the crops.

Mr Busby for the defence called,

Mr. Lister who said he was a land surveyor, and in the year 1855 he went over the land belonging to Mr Biggin to estimate the damage done by the coke ovens, and granted 15 - 0d, which was ample remuneration. He again went over the land in 1857, and thought that £4 was a great deal too much, as the grass was not injured on the west side, the wind seldom blowing in

that direction. He had been a valuer 20 years, and had never been asked to value on the west side, besides, the land is covered with a soil called blue soil, which at the most would never produce more than 1 ton to the acre.

Mr. Bishop, land valuer, of Sheffield, said he went over the land in 1855 on behalf of Mr Addy, and thought that 15 - 0d was a good remuneration. He should say that there had not been a shillings worth of damage done to the oats at the top of the field for the last seven years.

Several other witnesses were called but their evidence was similar to above.

Verdict for the plaintiff, £11.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 27th February 1858

Page 4 Col. 2

Knight v Michael

This was an action brought to recover £5, the value of a dial belonging to plaintiff's colliery, which defendant had in his possession. Mr. Cutts appeared for the plaintiff.

Mr Knight said that in 1853 he was partner with defendant, and in consequence of some words the partnership was dissolved, and the defendant was to give up all tools belonging to the colliery, but had kept a dial which had been applied for several times, but the defendant always stated that it was at Sheffield, having it in his possession at the same time.

The defendant said that he considered it belonged to him as much as it did to the colliery, and that was the reason he did not give it up.

His Honour gave a verdict for the amount claimed, to be paid at 10 - 0d per month.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 27th February 1858

Page 2 Col. 4

Knight v R. Backley, jun., of Sheffield.

This action was to recover £1 - 17 - 11d for sawing 150 yards of conductors, sent by defendant to plaintiff's colliery at Oxclose. Mr Cutts appeared on behalf of plaintiff.

Mr. Knight, the plaintiff, said that the defendant sent to his colliery 150 yards of conductors to be sawn and afterwards sent his men to fetch them. He had applied to him for the money several times, but had always been referred to his father.

Henry Bennett said he was sent by Messrs. Backley and Salt with some conductors to Mr Knight's colliery, to have them sawn, and he afterwards fetched them back.

Mr Backley in defence said that he did not owe Mr. Knight a penny, he had never been to his colliery in his life. It was his father that owned it, and because he had become a bankrupt, plaintiff wanted to come on him (defendant) for it.

His Honour said that the case was quite clear against him, as his (defendants) horses and carts fetched the goods by his orders. He should therefore give a verdict for the plaintiff.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 27th February 1858

Page 3 Col. 4

No Headline

On Monday the 22nd inst., an accident happened at one of the Clay Cross Company's pits, to a man named Lott Knighton, who was at work "holeing" at the pit, when a quantity of bind fell on him, and crushed him so severely that he died before he could be got out of the pit.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 27th February 1858

Page 4 Col. 3

No Headline

The Welsh mines of the Royal British Bank, which cost the bank £84,000, have been sold within these few days for £6,000.

Illustrated London News

Saturday 27th. February 1858

Fatal Colliery Explosion.

An explosion took place between three and four o'clock on Thursday morning, in Powell's colliery at Mountain Ash, Merthyr? thirty-two men were working in the colliery at the time, of whom nineteen were killed.