

Derbyshire Times.

Saturday 6th. September 1862.

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Staveley - Springwell Colliery, Staveley Works.

On Saturday last, a supper was given by Mr. Barrow, the liberal proprietor of the Springwell Colliery, to workmen and others, numbering nearly 50, upon the completion of a tunnel, commenced in April last, simultaneously from the Black Shale Coal mine and the surface. On the 16th. of August, the two divisions of the tunnel met exactly. It is now and will continue to be used for the workmen to walk into and out of the mine; the men thereby avoiding shaft accidents and having a secure outlet under all circumstances. The tunnel is about 300 yards long, in rock, and dips from the surface 6 inches in the yard. It was recommended to Mr. Barrow by Messrs. Woodhouse and Jeffcock, of Derby, and has been done under the direction of Mr. W.F. Howard, surveyor, Staveley, and Mr. W. Buxton, the resident viewer. At the same place, Mr. Barrow is now engaged upon a great improvement of the parish road, raising it upon an embankment, and carrying it over his works by two bridges; the excavations for an extension of his colliery railway and the tunnel providing the requisite materials. Seldom has a more useful and spirited public improvement been taken in hand by a private individual. These works were laid out and are superintended by Mr. Howard. The supper, provided by Mr. G. Bamford, the Miners' Arms, New Whittington, was excellent and abundant. The evening passed agreeably with toast and song. Mr. Buxton presided, and amongst those present were Mr. T. Robinson, cashier; Mr. J. Gillatt, Mr. W.F. Howard and Messrs. Redfern and Drew, the contractors for the tunnel.

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Ripley - Colliery Accident.

W. Whiston, Esq., held an inquest at the Royal Oak Inn, Marehay, on Tuesday, on the body of John Briggs, aged 68, whose death was caused on the evening of the 25th. ult. by falling from the soft coal to the hard (a distance of 40 yards), in the colliery at Marehay. From the evidence it appears that Briggs was a night fireman, and that he, and a young lad of the name of Cottrell, went down at 6 o'clock p.m., and when they got as far as the soft coal: the chair stopped, and they got off and mended the fires. Briggs then got on the chair, at the same time telling Cottrell to "ring off to lower"; Cottrell rang the bell once, and attempted to do so a second time, and, thinking that the bell did not act, told Briggs so, who got off and examined the bell handle, and turned round and told Cottrell to ring off again, at the same time making a step to get on the chair, when he fell to the bottom, as the engine-man had taken up the chair in compliance with the signal he received - the one bell; two bells being the signal to lower. It was satisfactorily proved that the bell was rung only once. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally Killed" and said there was not the slightest blame attributable to the engine-man.

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Ill-using a Pony.

Thomas Dakin, a collier at Staveley Works, was charged with ill-using a pony, the property of Richard Barrow, Esq. James Bell, overman at the Hollingwood Pit, said that defendant was the driver of a pony. On the 23rd. of August the pony was taken ill, and on being examined by Mr. Martin, veterinary surgeon, it was proved to be injured in the ames(?). The defendant was fined 2-6d. and costs.

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Leaving Service.

John Toole was charged with leaving his work, at the Wingerworth Iron Works, without giving proper notice. Charles Houghton, on behalf of the Company, said: Prisoner was engaged by me, on the 15th. of August. I produced the rules of the colliery, with his name signed thereon. He continued to work till the 25th. ult., when he left, and has not been there since. Committed to Derby for 21 days, with hard labour, and to be discharged from service.

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On Premises for an Unlawful Purpose.

Alfred Millington was charged by Police Sergeant Fern with being on property, at Newbold Fields, for an unlawful purpose. The officer said: I received information, last night, and went to an engine house belonging to Mr. Fowler, at Newbold Fields. I went into a cabin just below, and found the prisoner sitting before a large fire. It was 11 o'clock at night. I asked him who had authorised him to be there. He said no-one, and then said the banksman told him he might stop. I told him I had a charge against him for garden robbery. He admitted robbing Webster's garden. I took him into custody for being in the cabin for an unlawful purpose. Committed for one month as a rogue and vagabond.

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Leaving Service.

George Rundell, Thomas Bennett, John Charlesworth, and Titus Cutts were charged with leaving their work without giving notice. John Carr said: I engaged these men to serve Mr. Fowler and others. Randell on the 12th., Bennett on the 13th., Charlesworth on the 12th., and Cutts on the 13th. of August. They signed their names, and I produce the books. Cutts left his service on the 19th. or 20th.: the other three left last Saturday. They have not been to work since. They gave no notice. The rules specify that 14 days notice shall be given before leaving. Titus Cutts was committed for 14 days to hard labour; Randell, Bennett, and Charlesworth to return to work, and the costs to be deducted from their wages.

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Derbyshire Coal and Iron Trade.

Though there is no immediate prospect of a termination of the unhappy war in America, which is spreading increased commercial depression all over the country, there is a more cheerful feeling pervading the iron trade, but not much more activity than has characterised it for some time past. Amongst commercial men there is a better feeling of confidence as to the sound commercial policy of the country. The orders for all description of iron are more numerous, and we have had a large demand for articles required for the war, from America. There is great reluctance, however, manifested in receiving private orders which are not accompanied by a remittance, owing to the uncertainty prevailing as to payment. It may be noted that in the seven months ending July 31st., 1862, the exports of steel to America amounted to £278,155, whilst in the corresponding period of 1861 it only reached £182,589. The demand for general steel goods is considerably improved. We have also a better enquiry for plates and rails, the latter being required more for the renewal of permanent way than for export. Last week the annual feast of the Master Cutler's of Sheffield was held, where many notables were present. On the following day a large party of gentlemen visited the Atlas Iron and Steel Works, where the manufacture of armour plates is carried on, and the party were much gratified by witnessing the process of making these extraordinary large plates. The coal trade is improving and the demand firm: the southern markets have shown a decided improvement. The London merchants, too, setting upon the low rates for the article and the competition of the Midland to the Great Northern Railway Companies, are laying in large stocks, the effect of which must be to cheapen the price of coal in London during the coming winter. There have been several large contracts given out from France for hard coal for the French Navy, and other contracts of a heavy character for gasworks, all of which have tended to add more animation to the coal trade throughout the country. The working colliers are, consequently, better employed, though a large number are not fully at work. An attempt has been made by some coal-masters to make a further reduction in the wages of the men of 10%, but in several instances it has been successfully resisted, the masters being compelled to return to the late rates.

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Staveley - Powder Accident.

On the 1st. inst., two men named James Hardy and John Simster, went to Mr. Barrow's store for powder, and on their return each man light his pipe, and began smoking, when by accident the ashes from the pipe of one or both of them fell upon the parcel of powder, and it exploded sending one of them from off the main road into the old brickyard.

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Colliery Accident.

As a man named Patsey Connor was at work in the Do-Well pit, stall 15, a quantity of bind suddenly fell upon him, and broke a leg and a thigh.

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Important Colliery Cases - The Dispute at West Staveley.

8 colliers named John Orwin, James Webster, John Turner, Robert Harvey, William White, Charles Robinson, Charles Wheatman, and William Adlington, were charged with leaving their service at the West Staveley Colliery, without giving the regular notice. The charge was preferred by William Ridley, William Moody, the manager of the works, and Mr. Busby, solicitor, appeared on their behalf to prosecute.

Mr. Busby said it became necessary on the 17th. of August for the proprietors of the West Staveley Colliery to give notice to the men of an alteration in the rate of wages, and that unless they consented to a reduction they would be at liberty to terminate their engagements on the 1st. of September. The notices expired on the 1st. of September and the defendants refused to work except on the old terms.

Mr. Heathcote: Did they go to the master on Monday morning?

The defendants said they did but they could not see him.

Mr. Maynard: They would have been entitled to leave on the Tuesday morning.

All eight defendants pleaded Not Guilty to the charge.

Mr. Moody was then examined. He said: I am manager of the West Staveley Colliery, at Whittington. On Tuesday, the 19th. of August I posted an notice of an alteration in the rates of wages, and I gave notice to the men that at the end of the fortnight they might leave if they did not consent to the terms. All the defendants had signed the rules and the agreement of contract, which says that every man employed on the works shall give or receive 14 days notice before leaving work, and failing that he shall be liable to punishment, under the old laws regulating master and servant.

Mr. Maynard: You have not proved when these men were engaged.

Mr. Busby: The rules of the colliery provide that at a given intimation, notice shall take place or end at a certain time.

Mr. Maynard to Mr. Moody: Do you mean to say you had liberty to give these men a fortnight's notice at any time during any week, and that they can do the same?

Mr. Moody: Yes, just so. I gave them notice on the 19th. of August, and that did not expire until the 1st. of September.

Mr. Busby: The men came on the Monday morning and refused to work.

Mr. Moody: Their absence caused very great loss to the owners of the colliery.

Webster, one of the defendants, said all the men thought the notice expired on the Saturday. He went to the works on the Monday morning, when he found a number of other men

present. They asked what was intended to be done. Holt, one of the overmen, said they were not going to turn anything out that day as there were not men enough willing to work. Mr. Moody was not at the works that morning, and they did not see him at all.

Mr. Maynard to Webster: You can ask him if the notice was given. He said he gave each of you personal notice as well.

Robinson, one of the defendants: He has not.

Webster, another of the defendants: Where did he give it.

Robinson: He has never spoken to us.

Mr. Maynard: Where was he at the time he gave you notice?

Mr. Moody: I have a witness who told Webster that he was to leave in a fortnight unless he would agree to the new terms.

Webster: Nothing of the kind.

William Holt, the steward of the colliery, was then called. He said: I saw the notice up on Tuesday the 19th. of August. I heard the notice given to these men that if they did not like to work they would be at liberty to leave when the notice was out. They were not all present when this conversation took place, but they were at work in different parts of the pit. I was present when notice was given to Webster.

Webster to Holt: Where were you when I got my notice? You have not been in my place this last six weeks.

Mr. Maynard: Can you tell us the day you gave them notice?

Holt: A week since last Thursday.

Webster: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. Maynard: I cannot convict these men upon this evidence.

Mr. Busby: I say it is for them to prove that they had a notice to quit terminating at a certain time, and in the absence of that they are working under their original contract.

Mr. Maynard: There is no notice proved in my opinion.

Mr. Busby: If there were no notice proved they were bound to work.

Webster: Holt told us they were not going to work that day. He ordered his day men to pitch the roads.

Holt: I told them that they must work their notice out.

The magistrates said that they should not convict the men, and they were discharged.

They left the Court highly elated at the discussion of the Bench.

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Important Colliery Cases - Disobeying Colliery Rules.

An elderly man, named Samuel Wiseall, was charged that he being in charge of an engine at the Speedwell colliery, did permit some other person to interfere with the machinery of the engine contrary to the rules. Mr. Martyn Seymour, viewer of Staveley Works, produced a copy of the rules and proved that defendant had signed them. He also produced a notice, which had been affixed on the engine house, prohibiting everybody from interfering with the engine but the defendant. He received information on the 30th. of August that defendant had left his engine at Speedwell Colliery and had permitted some other person to interfere with it without his (Mr. Seymour's) authority. A workman named George Barrow, said that on Saturday last he went to the bank of the pit, and saw the engine wind the cage right over the wheel and let the cage drop on the pit top. He went in the engine house, and found a person there named Thomas Hemingway. The defendant came in directly. Hemingway had no business there. The engine broke directly, and it was going too fast. In answer to the charge, defendant said Hemingway came out of the pit to me in the engine house. I said: "Thon, mon, either work or fire". I had no stoker. Hemingway said: "I'll stop in the engine house". I then went and fired. I then went to the fitting shed and whilst I was there the accident happened. Mr. Seymour said the accident might have resulted in the death of 5 or 6 men. The damage done to the engine was not less than £100, as it was broken in three pieces. Mr. Maynard (to defendant): You know your duties and the consequence of your neglecting them. Defendant: I did not know that Hemingway was discharged. Mr. Maynard: You knew that you had been forbidden to allow anyone to interfere. It is a very important thing that these rules which are made by the Government Inspector should be carried out in order to avoid accidents. I think we cannot do justice to the people who work in these mines without punishing you severely. The defendant was committed to Derby for 24 days hard labour, Mr. Maynard adding that he hoped it would be a warning to all engine-men about them.

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Leader - The West Staveley Colliery Dispute.

The proprietors of the West Staveley Colliery, Whittington, recently gave notice through their manager, Mr. Ridley William Moody, of a reduction in the wages of their workmen, accompanied by the disagreeable alternative that unless they accepted these terms they were to cease work after the expiration of 14 days from the date of the notice, which expired on Monday, September the 1st. The men very naturally supposed that the notice was made terminable on Saturday, being the end of the week, and on the Monday morning they met on the works to know whether the masters would not agree to the old terms. They could learn nothing satisfactory, and by one means or another the day was frittered away, and a number of the men did not go to work. After a time the dispute was settled, and the men resumed work. To the surprise of the whole neighbourhood, eight of the men were summoned before the magistrates, at Chesterfield, for leaving their work before the expiration of their notices! Admitting that these poor men had omitted to work the last day of their notice, was it not sharp practise on the part of Mr. Moody to take them before the magistrates and ask for their committal to prison, which was the only course left open had the justices been disposed to have committed them - men with wives and families, who would have either been dependent upon their friends for support, or on the parish for relief? The whole business, however, was managed so loosely, and the giving of the notices so unsatisfactorily proved, that the magistrates stated that could not conscientiously sign a conviction which would have consigned these men within the walls of a prison in the company of felons. Working men will not be ruled by a rod of iron, and mutual forbearance would do much to soften the toils of labour. Again right has triumphed over might, and the unpaid magistracy has looked mercifully on the side of the working man.

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Stealing a Pick.

William Mackin was charged with stealing a pick, the property of Albert Watkinson. Mr. Cutts appeared for the defendant. The complainant deposed that he had seen the defendant working with a pick, his property. Cross-examined by Mr. Cutts: I don't know that I shall be discharged from Mr. Barrow's service for bringing this prosecution. Daniel Mackin said he worked at the same pit as the prisoner. On Monday the prosecutor missed his pick, and on the following morning he was at the bottom of the pit. The prisoner came and took it away. Cross-examined by Mr. Cutts: I am not sure that the pick did not belong to Thomas Bell. Mr. Cutts addressed the Court through the prisoner, contending that it was the most scandalous prosecution that ever was brought into a court of justice. The defendant was a hard-working, honest, and industrious man, and there was no reasonable foundation for the present charge. The defendant had put his two picks in the waggon on going down the pit, and when they arrived at the bottom somebody else took them. He asked for his own picks, and shouted out that somebody else had taken them. On proving this in evidence, the prisoner was discharged.

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Coal Stealing.

Joseph Allsopp, of Clay Cross, collier, was charged with stealing half a hundredweight of coal, of the value of 6d., the property of the Clay Cross Company. Mr. Benjamin Turner, Jnr., on the part of the Company, said that they did not wish to press the case if the defendant would pay the expenses and promise not to offend again. That they had suffered a deal of persons taking coal in that manner, and that they were determined to punish all future cases.

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Clay Cross.

The Clay Cross Company finding it desirable to erect a large pumping engine in order to lay several small ones determined to sink a new shaft, exclusively for pumping purposes. They commenced sinking early in the present year, and on Friday, the 12th. instant, succeeded in getting to the bottom of the coal, which is 130 yards deep. The shaft is 10 feet diameter, clear, and is cased with 9 inch brickwork for the whole depth. The time occupied in doing the above work has been 25 weeks. They have also got the engine house for a 300 h.p. engine built, and part of the engine erected during the same time, and we understand that in about 2 months they expect to commence pumping. The engine is being made by the Butterley Company, who have a wrought iron beam, composed of two immense slabs, 37 feet wide, and each slab 2 inches thick; these, it is said, are the longest and widest plates ever rolled. It is confidently expected that the whole will be a first rate piece of workmanship. The pee-caps(?) are being cast by Mr. Barrow, at Staveley.

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Derbyshire Mining.

The coal trade continues to manifest signs of gradual improvement. Merchants are lying stocks for the winter trade; and as prices and freights are low, the present is an unusually favourable opportunity to take advantage of the low prices of the article. The Midland Railway Company are pushing forward the works on the new line from Rowsley to Buxton, when a fine tract of mineral country will be opened out, and from the preparations going on, it is likely that steps will be taken during the next year to develop it's great mineral wealth. On the Erewash Valley Line, the mineral traffic is increasing, and were it not for the depression, in the cotton districts, the consumption would be at least one third more. A very important movement is now being spread amongst the colliers for the formation of co-operative societies in the colliery districts. The experiment has been tried in a great number of small places, and although the society is in its infancy in many places, it has always proved successful by good management. We stated recently that Mr. Barrow, of Staveley, had made liberal engagements with the Midland Railway Company for the conveyance of the wives and families of those in his employ to Chesterfield market and back on the Saturday, to enable them to take advantage of making their purchases on the most advantageous terms. The effect has been to nearly ruin the shopkeepers and dealers at Staveley, trade having been almost literally removed. An attempt has been made by the tradesmen to induce Mr. Barrow to discontinue the train, but he has positively declined. It is now intended by some of the tradesmen to remove their business to Chesterfield, so as to preserve their connection. Satisfactory progress continues to be made at the different Derbyshire lead mines, the weather having been favourable for mining operations. The Eyam mine is looking well, and the shares are held steadily in the market. North Derbyshire has not yet finished the sinking operations, but it is expected to do so shortly. The stratum has been so extremely hard, that the sinking has cost £100 per fathom. The directors feel confident that so soon as they are enabled to drain the Wren Park Mine they will get into some good work forthwith. At Mill Dam the company are preparing to carry off the water by pipes, so as to prevent such large influxes during the wet season of the year, which notwithstanding all the pumping machinery, prevent the men from working. We have not heard that the arbitration between this company and the Great Hucklow Company has been settled. The local share markets have not shown much animation during the past week, and the quotations of the great bulk of the mining stock have been merely nominal. It is the opinion of most people that the Mill Town Mining Company will succeed in getting sufficient capital to develop the mine, although the present is a most unfavourable time for speculation in mining. The late company had sunk through the toadstone to a considerable depth, and it is believed that, had they been enabled to raise more capital, they would have succeeded well. The produce of the mine has at different periods nearly paid the original shareholders.

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Summons for Wages.

Job Neal, ironstone mine contractor, at Brampton, was summoned by William Hinchley, for £5 wages. Mr. Cutts appeared for Neal. The complainant stated that he had worked 75 days for the complainant (?defendant), at 2-6d. per day, that he had received at different times £3-1-10d. leaving a balance of £6-7-8d. He only claimed £5, however. Several witnesses were called by Mr. Cutts for the defendant, and it appeared from their evidence that for some time Neal had been ill, and during that time Mrs. Neal had paid the wages of the men. She had put down in a book the amount she had paid to each person. She always paid them in the parlour, where they kept the shop (laughter). Thomas Mountray, a workman in the employ of the defendant, proved that he had always been regularly paid every fortnight. He had had goods from the shop, but he had always received his wages first, and paid for his shop goods before he had left the shop. Mr. Maynard said he did not see how he was to make the order upon Neal to pay the amount. He had a slight suspicion that Neal had been practising the truck system. The complainant said that he could bring plenty of witnesses who could prove that workmen had received goods instead of money. Mr. Maynard: That would be no evidence in this case. The magistrates refused to make an order for payment.

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A Refractory Collier.

John Nutt, a collier, employed at the Wingerworth Coal Company's work, was charged by John Godber, manager, with having left his work without giving the usual notice. The defendant pleaded Not Guilty. Mr. Godber stated that defendant had contracted with the Company, on the 7th. of August, 1861, to serve them as a collier, and to give or take 28 days notice on the termination of the contract. On the 18th. instant he absented himself with leave. William Shaw, the bailiff of the colliery, said that the defendant came to work on the Thursday morning and absented himself without leave. He merely went into the stall and came out again. He gave no reason for it. He had been sending out inferior coal with the best coal and had been told about it, when he said that he should do as he liked, and he forthwith left his work. The stallman where the defendant worked said that the defendant had a practice of sending out inferior coal. Mr. Godber said they did not wish to press the case too hard. The defendant, in reply to the Bench, said he was willing to go to work again, but not in the same stall. The magistrates said they could not interfere in that respect. The defendant was dismissed on promising to return to his work and pay 11-0d. costs.