

The Derbyshire Times

Saturday May 4th 1878.

Boythorpe Colliery

On Wednesday morning an outburst of gas occurred at the Chesterfield and Boythorpe Colliery Company by which between 300/400 colliers narrowly escaped with their lives and have for some time been thrown out of employment. The men went to work at the usual hour of the morning at about 7.00 am. The roof of the workings got on what is called the "dead weight" caused by the falling of the strata and a large quantity of gas, more than the ordinary ventilation was capable of dealing with, became dislodged from its position. A man in the underground engine room was the first to notice the presence of the explosive gas by seeing fire in his lamp. He immediately sent the alarm along the whole workings and all the naked lights and lamps were extinguished. There was a general rush of the men to the bottom of the shaft and the whole of the men were conveyed to the surface fortunately without any suffering any injury. If the gas which had been released had taken fire a terrible explosion must have followed, the quantity of gas in the pit is estimated to have been something about 400,000 feet and extended over an area of two miles of workings. So precipitous was the rush by the men to get out of the pit that a large proportion of them came to the bank in a state of almost semi nudity and had to borrow sacks and cloths and anything that could be converted into covering to walk home in. If the prompt action in extinguishing all lights when the alarm was given had not been carried out the consequences would in all probability been the sacrifice of 300 lives.