

CHILDREN'S EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION 1842.

**REPORT by JAMES MITCHELL, ESQ.,
LL.D., on the Employment of Children
and Young Persons in the MINES of the
W A R W I C K S H I R E a n d
LEICESTERSHIRE COAL-FIELDS, and
on the State, Condition, and Treatment of
such Children and Young Persons.**

Edited by Ian Winstanley.

Picks Publishing

Published by:-

**PICKS PUBLISHING
83. Greenfields Crescent,
Ashton-in-Makerfield,
Wigan WN4 8QY
Lancashire.
Tel:- (01942) 723675**

Coal **M**ining **H**istory **R**esource **C**entre
With Compliments

The Coal Mining History Resource Centre, Picks Publishing and Ian Winstanley reserve the copyright but give permission for parts to be reproduced or published in any way provided The Coal Mining History Resource Centre, Picks Publishing and Ian Winstanley are given full recognition.

**PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GIVEN FOR COMPLETE ELECTRONIC
COPYING**

Ian Winstanley.
83, Greenfields Crescent,
Ashton-in-Makerfield,
Wigan. WN4 8QY.
Lancashire. England

Tel & Fax:- (01942) 723675.
Mobile:- (0798) 9624461
E-mail:- ian.winstanley@blueyomder.co.uk
Web site:- <http://www.cmhrc.pwp.blueyomder.co.uk>

© Ian Winstanley and PICKS PUBLISHING, 1998

COMMISSION

(UNDER THE GREAT SEAL)

FOR INQUIRING INTO THE EMPLOYMENT AND CONDITION OF CHILDREN IN MINES AND MANUFACTORIES.

VICTORIA, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith: To Our trusty and well beloved Thomas Tooke, Esquire, Thomas Southwood Smith, Esquire, Doctor in Medicine, together with Leonard Horner and Robert John Saunders, Esquires, two of Our Inspectors of Factories, Greeting:- WHEREAS, an humble Address was presented unto to Us by Knights, Citizens and Burgesses and Commissioners of Shires and Burghs in Parliament assembled, humbly beseeching Us that We should be graciously pleased to direct an Inquiry to be made into the Employment of the Children of the Poorer Classes in Mines and Collieries and the various branches of Trade and Manufactures in which numbers of Children work together, not being included in the provisions of the Acts for regulating Employment of Children and Young Persons in Mills and Factories and to collect information as to the time allowed each day for meals and as to the actual state, condition and treatment of such Children and as to the effects of such Employment, both with regard to their morals and their bodily health; NOW KNOW YE, THAT WE, reposing great trust and confidence in your ability and discretion, have nominated, constituted and appointed and do by these presentiments nominate, constitute and appoint you the said, Thomas Tooke, Thomas Southwood Smith, together with, Leonard Horner and Robert John Saunders, to be Our Commissioners for the purposes aforesaid and We do hereby enjoin you to obey all directions touching the premises which shall from time to time be given you, and any two or more of you, by one of our principle Secretaries of State and for the better discovery of the truth in the premises, we do, by these presentiments, give and grant to you, or any two or more of you, full power and authority to call before you such persons as you will judge necessary, by whom you may be the better informed of the truth in the premises, and to inquire of the premises and every part thereof, by all other lawful way and means whatsoever and We do hereby also give and grant unto you, or any two or more of you, full power and authority when the same shall appear to be requisite, to administer an oath or oaths to any person or persons whatsoever, to be examined before you, or two or more of you, touching or concerning the premises and Our further will and pleasure is, that you Our said Commissioners, or any three of you, do, with as little delay as may be consistent with a due discharge of the duties hereby imposed upon you, Certify to Us, under your hands and seals, or under the hands and seals of any three of you, your several proceedings in the premises; And We further will and command, and by these presents ordained, that this Our Commission shall continue in full force and virtue, and that you, Our said Commissioners, or any two or more of you, shall and may from time to time proceed in the execution thereof, and of every matter and thing therein contained, although the same be not continued, from time to time by adjournment: AND WE HEREBY COMMAND all and singular Our Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Mayors, Bailiffs, Constables, Officers, Ministers, and all other of Our loving Subjects whatsoever, as will within Liberties as without, that they may be assistant to you and each of you in the execution of these presentiments. And for your assistance in the due execution of this Commission, We have made choice of Our trusty and well beloved Joseph Fletcher, Esquire, to be the Secretary of this Our Commission, whose services we require you to use from time to time, as occasion may require. In witness thereof, We have caused these Letters to be made Patent. Witness Ourselves at Westminster, the Twentieth day of October, in the Fourth Year of Our Reign.

By Writ of Privy
Seal,

EDMUNDS.

**LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS EXTENDING THE TERMS OF THE COMMISSION TO
“YOUNG PERSONS”**

Whitehall, February 11th, 1841.

GENTLEMEN,

THE QUEEN having been pleased to comply with the prayer of an humble Address presented to Her Majesty, in pursuance of a Resolution of the House of Commons, dated 4th. of February, 1841, ‘That Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to direct that the Commission appointees in answer to an Address of this House, on August 4, 1840, for the investigation of certain branches of Infant Labour, do include within its inquiry the Labour also of Young Persons designated as such by the provisions of the Factory Act’ I am delighted by the Marquis of Normanby to desire that you will include within your inquiry the Labour of Young Persons designated as such by the provisions of the Factory Act accordingly.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your Obedient Servant,
(Signed) F. MAULE.

*The Commissioners for inquiring into the Condition
of Children employed in Mines, &c.*

CONTENTS

VISIT TO A COAL MINE.	1
OF THE CHILDREN.	3
(1.) The Number of Children	3
(2.) As to the Hours of Labour	3
(3.) The Time for Dinner	3
(4.) The Employments of the Boys	4
(5.) The Pits in which the miners work	4
(6.) Accidents occasionally occur	4
(7.) Holidays	5
(8.) Hiring and Wages	5
(9.) Treatment and Care	5
(10.) Physical Condition	6
As to Clothing	6
As to Cleanliness	6
(11.) Of the Moral Condition	6
(12.) As to the effect of the present system	7
OF THE BADSLEY COLLIERIES.	7
OF THE KETTLEBROOK COLLIERIES.	7
ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH COAL-FIELD.	8
VISIT TO THE MOIRA BATH PIT.	8
OF THE VENTILATION OF MINES.	9
OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS.	12
(1.) Ages and Number	12
(2.) The Hours of Work	12
(3.) As to the Meals	12
(4.) The Employment of the boys	12
(5.) As to the State of the Place of Work	13
(6.) Accidents	13
(7.) Of Holidays	14
(8.) The hiring of boys	14
(9.) That the treatment and care taken of the boys	14
(10.) The appearance of the children	14
(11.) The state of education	15
(12.) The effect of the present system	16
OF APPRENTICES.	16
EVIDENCE COLLECTED BY DR. MITCHELL.	18
WARWICKSHIRE COAL-FIELD.	18
No.62 Benjamin Stratton.	18
No.63 Thomas Pearson.	20
No.64 Thomas Arrott, accompanied by Samuel Shelton.	21
No.65 John Lawrence.	22
No. 66 Samuel Sheldon.	23
No.67 John Craddock, of Camp-Hill, Nuneaton.	23
No.68 John Sommers.	23
No.69 William Butler.	24
No.70 Thomas Smith.	24
No.71 William Dewis.	24
No.72 William Cruchelow.	25
No.73 Edward Whitehead.	25
No.74 Samuel Parker.	25
Weekly expenses of a labourer at Atherstone, in the county of Warwick	26
Weekly expenses of a man working on the bank of a colliery at Bedworth, in the county of Warwick	26
Weekly expenses of a collier at Bedworth, in the county of Warwick	27

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH COAL-FIELD, IN THE COUNTIES of LEICESTER AND DERBY	27
No.75 Stephen Evans.	27
No.76 Joseph Dooley.	29
No.77 Michael Parker.	30
No.78 Samuel Parker.	31
No.79 Charles Tandy.	31
No.80 William Stenson.	31
No.81 Charles Allsopp Dalby.	32
No.82 John Davenport.	32
No.83 Samuel Dennys, accompanied by John Sommers.	33
No.84 John Sharn.	34
No.85 Thomas Art, in presence of Samuel Dennys.	34
Weekly expenses of a farmer's labourer at Measham in the county	35
Weekly expenses of a collier at Moira, with a wife and 3 children, the oldest 5. The wife does not earn anything by working for any one	35

**REPORT by JAMES MITCHELL, ESQ., LL.D., on the
Employment of Children and Young Persons in the MINES
of the WARWICKSHIRE and LEICESTERSHIRE COAL-
FIELDS, and on the State, Condition, and Treatment of
such Children and Young Persons.**

TO HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS.

GENTLEMEN,

THE Warwickshire collieries chiefly lie between Coventry and Nuneaton, beginning about two miles east from Coventry on the south side of the road, and extending onwards to Bedworth, which may be considered as the centre and where there are most pits, and thence to Nuneaton. The number of the pits is about 30 and about nine miles north from Nuneaton and about three north from Atherstone commence the pits but under half a dozen altogether and several pits in a field near Tamworth.

There are no iron furnaces, and the coal is got up for what is called land sale, but some is sent by canal to more distant parts of the country.

Several of the proprietors in this district work their coal mines on their own account, employing an agent who has a general superintendence over the whole concern; the working of the mines, the payments to be made, and the sale of the coals. Under him is a ground bailiff, whose duty is to go down frequently into the mines and see that the butties work the mine fairly, so as to get out all the coals that can with safety be removed. The pits are worked by butties, who receive a in certain charter per ton, on the coals brought by them to the foot of the shaft, which, however, are weighed after being brought up. The butties employ and pay men and boys who work under them. In some mines the charter is 3s. per ton, in some as high as 5s. 6d. per ton according to the difficulty of working. The proprietor, however, has also to make the roads and find the rails.

Some mines are let on lease at a royalty and a payment of one sixth of the produce of the sales is not unusual. Such is said to be the royalty paid for the mines of the Bedworth charity and also of a mine a little nearer to Nuneaton wrought by a Mr. Wilson.

The Warwickshire coal though very pleasant for domestic use, yet has not been found equal to the smelting of iron ore. The attempt was made and a furnace was tried near the Hawkesbury colliery, about a mile south west from Bedworth, and the very powerful means of the hot blast air was made use of but it proved a failure; for though iron of excellent quality was made, the quantity was insufficient and after an experiment had been tried about twelve months, the furnace was blown out more than a year ago.

Abundance of excellent ironstone is sent by canal from this place into Staffordshire as also from iron mines close to Bedworth. The ironstone was stated by persons on the spot to be sold for 1s. to 1s. per ton, the buyers paying the freight.

In the Warwickshire coal-field the tall chimneys of the steam-engine fires rise amongst the cultivated fields and no masses of cinders and ashes, as in the iron districts, disfigure the landscape.

VISIT TO A COAL MINE.

The mine that was visited is that called the slate colliery, the property of Charles Newdigate, Esq., a gentleman who kindly ordered his agent to render every assistance to the Commission.

On approaching the mouth of the shaft there was seen the appearance as of smoke proceeding from it but this was found to be only the condensation of vapour issuing from the pit, by the hard frost and after we descended a yard or two all vapour ceased to be visible. The descent

was made by standing on a skip, along with Mr. Benjamin Stratton the agent and the ground bailiff; as we got near the bottom of the shaft the rush of water within the brickwork was distinctly audible. It is allowed to go to the foot of the shaft and then it rapidly rushes downwards in a torrent along the side of the mainway to a much lower level.

We found ourselves when at the foot of the shaft on the side of the hill, steeper than the slated roof of a house, the descent being towards the west. The passage through the gateway or main road was for the most part sufficiently high admit walking without much stooping. Several years ago horses were employed drag the waggons with coal up this steep hill but now the waggons run up on a railway about three feet wide and are drawn forward by a jig-chain which descends from the steam engine on the bank and passes round a pulley at the foot of the shaft. The old miners describe the work with the horses as having been most dreadful. Boys now attend the carriages to and from the shafts to keep them steady, and accidents sometimes arise from this work.

There was a stream of air in the mainway and it was difficult to keep the candles from being blown out. Of course there was no hazard from explosions from choke-damp, as none could collect on such a current.

About the distance of from 90 to 100 yards brought us to workings or ends which proceed on each side right and left. The workings had been much farther off at first but had gradually come nearer and nearer to the shaft.

The system in working the mines in this district is to carry on the mainway down the hill to the farthest extent which they intend to go, perhaps 500 or yards and then to make what they call a level to another mainway so as to have circulation of air. Although the face of this level they work the coals by undergoing and afterwards driving in wedges or by gunpowder and these coals are loaded on carriages and pushed up to the mainways, along which they are dragged upwards by the chain to the foot of the shaft and hoisted up to the bank.

The workings are carried from this lowest level backwards, or up-hill towards the shaft.

The water is allowed to run to the lowest level and there forms a pond. There are two steam engines with lifts of pumps belonging to this mine to pump out the water from this pond and it is deemed most convenient to let all the water of the mine flow down into one place and then to pump it off; though it is obvious that much of it might be raised from a higher level.

The men and boys in this pit seemed unusually robust. Some of the men were large and powerful of size, sufficient for heavy dragoons and in that respect had greatly the advantage of the men of Coalbrookdale and Staffordshire.

The workings or endings are narrow in comparison to the mainway and the rails on which the carriages run are only 15 inches apart. The cause is the difficulty of supporting the roof if too wide and as it only requires to be kept up whilst the coals are got out it is not desirable to incur great expense. There are two rows of posts and when the coal is got away the posts of wood nearest the gobbin are removed and brought forward and the small coal, slack, or coal-dust and the sparry matter, earthy matter, clay and sandy matter in the coal is piled up behind in the place where wooden props previously removed had stood, that is, as miners express, into the gobbing. The holers begin a new working close to the mainways and undergo and bring down the coals, which are then put into carriages and small space is cleared in which to lay down the rails and gradually as the working advances farther and farther from the mainway more rails are laid down, so a constantly to continue the railway to where the working is going on. The rails are fastened on sleepers and are ready to lay down. Powerful youths load the car and push them to the mainway. When an empty carriage meets a loaded carriage the driver of it lays it on its side off the rails until the loaded carriage has passed and then he replaces it and goes on.

The proportion of the coal got out from a mine depends much on the principle which may be obtained for the small coal and slack. In this district about three fourths are brought up, the small coal and slack being in demand for burning lime and bricks, and for steam-engines. In Staffordshire, where there are so many coal mines, the slack far exceeds the demand and a large quantity is left under ground which otherwise would be brought to the bank.

The beds of coal in the Warwickshire coal field were easily discovered at first by their outcropping on the east side and now that the nature of the country has been fully explored, it is easy when a mine is exhausted to know where to sink a shaft. When the coal is reached, which is always on the side of a declivity, or internal hill, if it be not at or near the top of such hill, it is easy to form a judgement where to sink the second shaft so as to be upon or near the highest spot which, according to the system adopted, is that to which to bring the coals. The depth of the shaft is of course less than anywhere else. The hydrogen gas readily ascends out of the mine and the carbonic

acid gas rolls down to the lowest part and out of the way of the people at work.

As in other districts of England, the names given to beds of coal are not by any means strictly characteristic. Thus, the bed called slate-coal is not more slaty than the other beds and the bed called the seven-feet coal is sometimes not so thick as the two-yard coal.

OF THE CHILDREN.

(1.) The Number of Children in the pits of the Warwickshire coal-field, in proportion to the men, is small, as compared with other districts and for this reason, that the coal is very hard and comes in large masses and is placed on the waggons in larger and weightier pieces than boys could manage.

Mr. Benjamin Stratton, agent to Charles Newdigate, Esq., says that 'there are very few children in the mines under 10 years of age and these few are such as are brought down by their fathers or relations' (No.62). Mr. Thomas Pearson (No.63), a butty in one of the Bedworth Charity Collieries, says, 'he has 30 men and eight boys and lads. There is a boy on the bank eight years of age, whose work it is to carry picks to the blacksmith. The youngest boy in the pit is better than 11 years of age.' He also says that there are no boys employed in that part of the country under eight years of age. Mr. John Lawrence, a butty of the Grove Colliery, says that there is one boy in that pit only eight years of age (No.65). Two working colliers, Mr. Thomas Arrott and Mr. Samuel Shelton (No.64), stated that there were boys of seven or eight years of age employed on the bank to carry picks to the blacksmith but none under 10 in their pit; and there were very few under 10 employed at all in this district and could not be useful now that the mode of drawing the coals to the foot of the shaft by machinery had been introduced.

(2.) As to the Hours of Labour in all coal districts hitherto examined, these 12 in number, only varying a little as to the time of commencement; the most usual time of working being from six in the morning to six at night.

In addition to the actual time of working the boys are occupied in coming on their houses to the shaft and getting down; also in getting up the shaft at night and going home; which may make the 12 hours work come to 13 hours and upwards 'out of the house,' as the miners express it in Durham.

There are sometimes men engaged in the pits at night, according to Mr. Stratton (No.62), when a heading is made up hill. In such a case the carburetted hydrogen gas, by inferior gravity, would naturally rise to the top of the heading and would explode when a light was brought and to disturb it, and thereby prevent such dangerous accumulation, the work goes on day and night.

In this, as in other districts also, the holers, or men who undergo and bring down the coals, may some of them have to go down into the pit and work at night, when the heading is limited in extent so as not to allow them all conveniently to work at the same time and a man may have a boy or two in attendance upon him. These, however, exceptions to the general rule. There is no hardship in working at night. So far as the appearance of things goes there is no difference in the pit between day and night but where a pit is well ventilated a miner becomes very sensible in distinguishing the condition of the atmosphere above.

(3.) The Time for Dinner in the Bedworth Charity Collieries, according to Thomas Pearson, is half an hour (No.63); at which time the men have an allowance of a quart of ale and the boys have a pint. In the Grove Colliery, according to Mr. Lawrence (No.65), there is no particular time for dinner but the engine stops for half an hour when it is thought convenient. The men and boys do not then take their ale but have it in the cabin, being the same as 'the hovel' in Staffordshire, after they come up at night. There are some men with whom the ale would not agree when they were down in the pit. He says it is not like the two penny ale which the miners drink in Staffordshire but is as good as that sold at inns and the men, after drinking their quart, go home as merrily as larks.

There are some pits, according to Mr. Arrott and Mr. Shelton (No.64), where all the men work by stint, that is they are all paid so much per ton, according to the quantity sent up the shaft and in these pits the engine never stops, and the people have no regular time for their meals but take their food as they can.

There is therefore, considerable diversity in regard to the time of meals different pits in this district and such is the case in other coal districts also.

(4.) The Employments of the Boys are various. Very young boys stop above on the bank and when picks are sent up the shaft to them they take them to the blacksmith and wait and bring them back; other boys attend to the trap-doors, doors for regulating the current of air; sometimes a cloth is used instead of door. Some are in attendance on the miners to go errands to other parts of the pit, to fetch a candle or such like. Some children are employed in driving a hot in a gin, by which coal and iron-stone may be brought up from pits not very deep. In fine weather this is very agreeable employment but when it is rainy weather it is otherwise, unless the boy have a hovel and fire. The lads sometimes neglect their duty and let the horse stand, in which case both boy and horse may chance to receive punishment.

Some boys are employed in sweeping away the dust of the coal, or dirt as it called, from the headings where the men are at work, which enables them to get at the coal by seeing where to strike at the right place.

There are boys employed at the foot of the shaft in hooking on the waggon or skips to the end of the chain or rope, by which they are hoisted up to the top.

All these descriptions of work do not require much exertion, and are usual in all pits in every district.

The labour requiring the greatest exertion of physical strength is pushing the waggons loaded with coals on the rails from the workings to the main railway. Only boys above 10 or 11 perform this work; their size and agility render them much fitter for it than men are and it does not appear at all beyond the strength.

(5.) The Pits in which the miners work are comfortable, the height of the seams being from five to seven feet. As the seams or beds of coal lie on the side of declivity the water readily flows down to the lowest part below the workings, as does the carbonic acid gas, or the choke-damp, whilst the carburetted hydrogen gas is carried by the current of air up the declivity, and thence up the shaft to the regions above.

(6.) Accidents occasionally occur but were uniformly talked of, by all the witnesses as comparatively rare. Mr. Stratton says:- ‘Accidents sometimes occur from the falling in of the roof; notwithstanding it is supported by wooden prop’ and every thing is done to maintain it. Accidents rarely happen from the explosion of gas. Cases of mephitic air are seldom of a fatal termination. About forty years ago a miner of the name of Johnson, and five others, fell down from this air, but Johnson recovered again and it was observed that he happened to fall into a place where there was water and his recovery was attributed to his falling into the water’ (No.62).

That the accidents are not very numerous, nor yet serious, is evidenced by the salary paid to the surgeon of Mr. Newdigate’s pits. Some years ago it was ten guineas a year, when there were about 100 people and now that the people are about 150 the salary is fifteen guineas a year.

Mr. Sommers, a surgeon at Bedworth, says:- ‘That there are not many accidents; few lives lost. The usual accidents are contusions and fractures from the coals falling on them. Boys are more frequently hurt than the men from the waggons’ (No.68).

Mr. John Lawrence of the Grove Colliery says:- ‘We meet with few accidents. We have never had a bone broken in our field for four years. There are 20 of us in our pit.’ He also says:- ‘Accidents from blowing up, or damp, very seldom occur; not one damped nor burnt within these three miles for these five years’ (No.65). Lime and slack will take fire and make foul air. When it happens and a man is damped, they dig a hole in the soil and put the head and shoulders in, and it brings him to again.

Another method of bringing a man to who has been damped, according to Mr. Sommers (No. 68), is, to throw cold water upon him. This method operates precisely in the same manner as the former.

Sometimes when a miner is working in choke-damp where his candle is apt to go out, he uses three candles and endeavours to light any of the three that goes out at the others which still continue to burn: but if all the three go out, notwithstanding all which he can do, he judges it is high time for him to make his retreat.

The life of the miner, however, in the most favourable circumstances, is full of hazard and accidents, though not frequent, do now and then occur even in these collieries.

Mr. Thomas Pearson of the Charity colliery being asked:-

‘Is there much explosion from gas?’ - Makes answer, ‘Not about this quarter. There has been some in Mr. Newdigate’s collieries, but not where I work’.

‘Are there often accidents?’ - ‘Very few in this quarter’.

‘Are many damped?’ - Very seldom ill the Charity Colliery but several in the collieries below. We lost two boys who fell before a waggon and a man fell down from the mouth of a pit and was killed.’

In the colliery of Mr. Harris, in the parish of Wyken, near Coventry, two severe accidents occurred within the last two years - the engine-man was killed whilst oiling the machinery and one pitman was hurt and is not yet recovered (No.63).

(7.) Holidays. The miners in this district have many days free from labour during summer, when, of course, there is not great demand for coals. Mr. Pearson estimates the time employed, take the year all round, at little more than half. Other witnesses do not make the leisure thus nearly so much. Mr. Lawrence says:- ‘The men during the last fortnight worked 11 days, only one day’s play’ (No.65).

On Saturday, after the wages are paid, about two o’clock, the men do not go back to work.

A miner is checked from taking holidays at his own caprice, and thereby putting the set with which he works to inconvenience, by a fine of five shillings for any day which he is absent. As the fine is paid to the fund of the field-club, all have an interest in enforcing the payment of the penalty. But when there is such a matter of universal interest as a prize-fight most go to see it and it is a day’s play. Upon the average there may be five or six such occasions in the course of the summer but there were however only two last summer.

(8.) Hiring and Wages. The boys in the pits engaged in opening and closing doors and sweeping the paths, are paid by the coal-master. The boys employed in guiding the waggons which carry the coals are paid, like the other work people, by the butties.

As to the wages, Mr. Pearson states that a boy of eight years of age, who works on the banks and takes picks to the blacksmith, gets 8d. a day. A boy of 12 or 13, working in the pits, gets 20d. a day, and a boy of 14 gets 2s. 2d. to 2s. 4d. a day. The boys who push the dans in the iron-pits at 11 or 12 years of age get 1s. 6d. a day and a pint of strong ale; at 13 they get 1s. 9d. to 2s. a day and a quart of ale; at 15 they get 2s. or 2s. 4d. a day, and the same quantity of ale (No.63).

Some lads at 14, if unusually strong, will take a pick and work like men but the greater part not till 16 and gradually a lad gets forward to the full wages of a man, which, according to Mr. Lawrence (No.65) and other witnesses, are 3s. a day, a quart of ale, worth 5d., and a candle to take home at night, one of 16 to the lb.; and lastly, the very comfortable addition of 12 cwt. of coals per month. The men’s wives do not carry home the coals on their heads, as is common in Staffordshire but the coals are delivered at the miners’ own houses.

Two colliers (Arrott and Shelton) (No.64), said that a collier with 18s. a week was no better off than a weaver with 10s. a week, because a collier had occasion to eat and drink much more. But there are few who will not consider this vigorous digestion a benefit, rather than otherwise. Mr. Sommers, the surgeon at Bedworth (No.68), says the colliers live like fighting-cocks and certainly the subterranean workmen look far like fighting-cocks than their neighbours above who are engaged in making ribbons.

(9.) Treatment and Care. That the boys are treated well and properly taken care of there can be no doubt. The younger boys who come down into the pits are brought by their parents and relations, who are there to protect them. As to the older boys and lads who push the waggons to the main railways, there is little fear of their being able to protect themselves. The wages which they receive are higher in proportion to their strength than the wages of the men, which is a proof that they are in great demand and it is therefore the interest of the coal masters and of the butties to see that they are well used, that they may not be induced to leave them. When the men receive a quart of five penny ale the boys get a pint. The boys are members of the Field Club, and when injured receive surgical attendance and a weekly allowance. The boys, of whatsoever age, receive their own wages themselves but they all live with their parents and do not go to lodge elsewhere, as is sometimes done in Staffordshire. Their work is not extremely laborious. The distance which they

have to push the waggons to the main railway vary from a few yards to as much as 150 yards and is never therefore very long; as they have plenty of breathing time whilst the men are putting in the load.

(10.) Physical Condition. The physical condition is most excellent. A single glance at the children of the colliers and at the children of the weavers, will show the benefit of good wages, good appetite and good eating and drinking. Mr. Sommers, surgeon at Bedworth, being asked:-

‘**What kind of health have the boys?**’, replied, ‘Very good; rosy cheeks and good appetites. As a proof that the employment of the collier is very healthy, I may state that when ribbon-weavers, from distress, have gone down to work in the collieries, they have improved in their appearance, and become strong and fat’. (No 68).
54.

This witness also states that the injuries of colliers are healed remarkably quick, more so than the injuries of agricultural labourers.

That the physical condition of the boys is good is indisputably demonstrated by the fact that many of the millers are strong and able to continue at their work down to a very old age.

Mr. John Craddock, the Chairman of the Guardians of the Nuneaton Union gave the following evidence:-

Have you many applications for relief from the colliers? Much less from colliers than from any other class; less than from agricultural labourers or from weavers.

At what age do you consider the colliers unfit for labour? They keep on working to an, age, to 60, and even to a higher age’ (No.67).

One of the witnesses examined, Mr. Samuel Sheldon (No.66), stated that he was 66 years of age and still continued to work in the pit, though he could no do a full day’s work and was therefore paid by the stent. His brother had died about a fortnight before, at the age of 68 and he had kept to his work in the pit until within a few days of his death.

As to Clothing, in working-days, the whole collier population, boys and men, wear strong substantial dresses suitable to their work, chiefly made of strong thick flannel and on Sundays they make a very decent appearance in clothes such as are usually worn.

As to Cleanliness, very little of it is compatible with the occupation of a collier and cannot reasonably be expected. Whatever may exist of it may be the subject of much praise but the want of it cannot deserve blame.

(11.) Of the Moral Condition. Of the education of this part of the country, the best thing that can be said is that it is far better than it was formerly. Mr. Stratton says, ‘Sunday-school education has made great progress within the last 30 years. Most of the colliers can read, and some can write.’ This favourable account can refer only to the young men, for four out of five of the colliers whom I examined could make only their cross.

There is a large school at Bedworth maintained out of the funds of the Bedworth Charity and Sunday-schools are very general.

Mr. Benjamin Stratton, agent of Charles Newdigate, Esq., and his brother, Mr. John Stratton, who formerly held the same office, and has now retired and holds the office of Overseer and Guardian, both concurred in stating, that ‘the Sunday-schools had done much good.

Thirty years ago, before there was any schooling, there was more drunkenness and extravagance than at present. Much of the improvement may be attributed to the silent operation of the Sabbath schools. There are many more now who read their Bibles, and other good books, and go to places of worship.’

A very ample account is given of the schools in this district in Part IV. of the Reports from Assistant Hand-loom Commissioners, by Joseph Fletcher, Esq., to which I request to refer.

Mr. Thomas Arrott confirms this evidence (No.64):- ‘The butties keep their accounts of coals delivered on sticks and go and see if the clerks have entered the right quantities, the same as on the sticks. If there is a dispute, and they go before a magistrate, he will believe a butty if he swear

to the correctness of his stick. He has a fresh stick for every day in the week. When I was a butty I kept my accounts on sticks from quarter to quarter, and never had a book at all.'

After all, this method of notching on sticks is reading and writing of a peculiar sort and cannot be held to be very undignified when we consider how the same thing was once in use in use in the British Exchequer.

(12.) As to the effect of the present system it must be considered as satisfactory. A fine, healthy, vigorous body of men and boys pursue a most useful employment beneficial to the public, and themselves obtain a comfortable livelihood. The boys gradually grow up to be men and continue in the employment and have strength to pursue it to a good old age.

Although very few young children are employed and these not at any labour which is injurious to them, we may still regret that any children at all should be taken to the work until they have had time to receive a suitable civil and religious education and although accidents are comparatively infrequent, we may still regret that they are so many and may be allowed to wish that the ventilation were carried to a far greater extent, that they might be still farther diminished and the people, by breathing a still better supply of fresh air, might be in a better sanitary condition than they are now. Yet, on the whole, we must conclude, with an expression of satisfaction, that the condition of the children and young persons in the mining population of Warwickshire should be so good as it is.

There are no apprentices in the pits in this district. No females are employed.

OF THE BADSLEY COLLIERIES.

The Badsley collieries are three miles north from Atherstone, in the county of Warwick and are the property of George Stafford Dugdale, Esq.

In one pit there are from 40 to 50 people. Another pit has not quite 40 people. There is a third in which they have sunk their shafts down to the coal and are now carrying forward their horseway in the pit, being there down the side of a steep hill, the descent being one in three. It will be carried forward as far as they can go, and until stopped by the water.

In all these pits the coal has to be drawn up hill to the shaft by the help of a jig-chain, as in Mr. Newdigate's pits near Bedworth. The holers go down between four and five in the morning. The boys begin to go down at six, and are down and ready to begin work at half-past six. In the course of the day they have half an hour for dinner. They begin to come tip at seven in the evening, having been 12 hours at work. They are employed in guiding the horses, in sweeping the railways and putting back the slack into the gob. A boy on the bank will get 4s. who might get 8s. if he would go down into the pit.

The people are not engaged under a bond.

There are great iron umbrellas, to which are attached chains with loops, in all these pits, over the heads of the people as they descend.

At Badsley is a small mine where the coal is brought up by a gin and only people are employed. It is in the wood. It belongs to a Mr. Ombry.

OF THE KETTLEBROOK COLLIERIES.

The Kettlebrook coal-field is less than a mile south from Tamworth. It is the property of Miss Mary Satterthwaite. Inquiry was made in this coal-field of Mr. Thomas Everett, the butty and from him the following information was obtained.

The beds of coal correspond to the beds at Bedworth. The bed which is now worked is the seven-foot coal. It is 120 yards from the surface. The workings at present are about 400 yards from the foot of the shaft. The mode of working is the same as near Bedworth. They run their mainways as far down the side of the hill in the pit as the water will allow them and then work backways to the shaft. There are 100 people employed, 20 of them boys. They go down at six, and begin the turn at half-past six, and they come up at seven. One hour is allowed for dinner. The people are not engaged under a bond and may leave or may be discharged at a fortnight's notice. The trappers are allowed candles, and it is no loss, as the candles serve to give some light to the

horses passing along. There is very great disturbance in the strata of the pit.

There is a fire in the side of the shaft, 20 yards down from the top, to cause ventilation.

There is a jig-chain which descends over a pulley down into the bottom of the pit and which serves to draw the carriages up a steep place to the foot of the shaft. There are horses who draw the carriages to the foot of this steep incline.

A signal may be made by a man at the foot of the shaft, by pulling a wire which lifts a ball at the top of the shaft, which falls on a plate of iron and makes a noise. There is a code of signals according as the ball is moved whether once, twice, three times, and so on. A similar system is in use in Staffordshire.

There is a strong iron umbrella over the people when they go down and they place themselves in loops in the same way as at Moira.

The Badsley and Kettlebrook collieries are so exceedingly like the collier near Nuneaton and Bedworth, that nothing further need be said respecting them.

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH COAL-FIELD.

This district is about 10 miles in length and as much in breadth. The town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch is in the centre and the coal mines scattered round the circumference at the distance of from four to five miles on every side; the principle of them being at Swadlincote, Moira, Snibson, and Whitwick. The mining population is accordingly scattered over an extensive agricultural district and the coal works with their lofty chimneys adorn instead of disfiguring the landscape.

VISIT TO THE MOIRA BATH PIT.

Mr. John Thomas Woodhouse, agent to the Marquis of Hastings kindly ordered the ground-bailiff to render every assistance and shew all the works.

The wooden posts or frame-work on which the wheels or pulleys are fixed over which the rope from the engine runs and more particularly the great frame-work which supports the pulley immediately over the shaft, are at this pit most substantial and solid. The rope is made of flat ropes laid side by side, and appeared very secure. Every person going down puts his feet into a loop formed by the lower links of a chain, which will admit his thighs and will then not permit his body to slip through and he lays hold of the chain with his hands. There is no risk of man slipping off the chain, as it might be possible to do in places where it is not so secured round his thighs. Overhead is what is called an umbrella and it resemble it in form but it is composed of weighty solid iron and protects the persons going down or coming up from the stones, pieces of coal, brick, timber, or anything else falling down the shaft. As the depth is 708 feet it is easy to see how much mischief might be done by a body of only very small weight.

A great deal of smoke was coming up the shaft and the air was very warm. This was occasioned by a furnace or very great fire used for ventilation. The opening from this furnace into the shaft was observed at the height of nine yard before coming to the foot; when once below this opening there was no hot air nor draft of any sort.

Advancing forward we soon came to a door, which a boy opened to let us through and immediately shut again. This is to prevent the air from passing this way. At the distance of 44 yards from the foot of the shaft is a road which ascends up to the furnace, or great fire and all the air is drawn along this way with a strong and powerful current. Thus, although the air which enters at the other shaft has miles to traverse before it reach this spot, it is drawn on with great force and produces a strong ventilation throughout the whole course. Neither fire-damp nor choke-damp could be dangerous here.

We proceeded forward and we had a mile to go before arriving at the place where the miners were at work. The road for the greater part of the way was sufficiently lofty to enable us to walk upright and even to go bareheaded without fear of being hurt. Every here and there were candles

with the ends in clay stuck against the coals forming the sides of the roads.

Several boys were engaged in sweeping the railways.

There are several faults, and for part of the way the sides of the road and roof were composed entirely of sand-stone instead of coal.

In some places the road was secured by brick walls on the sides, and also by wood.

We met horses and carriages with coals. Generally two horses walked one after the other between the rails, drawing two or more carriages. A lad, almost a man, walked at the head of the first horse and a boy of 10 or 12 at the head of the second. They wore only trousers, stockings, and shoes. The air was warm in this part of the pit, though in the neighbourhood of the shaft where the air, then about 25° Fahrenheit on the bank entered it would be exceedingly cold.

About a third of the way from the foot of the shaft we came to a gin with four horses yoked into it and raising the coal waggons up an inclined plane by a rope which rolled round a cylinder. The waggons which descended empty went merrily along by their own gravity.

We came at last to the workings where the men were engaged in getting the coal. The rollers undergo the coal and then force in wedges and cause it to fall down. The coal is very hard and comes down in large masses and is put in large pieces upon carriages, and young boys are totally unable to do this work. The men were all naked from the middle upwards.

The usual system of a moveable railroad laid along the face of the workings piece after piece as it is wanted, is adopted here.

On returning back the stream of air which had been in our faces, was now in our backs and the heat was felt to be oppressive, and coat and waistcoat were laid aside, but notwithstanding, before coming to the foot of the shaft every remaining portion of clothing was wet with perspiration. Happily the cabin, as it is here called, the same as the hovel in Staffordshire near the mouth of the shaft, with its warm blazing fire, afforded a hospitable protection from the frost and snow.

The heat in this pit is caused by the presence and working of about 80 men and boys, with 30 horses, also by the burning of 100 to 200 candles at a time. The late Mr. Edward Mammatt, in his collection of geological facts respecting the Ashby coal field, says:- 'From the fact that 44° to 46° of Fahrenheit indicates the ordinary heat of water in these mines, it may be inferred that this is the true temperature of the earth at these depths.'

The mine throughout was perfectly dry, and it was stated that no water in that part of the country was met with more than 300 feet below the surface. Water has to be sent down in iron casks for the use of the people who choose to drink it and for the 30 horses which are there to drag the coals. The salt water which supplies the Moira baths is pumped from a depth of 100 feet lower than the bed of the mine.

The Moira coal has a high reputation. It burns beautifully bright and clear, requires no stirring and throws out a strong heat. The lumps do not split open in the fire but adhere together to the last, gradually, however wasting away on the exterior.

The price of the best coal at Moira was 11s. the ton.

The number of pits wrought in the whole Ashby district was stated to be from 17 to 20 but some of them are small, employing only 20 people, whilst the pits of the largest class employ 80 or upwards. We may reasonably estimate the miners at nearly 1000.

OF THE VENTILATION OF MINES.

On this subject the following valuable remarks have been received of Mr. Woodhouse of Overseer, Mining Overseer of the Moira Collieries.

Remarks on Ventilation of Mines and underground Management in the Northern Coal District of England.

The modes of working coal mines in these districts vary so very much that these observations must be considered general. The number and variety of seams of coal now in work in the counties of Derby, Nottingham, Warwick, Stafford, Leicester, and Salop, is so great, that a descriptive account of each and the plan adopted in working, would require a very voluminous

report but it would be a highly interesting and a very useful one.

One of the principal causes of accidents from explosion, of the unhealthy state of the men, and of other drawbacks from the profits of collieries, is an imperfect system of ventilation - imperfect as regards the whole quantity of air passed through the workings but still more imperfect in its distribution.

The improved system adopted in the collieries on the Tyne and the Weare, of dividing the workings into districts and so obtaining a current of fresh air in every division, may in many cases be adopted at a trifling expense in these counties and although the extent of the workings in general bears no proportion to those in the collieries in the north, the principle remains the same and the result would be favourable in a corresponding degree.

It may be urged that the immense quantity of gas given out of the coal in the north has called for the improved system there, which is probably the fact but there are many advantages to be derived from good ventilation beyond the mere prevention of explosion. In pits with a rapid circulation the men respire more freely, the road-ways are kept dry and repaired at less expense, and the timber lasts longer by years and therefore it is a matter of strict economy to ensure a good ventilation. The men suffer most materially from working in an impure atmosphere. In some mines the air can scarcely be perceived to move at all, a thick mist or fog pervading the whole pit, which is caused partly from fermentation in the wastes and old works, partly from the heat and effluvia from the horses and men. This, with a large formation of carbonic acid gas, forms an atmosphere that none but colliers who are accustomed to it could endure but which has the effect of shortening their days.

The accompanying plan shows the mode of ventilation adopted at a small colliery in the south of Derbyshire which is found to answer fully. The workings are always perfectly free from explosive gases and the atmosphere as pure as can be obtained in a mine.

By inspection it will be seen that fresh air is introduced into the different faces, by which the old mode coursing the air through the different works in succession, and thereby carrying the accumulation of vitiated air through the whole is avoided.

The diagram of the Swadlincote colliery, kindly communicated by Mr. Woodhouse, represents two pits, the one called the Common pit, 225 yards below the surface of the ground and the other called the Granville pit, which goes down to a lower bed of coals. Each of these pits has its own downcast shaft, by which the air enters but they have one common upcast shaft, by which the air is made to ascend by means of the great furnace in the upper bed.

On the subject of ventilation, Mr. Vaughan, the agent of Messrs. Stephen son and Co., states, a furnace is placed at the bottom of each upcast shaft, which causes a strong current of air to pass through the whole of the workings. The current of air is so strong throughout the workings that it requires great care on the part of our miners to prevent the candles from being blown out by it.

Children's Employment Commission

J. L. L. N.
SHOWING THE MODE OF VENTILATION
ADAPTED TO

SWANLATE COLLEGE, BURTONGY TREAT.

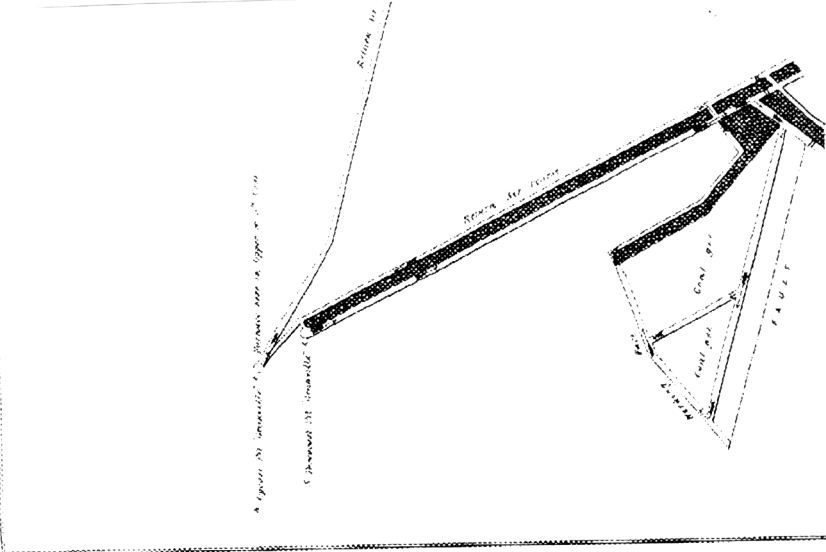
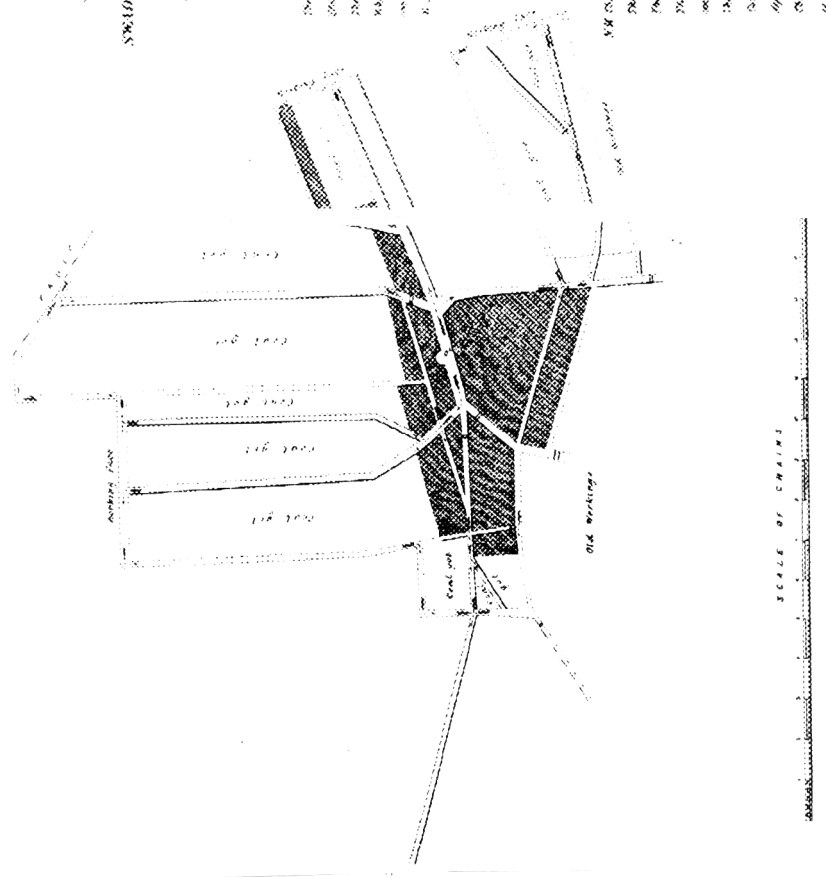
the Property of

COURT GRANVILLE, KNOX.

Block 888.

EXPLANATION.
The dark lines show the workings in the old plan.
The fine dotted lines show the workings in the new plan.
The arrows show the course of the air.
When the windows are closed, the air is introduced
into the room in the top air shaft by a current of current
to clear the chimney.

At the distance of 100 yards, the
The distance of 100 yards is 100 yards, but
The upper part of the shaft is 100
The upper part of the shaft is 100
The upper part of the shaft is 100
The upper part of the shaft is 100
The upper part of the shaft is 100
The upper part of the shaft is 100
The upper part of the shaft is 100
The upper part of the shaft is 100



OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS.

I now proceed to Report on the condition of the children and young persons under the several heads pointed out in our instructions.

(1.) Ages and Number. According to the evidence of Mr. Stephen Evans, the ground-bailiff, there are in the Moira Bath pit 80 men and boys, or lads, of whom there are 20 boys, or lads, that is, persons who have not yet taken the pick in hand, or have assumed the work of a man, which will include all to 16 and a few above it. Some go to work as young as 7 or 8, and at all ages afterwards (No.75).

In the Swadlincote pit, the property of Court Granville, Esq., according to Mr. Joseph Dooley (No.76), there are 65 men and 27 boys, of whom the youngest is 10 years of age. In the Snibston collieries there are about 200 men, and 50 under 16, of whom only six are under 13 years of age, of whom the youngest is 10 years of age.

The three taken together give 875 men, and 97 boys and young persons under 16; the proportions being nearly 4 to 1

In the Whitwick collieries, according to Mr. Stenson, there are no boys under 10 (No.80).

(2.) The Hours of Work. In this, as in other districts, are 12. At the Moira Bath pit the people come at six, or soon after and take about three-quarters of an hour for them all to go down. They leave off at seven in the evening, and it takes them about three-quarters of an hour for all to come up.

The following is the system at the Swadlincote pits, according to the evidence of Mr. Joseph Dooley, the ground-bailiff:-

There are men who go down at night to repair the roads, shift the wood that supports the roof and also hole the coal. About 12 or 14 go down at night; the other half of the holers work in the day-time. There would not be room if they all worked together. About 2 boys go down to assist the men at night to remove the rubbish out of the gate-roads. They have a stint 10 ells, of 3 feet 9 inches each, to hole for their day's work; some turns are about 140 ells, some 180 ells.. The holers come up, if they think fit when they done their day's work; the fillers and boys remain until they have filled and sent of what the holers have dug. They go down about six in the morning; about six men at a time. None of the fillers or boys leave till all the work be done. They are paid by the ton and the more work the more money; from 3s. to 4s. a-day. They come up sometimes at seven and sometimes it may be eight (No.76).

At the Snibston collieries, according to Mr. Michael Parker (No.77), the people begin to go down at half an hour before six, and are all ready to go to work at six and begin to come up at six, and it takes them half an hour.

At the Whitwick collieries the hours of working are from seven to seven. At these collieries, however, the holers go down about two in the morning and get coals ready by the time the people come and these holers come up about two or three in the afternoon.

(3.) As to the Meals. There is no fixed time in the Moira Bath pit. The people take their food when they can, so as not to interrupt the workings. They have not any beer given to them.

In the Swadlincote pits the men have a quart of ale on the Tuesdays and Thursdays and the boys on the Wednesdays and Fridays. The butties showed me their cellar, and handed me a glass and its quality was such as to do honour to the brewers of Burton.

In the Snibston and in the Whitwick collieries the engine stops half an hour and the people then take dinner. At the Ibstock colliery there is half an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner.

(4.) The Employment of the boys in all the collieries in this district is to open and shut doors to guide the current of air for the purpose of ventilation; also to sweep the railways, and go errands. The coal is all in large, weighty pieces and boys and lads under 16 are not able to load the waggons. In the Moira Bath pit there were generally two horses drawing a line of waggons; and an older lad walked at the head of the first horse, and a boy of 10, or 11, or 12, at the head of the second horse. In the Swadlincote collieries boys are employed in a similar way; also in placing garlands, or large broad rims of iron, round the lumps of coal in the skips.

In the Snibston collieries the coals are drawn from the workings to the main railways in large baskets holding 7 cwt., placed on carriages. Such baskets are called 'corves.' One boy goes

before and draws, and another boy pushes behind. When arrived at the main railway, the baskets are lifted by a crane, and placed on a carriage, drawn by a horse or an ass, to the foot of the shaft.

In the neighbouring colliery of Whitwick, boys and lads are not employed in drawing and pushing, as horses and asses are conducted up to the spot where the coals are got in the workings.

(5.) As to the State of the Place of Work, the mines in the Ashby coal-field are exceedingly comfortable; the beds of sufficient thickness to enable all persons to work without being forced into a fatiguing and disagreeable posture. The mines also are dry, as water is not met with below a depth of 100 yards from the surface, and by a powerful ventilation the impure air is rapidly carried off.

(6.) Accidents occur, but not so frequently as in many other districts. Mr. Joseph Dooley, of the Swadlincote pit, says:-

Accidents are very few. About eight years ago two men were burnt by an explosion. We have never had any men damped for some years. There is a greatly improved plan of ventilation now and the air-ways are much larger than formerly. Formerly the air was made to enter, and was conducted through the old workings, where it met with foul air and was brought out on the places where the men were at work: now it is quite the reverse; the fresh air is made to enter and come on the workings where the men are employed and then it passes into the old workings, carrying with it any foul and dangerous air which it may have met with (No.76).

In reply to a query whether any accidents had occurred within the last years, information was obtained from several collieries.

From one colliery - Two men with the breakage of wheels.

From a second colliery. - Only a boy about thirteen years of age, by falling out of the skip in descending the shaft.

From a third colliery. - Yes: two accidents, by which one man and three boys were killed, caused by the fall of suddenly fractured stone from the roof of the mine.

From a fourth colliery. - No lives have been lost. One miner has been injured in his back by stone falling from the roof in the work in the act of getting coal.

In answer to the query as to the precaution taken to keep the head-gear, machinery and the ropes in good repair, some of the agents reply:- "by frequent inspection;" others, 'by inspection at different times.' But the agent of Messrs. Stephenson and Co. states that he causes this duty to be performed every day and the agent of Messrs. Stenson and Co. says that the underground bailiff examines daily the ropes, bull-chains and tacklers by which the men descend and ascend and one of the smiths examines the head-gear and machinery daily. Large iron bonnets are provided and used in order to prevent anything from falling on the men descending or coming up the shaft. Such ought to be the system in every mine in the kingdom.

The following is the evidence of Mr. Michael Parker, of the Snibston Collieries:-

How many go down together and come up together? - 'About four men and, if all boys, about five or six go. They go in the basket. We have had no accidents in our pits going up and down.

To what do you attribute freedom from accident? - To having good tackling and taking great care. There is a man whose duty it is to see the boys safe in the skips coming up down and that there are no more in number than four men, or more than five or six boys. We are particular to have a steady man at the engine.

What precautions do you take against fire-damp and choke-damp? - Strong ventilation (No.77).

At the Ibstock colliery only six are allowed to ascend or descend at a time and if more go there is a fine of 6d.

The solid nature of the coal renders the mines of this district less likely to produce injuries by pieces falling from the roof; also from the moderate height when an injury is inflicted it is less likely to be severe than when a piece of coal has fallen from a great height.

Mr. Charles Allsop Dalby, a surgeon in Ashby, who has had much practice amongst the colliers, being asked:-

Have you had much to do with boys? - 'Very little. Sometimes a pinched finger or pinched foot. There are not half the accidents you would imagine. They still occur some times (No.81)'.

(7.) Of Holidays, or days on which there is no labour: in addition to those prescribed by religion there is the afternoon of the day when the people receive their wages; also in the warm weather of summer when there is a diminished demand for coals there is not full employment. The proprietors, however, in merciful consideration of their work people at that season of the year, accumulate a stock of coals in anticipation of the winter's sale; but in doing this it is necessary to observe some degree of prudence and of necessity the people cannot have full employment at that time.

(8.) The hiring of boys whose business it is to open and shut doors, to sweep the railways, is the work of the proprietors. The boys will attend to the horses, or draw and push the waggons, and the young persons who assist in filling them, are hired and paid by the butties. A very young child is paid 8d. a-day. By and bye when the boy is able to walk with the horses the wages rise to 1s 5d. and 1s. 8d. About 16 the young man gets 2s. a-day, and gradually advances until he arrives at the maximum wages of 3s. 8d. a-day, and 12 cwt. of coal per month. At the Swadlincote mines the maximum is 3s. 4d. a-day and the allowance of coal is four cwt. a-week. At the Snibston and Whitwick collieries the men have 3s. a-day and 10 or 12 cwt. of coals a month, besides a little favour shown them in the rent of the cottages.

(9.) That the treatment and care taken of the boys are good, their cheerful, happy appearance is evidence which no man who has seen them can in the least doubt. Independent of the good feeling which actuates proprietors and their agents not to allow oppression, the boys and young persons have the best of all securities for good treatment in the interest of proprietors and all persons under them. Their work is often of a kind which could not be so conveniently done by full-grown men, yet is altogether indispensable and the boys and lads if ill-used in one pit could easily find shelter in another.

(10.) The appearance of the children and men bespeaks their good physical condition.

Mr. Dalby, one of the surgeons of the Union of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, gave the following evidence:-

Do you attend many colliers in that capacity? - I very seldom have an Union order to attend colliers but it is the case sometimes, and I attend many colliers as surgeon of field-clubs.

What is their general state of health? - Exceedingly good. I consider better than that of agricultural labourers.

At what time do you think them past being able to do the work in the pit? - The work in the pit is very laborious, and some are unable for it as early as 50, others at 55, and some at 60. I should say the greater part about 55. It depends upon constitution (No.81).

Mr. John Davenport, Clerk of the Union of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and many years Treasurer and Guardian under Gilbert's Act, gave the following evidence:-

Have you many applications from colliers on account of sickness? - No, very seldom.

Have you many applications from colliers on the ground of debility from old age? - Very few indeed.

Do you consider an agricultural labourer or a collier to be soonest unfit for labour? - The collier; I do not think he wears quite so long.

To what period does he wear? - A collier to from 65 to 70 and an agricultural labourer to from 70 to 75 (No.82).

It is clear that the men who can wear to from 65 to 70 must have been in good physical condition in the duties of their youth.

Mr. Stephen Evans, of the Moira collieries, says, 'We have men of 60, even of 70, years of age, who are as able to do a day's work as any men in the pit' (No.75). Mr. Dooley, of the Swadlincote collieries, says, 'One man is at 60 years of age and at another pit there is a man of 70 years of age and he able to do a full day's work as any man in the pits' (No.76). Mr. Parker, the Snibston collieries, gave the following evidence:-

Do the boys enjoy good health? - Exceedingly good.

At what age can a man hold out to work? - Some work well at 60, but some are knocked at 50 and 45. Fifty may be the average (No.77).

Considering the rocky hardness of the coal of this district, it is wonderful that men can hold out so long as the above evidence, taken altogether, shows that they do. The colliers are of good stature, and of a fine manly appearance.

(11.) The state of education cannot be considered very bad, nor yet very good.

All the witnesses agree in stating that the children attend Sunday-schools, they speak well of these schools, and it is so far so well. But Sunday-school action, though exceedingly good in communicating moral and religious instruction and bringing the children to places of worship, can never compensate for the want of instruction at day-schools. The proprietors of the Whitwick collieries have a day-school and 110 children under 10 years of age are admitted to work in the mines. This is just what ought to be, and is an example worthy of imitation in the other collieries of the Ashby district and in all the coal districts the empire.

The clergy of this district who have made answers to the queries on education which were circulated by the Board but the returns to which have proved too voluminous to be appended to this Report, all concur in deploring the injurious effect produced on the children by too early a removal from school to labour.

The Rev. Joseph C. Moore of Measham, says:-

Not having learnt to read well they find little pleasure in reading and therefore are little benefited in after life by that measure of education which they have obtained, excepting in cases of superior intelligence.

In answer to the query whether he considered Sunday-schools sufficient to make up for the loss of instruction by early removal from the day-schools, he says:-

I do not. Sunday-schools are an evil to remedy a greater evil, and should, as far as possible be confined to their proper object, religious instruction.

The Rev. G. W. Lloyd, of Church Gresley, states:-

That the time of leaving school varies from 7 to 12 years of age, in fact it depends chiefly on the opportunity which the child has of getting employment, for parents remove them as soon as they can turn their labour to profit.

Of the early removal from school he states:-

That it operates greatly to their injury. They are removed from restraint and the lessons are forgotten soon amidst light and thoughtless companions and mere worldly occupation.

The same gentleman forwards replies to the queries from Mr. John Rowley Swadlincote, who states:-

Two-thirds of the Sunday-scholars commence labour from 7 to 10 years of age; the day-scholars from 10 to 14. It is my opinion that commencing labour at so early an age is injurious, preventing the proper building up of the constitution, consequently an early breaking up of the same and premature death. It is also exceedingly pernicious to their morals; the vice presented to them at collieries, manufactories, &c., being their chief learning. Whereas, their morals by a long course of instruction would be more established. He considers the Sunday-schools insufficient to make up for the loss of instruction by early removal.

The Rev. Francis Jickling of Donisthorpe, makes the following statement:-

The chief employment of the inhabitants of Donisthorpe, Moira, and Oaktharpe, forming one ecclesiastical district, is in the Moira coal pits. Boys, in consequence of their poverty of the poverty

of their parents, are for the most part sent to work in the pits when they reach their tenth or year. Previously to attaining this age, they attend one or other of the day-schools, where they are taught reading, writing, and arithmetic. The early age at which they are withdrawn, of course renders their actual attainments much less than is desirable.

As to the age at which children should be withdrawn from school to be sent to labour, it will be seen by the preceding extract that Mr. Jickling considers in 10 to 12 too early. The Rev. Mr. Moore of Mesham thinks 14 is the proper age for boys, but they might be allowed to go to farmer's work in summer after 11. Girls might leave at 13. The Rev. Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Rowley also consider 14 as the proper age and the Rev. Mr. Cotton of Staunton Harrold considers 15 as the proper age.

No doubt, if we look solely to the moral and religious benefit of the children, the ages which these gentlemen recommend as proper for removal would be the best but when we look at the poverty of the parents and the great difficulty in many districts of obtaining a sufficient supply of labour, we must see the necessity of permitting children to leave school at an earlier period, although the Ashby-de-la-Zouch coal field may be in more fortunate circumstances.

All the witnesses concur in the existence of the very best state of feeling between employers and employed, which is one of the best results of good moral training. Mr. Evans attributes this happy condition to the circumstance of the work people having been born and bred on the spot and accustomed to orderly submission and having no strangers coming amongst them to disturb their minds. Hence they had no squabbles or disputes.

The witnesses all describe the people as attending public worship, and as not indulging in cruel sports and not tormenting dogs, cocks, bulls, badgers, or bears. There are no prize-fights, nor gambling of any sort. As usual in other places, they have a great liking to strong beer.

Of the moral condition of the miners the Rev. Francis Jickling gives the following favourable account:-

The mining population here are, with few exceptions, what might be termed a moral people, compared with other districts of a similar kind, though still very different to what I could wish. There is very little drunkenness or swearing and the time allowed for rest and recreation is in most cases spent at their own homes. They are not, however a reading people. The schools which, as well as the church, are of recent origin, will I trust gradual infuse a better spirit into them.

That they are in a good state of moral discipline and under self-control is evidenced by this fact, that, although the butties pay the wages on the Friday afternoon, yet nevertheless the men come to their work on the Saturday. The plan was attempted in Warwickshire, and according to the witnesses examined, totally failed. In Staffordshire when the men are paid their reckoning on the Saturday they spend the following Monday in drinking and are not always able to come to work on the Tuesday.

(12.) The effect of the present system cannot be otherwise considered than as extremely good. The miner derives a comfortable livelihood by an occupation beneficial to society. From boyhood he imperceptibly becomes a man, and obtain a man's income. He marries, and has his wife, his house, his 18s. a-week, and 12 cwt. of coals a-month and his church or chapel for the enjoyment of the blessed prospects of religion on the Sunday. His family rises around him, and at last he arrives, still in his strength, at a good old age, departs this life and is laid where his forefathers were laid before him. Some men may have a more splendid career but few a career which is more useful, or which affords more happiness her or a better prospect hereafter.

OF APPRENTICES.

The mines in this district are worked without the help of any apprentices. It would be a happiness to be able to say that no boys had ever been subjected to such injustice as being bound to a collier in this district but, from the evidence of Mr. John Davenport (No.82), it appears that one boy was bound from Ashby-de la-Zouch to a miner in their own vicinity. The pauper children are however carried away at an early age to Staffordshire to give their labour till 21 years to the butties of that county and to the Report on South Staffordshire I therefore refer.

Mr. Thomas Shuttlewood, the agent of Viscount Maynard, states in his answers to queries,

‘Never allowed the butties to take apprentices.’

Mr. Price, the agent of the Leicestershire Coal Company, in like manner states that they have no apprentices.

Mr. George Vaughan, agent of the mines of Messrs. Stephenson and Co., gives a similar statement.

Mr. Evans and Mr. Dooley in their evidence declare that there are no apprentices at Moira or Swadlincote, nor in any mines of this part of the country.

. No females are employed about the mines, either in the pits or on the banks.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

JAMES MITCHELL.

36, New Broad Street, London,
August 7, 1841.

EVIDENCE COLLECTED BY DR. MITCHELL.

WARWICKSHIRE COAL-FIELD.

No.62 Benjamin Stratton.

I am agent to Charles Newdigate, Esq., and have the management of the coal-mines near Nuneaton, in the county of Warwick. There are very few children in the mines under 10 years of age and those few are such as are brought down by their fathers or relations. The people who work in the mines enjoy very good health, and there are very few accidents. There was a contract with a surgeon to attend to all the accidents for 10 guineas a-year and the people might be about 100 in number: now that we have increased our works and have about 150, the surgeon gets 15 guineas a-year. Accidents sometimes occur from the falling in of the roof, notwithstanding it is supported by wooden props and everything is done to secure it. Accidents rarely happen from the explosion of gas. When a heading is made up-hill, the gas accumulates in the upper part and it may become necessary to continue the work of the men all night as well as by day, in order that the gas, by being disturbed by the men and carriages going backwards and forwards, may be partly driven off. The most dangerous time is when an uphill heading is united to another heading, for then there is a rush forward of the gas and it is mixed with atmospheric air, and if there be a light in the way an explosion takes place. On this account this junction must be effected in the dark, without any light. Cases are ill recollection of individuals being headstrong and refusing to take proper precautions and have suffered for it. Cases from mephitic air are seldom of a fatal termination. About 40 years ago, a miller of the name of Johnson, and four or five others, fell down from this air but Johnson recovered again, and it was observed that he happened to fall into a place where there was water, and his recovery was attributed to his falling into the water.

There is generally a supply of fresh air in the mines, and it is not necessary to light a fire in one of the shafts to produce a circulation of air above perhaps once or twice a-year. The air of course is not so fresh as the air on the bank, but the colliers are seasoned to it and do not feel inconvenience in places which to other people would be disagreeable. You may go into a small room where there will be from 20 to 30 of them all sitting together smoking and the place will be so full of smoke that nobody else could endure it but there they sit, and drink and smoke and enjoy themselves and find the close air no inconvenience. Some few get asthmatic in old age but it will not be one in 50.

Sunday-school education has made great progress within the last 30 years. Most of the colliers can read and some can write. There were remarkable instances how well men could manage when they could not read and write. There was an old bailiff who could sell coals and his accounts as well as any man, without writing. He had a long stick covered with notches which was his ready reckoner and to which he referred to save him time in making his calculations. Then he could notch down on a stick the quantity of coals which he sold to any man and the amount and as the buyers were mostly the same people over and over again, he had his marks for them. He used a long stroke for 1s., a stroke half the length for 6d., a very little stroke for 1d. and a stroke less still for 1/2d. At the end of the week he could take his sticks and tell off every man's account to the clerk, who entered the particulars into a book, and to the amount of the value from £50. to £100 and make no mistakes.

There are no apprentices in the coal-mines.

Thirty years ago, before there was any schooling, there was more drunkenness and extravagance than at present. Much of the improvement may be attributed to the silent operation of the Sabbath-schools. There are many now who read their bibles and other good book, and who go to places of worship. The Methodists also have done a great deal of good and their chapels are well attended. The colliers, many of them, love gospel sermons and formerly sermons of this description were not always to be heard in the churches but there is a much greater number of ministers now in the church who preach gospel sermon, and who are zealous in the discharge of their spiritual duties. The colliers have a bean-feast in the open field every year, which is given by

the landlord of the house where the club assembles. It is held at the time when the beans are just ripened. He prepares about two pecks full and about 20 or 30lbs. of fat bacon and plenty of loaves of fresh bread. The colliers leave off work that day by two o'clock, and assemble in the field. Every man takes his great bladed knife and cuts off a piece of bread and a slice of bacon and helps himself to beans and there is nothing left. Such a substantial meal requires to be washed down, and the men pay for their ale, so that the landlord is no loser by the hospitality of the festival.

The late Marquis of Hastings, returning after a long absence to his property in a neighbouring district, entered into conversation with one of his colliers who did not know his person and his lordship endeavoured to persuade him that the colliers would be in better health if they would drink less beer, and in proof of this, stated the case of an old man of 90 years of age who had never had a quart of beer in his life. But the collier was not to be so easily persuaded, and he replied, 'If such a man without beer could live to 90 years of age, if he had only taken a quart of ale a-day he would have lived for ever.' His lordship desisted from the argument and made the collier a present.

The colliers delight in seeing pugilistic combats and may have an opportunity perhaps five or six times in the summer. All are at play that day, and half the colliers go to see the fight.

When there is general play, as on such an occasion, there is no fine for being absent but if an individual from his own caprice do not come to his work, he puts all the rest to some inconvenience, and there is a fine of 5s., which is paid into the fund of the club.

Benefit societies are well supported, but their plan is often not such as to make the fund hold out, to give all the benefits promised in the articles. Hence the clubs break up and individuals who have paid their contributions for many years find themselves without a resource in case of need, when at an advanced period of life. The dignities of office and the social pleasures at their meetings contribute to render the societies attractive.

A self-supporting dispensary after a struggle of three years was abandoned.

No savings-bank has ever been established.

The men almost universally marry very young.

The men are paid their money on Saturday, at about two o'clock. The one Saturday is drawing day and the next Saturday is the reckoning day. The accounts between the men and their employers are kept and settled by the fortnight. Supposing that the fortnight terminated on this day, the 6th of February, 1841, it would be the drawing Saturday, as men would draw so much on account; then in the course of the next week the account of every man would be made up to this 6th day of February, as to what he had earned in the fortnight and the balance due to him being ascertained, then on next Saturday, which will be reckoning Saturday, he will be paid this balance, which will make a clear account to the 6th day of February on all sides.

By this method the collier always has a week's wages due to him from his employers, but which will be paid up to him if from any cause his services are discontinued.

The plan of paying the men on Friday instead of Saturday was tried and was found to be very injurious. By paying them so early as two o'clock there is ample time for their wives to go to market and buy the necessaries for the Sunday.

The Warwickshire coal is not bituminous and will not coke, and this is considered the principal cause why it will not do to make iron. There is indeed a place about two miles south from Nuneaton where there is excellent ore, in the coal-field of Mr. Wealden, where the attempt has been made but, although the hot-blast has been applied to his furnace, still there was not success and he discontinued. It is reported that he intends to try it again.

Throughout the district there are three beds of coal:-

The first is the two-yard coal.

The second is the slate-coal.

The third is the seven-feet coal.

In some collieries there was a seam of coal not far below the two yard coal, called Rider-coal.

In most places it is not so thick as to be worth sinking a pit for it.

There are other veins of coal, but too thin to be worth working.

All the three beds already mentioned are worked. There is a distance of from 20 to 25 yards between them and for extensive fields they preserve their respective distances. They keep their respective distances in the coal-fields about Atherstone.

The seven-feet coal for household purposes is as good as the Staffordshire coal, but will not coke.

The same beds of coal which exist near Nuneaton are recognised beyond Atherstone a towards Tamworth.

About Nuneaton the beds of coal dip as much as one foot in three, and consequently although the coal may be reached by a shaft of about 100 yards or little more, yet, when the level is advanced forward from the shaft down the decline, the depth from the surface becomes greater and greater.

At Nuneaton the collieries were worked for a length of country of about two miles, and levels were carried downwards as far as it could profitably be done on account of the water, that in that place the collieries are exhausted. Immediately south of these old collieries the property belongs to a number of different people and as they cannot be got to unite to grant lease, there is no one who can venture to be at the expense of what would be necessary to work it. The ground next farther belongs to Mr. Newdigate, and is worked.

From the fields of Mr. Troughton, near Coventry, ironstone is exported to Staffordshire. It is said to be of excellent quality, being very rich in iron. The same kind of stone is got Nuneaton, but it is so poor in iron as not to be worth getting. The iron-stone is in bands and continuous, but there are also round balls, and some of very large size.

In working the coal-pits it is not usual to leave any pillars to support the roof and about three parts out of four of all the coal is got out; the remainder, consisting of slack, is kept to fill up the gob. There is often a sale of the slack and small coal together, at as much as 5s. for a ton and a half. This mixture is used for the fire of the steam-engine and to burn lime stone. The ground from below which the coals have been taken, sometimes sinks as much three feet.

About Bedworth the beds of coals approximate to each other and farther on they cease altogether, that is about 10 miles from Nuneaton. As to where the beds terminate on the west side nobody can tell, for they dip down farther than it is possible to work them on account of the water and they may extend to any distance for anything that can be known.

Towards the south the veins approximate so near together that two of them may be worked by one shaft by successive draughts.

No.63 Thomas Pearson.

You are butty of the colliery called the Bedworth Charity Colliery? - Yes.

What people have you under you? - 38 men and lads. The lads are eight in number.

What is the depth of the shaft? - 114 yards.

What is the length of the level? - At first 300 yards.

What is the thickness of the seam? - Six feet.

Are there railways? - Yes.

Any horses employed? - No.

How are coals got to the shaft? - Driven by cars on the railway. The boys run the waggons.

What wages have they? - Some 20d. a-day, some 2s., some 2s. 2d. A boy of 12 or 13 gets 20d. and a boy of 14 gets 2s. 2d. to 2s. 4d. a-day. No overtime in this country.

What are the ages of the boys? - There is a boy of eight years who gets 8d. a-day. He works on the banks; he does not go down, he goes to the blacksmiths with the picks.

What does the youngest boy in the pit get? - 14d. He is better than 11 years of age.

What hours do they work? - They begin at six in the morning and give over at six at night.

What time is allowed to meals? - Half an hour to dinner when they have beer. The men have a quart and the lads have a pint.

Are there younger boys than eight years of age in the pits? - Not younger than eight.

Is the bottom of the pit level? - No; in one part there is a descent, in one part six or seven inches in the yard and the cars are let down by a chain and there is an ascent in some places and the cars are hoisted up by the whimsey.

What is the depth of the seam? - About six feet.

Are there any pits where the seam is as shallow as three feet? - do not know of any in this country. There are some four feet and five feet. There was a pit only three feet, but it is not worked now. They had men to draw the cars by a belt round the middle. I worked myself, and drew sometimes in only three feet. I never heard of any seam less than three feet.

Is there much explosion from gas? - Not about this quarter. There has been some in Newdigate's collieries but not where I work. There is a good deal in Staffordshire.

Are there often accidents? - Very few in this quarter.

Are many 'damped'? - Very seldom in the Charity colliery but several in the collieries below. We lost two boys who fell before a waggon. A man fell down the mouth of a pit and was killed.

Why are the boys paid so much better in proportion than the men? - Boys are scarcer, they can run over their work better than men could.

How many days in the fortnight do the colliers work altogether? - Take the year altogether, not above half their time, or very little more. The sale falls off in the summer time.

Are any young women or girls employed in the collieries? - None in this part.

Do the men draw on the one Saturday and reckon on the next? - Yes, the men would draw oftener if they could.

Will what you have said about the colliery, of which you are butty, apply to the collieries of the charity? - They all are much the same.

No.64 Thomas Arrott, accompanied by Samuel Shelton.

First went down to the mine at seven years of age, and was employed to move the slack back to the gob. Is now 43. He has had good health and may continue well 20 years longer, please God to preserve him from accidents. The men who work by the stint have no time for their meals but the engine is kept always going until the stint be got down and then they leave off.

There are boys of seven or eight employed on the bank to carry the picks to the blacksmith. There are none under 10 in our pit and there are very few employed at that age in this country and cannot be so useful now since engines have been introduced. There are no apprentices.

There is very little fire-damp or wild-fire but a great deal of choke-damp. Sometimes a man will need three candles and he lights any that goes out by the help of the others but if he cannot keep any of them alight, it is time for him to come away. He has worked from field to field in the same parts all his life. When the sale of coals has been dull he has taken to dig wells but that is a small job, as water is got about the town of Nuneaton at the depth of 5 to 10 yards and is soon done. In some places where there is sand at the bottom it is necessary to place tubs to hold the water but where the soil is not sandy tubs are not necessary. In the pit in which he now works, the engine brings the coals along the road 500 yards to the foot at one the shaft and the workings extend in some places 170 yards from the road. In the ends or workings there are smaller cars on wheels which run on rails and boys push them on to the roads and when they are emptied into the great waggons they push them back.

The butties keep their accounts of the coals delivered on sticks, and they go and see if the clerks have entered the right quantities, the same as on the sticks. If there be a dispute and they go before a magistrate, he will believe a butty if he swear to the correctness of his stick. He has a fresh stick for every day of the week. When I was a butty I kept my accounts on sticks from quarter to quarter and had never a book at all. Butties are sometimes not well off as the men, for they have to keep the roof up, and sometimes are put to great expense to get wood. When the ribbon-trade is bad, all trades are slack here and the weavers have not money to buy coals and some take to the pits. The seven-foot coal usually sells for 10s. the ton, the slate-coal in Newdigate's field sells for about 8s. 4d., and the two-yard coal about the same. Sometimes the charter to the butties is 3s., 3s. 3d., 3s. 6d., and sometimes 4s. 6d. It is 4s. 6d. to get the seven-foot coal in Newdigate's collieries. When a shaft is sunk they find out where they are and then run ahead to the place which they prefer for the other shaft, up which they wish to draw the coals. In one pit, that is the Charity colliery, one shaft is 120 yards from the other. Sometimes the roof appears to threaten to fall down and the wooden props crack and snap and then it may become necessary to build up the coals to support the roof. The coals yield a little but if the wood be insufficient to bear the roof it snaps. This is a great loss to the butties and to the men; and if it be a time of brisk ale it is a loss to the master, as he has not the coals to sell.

There are usually two rows of props, and when the coal is got out then the back row next to the gob is taken out and moved forward and a new working is begun. Once they are forward from a place and have left it behind them, it is of no consequence if the roof fall or not. The plan in making roads is to work the road to the foot of the hill and then make the ends or workings backwards towards the shaft.

In the pits at night the earth is more on the move than in the day, and greater noises are heard, sometimes as if the rocks were breaking.

Many times I have been working at night, only myself and two lads and we have notice it,

and chief of all between 12 and 2, I have been in like manner in the pit with only the two lads in the day time but the noise was not so great as in the night.

Thinks a weaver with 10s. a week is as well off as a collier with 18s. A weaver neither eats nor drinks so much, nor wears so many shoes or clothes.

No.65 John Lawrence.

Works in the Grove Colliery about three quarters of a mile from Nuneaton. Went I work at 12 years of age. There is a boy in the pit about eight. His work is to shut down the cloth after the men have passed through. The cloth is used instead of a door to regulate the course of air. A boy of 12, if strong, can guide the carriages. Pits here are much up and down. No horses now. He used to guide the horses when young. Rails no instead. When the car goes down it is let down by a chain, when one skip goes up the other is let down the hill.

A pit at Colliecraft is upwards of 600 yards down hill, and a whimsey drags the carriage all the way up. Three waggons are brought up the hill at once.

Three different hills in the pit at Grove Colliery and a flat place at top of each, horse never dragged at Colliecraft. I would rather stand the trade than any trade a going. but some men cannot stand a dump at all hardly. We meet with very few accidents. We have never had a bone broke in our field these four years. There are 20 of us in our pit.

Our coal is five feet high, we have to undergo it and then use gunpowder. When we use gunpowder we must undergo a yard and a half. Some lads will take the pick at 14, but you will not find one often who will take it at 14, some will take it at 16. The wages to a man are 3s. and a quart of ale worth 5d. also a candle every night, (the candles are 16 to the lb. and 12cwt. of coals a month. The master draws home the coals to the men. The wives do not carry home the coal as in Staffordshire. The men during the last fortnight worked 11 days, only one day play. The men are subject to a fine if they take a day's play without leave. If a man come and entice others away they fine them all. The fine is put into the club money. Several times when they hear of a fight, they all go to see it. Only two fights last year. These were prize fights, one was at the White Hat at Hurley. All the far and near went to see it. There is no other fighting but man-fighting.

If the butties go to the fight and there are no coals for the sale, they are fined a sovereign but if there be coals, nothing is sad. The land sale is the chief demand but there is some times a boat now and then. It is seven or eight months since we sold a boat's load. Then is no regular hour for dinner but the men take about half an hour and the engine stands. The men drink the ale in the hovel after they come up. Many of the men would not stand the ale in the pit. It is not like the poor stuff in Staffordshire. They drink it in tuts or horns all round. The Staffordshire ale is two penny, ours is as goes as that sold in inns. After the drink in the cabin the men go home as lively as larks. The men draw on one Saturday and reckon on the next. After the reckoning the men go and refresh themselves and carry home the remainder to their wives. Some hide a little money in their shoes and when their wives go to settle with the baker or the butcher, the men step back and have a little more. There is often quarrelling between the men and their wives about the money.

There are no tommy-shops but some of the butties keep beer-shops and the men come there to draw and to reckon. If a man do not take his beer, the other workmen think him a poor devil and do not like him. We once had our draw on the Friday night but it was the worst thing that ever was, for the men would not come to work on the Saturday and the women had not the money either for the Saturday night, or the Sunday morning. The boy is always paid himself his wages, whatever be his age.

The boys all live with their parents and do not go to lodge elsewhere. I have seen it done in Staffordshire. A boy is not allowed to go to a public-house, except to take a pint of ale or so. Accidents from blowing up or damp very seldom occur. Not one damped within these three miles, nor burnt for these five years. Lime and slack will take fire and make foul air. When it happens and a man is damped, they dig a hole in the soil and put the head and shoulders in and it brings him to again. The doctor is paid out of the lordship of the colliery every year.

The men marry usually about 19, and the girls are generally younger when they marry. The first child generally comes very soon after, sometimes it comes before.

There are Sunday-schools now everywhere at chapels or churches. Most of the boys learn to read. Chief take to writing at first, and many write better than they read.

No. 66 Samuel Sheldon.

Is 66 years of age. Has worked 50 years in the coal-pits. He goes down still, but is paid by the stint and cannot do a day's work now as in former days. Thinks that a man after 50 years' work in a coal-pit ought to have a pension. He has had good health but has had hurts sometimes. His brother died a fortnight ago aged 68. He had kept to his work in the coal-pit until within a few days of his death.

No.67 John Craddock, of Camp-Hill, Nuneaton.

You have had opportunities of knowing the condition of the colliers? - Yes, as chairman of the Nuneaton Union.

Have you many applications for relief from the colliers? - Much less from colliers than from any other class; less than from agricultural labourers or from weavers.

At what age do you consider the colliers unfit for labour? - They kept on working to about 60 and even to a higher age.

When you have altogether few applications? - Very few altogether.

No.68 John Sommers.

You are a surgeon residing in Bedworth, in Warwickshire? - Yes; I have practised there for 19 years.

Have you had many patients amongst the colliers? - I have been surgeon to several clubs.

What is their general state of health? - Remarkably good. When they are ill, it is almost always from drunkenness. As a body, they are remarkably healthy.

To what age are they able to continue their labour? - If not crippled by accidents they can continue to 50, and many to 60.

At what age do the boys go down to the pits? - Many at six and seven and at all ages. They generally begin very young. **What kind of health have the boys?** - Very good, rosy cheek and good appetites. As a proof that the employment of the colliers is very healthy, I may state, that when ribbon-weavers, from distress, have gone down to work in the collieries, they have improved in their appearance and become strong and fat.

Are there many accidents? - Not many; few lives lost. The usual accidents are contusions and fractures from coal falling on them. Boys are more frequently hurt than men from the waggons.

Are the injuries soon healed? - Remarkably quick, much more so than the agricultural labourers. They live like fighting cocks.

Are they much addicted to drinking? - We want the Temperance Society very much here. They drink very much here. The colliers are very ignorant, few can read and write. It is much better amongst the ribbon-weavers. The colliers who earn the most money do not keep their families better than the rest who earn less.

Are rheumatisms frequent? - Not with the pitmen, but it occurs with the men on the bank who work the engine.

What do the colliers pay to the clubs? - Some 2s. and 2s. 6d. to the surgeon for sickness. The proprietors contract for the accidents, perhaps £5 for a pit of 20 men. The men pay to their clubs a sum which enables them to afford pecuniary relief to the sick.

Are there many accidents from hydrogen and carbonic acid? - Very few. In the case of carbonic acid gas the man is brought up by his fellow workmen and cold water is thrown over him and he comes to of himself. We hardly ever hear of accidents from burning by hydrogen gas.

Have the colliers any night-work? - When there is a great demand for coals, they have two turns, one set works in the day time, and the other at night. Night shift and day shift is what they call it. They work one fortnight in the day-time, and the next fortnight in the night-time.

No.69 William Butler.

I am 19 years of age. I went down to the pit when I was 11. Before that I had been 2 years on the bank to be ready to carry picks to the blacksmith. It was easy work. I had then 9d. a-day. I have been 8 years running the rails, that is, pushing the carriages on the rails. I get 1s. 9d. a day. I like the work very well it is fatiguing but I have nothing to complain of. I get up at 5, take breakfast, get on the bank at half after 5 and am down by 6. The shift begins then and ends at 6. We have half an hour for dinner, from 2 to half after 2. We have a quart of beer, good strong beer. We begin to come up at 6, and it is half-past before we are all up. I come home, and get a hot supper, wash my face and neck, and I go out for a short while; come home, go to bed at 9; but sometimes later. On the one Saturday we work usual but on the other, which is the reckoning Saturday, we come up, and have our dinner at home and go and receive our money.

On Sundays I get up at 8 and wash all over with water and put on Sunday clothes. I go to church, and come home to tea at half after 4. I go to church in the evening. I read the Testament and sometimes in the Bible but no other book. I never read the newspapers. I can say the Lord's Prayer and do so every night before going to bed. I can say the Catechism. We sometimes work a few hours at a time when there is no sale and we get no money, but only ale, when we leave at 11. I generally get drunk on such occasions. We generally have 12 quarts. I very seldom get drunk at any other time. When once we get a sup too much we think we can drink more, and go on.

[This witness was the usual size of boys of 12.]

No.70 Thomas Smith.

I think I shall be 17 next Michaelmas. I went to work in the iron-stone pit when I was 10 years old; I run the rails. The road was a yard high at the most and three quarters in some places. I got up at 5, and went down at 6. I worked 12 hours. I had an hour for dinner out of the 12 hours. I dined in the pit. I had a pint when I first went down, and when I was 13. I had a quart. It was good beer, not small beer. I left off work at 6 at night. The waggons were not too much for me. I sometimes was tired, sometimes I was not. Sometimes there was water in the cast road, but not where I worked. I brought the ironstone to the great waggon, where a man emptied my little waggon, and another man ran it up to the shaft. I liked it very well. When I was 11 I had 1s. 6d. a-day and at 13 I had 2s. a-day, and at 15 I had 2s. 4d. a-day. I sometimes work 9 days in the fortnight and sometimes ten. I am in good health.

I cannot read. I say the Lord's Prayer every night when I go to bed. I have seen wild beasts at the wake. I can play at skittles; that is, at four-pins.

On Sundays I get up at 6; stop at home in the morning to get dinner. I go to church in the afternoon and evening. I do not go, like many boys, to play in the fields on Sundays.

No.71 William Dewis.

I was 15 last Christmas. I was a weaver but, trade being bad, I went down to the pit to run the rails. I liked it very well. I am much stronger, and have much more flesh on my bones. It agrees very well with my health. I get 2s. 4d. a-day but we have had a great deal of play lately. All the boys are used very kindly, and we have nothing to complain of.

I had used to read, but I have forgot it all now. I can say the Lord's Prayer, but I never say it now. I have given over saying it at night these 12 months. I sometimes go to church. I have been twice since New Year's day. I get up on Sundays about 9 or 10 and take breakfast. I then go up stairs and rest myself on my bed, lying with my hands under my head, till dinner. In warm weather I go out and lie in the coal-field and bask in the sun. I enjoy rest after a hard week's work. After dinner I go to sleep by the fire till 4 o'clock; after which I take tea. After tea I go to bed about 6 o'clock and get up on Monday at the usual time and go to work. I am never drunk of myself. Sometimes they make us drink when we work in the morning for nothing. Some of the men would rather work a few hours for a sup of drink than work all day for money.

No.72 William Cruchelow.

I am 16. I went between 4 and 5 years ago into the ironstone pit. I go down at 6 and work till 6, and out of that time I have half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. I minded the flats at first, that is, when the loaded waggon came to the foot of the incline I hooked it to the chain to be drawn up. I now stand at the foot of the shaft and hang on, that is, I hang the wagons to the chain to be drawn up the shaft. I get 2s. a-day. It is not very hard work. I like it. I keep my health. The other boys never beat me and I never beat them. The butties would beat me if I were to do so. The waggon-road is 4 feet high and the ends are 3 feet and sometimes higher.

I can read the Bible. I go to school 5 nights in the week, and read a chapter and then come out. I pay 1d. a-week. I never read any other book. I do not remember anything about Jerusalem. I think it is in the Bible. I have seen the name of David. I do not know what he was. I have heard of Abraham. He was very rich in cattle. I have not heard of Jacob, not that I know on. I do not know anything of Moses. I never heard of France. I do not know what America is. I never heard of Scotland nor of Ireland. I cannot tell how many days in a year. I cannot tell how many weeks in a year. There are 12 pence in a shilling and 20 shillings in a pound. There are 8 pints in a gallon of ale.

No.73 Edward Whitehead.

I shall be 15 next month. I drove a gin for 6 months. I used to throw stones at the horse when the banksman's back was towards me, so that he could not see me. He would have leathered me if he had seen me.

I have worked 4 years in the cleaning the headings and running the rails. I like it very well and I should like it better if my eyesight were good. I can read the Bible and read it on Sundays. I go 3 times to church on Sundays. My father and mother are dead and I live with my uncle. I carry my wages to him and he gives me 6d. or 1s a fortnight and tells me to lay it by to buy me some things. I never read anything but the Testament.

I do not know where Birmingham is. I know where Coventry is. I do not know where London is, whether it be north or south. I have heard of France. The Frenchmen do no English. I have never heard of Ireland. I have seen Irishmen. I can say my catechism. I have heard of the sea. I have heard it is 3914 miles across in one place.

I like very well to be in the pit. The butties beat us sometimes but not much. We sometimes sing out and are much hurt. I never tell when I go home. I can't for shame. My uncle would make a noise at me because I did not mind my work.

No.74 Samuel Parker.

I am 15 years of age. About 11 I went to drive a gin and got 10d. a-day. I used sometimes to sit down and throw stones at the horse to make him go. I took care the master should not see me. He would have leathered me if he had seen me. He would have served me right too. I worked from 6 to 6. There is a cabin and a fire. I could roast potatoes at it. I drove a gin about a twelvemonth. I was very tired before night. I sometimes got thumped by the banksman or letting the horse stand but I never let my father know, because perhaps he would have lathered me again. I liked driving the gin very well. When the skip was down the horse stopped till another skip was hooked on and he was at work all the 12 hours. The horse always was a-biting at us and we were obliged to muzzle him. Out of the 12 hours there was allowed half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. After 12 months I went down into the pits and got 20d. a-day but we have had a great deal of play lately. I clean headings and run the rails. I like it very well. It is not too much for me. We are ready to begin at 6 and begin to come up at 6 at night. We have 20 minutes for dinner.

I cannot read. I never could read. I say the Lord's Prayer every night before I take off my clothes. I get up about 8 on Sundays. I have not gone to church this last month or two nor to any place of worship lately. I go out on Sundays rambling about till dinner. I often sleep after dinner. I have been to Coventry. I do not know whether London or Coventry be the largest. I have never been to London. I do not know where Birmingham is. I have heard that the Queen's name is Victoria but I do not know. I have never heard of France. I never heard of America. I can play at pitch and toss sometimes. I play at cards sometimes and dominoes. We play at dominoes for

money, but do not let the landlord see us pay any money, or he would stop us and take the money away.

Weekly expenses of a labourer at Atherstone, in the county of Warwick:-

Thomas Goode has a wife and 3 children - 7, 10, and 12 years of age. He gains 1s 6d. a-day breaking stones on the highway and when he can get any other work to do he gets 2s. a-day. In hay-time or harvest-time he gets 2s. a-day, or 1s. 6d. and drink and victuals. He sometimes gets old clothes from one person or another. His ordinary expenses are:

	s.	d.
Flour, 2 stones, 281bs., at 23. 6d.	5	0
Bread, say	0	6
Oatmeal	0	1.5
Potatoes, 3 gallons	1	0
Bacon, sometimes 1d. worth, sometimes 1/4lb., value 2.5d., say in the week	0	9.75
Milk, 1 quart skimmed milk per day	0	7
Coals	0	10.5
Rent	1	3
	10	1.75

They buy no cheese or butter and hardly ever taste meat. Beer he never tastes unless a gentleman give him some. He has sometimes had for his Sunday's dinner two penny worth of meat and one penny worth of potatoes. His wife lives on water-gruel. Some time ago she bought four penny worth of tea. Once or twice in the season they have for their Sunday's dinner a pint of green peas and a quarter of a pound of bacon.

He works on the road from 7 to 6 and has out of that half an hour to breakfast and an hour to dinner.

Weekly expenses of a man working on the bank of a colliery at Bedworth, in the county of Warwick:-

John Randall has a wife, a girl 17 who gets 3s. 6d. a week in the silk-winding, a girl 11 who gets 2s. 2d. a-week, a boy 9 who is at school, and a girl 4 years old.

	s.	d.
Flour, 2.5 stone, at 2s. 6d.	6	3
Sometimes a loaf, sometimes 2, say 1.5	0	9
Potatoes, 1 gallon	0	4
Meat	2	6
Bacon, 1lb.	0	9
Beer, only occasionally, say	0	9
Tea 2oz. enough to go through the motions of tea drinking	1	8
Rent	1	4
Bringing home coals	0	4
Sugar 1ld.	0	8
Cheese	1	6
Butter 1lb.	1	2
Mustard, salt, pepper, vinegar	0	2
	17	2

Weekly expenses of a collier at Bedworth, in the county of Warwick:-

William Johnson has a wife, a boy of 14 who gains 3s. a-week, a girl 11 too ill to work earns 1s. 2d. a-week and a boy of 5, and a girl of 2.5 years. Their regular weekly expenses are as follows:-

	s.	d.
Flour, 2 stone, 28lbs., at 2s. 6d.	5	0
Two loaves	1	0
Potatoes, 1 peck	0	8
Rice, for puddings on Sundays	0	4
Meat	4	0
Beer at home, beside the allowance of a quart a day when in the pit	1	6
Tea, 2oz.	0	8
Butter, 1lb.	1	2
Sugar, 1.5lb.	1	0
Cheese, 1.5b.	1	0
Rent	2	8
Firing, expense of bringing home coals	0	4
Soap, 2 half-pounds	0	8
Mustard, salt, pepper, vinegar	0	2
£1	0	2

He buys 2 loaves every week after the flour is done, instead of using potatoes, because the potatoes must be paid for ready money, whereas the bread may be had on credit.

After receiving his wages on reckoning day, the wife pays what they owe, and they go on credit for another fortnight.

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH COAL-FIELD, IN THE COUNTIES of LEICESTER AND DERBY.

No.75 Stephen Evans.

You are connected with the Moira Collieries belonging to the Marquis of Hastings? - Yes, as ground-bailiff and I act under the direction of John Thomas Woodhouse, Esq., who is a mining engineer.

What is the depth of the shaft of the Moira Bath pit? - About 236 yards.

What number of people are employed in that pit? - About 80 men and boys, including six men who work on the bank at the engine and mouth of the shaft. There are about 20 boys.

At what age do boys go down into the pit? - Some as early as seven or eight, and at all ages after that.

What is the employment of the youngest boys? - They act as door boys, that is, they open doors which are usually kept shut for the purpose of guiding the current, and when the men and the boys, with horses and waggons, have passed through, they shut them again.

What further employment is given to boys? - Some are employed to sweep the road and the rails, in order to make it easier for the horses to draw the waggons. Some boys also go errands for the men.

Are any of the young lads employed about the horses? - Usually two horses draw one behind the other a train of two or more skips and there are two persons to guide, of whom the elder is a youth between boy and man, in which case a lad of 10 or 11 may be intrusted to walk at the head of the second horse.

Do any of the boys load the skips? - Our coal is in very large lumps, which would be too heavy

for boys, besides there is ample room for big lads, and it is more to our advantage to employ persons of greater strength than boys of 10, 12, or 13, usually possess.

Do boys go errands for the men? - They are useful for that purpose also.

What wages have the boys? - When very young perhaps only 8d. a-day, and as they get bigger and stronger and can attend to the horses, they get on to 1s. 5d. and 1s. 8d. When they get on to about 16, they begin to get ashamed of working as boys and work like men, and then get perhaps 2s. a-day, and still higher wages as they are found to be worth it.

Do the people in the mines enjoy good health? - Excellent health. We have men of 60 and even of 70 years of age who are as able to do a day's work as any men in the pit.

To what do you attribute this state of health? - Our pits have the most excellent ventilation so that the men breathe pure air; all foul vapours are carried off: the men are protected here below from the seventies and changes of the weather, their work gives them excellent appetites and their wages enable them to buy abundant and wholesome food. Our miners also have abundance of coals allowed them, by which their habitations are rendered comfortable.

What are the usual wages of the men? - Our pit is on a different system from many other pits. Twenty of our men, who do the most profitable part of the work, unite together and contract to furnish the coals at a certain charter per ton and these 20 engage all the other men and boys and pay them their wages and certain outgoings then what is over out of the money which they receive, having paid those things is their own and is divided in equal proportion amongst them. So that these men are in fact a partnership of butties and all have an interest in the working of the pit and in all the people employed doing their duty. The amount of their incomes will depend on the demand for coals, and the number of tons which can be sold, for of course the proprietor does not wish to accumulate an immense stock and what can be sold.

What are the usual wages of a filler? - The regular wages are 2s. 8d. a day, besides which every man is allowed 12 cwt. of coals a month, which are sent to him from the colliery for the use of his family. Formerly the allowance of coals was still more liberal but it was found that some of the men sold part of their coals and the allowance was diminished.

Do they receive any beer or candles? - They receive no beer, neither do they receive any candles except they save any out of their stint. The men have four candles of 16 to the lb. every day and if they are working in a situation where there is a strong draft, they receive more candles, even as many if necessary as six, seven, or eight. If they can manage to save any candles, they derive the benefit of their saving themselves.

What is the system of settling with the men? - The system is to reckon once every fortnight up to the Thursday night and the wages are paid on the Friday, being the day after. The 20 butties on such occasions give 1s. each which makes £1 and the value of this £1. is ordered in beer from a public-house and sent to the house of one of the butties to be drunk by men who come to be paid. The butties all take it in turns to pay at their houses. Thus men are not led to the public-house to be kept waiting for their turn of payment and be induced to indulge in liquor at a time when they have money to lay out. This has been the system for the last 23 years and it has had a most excellent effect.

Do you find no inconvenience from paying the men on Fridays, can you get them to their work on the Saturday? - It is very rare for any man to be absent from work on the Saturday and we have a check upon them, for if a man be absent he is subject to a fine, which is paid into the club-fund.

What is the plan of the Club? - It is a field-club. Every man at reckoning leaves 4d. for the fund and every boy leaves 2d., for which in case of accidents or injury caused by the work there is a surgeon to attend to them and in addition the sick person is allowed 9s. a week and if it be a boy it is 4s. 6d. a-week. If any year prove unusually severe on the club, the proprietor sets all right at Christmas, and the club starts again all square for a new year. If the surgeon think it necessary, he may order for his patient a lb. of beef and a pint of ale a-day.

Are any women or girls employed about the pit? - None whatever.

Is the expense of a surgeon considerable to a club? - If the miners live within such a distance of the surgeon that he has no charge to make for the journey, the expense is very little, but if journeys have to be paid for, then the expense is heavy.

Is there any fixed time for meals in the pits? - No, there is not. The people take their food when they can, so as not to interrupt the progress of the working.

At what time do they come in the morning? - About six, and it will usually take about three quarters of an hour before all can be let down into the pit.

When do they begin to come up? - About seven in the evening.

How many are allowed to go up or down at a time? - Nine at a time.

Do the men live in harmony and good feeling with their employers and superiors? - Quite so. There is always some person not perfectly content in every place, but altogether there is a very good feeling amongst the men. We have none but our own people born and bred on the spot and their lives used to orderly submission. We have no strangers come amongst them to disturb their good habits, and we have no squabbles or disputes.

Do they indulge in cruel sports? - We have no cock-fighting, nor are bull-dogs kept, nor do the men seek pleasure in tormenting bulls, bears, or badgers. We have no gambling of any sort.

Are there any apprentices? - No, there are no apprentices in our pits.

Do the people generally attend public worship? - They generally do.

Take the year all round, what proportion of their time are the men unemployed? - For a couple of months in the summer when the sale of coals is slack, the men sometimes work only four or five days a-week; but the proprietor at that time generally accumulates a large stock that the men may be kept at work. Some summers they have not had any slack time.

What schools have the children? - Sunday-schools both of the Church and Methodists.

No.76 Joseph Dooley.

He is ground-bailiff of the coal-pit at Swadlincote, called Granville colliery. The top bed is 226 yards below the surface. The thickness is five feet two inches, sometimes a few inches less and has been as little as four feet six inches. The men employed are 65 and the boys 27. One man is about 60 years of age; at another pit there is a man 70 years of age and is as able to do a full day's work as any man in the pits. There are several above 50. There is one boy as young as 10. He is the youngest. From 10 to 16 the boys are employed opening and shutting doors and sweeping the railways and attending to the horses. There are no apprentices.

The boys assist the men, who fill the skips by placing the garlands but do not push them forward in any way. The horses come up along the workings to where the skips are loaded and carry them thence to the foot of the shafts. The youngest boy has 8d. a-day. The others, before they take to the holing with the pick, gradually rise in wages from 8d. to 2s. 4d. and some 2s. 6d. The men get 3s. 4d., besides four cwt. of coals per week and they have a quart of ale on the Tuesdays and Thursdays. On the Wednesdays and Fridays the boys take their ale, a quart each.

There are men who go down at night to repair the roads, shift the wood that supports the roof and also hole the coal; about 12 or 14 go down at night, the other half of the holers work in the daytime.

There would not be room if they all worked together. About two boys go down to assist the men at night to remove the rubbish out of the gate-roads. The holers have a stint, 10 ells of three feet nine inches each, to hole for their day's work. Some turns are about 140 ells, some 180 ells. The holers come up, if they think fit, when they have done their days work. The fillers and boys remain until they have filled and sent off what the holers have dug. They go down about six in the morning, about six men at a time. None of the fillers or boys leave till all the work is done. They are paid by the ton, and the more work the more money, from 3s. to 4s. a-day. They come up sometimes at seven and sometimes it may be eight. The butties reckon with the men once a fortnight and pay the money on the Saturday. They reckon to the Thursday night. The money is paid at the works and never at a public-house. This is a most excellent arrangement. Sometimes the men's wives come to receive the money.

Accidents are very few. About eight years ago two men were burnt by an explosion. We have not had any men damped for some years. There is a greatly improved plan of ventilation now, and the air-ways are very much larger than formerly. Formerly the air was made to enter and was conducted through the old workings, where it met with foul air and was brought out in the places where the men were at work, now it is quite the reverse. The fresh air is made to enter and come in the workings where the men are employed and then it passes into the old workings, carrying with it any foul or dangerous air which it may have met with.

Some marry as early as 19, but the greater part not before 22 or 23.

Most of the people attend public worship.

The police establishment has been of service in preventing the people going to public-houses and beer-shops at improper hours on Sundays.

There are many Methodists and Ranters.

There are very good Sunday-schools. At the Methodist chapel are 300 scholars on Sundays. At Newhall Church-school may be about 200 scholars. There are 150 to 180 at the Methodist Sunday-school at Newhall. At Gresley Church there is also a school. Most of the boys can read and a few can write.

Good feeling exists between the employers and the employed.

There are no bull-dogs kept for sporting, there is no cock-fighting now. About 10 years ago there was much cocking. There is no badger-baiting, no bull-baiting. Men sometimes fight, but never pitched-battles in cold blood.

When men from different pits met to receive their money at public-houses they sometimes quarrelled. The present mode of payment prevents this.

There is a field-club. The surgeon has £30 a-year. The men pay 6d. a-fortnight and in case of accidents have 5s. a-week. They have clubs for sickness.

No.77 Michael Parker.

What occupation do you follow? - Ground-bailiff to the Snibson collieries.

At what age do children commence going down to the pits? - Some at seven, and all ages afterwards.

How are boys under 10 employed? - Opening doors, sweeping railroads, driving ponies and asses, according to a boy's activity.

When do they begin to fill skips? - About 18.

Why do they not go to this work sooner? - Our coal is all in large pieces, and boys are not equal to the work.

Are other boys employed at other employment? - Some work at what is called putting the coal, that is drawing and pushing the coal from the face of the work to the crane at the horseway. Two boys are able to draw a train, or the one draws and the other pushes. A large basket is put on the train and the basket is filled. It will hold about seven cwt.

When do they take the pick in hand to dig the coal? - Generally about 20, but some much sooner if very active. Our coal is very hard, and young people are not very capable of doing it.

Do the baskets when once loaded go all the way to the shaft, and are they afterwards lifted up without being emptied? - When the trains arrive at the horseway the baskets are lifted up by a crane and put on the great horse-waggon and then are conveyed to the foot of the shaft.

Do the boys enjoy good health? - Exceedingly good.

To what age can a man hold out to work? - Some work well at 60 years, but some are knocked up at 50 and 45. Fifty may be the average.

What is the cause of a man being knocked up so early as 50? - The severe labour, and on some constitutions the bad air takes considerable effect.

Are the mines much exposed to bad air? - Only at chance times. The wind is carried through the mines.

What are the hours of work? - The holers go down at two in the morning, and return about two or three in the afternoon. The others begin to go down about half-an-hour before six and are ready by six to go to work. They finish at six, and take half-an-hour to come up.

How many go down together and come up together? - About four men and if all boys, five or six go. They go in the basket. We have had no accidents in our pits going up and down.

To what do you attribute freedom from accidents? - To having good tackling and taking care. There is a man whose duty it is to see the boys safe in the skips coming up or and that there are no more in number than four men, or more than five or six boys. They are particular to have a steady man at the engine.

What precautions do you take against fire-damp or choke damp? - Strong ventilation.

What time do the men take their meals? - The engine stops about half-an-hour at one o'clock, then the people all rest.

What are the wages of the fillers? - 3s. a day, no beer and the company allows 10 cwt. or 12 cwt. of coals in the month and the men have free cottages and gardens or a very small rent, 1s. a month.

Are they often out of employment? - Some time in the summer when there is a small demand for coals.

Are the people tractable, and is there a good feeling between masters and men? - They are

all quite friendly.

Do the people attend public worship? - Most of them do.

Do the children go to school? - They in general go to day-schools, and all go to Sunday-schools. Mostly all learn to read and many to write.

Have they a field-club? - Yes. They pay 8d. a-month and receive medical attendance and 7s. a-week when sick. The boys pay 4d. a-month, and receive 3s. 6d. a-week when sick. If the fund fall short the company makes it good. There are few accidents from the fall of stones or the coal from the roof. We have not had any such for years past.

No.78 Samuel Parker.

What occupation are you? - A ground-bailiff.

You have heard the evidence of Mr. Michael Parker and do you consider it correct? - It is all perfectly correct.

No.79 Charles Tandy.

What occupation do you fill at the Snibson Colliery? - I am bookkeeper and have been in the service of the colliery four years.

What is the depth of the pits? - About 220 yards.

What is the thickness of the beds? - About six feet.

How many people do you employ? - About 250 men and boys.

How many are boys? - About 50 under 16, of whom only 6 under 13. The youngest is about 10.

What wages do the boys get? - Some of the boys and men are paid by the butties, but to those employed and paid by the Colliery Company the youngest boy has 6d. a-day, the others higher in proportion to their usefulness.

What work do the boys do? - Some attend to the trap-doors, that is to the ventilating, some sweep the railways, others attend to the asses and ponies.

Are accidents common? - Very unfrequently now, which is attributable to improved ventilation and to a general care to obviate every cause of danger.

Do the people enjoy good health? - Uncommonly good to my certain knowledge.

What system is adopted in employing the men? - The holers form themselves into small companies and they engage and pay the men and boys, and the holers divide the surplus amongst themselves.

When do the men receive their wages? - On the Saturdays. They reckon once a fortnight up to the Wednesday evening.

Is it usual to draw money on account the alternate week? - No, it is not done.

Are there schools? - There is a large school and there are Sunday-schools.

Do the people usually attend religious worship? - They do, either the church, the Baptist chapel, or the Primitive Methodists' Chapel.

Is there a good feeling existing between employers and employed? An extremely good feeling and the men are exceedingly well behaved. We are in a very healthy moral condition.

No.80 William Stenson.

You are an engineer and have the management of the Whitwick colliery? - Yes.

Having read the evidence of the Messrs. Parker respecting the Snibson colliery, Will you be so good as to state if the same will apply to your colliery? - To a considerable degree the same. We have 110 boys under 10. We support a day-school, to which the children under 10 go, and we have a Sunday-school also. Men who act together as butties get great wages as much as 28s. a-week. We do not put boys to push or draw the trains. We employ horses and asses. We do not use iron chains but flat ropes, which we consider much safer. Ropes will tell a tale before breaking. Our people begin work about seven and leave about seven at night. In other respects the description of Messrs. Parker will apply to us.

No.81 Charles Allsopp Dalby.

You are a legally qualified medical practitioner residing at Ashby-de-la-Zouch? - I was educated at University College, London, and am a member of the Royal College Surgeons and a licentiate of the Apothecaries Company.

What public offices do you hold at Ashby-de-la-Zouch? - I am a surgeon of the Union workhouse and one of the surgeons of the Union.

Do you attend many colliers in the capacity? - I very seldom have an Union order attend colliers but it is the case sometimes and I attend many colliers as surgeon of field-clubs.

What is their general state of health? - Exceedingly good; I consider better than that of the agricultural labourers.

At what time do you think them past being able to do their work in the pit? - The work in the pit is very laborious and some are unable for it as early as 50, others at 55, and some at 60. I should say the greater part about 55. It depends on constitution.

Have you many medical cases? - Very seldom any such, only accidents, but there are not so many accidents now as formerly.

What is the expense of medical attendance? - In the case of the collier-clubs we send our bill and it is paid from the fund in hand. Where the fund proves insufficient the proprietor pays the deficiency. In the case of common benefit-clubs the price paid by each member is 2s. a-head, some 2s. 6d., and some as high as 3s. per annum. The money received from those who are not sick in the course of the year enables the medical man to attend those who do fall sick. There are clubs of Odd-fellows, consisting of tradesmen, who pay much as 4s. per head per annum.

Have you had much to do with boys? - Very little. Sometimes a pinched finger or pinched foot. There are not half the accidents which you would imagine. They still occur sometimes.

The collier families would appear to suffer less sickness than other families? - Less than others. At the same time from his labour a collier is more worn out at 60 than a labourer. There is a large club of colliers' wives but I have not near so much to do for them as female clubs of other classes of society consisting of an equal number of members.

How are the female-clubs conducted? - The members meet to transact business public-houses and they have a man for their clerk.

Are the colliers much troubled with asthma or rheumatism? - I do not remember having attended a collier for either the one or the other.

Do the women give opiates to their children? - I have no knowledge of such being the case. They sometimes give them senna or salts.

Is there any particular disease to which you consider the colliers especially liable? - There is no particular disease to which they are more liable than others.

Are there many apprentices sent out from the Union-house amongst the colliers? - Not amongst the colliers of this district, but among the colliers of Staffordshire.

No.82 John Davenport.

You are employed in the Union of Ashby-de-la-Zouch? - Yes, as clerk of the Union and have held office since it was formed in 1836, and I had been treasurer and guardian for many years under Gilbert's Act.

Have you many applications from colliers for relief on account of sickness? - No, very seldom.

Have you many applications from the colliers on the ground of debility from old age? - Very few indeed.

Do you consider an agricultural labourer or a collier to be soonest unfit for labour? - The collier; I do not think he wears quite so long.

To what period does he wear? - A collier to from 65 to 70, and an agricultural labourer to from 70 to 75.

Have you many boys in the Union-house? From 9 to 16 only 2, but from 2 to we have 23.

Do you bind any of them as apprentices to colliers? We bound three last Saturday a apprentices in Staffordshire. I think all the three must have been bound to men who live in the parish of Darlaston. They were bound before the magistrates to 21. We never bound but one boy

to a collier in our own district, but generally to Staffordshire.

No.83 Samuel Dennys, accompanied by John Sommers.

I was 20 on the 3rd of April, 1841, and went into the coal-pit at about 14. Many work at 8. I drove an ass at Moira. I got up at half-past 4, took breakfast and went off to the pit. I began to go down at 6 o'clock. It took us half an hour. The holers had been down about 3 and had coals ready. I took the ass out of the stable, yoked him and went up to the workings. Men loaded the corve. When loaded I drove the ass up to the mainway, when the corve was taken off the slide, and put on a skip and a man drew it along the horseway to the foot of the shaft, by means of a belt round him and a chain which passed between his thighs. it is not done now. It has been given over 6 years since. I never knew boys draw by the girdle and chain. Horses are now used instead of men and in one pit, the New Field, an engine draw the coals to the foot of the shaft. There are now horses and trams.

I had an hour for dinner, about 1 and the engine stopped. Now there is no regular time, and we take a quarter of an hour as we can, in our turns, so as to keep the engine at work amongst us. We left off at 7; the man at the top, the bankmaster, called to give over and we go up in the same time as we took to go down. There were 50 or 60 in the pit. We could get home by 8 o'clock. We then got a warm supper and at about 10 I took off my clothes, washed my face and hands and a little about the neck and went to bed.

After half a year I was employed to bang the skips to the chain at the bottom of the shaft, in order to their being pulled up. The time of working was the same but it was harder work than driving the jackass. I continued a quarter of a year at this.

I then went to die Bath Pit and was employed in placing coal after it was hewed down in the skips. It was much harder work but better pay. I worked at this 12 months. I then took to getting coals, that is, hewing them out, and so continue. I liked the whole of these works very well. I never found the work too much for me.

I cannot read. I was at school before I went down into the pit but I was always a bad boy and played the truant and went to bird's-nesting and one thing or another. I played at marbles, chased birds, threw stones and all such things.

I did not go to Sunday-school. I always say the Lord's Prayer after I go to bed before going to sleep. I may sometimes omit it, but it is very seldom. I go every Sunday to the meeting twice a-day. After the meetings are over, I walk about and sometimes go and have a sup of ale and sometimes get drunk. I think it a sin. I do not often make a beast of myself, but sometimes. I get up on Sundays at 7 or 8. A collier wakes at his regular time and cannot keep in bed longer, as he is uncomfortable. There are some colliers who usually get up at 3, on Sundays some of them do the same in summer-time and go out and lie down in the sun, with their face upwards and their hands under their head and come to breakfast between 8 and 9. After breakfast they walk about till meeting-time and then go to meeting. Almost all the colliers dress themselves about 10, and go to meeting decently. They always have a good dinner on Sundays. It would be very wrong not to have a good dinner on that day.

The colliers in this part are all bound for one year. In our pits, from 29th of June to June again. We are bound to the masters to work under the butties. If we get a sup of drink and are not able to come to work on any day, the butties make us work the next day for nothing. If we were to desert our service we should be sent to prison. I have been in prison myself for doing this. I was kept in two cardinal months. It was according to the agreement.

The boys of between 7 and 8, and higher ages, are employed to open doors. The boys open the doors with their bands. The boy pulls the first half of the door with a handle and then forces open the other half by his hands and he has to shut them half by half in a similar way.

There is a place for the boy to run into out of the way of the horse if he move off his path. The boys catch mice in the pits, chiefly in the corn-tubs. The usual way is to stick the hind feet and tail in clay and stick them up against the side of the horse-road and let them remain there. They tie them sometimes to the cat's tail. They will carry them sometimes 3 miles to give to the cat. There are gnats in the pit. There are black creeping things called sowls there also. There are also forty-legs in the pits. Cats breed in the pits. There are wood lice in the pit.

Altogether, I do not think, taking every week in the year, that we have more than 10 days work in the fortnight.

A door-boy has 8d. a-day.

A boy driving an ass, 15d.

A boy driving a horse, being from 12 to 16, 18d. a-day.

A filler 2s. 8d. a-day.

In cold weather in winter, on Sundays, some of the men lay themselves on the bed clothes with their hands behind their heads, and remain till dinner. In the evening they go to chapel.

The masters hold us bound, but are not bound themselves to give us any money when we are not employed and if we go to another pit they can fetch us hack if they like.

On Saturday night, if the men can get home in time, they strip and give themselves a thorough washing but if they have not time then they do it on Sunday morning. The boys do the same.

No.84 John Sharn.

I am turned 15 on the 28th day of last month (March). I went down into the pit 2 years ago to open doors. I was at school before I went down. I call read the Testament and some of the Bible but not all of it. I can say the Lord's Prayer, and say it at night before I take off my clothes to go to bed. I cannot cast up a sum. I never read anything but the Testament and Bible. I sometimes read them on Sundays. I can say the Creed and the Ten Commandments and all the Catechism. I am at the head of the first class in the Sunday-school. I go to the Baptist Sunday-school. They teach us the Church Catechism. They have another Catechism as well in the School. I stop to hear the Baptist preacher. I come home and dine at 1 on Sundays and go to school again, and stop and hear the afternoon preaching and go to chapel at night. A great many boys go to public worship much as I do.

When I have no work in the pit I go gathering horse-muck on the public road, to put upon the 'tato-ground. We have a piece of parish-ground. We pay 1s. 6d. per hundred as rent. A hundred is 20 yards long, and 5 broad. When we have play in the pit I work in the ground. In summer evenings I sometimes play at marbles, at bowls, at hide and seek I shy, at stag-warning and one boy is the stag, and others the hounds; sometimes at quoits. I can slide on the ice. I sometimes use a bow and arrow. I can play at cricket. All boys know to play at these sports. I never play on Sundays, and never saw any of boys do it. When I was at school, if any boy made any complaints to the master, whacked him. If any boy in the pit were to make any complaint, we'd whack him before got home.

There is an evening-school on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 9. Several colliers read and learn to write.

I like the pit very much. I mean to be a collier all my life. I have nothing to complain of.

Mr. Woodhouse gave six of us a Bible each and three of us a Testament each, this evening.

No.85 Thomas Art, in presence of Samuel Dennys.

I will be 13 soon after Whitsuntide. I was at school till 11. I could read the Testament and can do it still. I go to the Sunday-school. Most of the boys go to Sunday-school. I like the Sunday-school. I like going down into the pit. Sometimes I get thumped for letting the wheels off the railway. I deserve it sometimes. When I first went down I opened door I had candles allowed me. There are 36 candles to the pound. The door-boys might read in the pit but they never do so. I was on the bank at 6 in the morning, and got down as could. It took half an hour for the whole party. We began to come up sometimes at sometimes at 7, generally between 6 and 7 and generally got to the top of the bank at I could eat my bread and cheese or meat when I pleased. I might dip my bread in a horse tub in the water and put down my head and drink the water, as much as I liked. I did not like the water so well as I should have liked beer. The water is warm. It comes from the engine. It is good but not so good as beer.

I have a quarter of an hour to dinner, now that I am a horse-boy. When the engine does not carry up the coals so fast as we bring them, we can stand and have something to eat. The door-boys sometimes fall asleep and get wakened by a cut from the horse-boys. When I find the door boy asleep I give him a slap with the whip to waken him. A door-boy cannot venture farther than a dozen yards from his door.

I like being in the pit very well and will be a collier as long as I live.

Weekly expenses of a farmer's labourer at Measham in the county of Leicester:-

William Stanley has 12s. a-week. In hay time he has 2s. 6d. or 2s. 8d. a-day, with a quart of ale in the morning, and small beer as much as he pleases. In harvest he cuts down the corn at 4.5d. or 5d. a threave and in the course of a fortnight may have 10s. beyond the ordinary wages. He rents six hundreds of land, that is, 600 square yards and plants potatoes. He pays rent, is. 3d. per hundred, altogether 7s. 6d. He sometimes has a bolt of turnips, and sometimes, when he goes out with the team, a gentleman may give him 6d. to drink, which he always carries home to his wife. His wife goes regularly to receive his wages. His Sunday suit of clothes has lasted him these 12 years.

	s.	d.
Flour, 2.25 stone, at 2s. 6d.	5	7.5
Meat	1	0
Cheese, 0.25lb	0	2
Butter, 0.5lb., fresh from the shop.	0	9
Rent of his house	1	6
Fire	1	0
Milk, 1 quart skimmed, per day.	0	7
Sugar, 0.5lb. at 8d.	0	4
Soap, 4lb. at 7d.	0	3.5
Beer only now and then, at 0.5d worth-say	0	1.5
	11	4.5

Weekly expenses of a collier at Moira, with a wife and 3 children, the oldest 5. The wife does not earn anything by working for any one:-

	s.	d.
Flour, 1.5 stone at 2s. 4d.	3	6
Meat, 5lb. at 6.5d.	2	8.5
The meat is delivered on Friday and they use a little every day till Wednesday, when they buy 0.25lb. of bacon	0	2.25
Sugar, 0.75lb. at 8d.	0	6
Potatoes, 1.5 gallon at 4d.	0	6
Small beer, 3 gallons at 3d.	0	9
Butter, 0.5lb.	0	9
Sometimes 0.5lb. of Irish salt butter, or butter which is salted when more is made than can be sold, costs 5.5d.		
Skimmed milk, a pint morning and night, 0.5d. per pint	0	7
Pease, 1 pint (not bought every week)	0	2
Oatmeal	0	1
Cheese, 1lb	0	7
Rent	1	6
Leaving coals	0	7.5
Tea, salt, soap, pepper, mustard, coffee, he could not tell, but estimated at	1	6
	13	11.25

The remaining money is spent in clothes, shoes, beer at the public-house and other extra charges.