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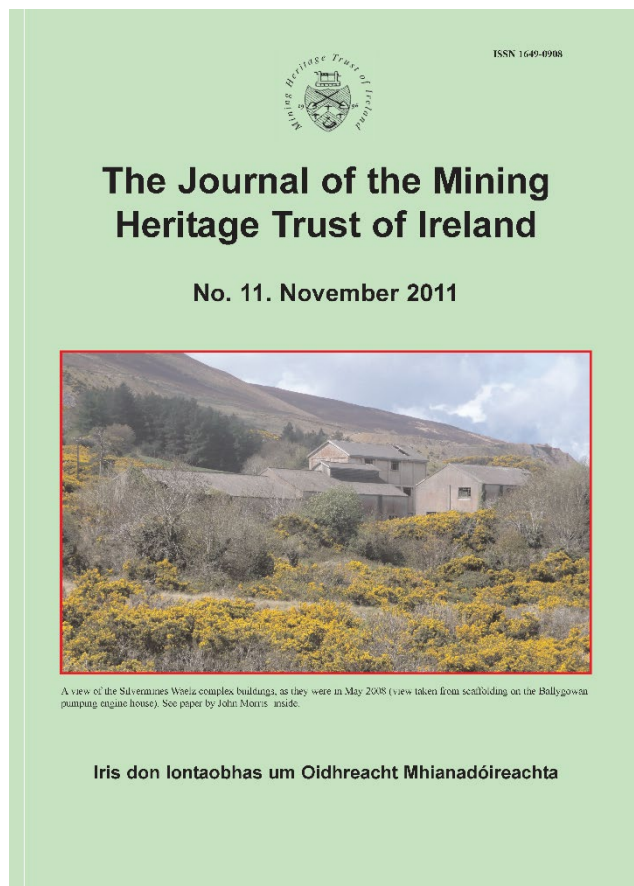
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Eggleston, P. (2011) 'The Cappagh mine share certificate vignette' *Journal of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland*, **11**, pp. 17-18

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THE CAPPAGH MINE SHARE CERTIFICATE VIGNETTE

by Peter Eggleston

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Abstract: In Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Journal No.10, John Morris's paper "A Register of Share Certificates" includes details of mining scene vignettes used for decoration. The one from the Cappagh certificate (figure 2 on page 38) is almost identical to an engraving of a Staffordshire colliery which has appeared in many places with various slight alterations to the detail. *Journal of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland*, 11, 2011 17-18.

INTRODUCTION

In Journal No.10, John Morris's paper "A Register of Share Certificates" includes details of mining scene vignettes used for decoration. The one from the Cappagh certificate (figure 2 on page 38) is almost identical to an engraving of a Staffordshire colliery which has appeared in many places with various slight alterations to the detail. The Cappagh version is slightly different from the other three I knew of.

The artist was William Henry Prior (1812-1882) who was a draughtsman, illustrator and landscape painter. The most complete version and the most widely used (which I think was the

original) can be seen in several places online by entering "Staffordshire Colliery" into a Google image search. In Tomlinson's "Cyclopaedia of Useful Arts" of 1852 it is captioned "Coal-whimsey, or engine drawing coal in the Staffordshire collieries." [(I have added a magnified inset to each picture to show the similarities of detail around the engine house.)].

It shows a mine with a pair of counter-wound shafts with pyramidal headframes. The left one has raised large lumps of coal held by hoops - a method only used in Black Country Thick Coal mines. (Spare hoops can be seen on the ground.)

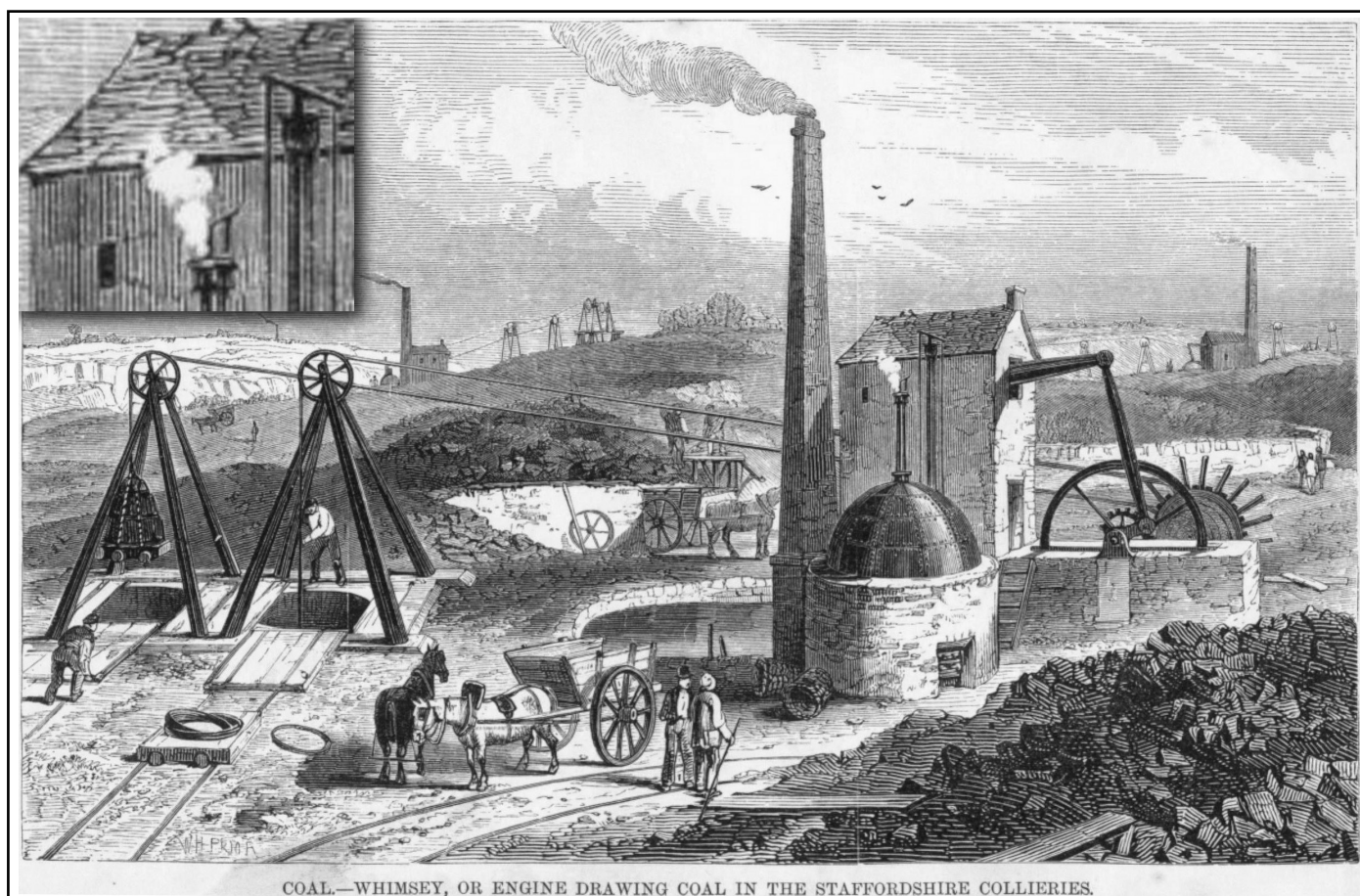


Figure 1. Coal - whimsey, or engine drawing coal in the Staffordshire collieries.

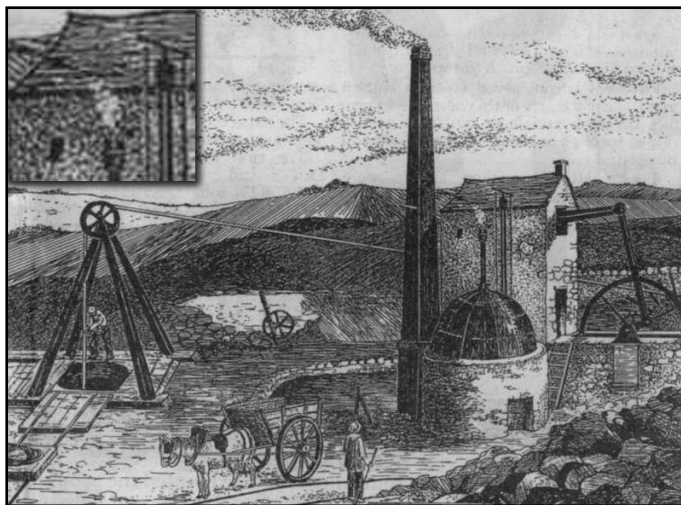


Figure 2. Version used to illustrate Trefonen colliery in Shropshire.

The winder has a low-pressure 'haystack' boiler and a beam engine driving a flywheel geared to a pair of flat-rope spools. The engine could be atmospheric or Watt.

In the foreground are two banksmen, a horse, a horse & cart and two onlookers. On distant hills in the background are three more Staffordshire pitheads.

The variations I have come across are almost identical in the mid-ground, particularly with the technical details of the steam engine, boiler and tall thin square chimney; but they differ in foreground and background content.

The second version, used to illustrate Trefonen colliery in Shropshire, can be seen in issue 2000.1 of 'Below', the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club newsletter. The differences include: generally poorer and sketchier style, one horse and one

onlooker are missing in the foreground and all distant pits in the background have been replaced with crudely-shaded rolling hills!

The third appeared in the Midland Mining Commission report on South Staffordshire in 1843. It was flipped horizontally. One banksmen, both horses and both onlookers have gone from the foreground and the background has extra people. A horse gin appears on the otherwise bare horizon. The quality is excellent, with plenty of fine detail.

The fourth version is on John's Cappagh certificate. It was printed too small to have included very fine detail, but the similarities are obvious. Nothing is changed in the foreground compared with the original - all four people and both horses are back. The mid-ground detail is also identical. Only the distant background hills with their three extra collieries are missing.

I wonder whether William Henry Prior made all these different versions himself? They could have been engraved 'from scratch' by another artist using the original as a guide, but some of the finest details are almost identical. Perhaps some of them were pirate copies?

Mike Munro of the Welsh Mines Society has researched the original engraving and has a page with high quality copies of it and the first variation at: www.copsewood.org/mining/ - click on "Midlands".

EDITORIAL NOTE: Grateful thanks to Geoffrey Hayes who also wrote to point out that the Cappagh vignette was a "doctored" version of an old engraving of South Staffordshire coal-field. He supplied a copy of the illustration from the Rolt & Allen book "The Steam Engine of Thomas Newcomen". He states that the illustration has been reproduced from an original held by the Science Museum, South Kensington, London.

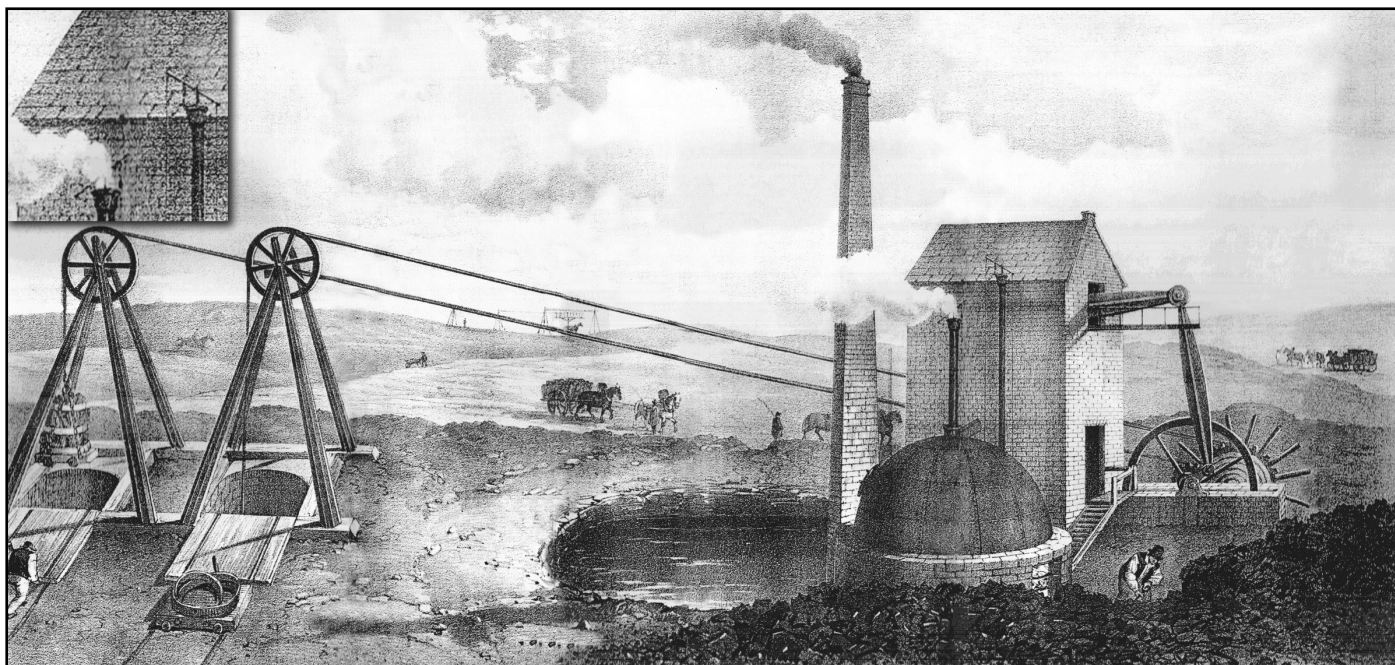


Figure 3. From Midland Mining Commission report. Original was inverted horizontally - I have flipped it back to match the others.