

## The creation of Coalville's Memorial Clock Tower

1

## A memorial to remember our war heroes

In July 1920 the then Coalville Urban District Council appointed a Coalville War Memorial Committee to oversee the creation of a memorial to commemorate all the servicemen who had died in the First World War.

In March 1923 the Committee met to review possible designs and selected a clock tower design by Henry Collings of McCarthy Collings & Co. a Coalville architect.

It was 68 feet high (about 21 metres) and 13 feet 6 inches (approximately 4.1 metres) wide, with clock faces on four sides, with the clock powered by electricity.

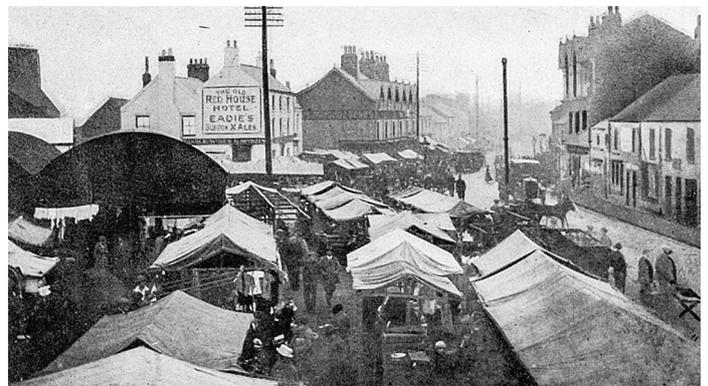


Above: The Memorial Clock Tower  
© Coalville Heritage Society



Above: The Market Place sheds  
© Coalville Heritage Society

The new Clock Tower would be built with bricks and would be located in what was then the Market Place, in front of the Red House.



Above: The Market Place in 1905. Can you see the Red House in the background?  
© Coalville Heritage Society

## The creation of Coalville's Memorial Clock Tower

2

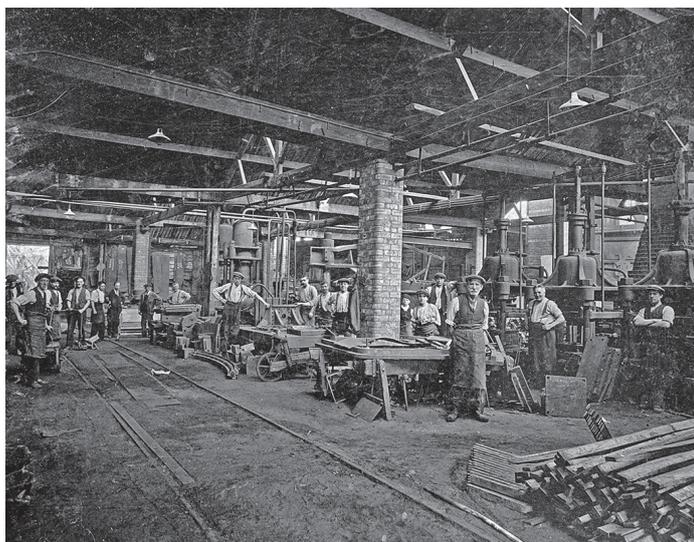
## Local businesses helped fund the Clock Tower

In March 1924 the Coalville Urban District Council bought the land on which to build the memorial from the Trustees of the Wyggeston Hospital.

By July 1924 they had appointed Walter Moss & Son to build the Clock Tower at a cost of £2,250 – equal to about £130,000 today. The type of brick used would cost about 90p each today, therefore the bricks alone would cost £51,000 in today's money.

If we were to build the Clock Tower today it would cost over £500,000.

By August 1925 the Committee appealed for a further £300 to complete the Clock Tower. Local companies including Stableford & Co. (that manufactured railway carriages and wagons), the South Leicestershire Colliery Company (which owned Snibston Mine), Clutsom and Kemp Ltd. and individual donors came up with the necessary funds.



Above: Stableford & Co. Forge Shop c 1910. The company had over 1000 staff by 1900.

© Coalville Heritage Society

Below: Bruce Dennis junior and senior.  
© Coalville Heritage Society



All the 54,000 bricks in the Memorial Clock Tower were laid by Bruce Dennis the foreman bricklayer and his son (also called Bruce Dennis). Both men worked for Walter Moss & Son and were master builders.

If each of these bricks were laid end to end they would extend nearly 13km (eight miles) – the distance from Coalville to Loughborough!

## The creation of Coalville's Memorial Clock Tower

3

## The grand unveiling

The Memorial Clock Tower was unveiled by Mary Booth at a grand ceremony on 31 October 1925.

Mary was married to the famous social researcher, Charles. They lived at Grace Dieu Manor in Thringstone - now a school.

Like her husband, Mary felt very strongly about helping those who were disadvantaged in society. She helped the families of local miners through the difficult times of a strike in the mid-1890s and following the Whitwick pit accident in 1898.

In 1903 the Booths bought and refurbished a farmhouse in Thringstone and gave it to the community in 1911. Mary set up the Women's Trust from here. She was also president of the Ashby and District Boy Scouts Association.



Above: Mary Booth, intellectual and philanthropist  
© Friends of Thringstone

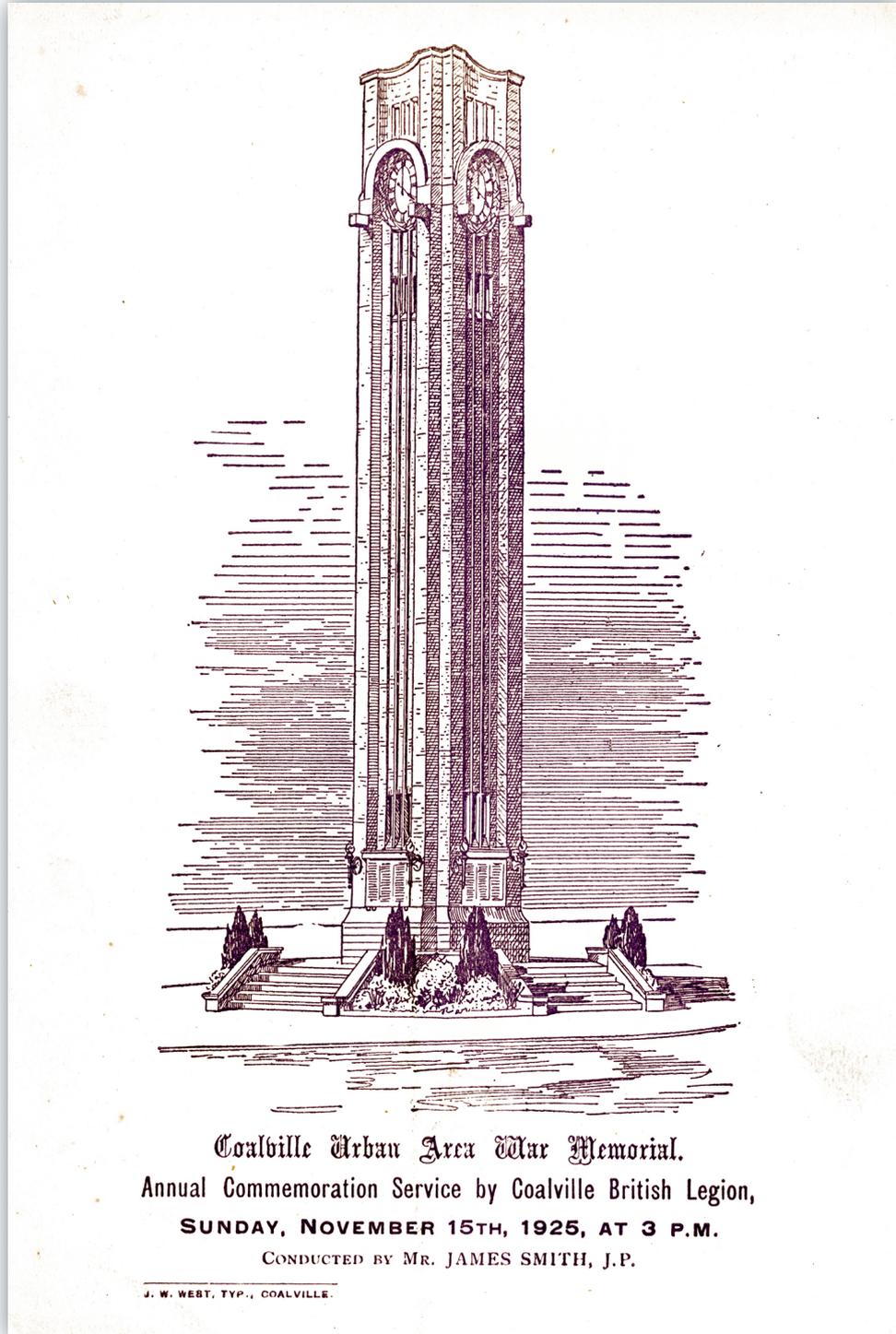
## “ Coalville's Fine Tribute to men who fell in the War. ”

Fully ten thousand people representing practically half the entire population of the urban district, assembled at Coalville, on Saturday afternoon, to pay homage to the 354 men from this locality who gave their lives in the Great War.

The occasion was the unveiling of the fine Memorial Clock Tower which has been built on the open space off the Market Place, and which has been very appropriately named "Memorial Square."

Few towns comparable to Coalville can boast such a splendid monument to the gallant men who responded so well in their country's hour of need.

Above an extract from an article in the Coalville Times Friday 6 November 1925 about the unveiling of the Memorial Clock Tower.



Front cover of the order of service, Remembrance Sunday 1925, the first to be held at the Memorial Clock Tower © Coalville Heritage Society

## Glossary

<b>Bricklayer</b>	Person who lays bricks
<b>Ceremony</b>	A formal public or religious occasion especially for celebrating a particular event, achievement or anniversary
<b>Committee</b>	A group of people appointed to organise and manage a project
<b>Disadvantaged</b>	A person or area that is poor and/or without social opportunities
<b>Intellectual</b>	A person who engages in critical thinking, research, and reflection about society and proposes solutions for problems
<b>Listed Building</b>	A building that is recognised to have historical or architectural importance and enjoying benefits of protection by law
<b>Master Builder</b>	The key person leading construction projects in premodern times
<b>Philanthropist</b>	A person who helps the poor and in many cases gives generous donations to help them
<b>President</b>	The person that has been elected to be the head of an organisation or region
<b>Refurbished</b>	To carry out repairs and/or improvements to a building or object so that it is in a better condition
<b>Researcher</b>	A person who carries out research into a subject to learn more
<b>Strike</b>	Where the employees of a company refuse to work to attempt to gain improvements in working conditions or their pay
<b>Trustee</b>	A legal term for anyone who acts individually or as part of a board to administer or control property in trust
<b>Trust</b>	An organisation or company that is managed by trustees
<b>Unveiling</b>	The act of revealing or removing a cover from a new memorial or object usually as part of a public ceremony