

Arguments in favour of Mansfield and Pinxton Railway and opposition to the plans



Image copyright Denis Hill

The railway would enable Mansfield to sell more of its malt (for making beer) outside of the area.

This was attractive to the local landowners who received a tithe (a fee) for profits made on the sale of produce from their land.



The Mansfield area had a rich supply of limestone and sandstone (pictured left) which could be sold for construction so needed the railway to transport the minerals in bigger loads.



A scene in St Giles (London) - an illustration in the 1852 survey by the Rev Thomas Beames. Credit British Library.

The construction of the railway would give work to the poor receiving relief from the Overseer of the Poor (the person in the parish responsible for giving money, food and clothing to the destitute).



A new gasworks was planned for Mansfield, which would require a regular supply of coal - more than the local collieries could provide at that time, as they were only able to mine the seams directly beneath the ground, rather than deep under the ground.

Opposition to the proposal for the Mansfield and Pinxton Railway

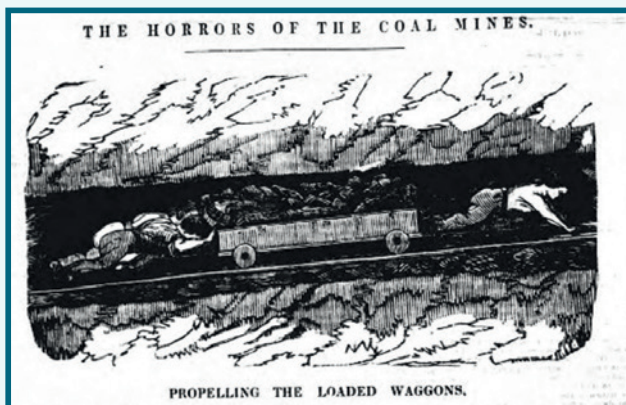


Image of miners pushing trolley loaded with coal, Bell's New Weekly Messenger | 5 May 1842



Image of Pinxton's Cromford canal wharf courtesy Norman Taylor

Local coal mine owners (in Skegby and Teversal) were worried the coals from Pinxton would damage their trade.

The Cromford Canal Company were not enthusiastic about the railway being built and didn't help fund construction.
Can you think why?

They were however happy with the new business it brought into Pinxton wharf when it was up and running.



The downsides of the Railway for John Coke

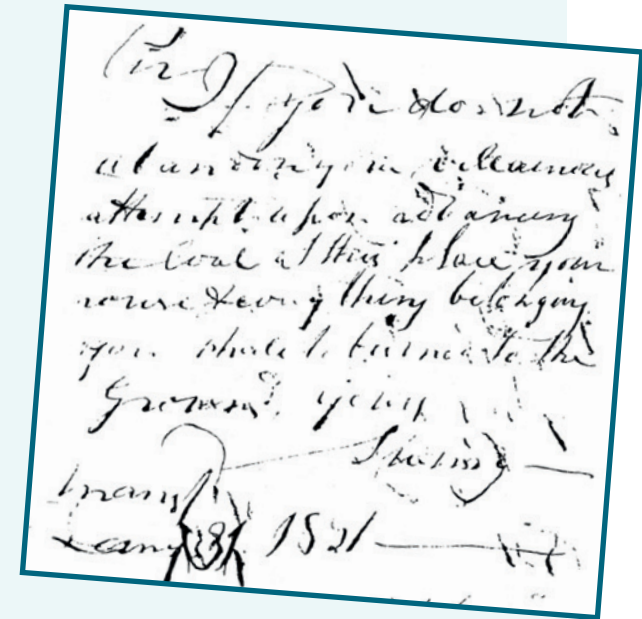
John Coke owned the mine at Pinxton. He was the main businessman behind the proposal – as he wanted to sell his coal to the factories in and around Mansfield.

The railway however, ended up costing him more money than he'd planned to build and caused him lots of stress.

John had to borrow money from his brother, D'Ewes Coke (Junior), to finish building the railway line and because the government put a cap on the price of coal being sold, he would have had to sell twice as much to recoup the cost of building the railway.

To make matters worse, after the railway was completed, John received a letter on 31 January 1831 threatening to burn down his house if he increased the price of his coal in Mansfield. The letter was signed 'Swing' – which was the name of a group of farmers in the south of England that burned down haystacks to protest against the loss of common land due to a new law called the Enclosures Act. The letter was probably written by colliery owners in Teversal and Skegby who were possibly still struggling to sell their coal into Mansfield and fearing that their prices would have to go even higher if extra tolls were introduced.

The letter, shown to the right, states that 'If you do not abandon your villainous attempt upon advancing the coal at this place, your house and everything belonging you shall be burned to the ground'.



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Jan 31 1831

