

Chapter 11

William Hocking's accident. Page 149

"The chain in front of a full coal skip"

To our knowledge coal skips were not hauled up the incline individually. All our photographic evidence shows three or five skips chained together in a "rake".

The tail of the haulage rope was attached to the hook on the back of the topmost skip using a whitetail closed socket. The socket was either placed directly over the hook or a forged ring was used. If rope twist was a problem, which could potentially de-rail the lightweight skips, a swivel was used between the socket and the hook.



There was usually a safety bar which was twisted across the gap in the hook to prevent the ring from coming out of the hook if the rope went slack for any reason.

So if young Hocking was riding on the front or uphill end of the coal skip, he was very unfortunate for the skip to de-rail and run him against some trackside obstacle. A question is raised here. There was no safety equipment in place, no fail safe signaling system or even down-line bell system to warn the engine driver of mishap. The only way he would know of any de-rail happening was by any sudden increase or decrease in the load on the engine, which would be indicated

by the steam engine slowing down or speeding up William was lucky that his father was an attentive driver, or the skip(s) would have been dragged all the way to the top.

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