

## **NORTON CANES**

### **PROPERTIES OF NOTE**

The devastation caused to public buildings and houses in Norton Canes through extensive deep coal mining was such that in 1947 it was declared the most damaged village in England through mining subsidence.

In that year the Picture Post magazine published an extensive illustrated article as the M.P. Jennie Lee fought to overturn a signed statement by colliers employed by the Conduit Colliery who owned their own properties. This had been obtained illegally at an event held at the Fleur de Lys Inn in which the men had signed away their right to compensation for damage to their houses from mining subsidence.

1947 saw the emergence of the National Coal Board and Jennie Lee's success saw the NCB become responsible for repairing the properties affected.

Coal mining subsidence had been occurring for many years from the late 19<sup>th</sup>. century, the worst period being 1940-45 when extensive subsidence took place in the Chapel Street/ Church Road/Washbrook Lane/Butts Lane area with subsidence being as much as 20 feet.

As a result of this extensive damage and the construction of the M6 Toll Road hardly any properties of note remain in the village.

The losses have included Norton Hall (Norton Hall Lane); Village Schools (Norton Green Lane/Church Road); The Village Institute (Norton Green Lane); Mere Lake Cottage (Church Road); Methodist Chapel & Craddock Memorial School (Chapel Street); Shops in Norton Square, & Brownhills Road; The Old Turf Inn (Watling Street); The Hollybush Inn formerly The Gate Hangs Well (Walsall Road); The Maltshovel Inn (Walsall Road); The Red Lion Inn (Little Norton); Swan Farm (Watling Street); Forester's Hall (Burntwood Road); Gildart's Georgian Mansion erected in 1760 (Stokes Lane); Pinfold Farm (Watling Street/Butts Lane); The Charity School (School Lane/Watling Street); Fleur de Lys Inn (Watling Street); and houses and cottages beyond count. The Parish Church although supposed to have been avoided suffered damage to the North Aisle and a few older houses notably in Norton Green Lane still show the extent of the mining subsidence.

Today the only remaining old properties worthy of note, with the exception of the hamlet of Little Wyrley with its Hall (Wyrley Grove) and attendant farms and cottages, are the Parish Church of St. James the Great & The Rectory (Church Road); The Railway Tavern (Norton Green Lane, the last remaining village inn); the former Fleur de Lys Farmhouse (Watling Street); 44 Church Road (c. 1910 home of Mr. Underwood, Headmaster of the old Norton School) and cottages adjacent to the Church. Additionally should be noted the chimney stack at Norton Aluminium in Norton Green Lane, site of Norton Green Colliery, the last colliery chimney remaining in the Cannock Chase Coalfield and derelict buildings at the old Grove Colliery in Lime Lane.

It should be remembered that before the advent of deep coal mining in the 1860's Norton Canes comprised of just a few properties near the Parish Church/ Norton Hall and Watling Street; with a few outlying farms and cottages.