



# Swannington Heritage Trust Annual Report



## 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013

The Trust maintains five historic sites comprising approximately 12 acres (0.5 sq km) and including 2.2 miles (3.5km) of hedges and boundaries, 2 miles (3.2 km) of paths and open spaces and 243 yards (222m) of railway track.



### Hough Mill

The 200 year old mill had approximately 1,300 visitors during the year, a 50% increase.

This was largely due to a number of family orientated events – Take Teddy to the Mill, Millympics, Ghost Trail and Christmas Market.

There were also more group visits such as walkers a choir and the Friends of the Children of Chernobyl.



The construction of the 10ft (3m) diameter brake wheel was a major project which required 864 hours of work from research and design through construction to installation. The £7,000, 1.77 tons, 3 metre (10 feet) diameter wheel was made in sections so that it could be hauled up through the trap doors on each floor.

Another major achievement by our skilled volunteers who also undertook numerous routine tasks.



### Gorse Field

The scrub has been well and truly bashed and burnt thereby helping this rare grass heath land to regenerate. Cutting back the bracken and the hedge was a significant contribution which should help with the new year's maintenance. Several areas are left to "grow wild" and provide a safe habitat for animals and birds.



Clearance work around the gorse has provided the light and air to encourage its regeneration. During the summer there is a wide range of native flowers to appreciate, provided you look carefully because a lot of them are very small.

The lack of sheep or cattle to graze the grass continues makes it harder to maintain the land as we would like.

### Califat Spinney

The grass paths were cut regularly and the new path around the southern and eastern periphery has become established.

The hundreds of trees planted since the Trust purchased the spinney are thriving and produce a great show of autumn colour. Likewise, the snowdrops are increasing in number and looked great during February and March.

The Newcomen Haystack Boiler roof required by Leicestershire County Council has been completed. An impressive weather vane has been added to the top.

Leicestershire Industrial History Society (LIHS) has continued their monthly excavations at the site of the second boiler house. They continue to find new pipes and walls as they endeavour to piece together how the site operated.

LIHS opened the site to the public during the Festival of Leicestershire and Rutland Archaeology in July and intend repeating this in 2013. Several individuals are members of both LIHS and SHT, this helps co-ordination.



### The Incline

The maintenance work has been focussed on the top of the Incline. The grass has been cut regularly and the trees cut back to allow the sunlight to reach the grass and flowers. A Lions group has completed two sessions felling trees at the bottom of the Incline.

The Trust joined forces with LIHS and Snibston to run a day's seminar commemorating the 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1832 Leicester and Swannington Railway, the first operational steam railway in the English Midlands.

## Snibston No 3

The site has been maintained with several working party visits during the year. The primroses behind the big wheel are thriving, as are the snowdrops.



## Strawberry Fayre

The Strawberry Fayre was again a major fund raising event for the Trust with excellent planning by the organising team. The strawberries and other victuals were as excellent as ever and a steady stream of local musicians provided the entertainment. The marvellous Hough Mill cake was amazing.

The weather wasn't great which affected the sales, but the hall was packed with villagers and members of the general public from far and wide attended, a great way to publicise the Trust.

## Publicity

The Trust has operated stalls at the Miners' Gala at Snibston, Leicester and Coleorton School.

There were another two excellent editions of the Trust magazine "Now and Then".

The website has continued to be a major source of both Trust information and publicity.



## Volunteers

The passing away of Terry Leader in April was a great loss to both his family and the Trust. We are very grateful for the donations at Terry's funeral which will help finance the mill's on going restoration.

The Trust's prime asset is its volunteers who have continued to contribute thousands of hours to help the Trust. These include the:-

- Land Management Team who work on Wednesday mornings.
- Mill Team who work on Friday mornings.
- Strawberry Fayre Planning Team and everyone who helped on the day.
- Editorial, production and distribution team for "Now and Then".
- Management Committee and officers such as Treasurer, Secretary and Membership Secretary.

Many thanks to everyone who has helped the Trust during the year.



## Trust Membership

There were 156 Trust members at the end of March, including 17 who joined during the year. Increasing our membership is a key aim.

Trust members can make a huge contribution to publicising the Trust. If each member mentions the Trust and its activities to two people each week, it would inform 16,224 people in a year. If just 10% of them visited it would double our visitor numbers.



## 2013-2014

### Swannington – Surrounded by Heritage

With £10,000 of Heritage Lottery Fund "All Our Stories" funding for this project this is providing an exciting opportunity to develop our exhibitions and find new ways of attracting audiences. The project will include:

- Working with numerous community organisations and individuals to research and interpret our heritage. To date 4 marvellous costumes have been made by the WI and 29 paintings by the Art Classes.
- So far 170 school children and staff have visited the mill and some impressive work has been produced by Whitwick Primary School.
- De Montfort University are well on their way in making a digital reconstruction of the Incline.
- The Easter Egg Hunt had 129 attendees and Take Teddy To The Mill 78.
- Progress is taking place on more events, school visits, signs and films.

