

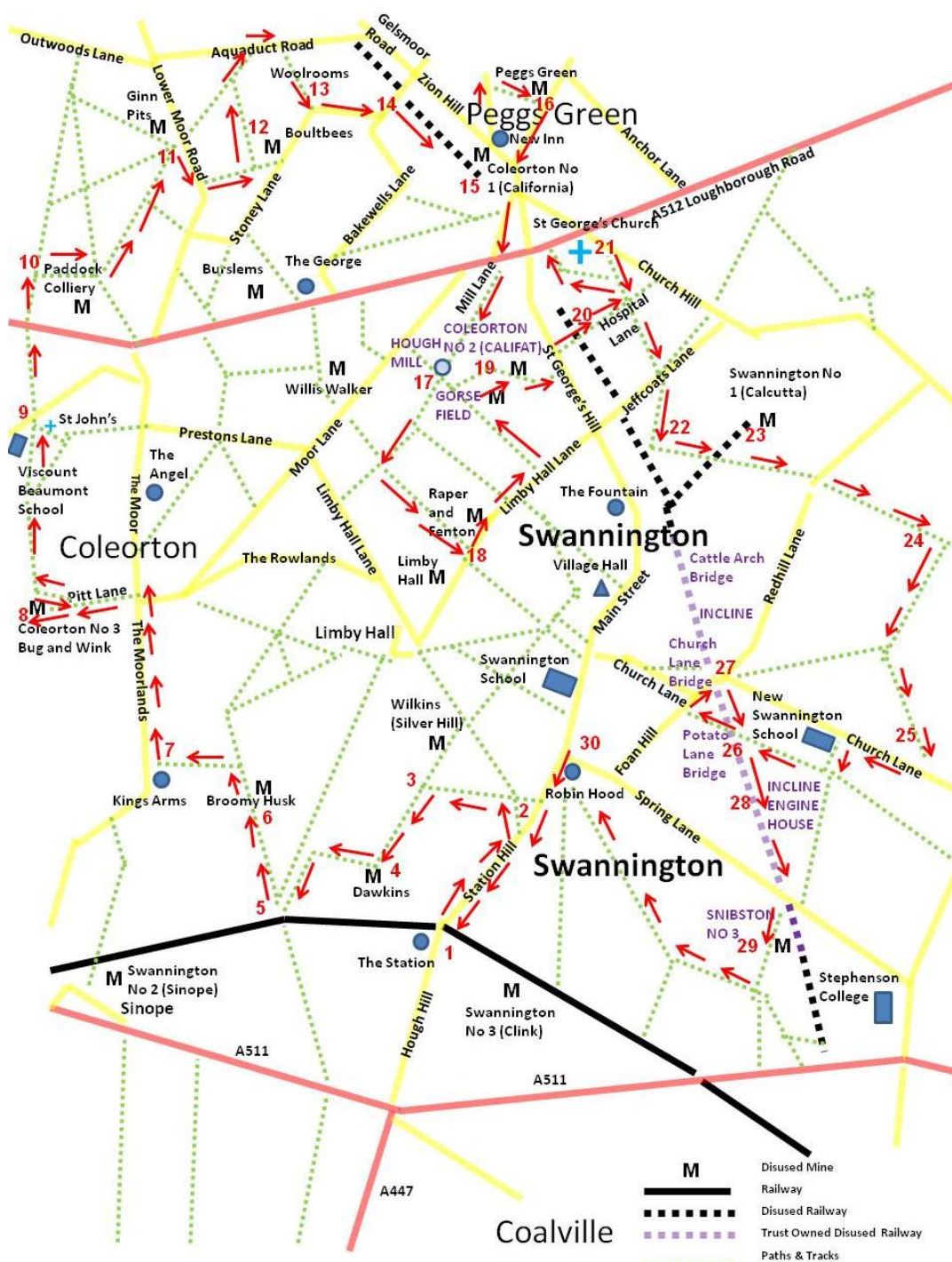
Swannington Heritage Trust

Walk 4.1 The Swannington Hokey Cokey

Follow an intriguing route that is in, out and twist about! Starting at The Station follow ancient green lanes and miners' paths to Coleorton, Hough Mill, Jessop's Tramway, St. George's Church, Calcutta Colliery, New Swannington, Potato Lane Bridge, The Incline and Snibston No 3 Mine. Discover mines galore, horse drawn tramways, the route to the Charnwood Forest canal, one of the world's first steam railways, a church with literary origins and a former isolation hospital. All within a couple of miles of the centre of Swannington!

Walking on paths and crossing stiles. Distance = 10 miles / 16 kilometres, duration = 5 hours.

The sketch map is not intended to be a substitute for an Ordnance Survey map.



1. Start at "The Station" at the bottom of Hough Hill. Cross the railway line and keep heading north / down hill.
2. Turn left up a few steps onto path diagonally across a small field. Turn left onto an ancient track used to take midden waste to the fields. It lies in a shallow holly lined cutting.
3. At the T junction admire the view across the Coleorton valley, before turning left along the track.
4. The track turns sharply to the right at the site of the former Dawkins mine, before turning left and heading for the tunnel under the railway line.
5. Before reaching the railway line, turn right immediately after the copse, after a few metres follow the path through the copse. Cross small field, on into a larger field heading towards the left of the two houses near the site of the former Broomy Husk mine.
6. The public footpath is through a garden, but it is courteous to aim for the left hand yellow post which goes behind the garden. Proceed along the stone track on the left edge of the field. Ignore the stone track's turn to the left and continue straight ahead along the grass path with the hedge to the left.
7. Look straight ahead and admire Hough Mill through the winter trees, in summer the leaves may obscure the view. Turn left and head for the houses across the field, it is only now that the Swannington / Coleorton border is reached. Cross a parcel of land next to the houses and emerge on The Moorlands, Coleorton just north of the "Kings Arms". Turn right and head north along The Moorlands, just after the junction with Moor Lane turn left into Pitt Lane.
8. Pitt Lane terminates in the car park of Coleorton Wood, one of the first National Forest plantations in 1991 on the site of the former Coleorton No 3 colliery, known as the "Bug And Wink" 1875-1933.
Take the left gate and walk clockwise around the periphery of the wood. On reaching a red dog waste bin turn left through a gate and start a clockwise circuit of the second part of the wood. On returning to the gate resume the circuit of the first part of the wood, appreciating what nature can achieve in just over 20 years.
On returning to the car park, retrace your steps along half of Pitt Lane. Pass Wisteria Cottage on the left, then go through the gate on the left and follow the footpath back alongside the wood and down the hill and across the bridge over the brook.
9. Turn right and proceed along the edge of the field, then down through the open meadow in between Viscount Beaumont school and St. John's mortuary chapel. The 3rd Viscount Beaumont built the original school in 1702. Cannon William Beaumont built the current school in 1867.
St. John's mortuary chapel was built in the mid 1800's as St Mary's churchyard was short of room for burials. The chapel contains three stained glass windows, two of which commemorate Canon William Beaumont who was rector of Coleorton from 1864 - 1901.
10. Cross Ashby Road, the former Ashby to Loughborough turnpike, which has been replaced by the A512. Follow the path straight ahead, with woodland to the right. Approaching the A512 there are two yellow posts about 50 metres apart, both lead to the same point on the A512.
Cross the A512 and into the field. Particular care is required when navigating the next stage as the area is very open and walkers have created a myriad of ill defined paths, some of which keep to the map and others do not. Proceed straight ahead on the footpath aiming just to the right of a group of trees. After a massive oak tree (500 years plus?) turn right at the junction of paths. There is a mature oak (100 years plus?) to the left before the path proceeds through a thicket.
To the right is the site of the former Paddock Colliery, an 18th century mine. The uneven ground displays lots of signs of coal mining. Aim just to the right of a solo thigh high tree stump. Continue to another thicket and proceed down the slope through the thicket to the yellow post.

11. Turn left (north east) after the yellow post, keeping the brook to the left. The path crosses the brook and bears right. Continue over another stream and bear right along the path that leads to the road to the south of the Ginn stables, which is the site of several gin pits. On reaching Lower Moor Road note Brooklyn Cottage to the left, a typical former miner's cottage. Turn right down the road.
12. Turn left off the road onto a track between the small, dilapidated 1830's Primitive Methodist Chapel on the left and the much larger and grander 1901 version on the right. At the end of the track cross the stile into a field and head for the two yellow posts. In theory turn left by crossing both stiles, but in practice walk through the gap next to them.

One of the Boulbbees mine is on the right, Joseph Boulbbe Senior and Junior made a fortune leasing mines from Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7th Baronet (1753 – 1827).

The path goes through a garden, the exit stile is at the left corner of the rear of the house. Continue through to Aquaduct Road.

13. Follow Aquaduct Road to the right. There is an option to walk an additional 100 metres to the site of the former bridge on the Coleorton railway with its pitted limestone. Turn right on to the Woolrooms, a track that runs past some cottages.

There were lots of sheep on Coleorton and Newbold Moors and Swannington common. The wool was processed in the cottages, which have since been extensively modified. Halfway through the Woolrooms the track ends and the path forks, take the left hand fork to Stoney Lane. On reaching the road, it is worth looking to the right to admire the only thatched cottage remaining in Coleorton.

14. Turn left along Stoney Lane and pass the junction with Bakewell's Lane (Billy Bakewell kept packhorses at the top of Bakewell's Lane) before turning right onto the route of the former Coleorton Railway.

The Coleorton Railway was built in 1833 and horses pulled coal carts along the railway tracks, through a 480 yard tunnel (under St. George's roundabout) and on to the bottom of the Swannington Inclined Plain. In 1862 it was extended to the Cloud Hill Lime Quarry. The railway closed in the 1870's.

15. On reaching the playing field note the cordoned off area marked danger / no entry. This is the collapsed blocked tunnel. Turn left passing the play equipment. To the right is the site of the Coleorton No 1 colliery, known as California as it opened in 1849 the year of the Californian gold rush. Cross Zion Hill and proceed along Clay Lane, keeping the New Inn to the right.

16. Before the houses on the right, turn right onto the footpath that leads down to the bottom right corner of the field, up the other side through a garden and emerge onto Nottingham Road.

To the right is the site of the former Peggs Green colliery and the cream coloured house was once the pub. The Coleorton Railway included a spur to this mine. At a later stage of its operation, the Peggs Green and Califat mines were connected.

Proceed south along Nottingham Road turn right and continue passed Zion Hill onto a narrow road.

17. On reaching the A512 turn left for 20 metres, then cross the road and proceed along Mill Lane, at the end enter the Hough Mill compound. The tower mill is approximately 200 years old and has been substantially restored by the Trust, it is open from 2-5pm on Sundays from April to September. There are a couple of picnic tables in the mill compound.

18. Continue along the path passed the mill until reaching a crossroads of paths, then turn left. Proceed down hill through the tree plantation, one of several National Forest sponsored plantings in Swannington. At the bottom turn left onto Limby Hall Lane.

After a short distance the grass verge on the left becomes substantially wider. This is because the mature woodland just passed to the left is on the site of the late 18th century Raper and Fenton mine.

William Jessop's horse drawn tramway took coal along Limby Hall Lane, Jeffcoats Lane and on to the terminus of the Charnwood Forest Canal at Thringstone, near the George and Dragon public house.

19. Continue to the second footpath on the left and head up hill to the Gorse Field (near Hough Mill). On reaching the Gorse Field leave the public footpath by taking the right hand fork which emerges near the Horse Ginn models. Turn right along the track and go through the gate. Turn left and through another gate into the Califat Spinney. Follow the clockwise track around the edge of the spinney.

There used to be miners cottages in the north west corner. The Califat mine operated from 1855 to 1873 and three miners lost their lives in 1863 when water broke in from the former Limby Hall mine. One of the engine houses was excavated in the late 1990's and a second engine house is currently being excavated by Leicestershire Industrial History Society.

Exit the spinney and look along the track towards St. George's Hill. The horse drawn tramway used to run just inside the field boundary parallel to the hill. Some of it is visible just below Limby Hall Lane.

20. Return to the two gates and take the South East path into the woodland and across a field before emerging between the houses onto St. George's Hill. Cross the road and proceed uphill a short distance before turning right onto a path across a small field. The path then crosses the disused Coleorton Railway.

To the left the railway headed into the 480 yard tunnel that went under the roundabout and emerged into what is now the playing field in front of the New Inn (point 15). To the right the railway crossed Jeffcoats Lane on its way to the bottom of the Incline.

21. Cross another field, passing the former Isolation Hospital on the left. Holding a maximum of six patients, it was originally reserved for smallpox patients before being used for other infectious diseases. Cross the field until reaching the track that is now the two house Hospital Lane.

Turn left, keeping the hedge to the left, then follow the path that emerges on the A512 to the left of the churchyard. Enter the churchyard through the main gate and near the wall on the left is the headstone for Harry Clements, at 16 years old the youngest victim of the 1863 Califat mining disaster.

William Wordsworth helped Sir George Beaumont select the site of the church in 1825 while staying at Coleorton Hall. Exit the churchyard onto Church Hill and head down hill. After a few metres turn right onto the field.

22. Follow the path back to the end of Hospital Lane, admiring the view of the headstocks of the former Calcutta pit. Keeping the house, garden and hedge on the left, follow the path down to Jeffcoats Lane. Cross Jeffcoats Lane and follow the path that skirts around the houses to the right. On reaching the embankment of the former Coleorton Railway it is worth nipping up the slope for a quick dekho.

23. Take the path across the fields aiming just to the right of the former Calcutta mine. After the mines closed the water they produced threatened to flood the pits in the Coalville area, so Calcutta was converted into a pumping station and operated as such until 1986 when the mines closed. The engine was coal fired until 1948 when it was converted to electricity.

24. Cross the now wooded former track that took coal to Calcutta and continue across the field to Redhill Lane. Cross the road and into the field, head just to the right of the hedge that starts part way across the field. Continue until reaching the corner of the field.

25. Turn sharp right keeping close to the hedge. When the path splits take the left fork and continue to Church Lane. If you forgot to bring refreshments they can be obtained from New Swannington corner shop a 100 metres or so to the left.

26. Turn right along Church Lane, then left onto the path immediately before New Swannington primary school. Turn right along the path that bisects the woodland from the rear of the school. On emerging

into a field, admire the views across the valley. There are good views of Hough Mill, the tall chimney at Newbold and St. George's Church.

Continue straight ahead to Potato Lane Bridge which gives good views up and down the 1:17 slope of the Swannington Inclined Plain. The winding engine could haul 3 coal trucks up at a time. Potato lane is an ancient cart track used to take the midden waste for spreading on the fields.

27. Continue along the track to Foan Hill, turning right and following the road down to Church Lane Bridge and down onto the Incline. Walk up the Incline and consider the huge amount of work the Trust undertook as the Incline and the bridges had been full of mining waste and rubbish.
28. At the top of the Incline there are brick outlines of the two tiny Incline Cottages and the larger engine house. It is here that the coal trucks joined the Leicester and Swannington Railway, the first steam railway in the English Midlands, which was built by George and Robert Stephenson and reached Swannington in 1833.
29. Cross Spring Lane and enter the site of the former Snibston No. 3 colliery 1850-1895 and explore the site. Follow the footpath along the right hand boundary and exit through a dual post squeeze. Cross the rough ground and after descending the short slope, turn right and follow the former green lane to the Robin Hood public house.
30. At the Robin Hood spend a minute or two to appreciate the "village sign" and the former Primitive Methodist Church. The joiners shop used to be a butchers and abattoir. Head along Station Hill towards The Station public house and the end of the walk.

Swannington Heritage Trust maintains:-

- Snibston No. 3 colliery 1850-95, adjacent the 1832 Leicester and Swannington Railway;
- Swannington Inclined Plane with a 1:17 slope connecting horse tramways to the steam railway;
- Califat Spinney nature reserve, a mine 1855-1873;
- Gorse Field, a fragile heath grassland, adit and bell pit mining from 1205;
- Hough Mill, built shortly after the land purchased in 1804.

Details of more walks, guided walks and mill visits are on www.swannington-heritage.co.uk. Any constructive comment on the walks would be welcomed, email walks@swannington-heritage.co.uk.

