

Monthly dig report for members of Leicestershire Industrial History Society and Swannington Heritage Trust.

Morning dig with 18 LIHS members in attendance.

Engine House near Califat Shaft - Excavation 2006-2016 - Ventilation Fan / Winding Drum Pit



After an explanation of what needed doing, the team powered into action cleaning the walls. The walls looked so different with the loose bricks, soil, rubble etc removed, especially the vertical bolt holes as it is now possible to look down them.

Work then started on stabilising the walls. As this involved “rebuilding” parts of the walls (albeit with original bricks) cement was used so that future industrial archaeologists can identify the rebuilt area. When the repointing of the existing brickwork is carried out, lime mortar will be used. It will take a couple more sessions to stabilise the walls.



At the bottom of the west wall inside one of the rag holes a piece of timber could be seen. The brick part of the hole is 16 inches deep, but it is 29 inches deep to the back of the hole where the timber is.

At the south west corner of the wall another hole was uncovered and requires further investigation and measurement.



A section of the brickwork appears to be covered with some form of grease. Some was scraped into a bag and will be analysed in the hope that this will help evidence usage.

Although the area was measured we lacked the intellect to record the measurements.



We welcomed Steve Grudgings who is involved with activities at:

- Serridge a 1791 Newcomen engine site just north of the M4 near Bristol
- Brandy Bottom Colliery. One mile from Serridge and with three engine houses on site
- Hemingfield Colliery near Elsecar, South Yorkshire.

After touring the Califat he invited us to visit these sites to see their work.

Engine House near Califat Shaft - Excavation 2006-2016 - Tunnel From Furnace To Chimney



Several barrow loads of weeds were removed and taken to the “saucer” north of the 1993-1999 excavation for burning. The brickwork base of the southern side of the tunnel leading to the boiler house chimney was exposed and it was decided that next time the area to the south of the tunnel will be sloped towards the pond. The northern side of the tunnel also needs to be exposed. At some stage a decision will need to be made on whether or not to fully or partially rebuild the tunnel.

Miners' Cottages



The floor has been uncovered near the Swannington Heritage Trust boundary (the western / left side of the cottages are on a neighbour's land). The eastern / right wall of the cottage has been traced. It was observed that there seem to be two types of slate at the site and any assistance in identifying the sources would be helpful.

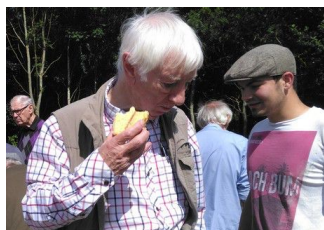
The diggers also won a gold star for their neat and safe stack of bricks.

Shaft to East of Califat Boiler House



One digger (harnessed to a tree) excavated the area inside the shaft and the rectangular building surrounding the shaft. Other diggers exposed the outside of the rectangular building. The heras fencing was replaced at end of the session.

The Important Part



We are pleased to announce that after a rigorous assessment our expert judging panel have awarded Margaret *Cake Making Goddess* status and she is welcome to bring cakes to the digs as often as she wishes. Thanks very much.