

Monthly dig report for Leicestershire Industrial History Society and Swannington Heritage Trust. Present - 12 diggers.

Engine House Area



To the west of the engine house and pit activity centred on clearing the top of the tunnel so that the brickwork can be inspected. The power barrow operator takes a rest while the other two fill the barrow, they in turn rest while the spoil is taken away.



Care is required as there are several holes in the tunnel roof, in some cases deliberately made to insert spoil to block the tunnel.



The top of the tunnel can now be clearly seen as a thick line of soil.

The green plugs in the holding down bolt holes on the engine plinth require LIHS attention prior to the Califat open digs.

The Trust has repainted the bench near the boiler house.

Pipes east of Boiler House



Painstaking and slow work in a restricted space continued around the pipe and drain between the boiler house and the old shaft.



Miners' Cottages



Work continued at the front of the cottage. Cutting through the hawthorn root will at least help kill the stump. One decision is whether to leave the stump in place as an example of what happens when buildings are left to nature, alternatively it could be removed and accept that any damage to the wall would be remedied during consolidation.



While part of the team is working on the outside of the front wall of the cottage, the other part of the team is working on the inside. Progress is enabling the condition of the front wall to be assessed.

Alabama Engine House Complex (next to boiler)



Weather conditions meant that the Trust weed spraying exercise was not as successful as previous years, so a large number of weeds were hand pulled. LIHS need to decide whether they wish to do additional weeding prior to the Califat open dig.

The Trust has cleaned and painted the Dick Thomson bench.

Visitors



A couple of gents from Leicester came along. They are tracing the descendants of Jeremiah Rose, the 40 year old carpenter from Belton who died in the 1863 flooding.



Museum Development East Midlands workshop 'Preservation of Archaeological Collections'

SHT attended a one day MDEM workshop at the University of Lincoln led by a Lecturer in Conservation at their School of History and Heritage. Key points identified during the workshop were:

1. Do not keep everything, be selective re what is retained but ensure that those items are properly documented.
2. Store artefacts securely in stackable *really useful boxes* that protects them from loss or damage, yet use minimal space.
3. Further protect by, ideally, storing each object in a separate smaller box within the larger boxes and using archival quality, acid free tissue, bubble wrap or foam to pad the space.
4. Store each type of material - bricks, tiles, slates, metals etc - in separate containers to create material micro climates.
5. Double label each box inside and outside, ideally with a photograph on the outside, so that only the correct box is opened when searching for items.
6. Keep a separate set of items as a handling collection so that the public can touch and feel the items without impacting the secure collection.

Califat Technical Research

Nobody knows what type of boilers or engines were used, but is it possible to narrow it down to a small number of possibilities based upon the size of the plinth and boiler placements plus who was making engines and boilers in the 1850's and 1860's?

Anyone interested in this research?

Next Consolidation Phase

The builders have been asked to provide estimates for several parcels of work for 2018. This will provide a starting point for planning further consolidation and raising the finance.