

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

### Engine House Area



A significant achievement was removing a layer of weed infested soil from the south end of the engine house. (Left hand photos are at opposite ends of what may be the winding drum pit). This ensured that visitors would be able to clearly see the site.



### Pipes east of Boiler House



Exploration has followed the engine house wall.

The hole in the side of the sump can be seen.

Look carefully at the top and bottom right, the pipes do not connect with the sump.



## Miners' Cottages



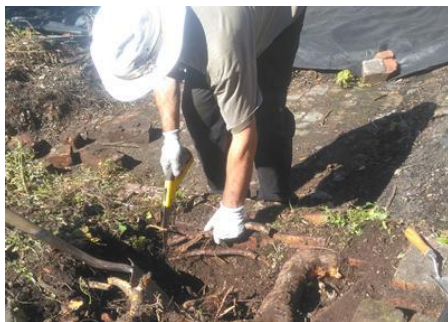
It was believed that the front porch extended as far as the row of blue/grey bricks, but excavations show an additional five rows of bricks in the front.



The trench at the front of the wall from the south east corner was continued to the porch. The row of bricks to the right of the porch was laid on bare earth and now bows both outwards and downwards.



There is a small brick protrusion at the front of the front wall, from which a tile broke away. The purpose is unknown.







LIHS continued clearing the material around the hawthorn stump whose roots had penetrated the front wall. Work on the root continued during the Festival of Archaeology digs and Trust land management meetings. Long roots followed the side wall of the cottage. Each root was individually severed as great care was taken to avoid damaging the walls.

The tirfor was used to slowly pull the stump away from the wall. Trust land management continued carefully removing the stumps from the dig area so that the area is clear for LIHS to continue excavating the cottages.



The bowl of a clay smoking pipe was found in the debris.



The Trust land management team noticed an increasing quantity of glass, including some shards several inches long, amongst the spoil being spread in the woodland. For the safety of visitors, the woodland will be scraped by the JCB to remove the material.

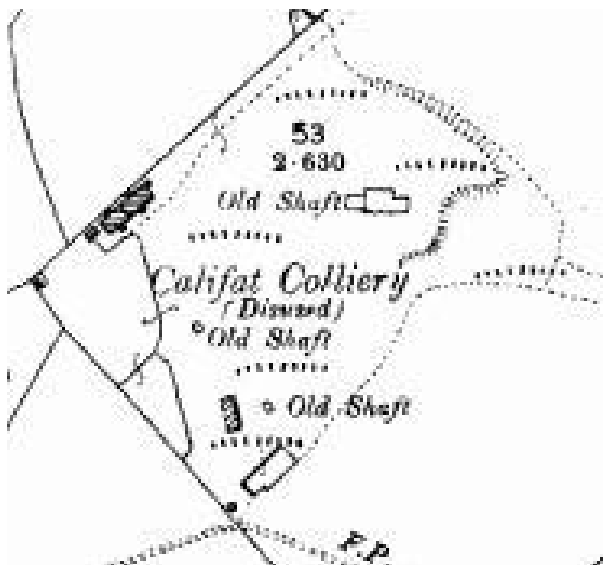


The Trust has cleared the area to the east of the cottage and laid a weed suppressing membrane. This will be the new area for storing separate piles of bricks, part bricks, glass, slate and general spoil. Because of the glass the whole of the miners' cottage and storage area has been fenced with the orange plastic mesh.

### Alabama Engine House Complex (next to boiler)



A one man whirlwind attacked the Alabama complex with such zeal it took three other Trust land management volunteers to take away the cut weeds and burn them.



Denis “Eagle Eye” Baker noticed that the 1903 OS map (left) shows the shape of the cottages. The 1923 map (right) is clearer. The 1883 and 1962 maps do not show such detail. The four maps were issued with one of the 2016 reports and are on the Trust website.

## Visitors



Across the three Festival of Archaeology Sundays Paul and Rod took about 40 visitors on tours of the site.



## Visitor strategy for 2018

### 1. Tour opportunities

Leicestershire and Rutland Heritage Forum are considering promoting a Heritage Month annually from April 2018. Similar to the National Forest Walking Festival and the Festival of Archaeology, L&RHF would be the coordinating body for the month.

The English Heritage Open Days take place during the second weekend of September. North West Leicestershire District Council are building on this to promote Hello Heritage from Friday 1st to Sunday 17th September 2017, then annually.

LIHS might like to consider whether to embrace these opportunities in addition to the three July Sundays or even to spread the Sundays out across April, July and September.

### 2. Tour Times

A suggestion was made that instead of visitors just turning up at different times, timed tours be offered such as 2pm, 3pm, 4pm.

### 3. Site Accessibility

With the progress that has been made in clearing around the engine house area, perhaps LIHS and SHT should consider the viability of taking people into the tunnel and pit areas during tours. Would this be (a) desirable? And (b) safe by 2018?

### 4. Tour Content

The content of the tours has evolved over time. Perhaps it would be opportune to consider what a tour should comprise.