

Photographic Report Of LIHS Excavation - July 2019

Swannington Heritage Trust own the Califat Spinney, which is the site of the Califat Coal Mine (1855-1873). Leicestershire Industrial History Society have led the monthly excavation of the coal mine buildings near the Califat winding shaft since June 2006.

Swannington Heritage Trust produce this monthly photographic report for the benefit of SHT and LIHS, so that they can share it with their members, volunteers and supporters. LIHS make the technical recordings of the dig and will produce a report at the end of the excavation.

Engine House - Winding Drum Void



In June the team built the sleeper wall at the north end of the winding drum void, so this month it was filled with spoil previously excavated from the dig. There is now a gentle slope that can be left to settle. The Trust land management team can then finalise the gradient and mow it when the grass appears.

Coal Storage Pavement



The excavated spur in the coal storage pavement's north west corner was filled with spoil removed from the pavement.

Photographic Report Of LIHS Excavation - July 2019



The first three wooden sleepers were moved to the coal storage pavement and carefully fitted in position. It was a slow process getting the levels correct and cutting supports.



Four diggers used a rope to carefully move the concrete step into position. This method shared the weight, protected the lifters' backs and minimised the risk of trapping fingers and toes.

Photographic Report Of LIHS Excavation - July 2019



It took the whole morning to complete the first layer. Progress should be much faster in August as the levels have been established.



Near where the coal pavement meets the brickwork there is a shallow drain which required the sleeper to be supported by three bricks.

It is possible that the shallow drain continued along the eastern brick pillar then went at a tangent to drain into the area with multiple pipes, now within the herras fencing.

As this low area is likely to fill with water when it rains, it might be worth digging out the route and installing a french drain before the retaining wall is completed.

Photographic Report Of LIHS Excavation - July 2019

Miners' Cottages



Diggers spent a considerable part of the morning removing the weeds and cutting back the hawthorn embedded in the walls. Trust land management will have another go at trying to kill the hawthorn, but it has been quite resistant to previous attempts.



The edge of the pavement to the left of the porch was uncovered and the wall line revealed.

Photographic Report Of LIHS Excavation - July 2019



In the north west corner of the room an inverted section of the roof was discovered. The tiles are neatly together and upside down.

This will be investigated further at the August dig.



Some larger pieces of mortar emphasising the method of construction. We wondered where the beautiful yellow flowered verbascum (mullein) came from. Amazing the beautiful creations that pop up at the dig.

Photographic Report Of LIHS Excavation - July 2019



A complete roof tile with the two nail holes. Collecting the construction and artefact evidence is an important feature of the dig.



An overview of the cottage site.

Social



The dig's resident artist with his latest work. It is always great to see non digging members of LIHS who come to see the latest progress.