



Just An Hour - Country Lanes Around Hough Mill

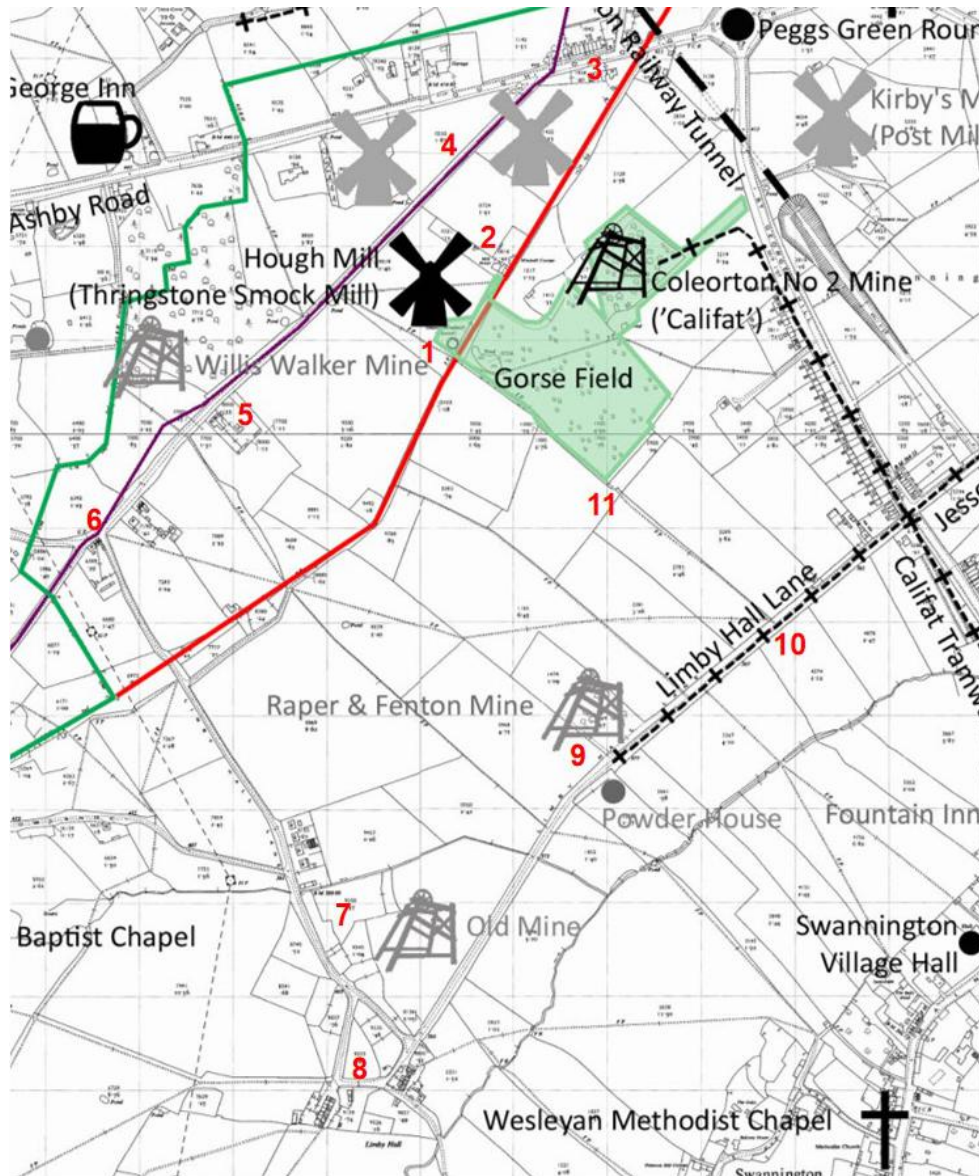
This circular walk from Hough Mill explores the quiet country lanes around the mill and passes several excellent mill viewing points. It is a couple of miles in length and will take an hour to complete, but twice as long if you spend time admiring the views and discussing the historical features! Although the country lanes are quiet, vehicles are not uncommon so please be alert and keep to the right hand side of the roads. There are not any stiles on this walk.

The car park at Hough Mill is available during mill opening hours 2-5pm on Sundays (April to September), as well as during Trust volunteer sessions from 9am to 1pm on most Wednesday and Friday mornings (some weeks volunteers are working at the Swannington Incline). Ensure you allow plenty of time to retrieve your car before the site gates are locked. At other times please be considerate when parking on roads. Arriva bus route 29 Leicester to Burton via Coalville and Ashby has stops on St George's Hill Swannington and Loughborough Road.

The map is an annotated version of the 1962 Ordnance Survey map. The finger of land between the purple and red lines was part of Thringstone parish until 1936, which is why Hough Mill was formerly known as Thringstone Smock Mill. Swannington was to the south and east of the red line, Coleorton to the north and west of the purple line. The current Swannington parish boundary is the green line. Light grey map symbols are buildings that no longer exist. The full "Centuries of Changes" A0 annotated map of Swannington is on display in the mill's ancillary buildings and A3 copies are on sale at Hough Mill.

1. From Hough Mill follow the bridleway across the field to Mill House (now Millburn).
2. Mill House (the white house) was the home of the Griffin family who operated the mill until the 1870's. Continue along the Mill Lane bridleway.
3. Turn left onto Loughborough Road (A512), then before reaching the Circle Garage, turn left again onto Moor Lane.
4. Until a century ago Moor Lane was known as Workhouse Lane. Before the 1830's Ashby Union Workhouse each parish had its own smaller workhouse, Swannington's was next to the road. Continue along Moor Lane.
5. In 1911 Charles Sydney Hutt, a retired pattern maker, lived in Beaumont Villas with his wife, daughter and two visitors. The other half was occupied by Charles Chester a smallware and hardware shop assistant, his wife and three children. Continue along Moor Lane.
6. The Dairy is the white house at the junction, try this walk in May to see the fabulous wisteria. In 1911 it was Knight's cottages and occupied by coal miners Fred Rushton Reed, Herbert Elliott and William Rowell, plus retired school mistress Emma Briggs. With their families there were 15 people living in the four cottages. Turn left down Limby Hall Lane.
7. Pass the end of the bridleway leading to the mill, as well as a small group of houses on the left and The Rowlands (which leads to the former Coleorton Baptist Chapel) on the right. The Califat coal mine near the mill extended underground to this area, on the 8th October 1863 the Califat was flooded when it breached the abandoned water filled mine workings near this point.

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8. The name Limby Hall has two potential origins. One is that it was a wooden Saxon hall of which nothing remains. The second is that it derived from the miners from Linby in Nottinghamshire who moved to Swannington to work the late 18th century coal mines. During the 19th century Limby Hall Lane was spelt Linby. After the mines in Coleorton and north Swannington closed in the 1870s, many miners moved to the mine owners' new mines in the Annesley and Linby area.
9. Miners used to have to supply their own blasting powder. The village powder houses were located away from houses. In 1794 William Jessop built a horse drawn tramway from the mine operated by John Raper and William Fenton (the woodland) to the Charnwood Forest canal. Hence the wide grass verge next to the road.
10. Turn left via a wooden kissing gate onto the public footpath or permissive path, both lead up the hill towards the mill.
11. Proceed through two gates into the Swannington Heritage Trust owned Gorse Field. The crater like holes in the ground are evidence of the bell pits (hand winched, 30 feet or 9 metres) and gin pits (horse winched, 150 feet, 45 metres) used to mine coal as far back as 1204. The Gorse Field is an acid grass heathland which is rare in Leicestershire. It has been granted "wildlife site" status because of its rare plants. Continue through the Gorse Field to Hough Mill.