



## Just An Hour - Wordsworth's church and the railway that led to California

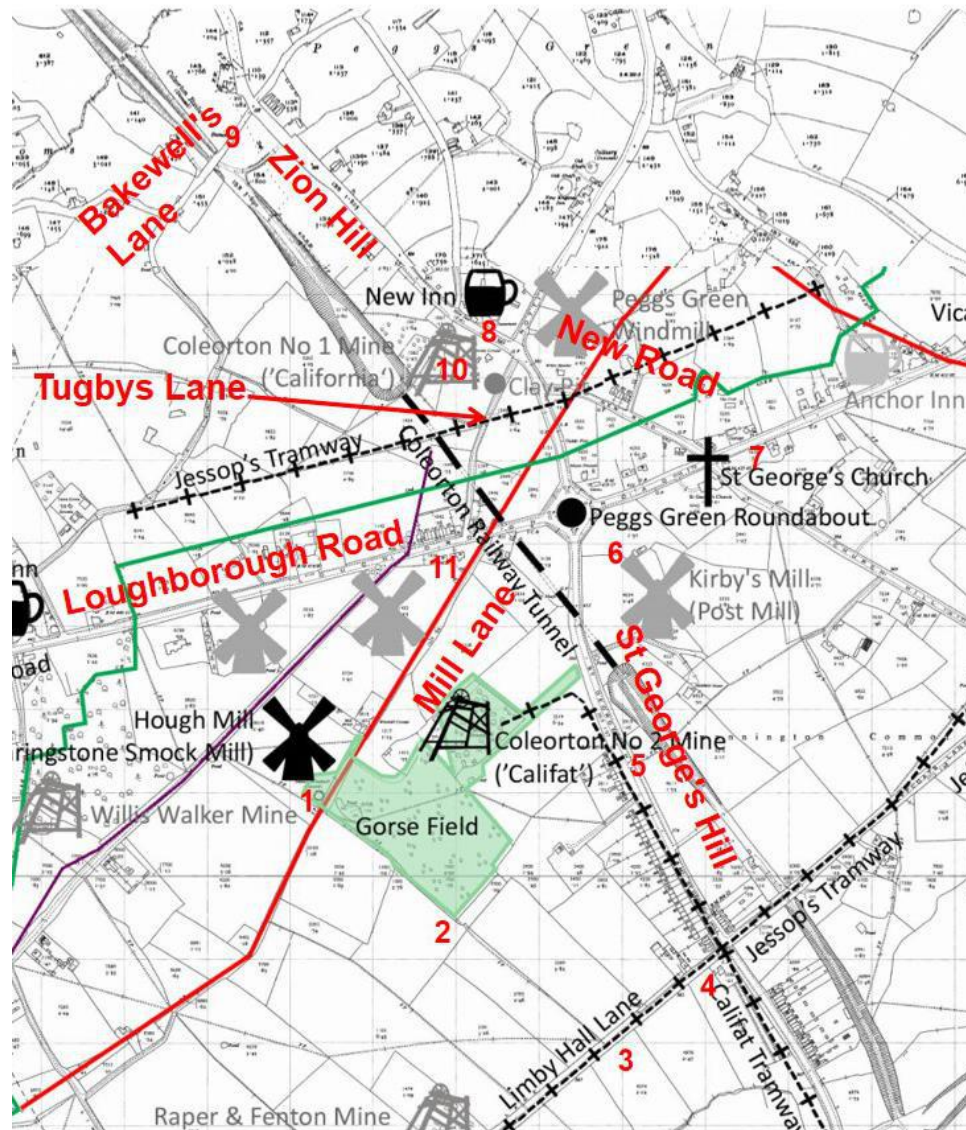
This circular walk from Hough Mill explores the Swannington / Coleorton / Thringstone border area that includes the sites of coal mines, a brickworks, windmills, three horse drawn railways, a church and a smallpox hospital. It is a couple of miles in length and will take an hour to complete, but twice as long if you spend time admiring the views and discussing the historical features! 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 at the mill and A3 copies are on sale.

1. From Hough Mill follow the public footpath south, down the hill through the Gorse Field, the dips are evidence of centuries ago bell pits.
2. Proceed through two gates and the Brook House estate's national forest planting to Limby Hall Lane.
3. Turn left and follow Limby Hall Lane. The wide grass verge was William Jessop's 1794 horse drawn railway to the Charnwood Forest canal.
4. Main Street was the Hinckley and Melbourne Turnpike and there was a toll house there. Turn left and proceed up St George's Hill. St George's Terrace lacks any form of front garden, later built Ivy Leigh cottages have short front gardens, and the post WWI houses have long front gardens which are on the former horse drawn tramway to the Califat coal mine (1855-1873).
5. Continue up St George's Hill, the small woodland on the right conceals the entrance to the 1833 Coleorton horse drawn railway tunnel (filled in 1963). Behind the woodland is the former 6 bed isolation hospital built for smallpox patients in 1884. It was sold as a house in the 1930s.
6. At the roundabout Mee's blacksmiths were on the far side of Loughborough Road. Turn right and head to the church. Thomas Kirby worked the post mill in the field until his March 1891 death, when his wife Mahala took over until her death the following month.
7. The poet William Wordsworth wrote in his diary "During the month of December 1820, I accompanied a much-beloved and honoured Friend in a walk through different parts of his estate, with a view to to fix upon the site of a new Church which he intended to erect." His friend Sir George Howland Beaumont contributed to the building cost of the Church. Near the west door is the gravestone of Harry Clements who died 8<sup>th</sup> October 1863 when the Califat coal mine flooded. Move around to the south door and nearby is the gravestone of the second John Griffin miller at Hough Mill and his wife Susannah. Cross Loughborough Road and the house on the left corner of New Road was once owned by Thomas and Mahala Kirby, then later by Harry Chester Hough, the grandson of John Hough who bought the mill in 1878.

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8. Cross Nottingham Road carefully and head along Zion Hill to the New Inn. Landlords John Tugby 1861, Thomas Cox 1871, James Bradley 1881, Henry Jackson 1891, Joseph Morley 1901. Pass Clay Lane and continue along Zion Hill to Bakewell's Lane.
9. Turn left onto Bakewell's Lane, then left again onto the route of the former Coleorton Railway. (Note on the other side of Bakewell's Lane the railway has been assimilated into various gardens.) Horse drawn trucks of coal from Smoile colliery in Newbold went passed the wharf and stables at what is now The Gelsmoor and along this route to the Leicester and Swannington Railway. Proceed along the railway.
10. Emerge onto the present day football pitch and play area next to the former Coleorton No 1 coal mine, known as California, because it opened in 1849 the year of the Californian gold rush. The position of the mine, brickworks, clay pit and tunnel can be seen on this extract of the 1903 map. Return to Zion Hill, turn right then right again into Tugby's Lane.
11. Former shop on corner of Olga Terrace and Tugby's Lane - shopkeepers Arthur Bishop 1901, Herbert Hull 1911, Roland Hull 1939 (1939 register enumerator). Cross Loughborough Road and head down Mill Lane (the Swannington / Thringstone parish boundary until 1936) to Hough Mill.

