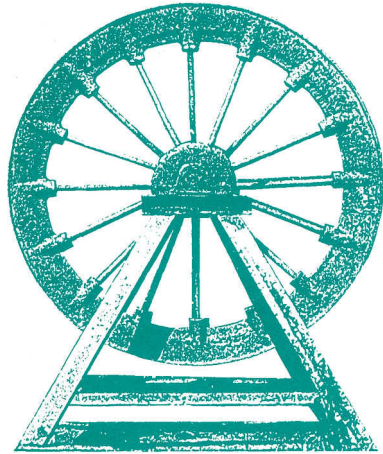


# MINING HERITAGE TRAIL



## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE

At the Heart of the National Forest

### Partly Revised Rapid Reprint

Please note this is a re-issue of a leaflet produced in the early 1990s by Leicestershire County Council in collaboration with North West Leicestershire District Council. Some of the information is out of date.



## NORTHWEST LEICESTERSHIRE'S MINING HERITAGE TRAIL

### Introduction

Welcome to the Mining Heritage Trail. This pleasant walk through part of the National Forest will take you through a variety of scenery in North West Leicestershire and show you examples of many aspects of the area's rich history. The circular route is approximately 9 miles long, linking the villages of Coleorton and Swannington with Snibston Discovery Park in Coalville. The trail has been signposted throughout with specially designed mining wheel signs on the waymark posts. This guide provides a description of the route and special features of interest to be found along the way as well as the location of car parking areas, public houses and picnic areas.

The sites and buildings which you will see and pass as you follow the trail will give you an insight into the huge importance of the mining industry to the area over a period of nearly a thousand years. Coleorton, and nearby Swannington were important centres of early coal mining activity, and some of the Coal Measures in the area are 250 million years old. These rich reserves which appeared at the surface in some areas and buried hundreds of feet underground in other areas provided the Beaumont family fortunes at Coleorton in the 15th and 16th Centuries which enabled them to build Coleorton Hall and the later fortunes of entrepreneurs like George Stephenson and his son Robert.

But you will witness much more than mining history as you walk along the trail. You will see examples of the social history of the area, including schools, churches and public houses together with other ancient and unusual industries such as rope making and bauble production. As you follow the trail, please respect the fact that you will be passing over private land and through working farm-yards and that strict adherence to the public rights of way is advised at all times.

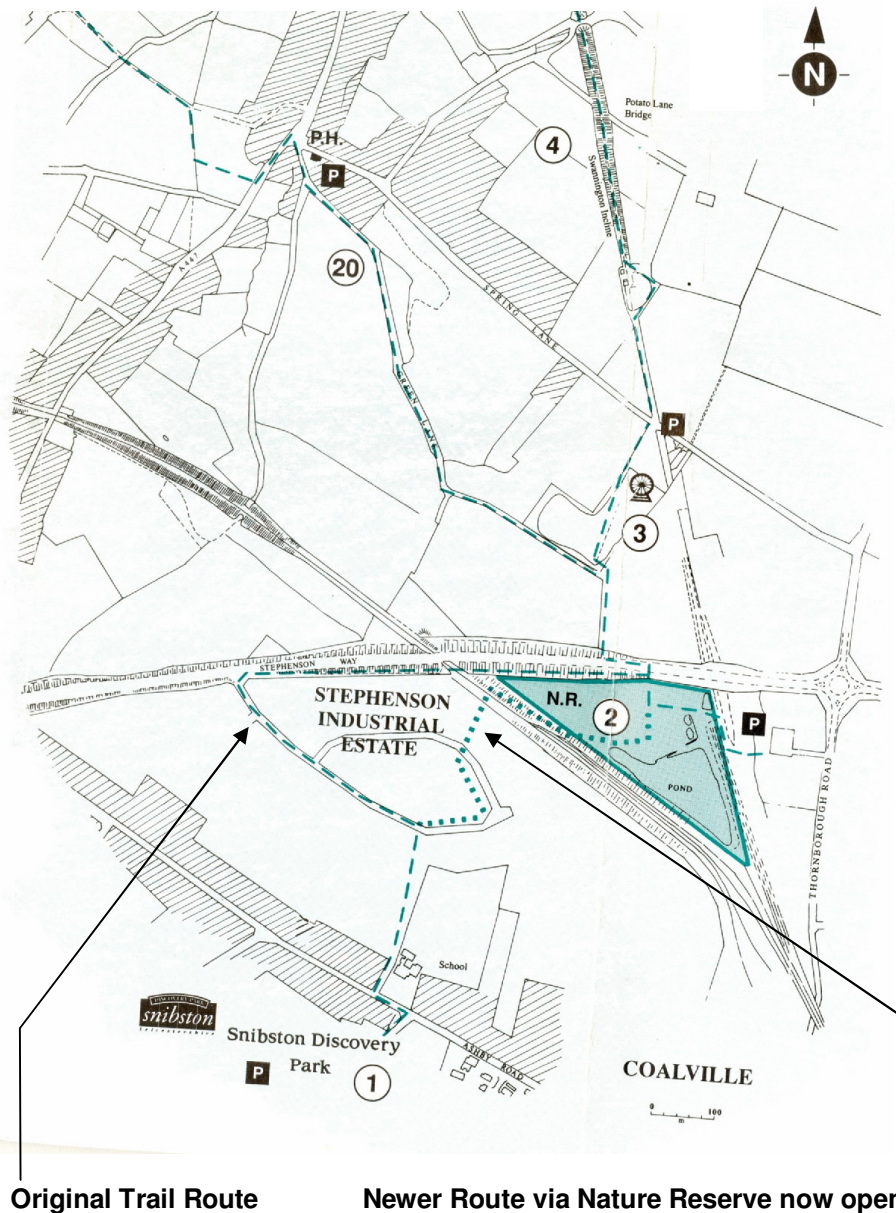


### KEY

- Heritage Trail
- Additional Points of Interest
- Planned link to Nature Reserve ( is now open)
- Parking & Access Points
- Nature reserve
- Picnic Sites
- Former Mine Shaft

# Route Map - Southern Section

Route continues on Northern Section Map on previous pages.



# Trail Description

The trail can be joined at a number of points with car parking areas identified at convenient locations around the trail. For the purposes of this guide the trail will start at Snibston Discovery Park (1) in Coalville and pass through the villages of Swannington and Coleorton before returning to the Discovery Park.

**1. Snibston Discovery Park** - Created on the site of the former Snibston Number 2 Colliery developed by George and Robert Stephenson in 1832. This is Leicestershire's largest tourist attraction and includes a huge science and industry museum. The head stocks of the former colliery remain and guided tours of the colliery buildings are available. In one of the galleries there is a display of local medieval mining which includes artefacts from the recent discovery near Coleorton of the earliest known example of deep shaft mining in Britain dating back to the 1450's. Extensive car parking is available on site.

*On leaving Snibston Discovery Park, turn left on to the Ashby Road, cross over the road. Passing Coalville Primary School on your right, turn right along the western edge of the school grounds, and follow the footpath through to the Stephenson Industrial Estate.*

*Since the leaflet was first produced, the path marked on the map as a 'Planned link to the Nature Reserve' has now been created. Follow the road round the eastern half of the Industrial Estate. Turn right into a short section of footpath that leads straight to a footbridge over the railway and then follow the path through the Nature Reserve (2).*

**2. Nature Reserve** - Formerly the Swannington Coalstocking Yard, this area has recently been restored by North West Leicestershire District Council to form a Nature Reserve. Car parking is available off Thornborough Road adjacent to the McDonalds' Drive Thru and a footpath provides access to the Nature Reserve and links in with the Trail.

*From the Nature Reserve go to Stephenson Way, cross over when and where it is safe, and rejoin the footpath immediately opposite. The path joins a surfaced track. Just after where the path becomes tree-lined take the path off right and up a slight rise. This brings you through to the rear of the site of the former Snibston Number 3 Colliery.*

**3. Site of the former Snibston No.3 Colliery** - Opened in 1850, this coal mine was the third of a number sunk in and around Coalville by George Stephenson's Colliery Company. At the main entrance to the site on Spring Lane, Swannington is a small wheel mounted on a plinth which formed part of the emergency winding gear at Snibston Colliery. A larger wheel also on the site was part of the winding gear from Ellistown Colliery to the south of

Coalville. A small car parking area is available on the site for groups by prior arrangement with the Swannington Heritage Trust. Otherwise, for individuals a small car parking area is available opposite, off Spring Lane in front of the entrance to the Swannington Incline.

*Cross Spring Lane and enter the site of the Swannington Incline. Follow the path alongside a short stretch of railway track before bearing to the right round the site of the former engine house to the start of the Incline (4).*

**4. Swannington Incline** - part of the Leicester and Swannington Railway engineered by Robert Stephenson. Built in 1832, coal wagons were hauled up the 1 in 17 gradient incline by rope, powered by a steam engine situated at the summit of the Incline. The system operated for 115 years and the original Stephenson steam engine is now preserved in the National Railway Museum in York.

*Follow the trail down the Incline, passing under a footbridge known as Potato Lane Bridge. This was rebuilt by Leicestershire County Council in the early 1990s to re-open a number of footpaths in the area. The Trail then comes to Church Lane Bridge which had been previously filled-in. Leicestershire County Council subsequently rebuilt this bridge to re-open access to the other side of the Incline. After the bridge ignore the access steps on the left which lead up to the road but, just after this, take the footpath off to the left across a field.*

*The Incline itself continues for a short distance further and makes for an interesting diversion. There are information points all along the Incline. Upon leaving the Incline, follow waymark posts around the field to rejoin Church Lane. Turning right continue up to the junction with Main Street and into the village of Swannington (5). Note the old Wheelwrights Shop (now a private residence) on the left at the top of Church Lane. Turn right on to Main Street, passing the old "Stone House" on your left which is believed to have been constructed in the 16th Century.*

**5. Village of Swannington** - This ancient settlement is noted for its agricultural importance over many centuries and for the good seams of coal which come to the surface in this area. The coal near the surface has been worked at Swannington since before the 13th Century.

*Continue through the village until you pass the Swannington Institute (the Village Hall) then take the footpath on your left, on the far side of the Institute building, that leads to Limby Hall Lane. This section of the trail passes over land which has been restored following the closure of the Limby Hall open cast mine in the 1940's. As you join Limby Hall Lane, note on the left and on the opposite side of the lane a small spinney (wooded area) which was the site of a late 18th Century Raper and Fenton Mine (6).*

**6. Raper and Fenton Mine and the Jessop Horse-Drawn Tramroad** - Opened in the late 18th Century, this was one of the later deep mines sunk on Swannington Common. The Jessop horse-drawn tramroad of 1795 connected this mine and many others in the area with the ill-fated Charnwood Forest Canal at nearby Thringstone. The remnants of wide verges visible on the far side of the lane indicate the line of the tramroad which continued down Jeffcoats Lane to Thringstone.

*At Limby Hall Lane, turn right and 200 yards further down take the footpath off to the left, accessed over a stile provided within a "doorway" cut into the hedgerow just before a farm gate. The trail continues along this path to the Gorse Field Nature Reserve. However, before leaving Limby Hall Lane, well worth a short diversion is a visit to the site of Calcutta Colliery (7) which is in private ownership.*

**7. Calcutta Colliery.** Operated between 1853 and 1877 and then taken over by a pumping company which continued to function as part of a chain of mine pumps servicing mines in the area up until the closure of Whitwick Colliery in 1986. The old engine house built in 1877 can still be seen on the site.

*The trail continues from Limby Hall Lane along the footpath to the Gorse Field Nature Reserve (8), which is an excellent spot for a short rest or picnic.*

**8. The Gorse Field and Califat Colliery.** This area of grassland is owned and managed as a nature reserve by the Swannington Heritage Trust in conjunction with Leicestershire County Council. It is now a particularly important area in terms of its bird life, dragonflies and butterflies, in particular the Speckled Wood. The site is on an area of ancient coal pits probably Bell Pits which worked the shallow seam outcropping to the east. The spoil mounds visible today are likely to originate from the adjacent Califat Colliery whose remains are to be found in the spinney immediately to the north east of the Gorse Field. This colliery is believed to have operated using a Newcomen Pumping Engine in the early 18th Century. A Newcomen Haystack type of boiler was excavated from this site in 1967 and is now to be found at Snibston Discovery Park in Coalville.

*Leave the nature reserve by the stile in the western corner which will take you out into a field containing an old "tower" windmill, known as the Hough Windmill (9).*

**9. The Hough Windmill.** This was built at the end of the 18th Century probably on the site of a former post mill. This tower windmill ceased working in the early 1890's and is now a Grade 2 listed building currently being restored. (Photo opposite is of a fully working tower windmill).



*From the stile leading to the Windmill, the trail follows the field around to the left, through a gate on to one of the many ancient green lanes in the area. Shortly after passing a small copse of trees on your right, the trail leaves the lane and takes a footpath over a stile on your right. Follow waymark posts to Moor Lane heading towards two private dwellings located on the other side of the field (the stile leading to Moor Lane is located near the right hand dwelling). Turn right on to Moor Lane and rejoin the footpath about 50 yards further down on the left opposite Beaumont Villas.*

*As you continue along the path, note the lightly wooded area to your right which was once the site of one of Burslem's 18th Century deep mines. This mine was also connected to the Charnwood Forest Canal via Jessop's horse-drawn tram road. At the first stile, take the left hand fork in the path and follow the edge of the field over another stile. Note the pond to your right which was probably an old clay pit from Beaumont's Brick Yard dating from the 1830's. The trail continues along this narrow path, passing an electricity pylon to your right, towards another stile which leads you into the Rope Walk (10).*

**10 Rope Walk** - This is a good example of long lost industries being maintained by place names. Rope was made here by hand until well into the 19th Century for use both in the mines and in agriculture. The individual strands from which the rope was made, were pegged out at one end of the "walk" and the rope twisted by hand as the rope maker walked the length of the ropewalk.



*Proceed towards the A512. Turn right and walk towards The George Inn Public House (11).*

**11. The George Inn.** Most of the public houses in this area were established on old colliery sites and it is likely that this Inn was built in the late 18th Century. The area of land around The George contains numerous examples of early coal mining including Bell Pits and later deep mines. The line of Jessop's tramroad can be seen in the earthworks behind the Inn; this

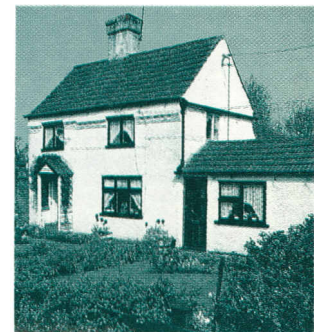


linked Boulton's 18th Century mine (located to the west of the Inn) with the Charnwood Forest Canal. Car parking is available at The George for those wishing to follow the trail.

*Continue past The George and take the first left down Bakewells Lane. As the lane bears off to the right take the stile on the left. This takes you into a field of rough ground that was once part of Boulton's mine. Follow waymark posts down the hill bearing to the left until you reach another stile in the far hedgerow. Continue along the path until you reach Stoney Lane. Turning right on to the lane, take the first left opposite the entrance to Beehive Cottage. As you turn into this lane, note the red brick building to the right of Willow Cottage on your right. This was the former "Old Engine" Inn (12) dating from the 1700's and is now a private residence.*

**12. The Old Engine Inn.** The Inn is named after the atmospheric "fire engine" installed just beyond Willow Cottage to pump water out of another of Boulton's Collieries in the late 18th Century. The colliery was located further down the lane from the Inn.

*Continue past Willow Cottage to the end of the lane and take the footpath to the left. In the field ahead, the remains of the colliery dirt bank can still be seen. Follow right hand edge of field and a short distance along this path take the stile on your right which leads in to a "grass" lane, known as Chapel Lane. Follow this lane up to Coleorton Main Street and note the original primitive Methodist Chapel built in 1839 to your right and the "new" Methodist Church on your left built as a replacement in 1901. Turning right on to Main Street, proceed towards the white cottage on your right a short distance further down the street (13).*



**13. Brooklyn Cottage.** The cottage is an example of a typical miner's cottage built in the early 1800's. It has been added to over the years but was originally a small thatched residence with "two up and two down", an earth floor, and an outside water pump which would have been used by nearby villagers for their water supply. The house remained thatched until the early 1940's and was home to a small general store until the war and is now a private residence.

*Take the footpath on the left almost immediately opposite Brooklyn Cottage.*

*The Trail continues by following the waymark posts bearing to the left. However, as you rejoin the footpath note the land rising up on your right. On the rise of the hill in front of a copse of trees (itself probably former mine workings) note the uneven appearance of the earth and in particular a large depression of about 10 yards in diameter. This is all that remains of substantial Ginn Pit workings (14) dating back to the 18th Century.*

**14. The Horse Ginn.** These were very common in the Coleorton and Swannington area during the 17th and 18th Centuries. The earthworks visible today suggest the remains of Ginn Pits with the typical circular mounds and a central circular mounds and a central depression caused by the shaft backfill collapsing leading to subsidence of the inner rim. Some of the horses operating the winding ginnns in this area were kept at the former Beaumont Estate Ginn Stables nearby and hired out on a daily basis together with horse minders. When the Estate workshops were sold in the 1930's the timber components of an old horse ginn were found. Sadly, since no-one was interested in them at the time they were burnt in the general clean-up operation that followed.

*Continue along the Trail by following the waymark arrows into an area of open scrubland. This area was formerly an important centre of mining activity in the mid to late 18th Century, centreing largely on what was formerly Paddock Colliery (15)*

**15. Paddock Colliery** - An important colliery in the second half of the 18th Century. It mined high quality coal and used the latest technology of the day, including atmospheric steam pumps. The shrub covered mounds visible today are the remains of the dirt tips and down towards the brook stood the main pumping engine. From this point on the horizon to the right can be seen the newly restored spire of St. Mary's Church, Coleorton and the east front of Coleorton Hall.

*On leaving the scrub area, continue towards the stiles that lead you across the new A512 Coleorton by-pass. As you cross the road note the "toad traps" running parallel to both sides of the road. The large pond to your left is Coleorton Fishpond, which formed part of the landscaping carried out in the grounds of Coleorton Hall during the first decade of the 19th Century. Follow the trail on the other side of the road up the hill towards Coleorton Primary School keeping to the edge of the woodland on your left. Take the stile in the top left hand corner of the field which brings you out on to the Ashby Road, opposite St. Johns Mortuary Chapel (16). Continue along the road past Coleorton Primary School (17) and rejoin the footpath 200 yards on your left.*



**16. St. Johns Mortuary Chapel** - The chapel was built in 1857 for a congregation mainly drawn from the estate workers and domestic staff of Coleorton Hall. However, it would appear that the Chapel was not consecrated for worship at the time and was used as a mortuary. In the 1960's it was restored and then consecrated by the Bishop of Leicester.

**17. Coleorton Primary School** - Built in 1867 by Canon Beaumont together with new Alms Houses. The school is one of the oldest in the area and has the motto "be kind to one another".

An earlier school was founded in 1701 by Viscount Thomas Beaumont as a combined school and hospital.

*The trail continues from the footpath after the school up the hill. Follow waymark posts up the hill. Note the evidence of ancient mine workings in this scrub area, probably the remains of 17th and 18th Century Ginn Pits and the many footpaths which originated as miners trails from nearby villages to local pits. Over the stile, follow the edge of a small wood to your left round to a stile in the left hand corner of the field.*

*From there, continue over a small footbridge crossing a stream and a stile which leads into a field containing at least two large Ginn Pit earthworks to the left. Note the large deposits of coal in the stream bed and surrounding fields. In fact, all the fields around this area have been mined extensively at some period in the last 400 years. To your right is the site of Coleorton Colliery more commonly called Bug and Wink Colliery (18).*



**18. Bug and Wink Colliery** - Opened in 1875 this was the last, but one, in a long history of coal mines to be sunk in Coleorton. The high cost of extracting the lower coal seams after the main coal reserves had been exhausted forced the pit to close in the early 1930's. Today the site has been planted with young trees by Leicestershire County Council as part of the National Forest. A car parking area and picnic area have also been provided. Access to the site can be gained from Pitt Lane.

*The trail continues along the footpath up to Pitt Lane. At the top of Pitt Lane, turn right on to the main road known as The Moor and take the first road on the left, which is Moor Lane. A short way down the lane take the right hand fork down The Rowlands. Note the large house standing on the left at the beginning of the Rowlands. This was at one time the Queens Head Public House (now a private residence) (19).*

**19. Queens Head Public House** - Rebuilt in 1827, but by the early 1900's it was no longer licensed as a public house. The building also became the centre of the Coleorton "bauble" industry for a short time in the mid to late 1800's. Baubles were Victorian novelty ornaments made from soft Derbyshire alabaster and local examples can be seen at Leicester Museum.

*Shortly after passing the former Queens Head, take the stile on your right which leads into a series of fields up to Limby Hall Lane. Follow waymark posts through the centre of the first field in the direction of a farm house in the distance (located to the left of an electricity pylon). Proceed over another stile and continue in the same direction towards Limby Hall Lane. Almost immediately to your right on Limby Hall Lane, note the row of back-to-back cottages built for miners in the mid 18th Century. Continue down the lane and take the track off to the right of two cottages as the lane bears to the left.*

*After crossing a footbridge over a small brook at Cuckoo Gap, take the path which branches off to the left and follow the footpath back down into the village of Swannington and the A447. Turning left on to the main road, cross over and take the first turning on the right into Spring Lane in front of the Robin Hood Public House (car parking available). Turn right in front of the pub and then take the left fork past the house on the left. This takes you down one of the most beautiful examples of a "Green Lane" in the area (20).*

**20. Green Lane** - This wide lane with high, well established hedgerows is a fine example of a traditional right of way between a settlement and a market.

*Follow this lane, take a left hand fork in the lane, then through a wooded area, after which, out in the open once again, you rejoin the route of the outward journey. Retrace your steps back to Stephenson Way and finally to Snibston Discovery Park. We hope that you have enjoyed the trail.*

## HISTORY OF MINING IN THE AREA

The Coleorton and Swannington area of North West Leicestershire has been a centre of coal mining activity for almost a thousand years. Coal seams up to 12 feet thick in places have provided an abundance of reserves to sustain the area at the forefront of coal mining activity. Indeed, recent excavations have uncovered evidence to prove that sophisticated techniques of deep shaft mining were being practised in the Coleorton area in the 1450's over one hundred years earlier than had previously been recorded in Britain. The shape and depth of the coal seams have influenced the pattern of mining activity in the area. In early times only the coal which emerged at or near the surface in the Coleorton and Swannington area could be mined due to primitive pumping techniques. The coal found in seams which run deeper underground towards Whitwick, Coalville and beyond could not be extracted until more sophisticated pumping and mining techniques and transportation methods were developed in the 18th Century.

Since the earliest mines were quite small and required few, if any, permanent structures on the surface there is little visible evidence remaining to identify the extent of this activity in the area. However, as deeper shafts were sunk, throwing up larger amounts of spoil and where permanent structures were built on the surface, there is more evidence available to locate these activities. Furthermore, as the mines grew larger so their impact on the environment became greater. While time and nature has healed many of the scars and softened the ravaged landscape caused by relatively small scale mining, Man has also played its part in restoring areas of land affected by much larger scale activity. Today, nature reserves and recreation areas have replaced many of the more recent colliery sites in the area.

### Outcrop Mining

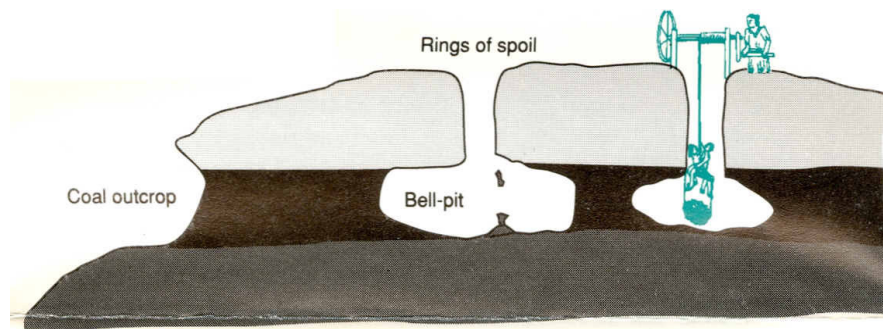
The earliest form of coal mining in the area, known as outcropping, simply involved coal being picked up or dug out from shallow pits wherever the Coal Measures emerged at the surface. The earliest record of mining in the area dates back to 1204 on Swannington Common where freemen of the village had the right to mine for coal. However, it is thought that mining in the area actually dates back even further. While there is little direct evidence available, it is also believed that coal mining in the Coleorton area was being carried out at about the same time as in Swannington. (A form of outcropping took place until recently in the form of the open cast mining

activities in the area).

Another common method of mining during this period in Britain was adit mining. This involved digging into coal seams which emerged on the site of a hill. However, there is little evidence to suggest this was a common practice in the Coleorton and Swannington area.

12th-13th Century  
Coal was worked where it outcropped at the surface and in Bell-pits

14th-15th Century  
Later Bell-pits used windlasses to haul up miners and coal



## Bellpits

From early times it became increasingly apparent to those searching for coal that it could be found underground as well as at the surface. As a result deeper pits were excavated in search of coal seams. Such pits, known as Bell Pits, gradually became more common from the 13th Century onwards. These were actually holes dug into the ground down to the coal seam. The coal was then dug out in a radial fashion from the centre of the shaft. It is the underground shape of the pit that gives this type of mining its name, rather than any shape visible on the surface.

Bell Pits were usually sunk close together in rows with spoil from the latest pit thrown into the last one to be exhausted. In the earliest Bell Pits, coal would have been carried up ladders to the surface in backpacks. However, as technology improved and deeper shafts were dug, windlasses were used to haul up the coal and the miners. Today, the only evidence remaining which may indicate the location of the Bell Pits are small circular mounds on the surface left by spoil with inverted bell-like depressions in the centre where the underground shaft has collapsed.

## Deep Shaft Mining and Pillar and Stall Workings

The disadvantages of Bell Pits were that only coal up to a certain depth could be mined and only a relatively small amount extracted before there would be a danger of the roof collapsing. The development of deep shaft mining techniques revolutionised the industry. Timber lined shafts of up to 100 feet in depth became common. Coal was then worked in chambers (or stalls) with pillars of coal left at strategic points to hold up the ceiling.

Until recently, it was believed that this method of mining was developed in Germany before the 1550's and then introduced into Britain. However, evidence uncovered at British Coal's Lounge open cast site in the Coleorton area has rewritten the history books. Oak pit props and timber lined shafts up to 100 feet in depth were recently discovered here and have been scientifically dated back to the 1450's. The discovery of these mine workings actually represents the oldest accurately dated mine in Britain. It also suggests that sophisticated forms of mining were taking place in the Coleorton area at the same time as it had originally thought to have been developed in Germany.

Following careful preservation of the timbers excavated at the Lounge site, a reconstruction of a medieval deep shaft mine will be on display at Snibston Discovery Park from early 1994. The exhibition will also include other artefacts of equipment and clothing found on the site.



## Revolving Winches and Horse Ginns

In addition to lining shafts with timber in order to be able to dig deeper shafts, new methods for bringing coal to the surface were required. As a result, large revolving winches were developed to replace the windlasses that had been used in Bell Pits. Initially these devices were powered by men. However, later versions utilised horses strapped to the revolving structure.



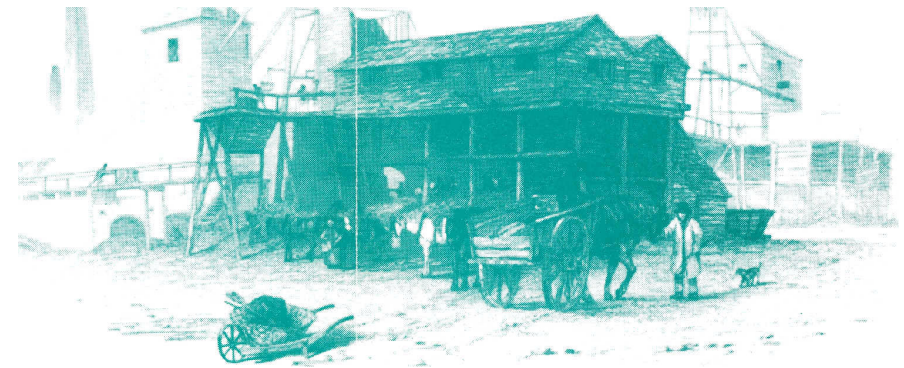
Horse Ginns, as they were called, were very common in the Coleorton and Swannington area from the 17th Century and were still being used well into the 19th Century. The horses used to power the Ginns were usually kept in teams and stables were a common sight in the area. The horses and their minders were usually hired out on a daily basis to local mines

## Industrial Revolution and Steam Engines

Towards the latter half of the 17th Century, the rate of progress in mining that had been achieved over the centuries as a result of advances in technology suddenly began to level off. Drainage and ventilation problems had always affected mining operations from the time the first shafts were sunk underground. Initial attempts to solve these problems included dividing shafts and lighting fires in the bottom to create air currents and using chain pumps to draw up water from the bottom of the shafts. However, these problems became so acute in the late 17th Century that contemporary technology could not find a way of resolving them.

For a number of decades, problems relating to drainage and ventilation almost brought mining to a standstill in some areas. Although there is evidence to suggest that Water Wheel pumping was being carried out in the Swannington area in the 17th Century. This allowed considerable trade to continue but was unable to sustain any expansion in the industry. The

development of Thomas Savery's "Fire Engine" in 1698 and especially the Newcomen atmospheric steam engine in 1705 revolutionised the industry overnight and provided an immediate solution to drainage and ventilation problems. The Newcomen engine proved more practically successful than Savery's and was widely used in the Coleorton and Swannington area during the 18th Century. The adaptation of the steam engine to provide rotary motion soon replaced Horse Ginns for winding coal up pit shafts.



## Transportation

In addition to drainage and ventilation problems, there was also one other major factor which began to affect the area, namely access to markets. The export of coal to local markets started in the 14th Century. However, the demand for coal increased dramatically with the onset of the Industrial Revolution and modern pits were being opened in many areas. Competition for markets became fierce and greater attention was paid to cutting costs. This stimulated a number of developments in methods of transportation of coal from the mines to their markets.

Up to the 18th Century, pack horses had been used extensively in the Coleorton and Swannington area to transport coal to Leicester. New turnpike roads to Leicester, Melbourne and Loughborough were built in the mid 18th Century to improve communications. In an attempt to revitalise the Coleorton and Swannington area, which had suffered from competition from neighbouring areas, the Charnwood Forest Canal was constructed in the late 18th Century. This was intended to provide a link to the Soar Navigation Canal near Loughborough and then on to Leicester via the Leicester Line and River Soar navigation. The Charnwood Forest Canal terminated at Thringstone and horse drawn wagons running on tram roads

provided the link to the coal mines. Unfortunately the canal was both a technical failure and an economic disaster and soon closed.

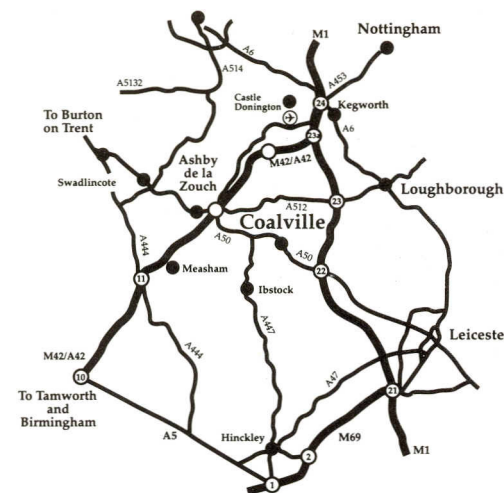
A much more successful venture in Leicestershire transport came with the opening of the Swannington to Leicester Railway in 1833. The railway was proposed by William Stenson, a local colliery owner in an attempt to exploit the concealed coalfield to the south of Swannington. He persuaded Robert Stephenson, son of the famous railway engineer George Stephenson to design and build the railway. With the benefit of this railway, Stenson opened the Whitwick Colliery and the Stephensons moved to the area and set up a mining company which developed two colliery sites at Snibston. It was this focus of mining activity that gave rise to the birth of the town of Coalville. Furthermore, the opening of the railway gave a new albeit temporary lease of life to the traditional mining areas around Coleorton and Swannington. It also encouraged the development of new collieries at Lount and Worthington.

The closure of the New Lount Colliery in 1969 saw the long tradition of underground coal mining in Coleorton come to an end. The last mine in the whole of North West Leicestershire closed in 1991 at Bagworth.



## Tourist Information

Tourist information on other tourist attractions, places to stay and places to eat in North West Leicestershire can be obtained from the Tourist Information Centre, North Street, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire, LE651HU Tel: 01530 411767.



## Further Information

Further information on the Swannington area is contained in a guide to the Swannington Heritage Trail produced by the Swannington Heritage Trust. Copies of this guide can be obtained from the Trust at the address below, Swannington Post Office and the Tourist Information Centre.

A guided walk of the Mining Heritage Trail can be arranged with the Swannington Heritage Trust, by contacting Denis Baker, 7 Hospital Lane, Swannington, Leicestershire, LE67 4DQ Tel: 01530 222330. The Trust is a voluntary body currently restoring the Swannington Incline and other sites in the area. For further information see [www.swannington-heritage.co.uk](http://www.swannington-heritage.co.uk)

Information about the public footpaths and bridleways managed by Leicestershire County Council is available from the Rights of Way Team see [www.leics.gov.uk/paths](http://www.leics.gov.uk/paths), telephone 0116 305 8160 or email [footpaths@leics.gov.uk](mailto:footpaths@leics.gov.uk). Further information about the Snibston Discovery Park is at [www.snibston.com](http://www.snibston.com) telephone 01530 278444 or [snibston@leics.gov.uk](mailto:snibston@leics.gov.uk)

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