

UNCOVER LEICESTERSHIRE'S INDUSTRIAL PAST

UNCOVER
THE STORY TRAILS

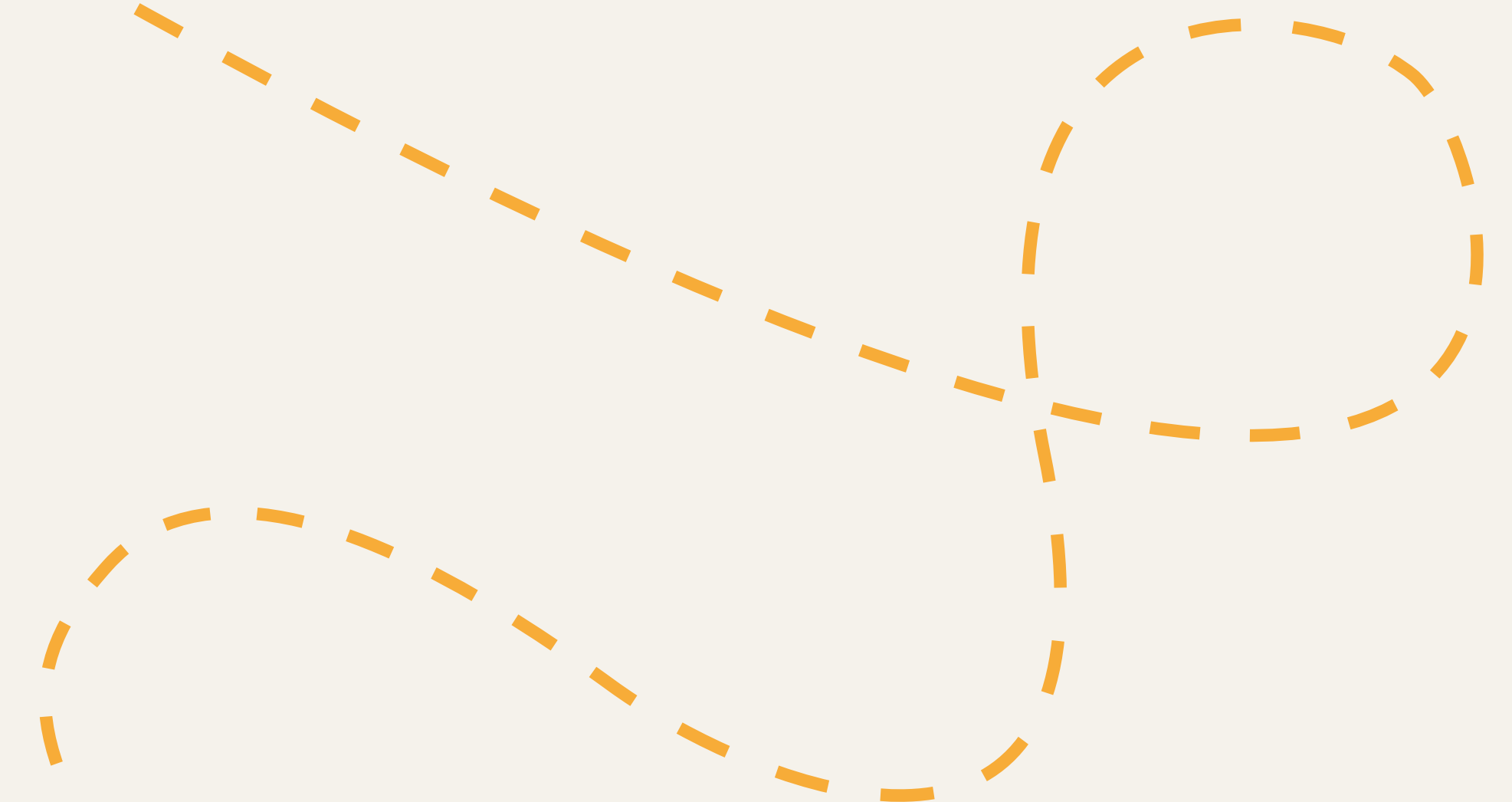
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WELCOME TO A NEW APPROACH IN TELLING OUR STORIES.

As you delve into the history of Leicestershire's industrial past you'll embark on a fascinating journey through former coalfields and ancient woodland, on heritage railway lines and alongside winding canals.

From a forest-themed adventure park to a museum of science, the county boasts a range of captivating visitor attractions. Each one has a story to tell about how the Industrial Revolution gained strength and how new machinery and ways of working shaped Leicestershire and the lives of its inhabitants.

**JOIN US ON THIS FASCINATING
TOUR TO FIND OUT MORE.**



Uncover more about
the attractions featured at
visitleicester.info/uncoverthestory

POINTS OF INTEREST

1. **Moira Furnace**
Furnace Lane,
Moira DE12 6AT
2. **Snibston Colliery Park**
12 Chiswell Drive,
Coalville LE67 3JX
3. **Conkers**
Rawdon Road,
Swadlincote DE12 6GA
4. **Great Central Railway**
Great Central Road,
Loughborough LE11 1RW
5. **Loughborough
Bellfoundry Trust**
Freehold Street,
Loughborough LE11 1AR
6. **Charnwood
Forest Villages**
Quorn, Rothley,
Mountsorrel,
Woodhouse Eaves
7. **Triumph Visitor Centre**
Normandy Way,
Hinckley LE10 3BZ
8. **The Battlefield Line**
Shackerstone Station,
Shackerstone CV13 0SB
9. **Foxton Locks**
Middle Lock,
Foxton LE16 7RA
10. **Lutterworth**
Lutterworth Museum,
12D Market Street,
Lutterworth LE17 4EH
11. **Abbey Pumping Station**
Corporation Road,
Leicester LE4 5PX
12. **Everards**
Cooper Way,
Everards Meadows
LE19 2AN
13. **Stoney Cove**
Stoney Stanton
LE9 4DW
14. **Canals**
Grand Union Canal,
Ashby Canal





MOIRA FURNACE

With the Industrial Revolution in full swing, mining land rich in iron ore was a lucrative proposition for the Earl of Moira. In 1806, he built Moira Furnace on his estate and set about doing just that.

In what was a period of development in blast furnace design, Moira's was dogged by flaws. Iron was only smelted here for five years, and documents from the time hint at all manner of faults.

Whether its demise was through bad design, bad construction or bad management, good would come from it never being modernised. This rare legacy of days gone by nestles within the North West Leicestershire countryside today as a fascinating museum.



SNIBSTON COLLIERY PARK

Rural land earmarked as a railway site by 'Father of Railways' George Stephenson would give the famous engineer even more success than he could have imagined. Surveying the route of the Leicester and Swannington Railway in 1830, Stephenson's son Robert was alerted to the area's coal-mining potential, and when the estate came up for sale the pair and their associates steamed in and snapped it up.

Producing coal for more than 150 years, transported for many on Stephenson's own railway, Snibston Colliery went on to yield up to a million tons of 'black diamonds' a year. Although the pits shut in the mid-1980s, rare colliery buildings remain on the spot, telling the story of the area's mining heritage.



CONKERS

In what was once an industrial landscape of mineshafts and spoil heaps, the beauty of the National Forest has taken shape. Sitting within its heart is Conkers, a forest-themed adventure park standing on land which, for 150 years, was mined for its coal.

Rawdon Colliery was troublesome throughout its history, closing and re-opening a number of times before coal production finally ceased in 1989. The noise of the machines that worked tirelessly hauling coal to the surface are replaced today by the peals of laughter and shrieks of excitement of family fun in full swing.



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

A line originally built to transport coal to the 19th century industries springing up all over Leicestershire and beyond, the Great Central Railway is a rare reminder of the days of steam.

Passengers were invited to hop aboard majestic locomotives here at the end of the century, and thanks to a group of determined railway enthusiasts, that's still the case today.

Despite the line's closure in 1966, services continue to run from its Loughborough Central base to its Leicester North terminus on a regular basis. It's Britain's only double-track mainline heritage railway, and the only place in the world where you can experience the thrill of full-size steam engines passing each other at speed.



LOUGHBOROUGH

BELLFOUNDRY TRUST

When bellfounders John Taylor and Company moved to their Loughborough home in 1859 little did they know that they'd go on to cast more than 25,000 bells which would peal in over 100 countries.

As the last major bellfoundry in Britain, the Victorian buildings in which their work was carried out still ring to the sounds of bellmakers at work. On a tour, visitors can watch from the casting hall viewing platform and explore the Victorian covered yard. A final treat is in store in the tuning shop, where the magical sounds of the world-famous Taylor's bells are perfected.



CHARNWOOD FOREST VILLAGES

The villages dotted around the ancient woodlands of Charnwood Forest owe their charm, in part, to the stone quarried here for thousands of years. Mountsorrel granite and Swithland slate add unique character to centuries-old cottages and cosy pubs, said to be the 'prettiest in Leicestershire'.

Quorn and Rothley are picturesque stops on the Great Central Heritage Railway, whilst Woodhouse Eaves is the gateway to the National Forest. Visitors to Mountsorrel can head to the village's heritage centre to see how granite was quarried at the old Nunckley Hill quarry. Reconstructed Stonemasons' huts and a section of narrow-gauge track with restored tub wagons demonstrate how the process was carried out here more than 120 years ago.



TRIUMPH VISITOR CENTRE

Celebrating 120 years of manufacture in 2022, the first Triumph motorcycle to be produced by this iconic brand went on sale in 1902.

Based in Hinckley, where every bike is conceived, prototyped and tested, Triumph's world-beating range encompasses every type from roadsters to modern classics. Triumph bikes even joined the military in both world wars and took on several starring roles in Hollywood movies alongside the likes of Marlon Brando and Steve McQueen.

Its history can be discovered at the Triumph Factory Visitor Experience, on the actual site where the bikes are made, alongside a thrilling collection of iconic machines. Learn even more with a pre-booked behind-the-scenes guided factory tour.



THE BATTLEFIELD LINE

The Industrial Revolution not only sparked a need for coal, but for a means to transport this now precious fuel. The Ashby and Nuneaton Joint Railway was created in 1873 to do just that, serving the coalfields of North West Leicestershire.

The line's usefulness was coming to an end by the 1930s, and in 1970, British Rail pulled up the rails, leaving behind just one section. This was lovingly saved and brought back to life by Shackerstone Railway Society, becoming the Battlefield Line. Twenty-first century passengers can embark on a nostalgic journey from Shackerstone via Market Bosworth to Shenton, where they can stroll to Bosworth Battlefield, which gave the line its name.



FOXTON LOCKS

Built in 1810 and now part of the European Route of Industrial Heritage, Foxton Locks were considered an engineering masterpiece of the Industrial Revolution. These dual five-lock staircases allowed canals to climb and descend steep hills through water displacement.

Believed to be the largest example in England, the Grade II-listed locks take about an hour to pass by narrowboat. Considered a bottleneck, they were briefly replaced by an inclined plane, which whilst taking only 12 minutes, was deemed financially inefficient.

Situated just three miles to the west of Market Harborough, see the locks in action and visit the Foxton Canal Museum, which tells the unique story of this ingenious waterway system.

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LUTTERWORTH — SIR FRANK WHITTLE

Just south of Lutterworth on the A4303/A426 roundabout stands a memorial to the engineer and inventor Sir Frank Whittle. The full-size replica Gloster E28/39 aircraft is quite a sight and the reason behind it quite a story.

Joining the RAF as an apprentice, Frank worked his way up the ranks, recognising early on in his career the potential for an aircraft able to fly at great height and speed. Although subject to ridicule, he developed his own ideas for a gas turbine which would propel an aircraft directly by its exhaust. Just 22 years old at the time, Sir Frank is credited with single-handedly inventing the turbojet engine, with much of his top-secret work carried out in Lutterworth. Lutterworth Museum tells this story and includes an example of the Whittle W2 700 jet engine.

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ABBEY PUMPING STATION

Abbey Pumping Station is an example of Victorian engineering at its best. Before it opened in 1891, household sewage was collected and deposited into the nearest river or gutter, causing a range of problems from nasty smells to fatal diseases.

Using four steam-powered beam engines, built by Leicester engineering firm Gimson & Company, the station pumped waste from the River Soar to a nearby treatment works, making Leicester a much cleaner place to live. Abbey Pumping Station museum is housed in the original Victorian building and is the only place in the world where four of these machines remain in working order.

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EVERARDS

Famous Leicestershire brewery Everards was founded in 1849 by William Everard and Thomas Hull. They purchased Wilmot & Co Brewery on Leicester's Southgate Street before opening their own pubs. Starting with the Elephant & Castle in 1862, this independent family business now has more than 150 pubs across the East Midlands.

In 2021 Everards opened a state-of-the-art brewery within the beautiful setting of Everards Meadows. Visitors who take a pre-bookable guided tour of its working brewery will learn about Everards' brewing heritage, see brewers in action and get to taste an award-winning beer or two.

The modern Beer Hall also has viewing windows into the brewery, a great food menu and a shop selling Everards beers and gifts.

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STONEY COVE

The need for crushed stone to build and maintain highways in the early 19th century led to the large-scale quarrying of granite. It was tough, it was durable, and although it was plentiful in the Leicestershire village of Stoney Stanton, the quarry here was under constant threat of flooding. Pumps were brought in to keep the local spring water at bay, but when it closed in 1958, nature was allowed to run its course, and the chasm was filled to the brim.

Just a few years later the disused quarry became popular with divers, and today is also a great venue for diners, who can enjoy views across the water from the elevated terrace of Nemo's Bar & Restaurant.

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CANALS

Before ultimately giving way to the railways in the 1840s, Leicestershire's many waterways helped facilitate the transportation of goods throughout the country.

The golden age of 'Canal-mania' was between 1770 and 1830 with the Leicester Line, linking London to Birmingham, at its heart. The Grand Union Canal itself was used mainly for moving coal from the East Midlands' many collieries to the capital.

Modernised in the 1930s, it now offers plenty of opportunities for active pursuits. Enjoy walking and cycling routes through the city alongside the River Soar or take in the historic, and ingenious, Foxton Locks. Narrowboat hire is also available at several marinas, including Market Bosworth and Quorn.

MORE PLACES TO UNCOVER

Swannington Incline

Spring Lane, Swannington,
Coalville LE67 8QR

swannington-heritage.co.uk

Hough Mill

St George's Hill, Swannington LE67 8QW

swannington-heritage.co.uk

Framework Knitters Museum

42-44 Bushloe End, Wigston LE18 2BA

www.wigstonframeworkknitters.org.uk

Hinckley & District Museum

30 Lower Bond Street, Hinckley LE10 1QU

www.hinckleydistrictmuseum.org.uk

The Atkins Building & Gallery (former hosiery factory)

Lower Bond Street, Hinckley LE10 1QU

www.atkinsbuilding.co.uk

The Mountsorrel & Rothley Community Heritage Centre

240 Swithland Lane, Rothley LE7 7UE

heritage-centre.co.uk



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LEICESTERSHIRE

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