

The Autumn Village Walk

On request, we had a change from Saturday to Sunday for the village walk, thinking that some of you might like a stroll in some fresh air after your Sunday roast. Whether this was the case, or whether the beautiful bright sunny afternoon of October 4th enticed you out, this walk was enjoyed by 20 or so walkers and 11 dogs, all of mixed abilities, as we found out over the course of the Gold route.

We set off at 2.30 pm, led by Tony at a comfortable pace. Turning right out of the Village Hall, we proceeded to The Green where we crossed the road to the field path to the right of Red Gables. Following the path straight ahead gave everyone time to get into the swing and for the excited hounds to sort out their pecking order while keeping their humans in their rightful place.

Taking a left at the end of the hedge we continued across the open field and headed for Hawfield Cottage which sits on its own on the main A1120. This path has been ploughed up in recent years but since it was dry and had been harvested recently, like good footpath preservationists we took the correct line.

Once at the road we crossed onto the lovely wide verge and headed towards The Lord's Highway. This little lane has been closed to vehicles for many years because there are insufficient funds to strengthen the bridge. I, for one, am very pleased about this because it gives us all a chance to walk the beautiful leafy lane in peace and quiet, without the fear of vehicles interrupting the tranquillity. It also reminds me of a lane which, as a child, I used to walk and bicycle ride with my Dad in Hampshire. The stream that runs under the bridge used to be known by locals as The River Jordan as it is believed to have been used for baptisms. It flows into the river Gipping just outside Needham Market.

Passing the sheep quietly grazing, we take a right just after Woolney Hall. This is where the fun starts. I didn't count the stiles, many and various. Dogs of all sizes were coaxed, cajoled and finally lifted over. Thanks go to the men for helping with some quite reluctant canines. Now we have had rain, this section of the walk to Fen Lane gets quite wet and muddy, so be prepared if you try it through the winter months.

Crossing the lane, and taking the footpath uphill brings us to Roydon Hall, in the parish of Creting St. Peter. Take the time to stop and admire the views across to Stowmarket. It is lovely on a sunny day, but if the wind is blowing you will certainly know about it. We passed in front of the house and turned right through the farm yard, all the dogs being very good and, of course, all kept on their leads. Just when everyone thought they could rest on their laurels, another stile! All got safely over, pleased to know that it was the last one. The path through this lovely spinney brings you out to the allotments in Broad Green. It's amazing how many of our walkers never knew this part of the village.

Arriving back at the Village Hall at about 4.30 pm, we were all very pleased to see that Lindsey had the kettle on and biscuits at the ready. We made short work of both. Thanks go to Tony for a very enjoyable afternoon's walk, where we made new friends, had a good laugh and learned a little more about our village. It would be great to see more of you on our next walk in the spring.

Jen Hamilton.

Here's a thought for those spending hours in the kitchen and those who enjoy what comes out of it in the coming weeks, wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

A Kitchen Prayer

*Bless this little kitchen, Lord,
Including every nook.
And bless me as I clean the sink,
Scrub pots and pans, and cook.*

*May every meal that I produce
Be seasoned from above
With tender loving care, of course,
But most of all, your love.*

*So bless this little kitchen, Lord,
And all within its care.
May they find cheer and warmth within
As well as tasty fare.*

Anon.