

FIVE MILES & A CUP OF TEA 2015

APRIL 2015: LAMBLEY DUMBLES

Our first walk around Lambley and the Dumbles went very well as it was a beautiful sunny day, pretty wild flowers, butterflies fluttering, and birds & bees busy doing their stuff. A group of fifteen set off up Catfoot Lane and then followed a footpath over the fields.

It was good to see a few varieties of butterfly and we spotted peacock, tortoiseshell, brimstone and orange tip. The view over the hills was lovely, and the pink colour of the fields was admired. Mike and Paul took some photos of the plentiful cowslips, and as we walked down the Dumble there were violets, bluebells and wood anemones. Back at the Lambley we enjoyed tea and cake, well deserved, though some healthy people chose soup. Chris went inside to order a coffee and came back with a variety I hadn't seen before, served cool in a glass, with a frothy head.

Maggie Martinez



MAY 2015: TRENT HILLS, EAST BRIDGFORD

After a day of almost constant heavy rain, the weather for the second walk of this new group looked ominous, heavy grey clouds and windy. However a small determined band of walkers set from East Bridgford to walk the ridge above the River Trent.

Walking down the hill to the riverside we first stopped by the bank to view the weir at Gunthorpe lock in full spate, cormorants drying their wings out on the bollards above. There was once a toll bridge across the river near this spot but this has gone long ago with the building of Gunthorpe Bridge - the only bridge across the Trent between Newark and Nottingham.

Christine Cracknell



JUNE 2015: NETHERFIELD LAGOONS

The June walk started at Netherfield Lagoons, where we enjoyed the wild roses and many other flowers then sauntered down to the river. We looked at the plaque on the old part of the railway bridge dated 1850. The group of 13 then walked by the river to Stoke Bardolph, spotting a grebe as well as other water birds. The cloudy morning warmed up as the sun came out and Mike and Paul took many photographs of the flowers and birds.

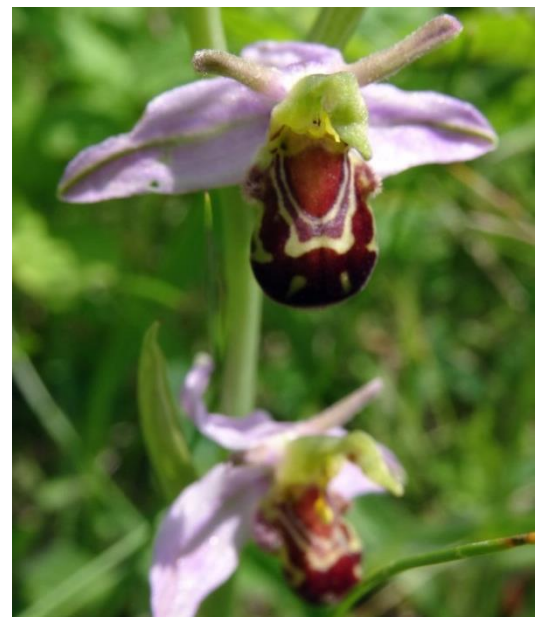
Maxine, a student from Leeds Metropolitan University, had asked if she could join us on the walk as she wanted local information on the history of Netherfield and opinions on the planned development of 800 houses, a school, nursing home and shops adjacent to this site. She asked me to pass on her thanks to everyone.

As we walked back round the lagoons another walker told us where to look for the rare bee orchid. All agreed to extend the walk, and off we went orchid spotting. The wild flowers were plentiful and it was hard to spot the orchid, so great was the excitement when we saw many purple orchids and then clusters of bee orchids! From a distance it really does look as if bees are clinging to the flowers, and close up they are remarkable, as in the photograph below.

We were late arriving for tea at Harrison's in Gedling and, having reserved tables for us, the proprietor was about to give up and close shop!

It was agreed that as the flowers were so spectacular we would make the lagoon walk an annual June event.

Maggie Martinez



JULY 2015: HOVERINGHAM

Grey skies threatening, 16 walkers set off for Hoveringham, a village on the Trent now known for the gravel extractions. The walk began from what was once the Old Elm Tree pub, which has an interesting history being once a 'Mecca' for local day trippers and holiday makers in the late 19th/early 20th centuries. Travellers came from New York, New Zealand, India, France and Italy. Among the guests who stayed there, were Dame Nellie Melba and James Philip Sousa.

The first section of the walk coincided with part of the Trent Way along the riverside. A short distance into the walk by a hedgerow stand two slate monoliths bearing plaques listing the names of British, Canadian and New Zealand airmen, who were killed in two separate crashes of Lancaster Bombers in January 1945. Based at Synerston Airfield on the other side of the river, both planes crashed and exploded close by within days of each other, after training flights, killing

all crew. Young men between 19 and 30 years old. The story of the crashes was uncovered 65 years later by Lady Helen Nall who lives at nearby Hoveringham Hall, and she located many of the relatives of the airmen and the erection of the memorials. Until then the men's' relatives knew nothing of the history.

The walk continued along the riverbank as far as Hazelford Ferry before turning inland and through the hamlet of Gibsmere. The sun was out by now and we followed a track across farmland for a couple of miles, with hedgerows full of birds, butterflies and wild flowers and wheat and barley fields almost ready for harvesting. A walk through Hoveringham brought us back to Ferry Farm to enjoy a cuppa and a piece of cake in the cafe. An enjoyable outing in good company.

Christine Cracknell



AUGUST 2015: GEDLING COUNTRY PARK

As usual, we met at Ranmoor Rd. car-park at 9.30 and after a very efficient car sharing, despite 22 in group, set off to the Spring Lane car-park to meet Terry, a 'Friend of Gedling Country Park' (FGCP). It was a slower walk than usual as Terry had lots of information to share which was very interesting.

It was good to hear that there is a wide range of birds in the park, and we were lucky to see a pair of kestrels hovering over the grassland. As the grass has not been mowed it was long and golden, and the purple of the reeds was very attractive. As well as the teasels in the photograph there were bulrushes and wild flowers.

It was encouraging to hear from Terry that the FGCP are working at establishing links with schools and universities to encourage science projects.

Love or hate wind-farms, we agreed that the solar field was far less visible than windmills would be. Plans are in place for bee-hives adjacent to the solar panels which is good news, as following our last guest speaker we are all rooting for our busy bee friends. Hundreds of trees are to be planted in the next 2 years with the emphasis on native species.

As we reached the top of the park we enjoyed amazing views as it was a clear, and windy, day. It is possible to see both Lincoln Cathedral and Belvoir Castle, so get up there with your binoculars. A viewing platform with a direction indicator is another ongoing project, but in the meantime we had fun spotting local landmarks. Terry pointed out where the relief road is going and that it is to

be built after the 800 houses adjacent to the north of the park and started from Burton Joyce. This is because the earth moved from there will make the bank for the top of the road.

Terry then left us and as we arrived back at the car-park too soon we added on the lagoon path; very poor leadership! Then back to the Mustard Seed cafe adjacent to Ranmoor Road car-park for refreshments. Terry gave us much more information, but you can hear more in February when he is our guest speaker, or go onto the FGCP website. Thanks to our official photographer, Mike Pointon.

Maggie Martinez



SEPTEMBER 2015: ASLOCKTON

The weather looked promising as 17 walkers set off from Aslockton in the Vale of Belvoir. This village was the birthplace and family home of Thomas Cranmer (Archbishop of Canterbury under Henry VII, and author of the Book of Common Prayer). Thomas lived here until he was 14 before going to Cambridge. However he met an unpleasant end when Mary Tudor became Queen.

The walk followed the River Smite through recently harvested farm fields until we reached Orston, a very attractive village, where we stopped by another interestingly recycled village telephone box, now overflowing with begonias.

We located the excellent village deli/café *The Limehaus* and although earlier than usual, decided to have our cuppa there. It was an excellent choice and though 'petit', warmly welcomed and accommodated our group.

Well refreshed we left the village via Moor Lane and the remnants of the Gypsum mining works, once one of the 'biggest and finest' English sources of Gypsum. Further on the bridge under the rail line linking Nottingham and Grantham brought us to Orston Lane and on to Whatton, the 3rd 'Domesday' village on our walk.

It was in the Church here that young Cranmer worshipped with his father. Following the path behind the church via several small paddocks we returned to Aslockton after an enjoyable and interesting walk, and we'd missed the heavy downpour back in Gedling!



OCTOBER 2015: BLEASBY

On the 20th October, a lovely sunny day, David Burgess led 17 of us in a 5 mile walk around Bleasby. We set off at a brisk pace, admiring the wonderful autumn colours. We stopped for a drink mid-morning, and the weather was so mild we were able to sit outside the pub.

Refreshed we set off again, spotting fungi and some meadow flowers, fooled by the mild weather into blooming so late in the year. We ended the walk at Manor Farm Tea shop where some people left as they had afternoon commitments and the rest of us enjoyed lunch. Some chose sensible soup or other savouries whilst more decadent people chose cake.

Maggie Martinez



NOVEMBER 2015: CLUMBER PARK

After a rainy Monday night the morning was grey but dry. A good turnout of 20 walkers met up at Ranmoor Road, to set off for Clumber Park. The area was mentioned in the Domesday Book as being two manor farms tenanted by Roger de Busli, and by 1709 Clumber had become an enclosed deer park owned by the 1st Duke of Newcastle. Successive Dukes built there and developed the estate.

The walk commenced by the cafe in Turnings Yard, went along by the Lake, then behind the church before taking a northern route into forest. Some trees were still in leaf and we passed among some magnificent specimens of both deciduous and evergreen. The route crossed Lime Tree Avenue, the main road through the estate. The avenue of Lime trees was established by the 5th Duke and is the longest double row of Lime trees in Europe.

We veered off the main track onto a narrow track through heavy woodland, and circling back towards the Avenue we came to a metalled way that would lead us round to the lake, the elegant bridge and of course, the cafe. We all enjoyed our walk through the peace and tranquillity of the forest, the huge, ancient trees and good company.

Christine Cracknell

