

STROLLERS WALKING 2014

JANUARY 2014: BEESTON CANAL

Seventeen members met at Broad Marsh Bus Station on January 2nd ready to walk off the holiday festivities. A window in the bad weather gave us a pleasant, sunny cloudless day. A flat, short walk along the Beeston Canal tow path took us to Beeston Rylands.

Here we separated, the pub, the cafe, walked back or had their sandwiches on the riverbank. Seven of us decided to catch the bus from the Rylands but we were faced with a fifteen minute wait. A walk into Beeston was voted for. After a twenty minute walk into Beeston, the bus stop timetable informed us that we now had a further twenty minute wait. Calls for my resignation ensued. The bus eventually arrived and we parted happily in Nottingham (I think).



FEBRUARY 2014: BOOBERS MILL TO TRENT BRIDGE

Gwyneth and I got off the bus in town and were met by a heavy snow shower. I thought to myself, "Perhaps nobody will turn up and i will have to cancel the walk." Visions of a full English breakfast and a warm living room swam before my eyes. This daydream was soon squashed, as seventeen, YES, seventeen intrepid, foolhardy, or just mad members turned up for the walk. A 77 bus took us to our start point at Bobbers Mill Bridge and we followed the River Leen to the University Jubilee campus.

Crossing Ilkeston Road we soon re-joined the University campus. This is a new site with a business school and student accommodation. The grounds are landscaped, with a lake and wildlife sanctuary. The buildings are well designed, light and airy. Everybody was most impressed. Leaving the campus we joined Derby Road at Lenton lodge. To our left was The Rose And Crown public house, where we paused for a coffee (or something stronger) and a warm in front of the log fire.

With the River Leen again on our left we entered the Queens Medical Centre grounds. The new tram works were well under way, with a very impressive flyover going through the hospital grounds. Leaving the hospital we passed the Boat public house and the less impressive remains of Lenton Priory. After a short walk along the Nottingham canal towpath, we entered the new Kings Meadow nature reserve on the site of the ROF factory. Still following the River Leen we eventually arrived at Queens Drive, where a couple of members caught the bus. The remainder of us walked along the embankment, where we had a sandwich break.

At Trent Bridge we went our separate ways. The weather was cold and rainy, but was compensated by a good walk and warm and friendly company.



MARCH 2014: WOLLATON PARK

Thirty four strollers met on Beastmarket Hill - YES, thirty four. The best attendance to date. Under a threatening sky we marched en masse to catch the 35 or 36 bus. A 36 bus at the stop immediately left. I think he saw us approaching! The next bus soon arrived and to the driver's chagrin we all boarded.

We soon arrived at the start point, the bottom entrance to Wollaton Park. A short hop brought us to the lake. Half way round a heron was spotted. A photo opportunity. I'm sure he posed.

We deviated from the direct path to the Hall and soon encountered a herd of deer. The males looked majestic with their imposing antlers. Another photo opportunity. The Hall was eventually reached, where we enjoyed a refreshment break and a comfort stop.

Refreshed we continued to Ilkeston Road. Here a few members parted company, taking advantage of an escape route. The rest of us continued to the nature reserve of Martins Pond and Harrisons Plantation. A circuit of both ponds rewarded us with interesting flora and fauna. For example, bright red fungi on a rotting tree stump.

The group eventually arrived back on Ilkeston Road, where we caught buses to Nottingham. Although the day remained cloudy, it was not cold and the walk and the company was pleasant.

APRIL 2014

24 strollers gathered at Bendigo's grave in Bath Street Park and set forth for Robin Hood Chase.

The group elected to carry on to the Arboretum. Ken and I waited for the member. The hikers were swallowed by the mist, only to re-emerge ten minutes later from the other direction. They had missed the turn off and walked round the reservoir. So plus the extra member we again headed off to the Arboretum. In front of the aviary we had a break. Here some members left us, pleading urgent engagements. I have since learned that they had sidled off to the Gooseberry Bush pub. Who needs these dens of iniquity when the delights of the General Cemetery awaited?

Another climb and philosophical discussions about death, only to be had in cemeteries, we arrived on Derby Road. Here we lost more members, lured by the bright lights of Derby Road. The remainder crossed the road and entered The Park via steps and the tunnel. Jealously admiring the large houses and counting the Magnolia trees, we arrived at the Castle gates and the end of the walk.

MAY 2014: GEDLING TO BURTON JOYCE

May 1st, no white rabbits but two white peacocks and a Hare. Twenty four happy wanderers met at the miners' lamp in Gedling for a walk to Burton Joyce. Certainly not Spring weather, an ominous grey sky accompanied us for most of the walk. Willow Lane, an estate and a path through Gedling Woods brought us to Spring Lane. On our right a signpost informed us that the bridle path would take us to Burton Joyce. Despite the weather, May compensates with spring flowers, lush, green grass, contrasting sharply with the startling bright yellow of Rape fields.

As mentioned earlier, we passed a farmyard containing several Peacocks, two of them white. The path now offered us a marvellous view over the Trent Valley, the Sun now breaking through to glint off the meandering river. The path now descended into the village, passing horses, cows and the rear of a scampering Hare. On the main street we went our separate ways, car, bus, foot and the pub.



JUNE 2014: STOKE BARDOLPH

Never cast a clout 'til May is out, seemed most appropriate as nine members gathered for the walk on a wet, cold and thoroughly miserable Thursday morning. This walk, ably led by Ken and Tricia, departed from the Netherfield Co-op to stroll down Ashwell Street and left to a footpath, which eventually brought us to a playing field. I have lived in Netherfield and the surrounding district for most of my life but this walk took me to areas I didn't know existed!

Once again on familiar territory we followed the Ousedyke to the Lagoons. Here Ken and Tricia conferred as to which way we should go, the dry or the wet route. Taking into account the weather conditions and I was informed a very interesting electricity substation they opted for the dry route. I, for one was quite pleased because I think the wet route would have required an aqualung. Tricia was most apologetic because my trousers were soaked but I had to be fair forgotten my waterproof over trousers. Despite this discomfort I was really enjoying the walk.

A member kept on pointing out birds etc. which of course I duly missed. After metalled roads, field paths and a small wood, we arrived at Stoke Lock. The Ornithologist went on ahead to catch the 12:10 bus from Stoke Bardolph. With the river on our right we strolled after him. Just as we approached the village the bus came, so near and yet so far. However the bus reversed and some of us were able to catch it. The member aboard had asked the driver to wait for us. After a short journey, I alighted opposite my house!

Despite the weather conditions I again enjoyed the walk. Many thanks to Ken and Tricia for an interesting and diverse walk.

JULY 2014: NETHERFIELD LAGOONS

Same venue different weather! Last time - cold and wet, this time warm and sunny. Fourteen members met outside Netherfield Co-Op for a walk around Netherfield Lagoons. We walked down Chandos Street past the allotments. A member pointed out his allotment and supplied us with cherries picked there and then from his own tree! The walk continued under Baker's Arch and we turned immediately right on a path leading to the Lagoons. We reached the point where the previous walk turned left towards the river. We turned right, crossing the bridge over the Ouse Dyke.

The Lagoons again rewarded us with everything nature can offer - birds, insects, rare orchids, wild flowers and of course the Lagoons themselves. This nature reserve is an overlooked jewel and only a short distance from Netherfield. A well laid out gravel path took us around the ponds. At a junction we took a lower path. Two members went on ahead because they had other engagements.

I was looking for a little used path to our right. Once found, we hacked our way through undergrowth, thistles and nettles, under a railway arch and then steep steps to eventually reach a better path. Bedraggled and disgruntled we strode on. I led us to a rail crossing and was asked why we hadn't taken the footpath we had just passed. Chastened we took this path which brought us to the industrial estate and eventually Morrisons. Who should we meet here, but the two members who had gone on ahead! Outside the supermarket we separated, some for a bus, some for the supermarket. My wife and I chose the latter and after a welcome cuppa wended our way home, weary but happy.

AUGUST 2014: THURGARTON

Twenty three members descended on Thurgarton village for the strollers walk. The day was hot and sticky with the threat of rain. We set off at 10:40 and were soon in the countryside, the best that England could offer. Rolling, golden fields of corn contrasted with the mottled green of copses. We tramped along well marked paths through field and woods, eventually stopping at the Sheep Wash Bridge.

We had a break and refreshments, before continuing up the hill to the road. Here a choice could be made, the shorter or longer route. However, a notice on a post informed us, that a bridge was down and therefore the footpath was closed. The decision made for us we took the shorter route into Thurgarton. Two members of the group left to find the Hollybeck garden centre. (I hope they found it.)

The village eventually reached, we went our separate ways and a number of the group sought the welcome of the Red Lion. The weather had been kind and the impending rain held off. It was another fine walk in the glorious English countryside, with again good company.



SEPTEMBER 2014: LOWDHAM & GONALSTON

Unaccustomed as I am to putting pen to paper, here goes. Made my way to the Pathfinder Bus Stop, minus the Convenor. At the bus stop it was very nice to have the congenial company of 3 other U3A Strollers, plus Ranjit from the Newspaper Shop across the road, as we had to wait 20 minutes for the bus.

Eighteen of us made our way down Lowdham Main Street, and took a path on our right, which led us into open fields. Young Bulls stared at us. I don't suppose they very often see eighteen people, all in one go, crossing their land. Next field was even better, lots more cows, not the usual common colour, but a lovely rich brown of varying degrees. I think cows have got lovely faces. Incidentally, the weather was beautiful.

One member picked a rucksack of mushrooms. As I write this, I am thinking, maybe I should ring him, to check if he is well! There were beautiful views across the landscape. We dropped down into the cemetery at Lowdham Church, and had a break amongst the gravestones. I don't expect the occupants minded, a change from someone mowing the grass around them.

Then down into the village, down a road I hadn't been on before. Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves, with our Deputy Convenor in charge. Maps came out occasionally, and everywhere we walked was lovely, and we all enjoyed the fresh air. It was very nice to have the heavy farmers gates held open by some of the participants.

A few people left the walk at one point, and headed off to Burton Joyce. Others went back to the Magna Carta in Lowdham to have coffee or a long cool drink. When I got off the bus, on my own, I thought how lucky I was to be able to go for a walk in the countryside with like-minded people. I would like to thank Ken for Deputising for Ian in his absence.

OCTOBER 2014: CLIFTON GROVE

Nineteen members met on Beastmarket Hill for possibly the last walk in good weather. A 48 bus took us to Clifton village, where after negotiating the road works, we alighted. A walk through the village brought us to Clifton Grove and after a pleasant stroll beside the river, we arrived in Wilford village.

At the Ferry Boat Inn we had a comfort stop and refreshments. The weather was nice enough to sit outside. Refreshed we continued our walk. Instead of the planned route by the Emmanuel and Becket schools we decided to cross the Toll bridge now open to pedestrians. This being the river crossing for the trams. The toll booth still informs travellers of the tariffs to cross the bridge. Many members left to walk up Queens Drive into town. The rest of us continued to Trent Bridge and the end of the walk. The weather remained kind throughout the day. Warm, sunny and pleasant; like the company.

NOVEMBER 2014: BURTON JOYCE

Eighteen members met outside the Co-op in Netherfield, with a promise that more would join us at Burton Road cricket field (It now has a new posh name). The weather was overcast but uncharacteristically mild. Down Chandos Street and across the cricket field, we met five more promised members. The route took us through Coronation Walk and Wood Lane to the main entrance of Carlton-le-Willows School.

To the left of the entrance was a gate and stile, with a path leading to Gedling Woods. This had previously intrigued me because as a child this path didn't exist and the woods were totally out of bounds. The path brought us out at the top of Yew Tree Lane. The route to Burton Joyce is still private. Many members had memories of the estate and reminiscences abounded. A cut through at the bottom of the hill led us to a path which the strollers had used on several occasions. Again through another part of Gedling Woods, then fields, to eventually arrive on Spring Lane. It was my original intention to walk to Lambley. But on a recce my wife and I decided there was a lack of public transport, so we opted for Burton Joyce.

[64663,] A bridle path led to a metalled road. The way we had taken before was blocked by a notice. A member read it and shrugged, so the road it was. Passing some very big houses we soon reached our destination. Here we went our separate ways. Some to the bus stop others into the village for refreshments at the Cross Keys. A local walk through beautiful countryside, made better by the autumnal colours and good company, but certainly not autumnal weather. It was so mild I had to take my coat off.

DECEMBER 2014: TRENT BRIDGE & HOLME PIERREPONT

Sixteen strollers met on Broad Marsh bus station. Regulars, new & returned. We set off at a steady pace, found the canal & followed it to Trent Bridge. An uneventful first half, except for the near death of the leader crossing Radcliffe Road. The main concern was who would do the walk report? The TBI was warm & welcoming, with a real fire! Two members left the walk, the rest, refreshed continued beside the river, along the Trent Valley Way.

Passing the City Ground some of the men fell behind. Reminiscing about the good & bad times of Forest. The rest of the group waited for us further along. They pointed out that the leader should be at the front. In response I said that like the Duke in a Gilbert & Sullivan operetta led the troops from the rear. Avoiding joggers, cyclists & dogs we reached our destination. Three of us continued on to the toilets near the canoe slalom course. I made the mistake of saying that I fancied White Water Rafting but I pointed out that I would look like a beached whale in a wet suit, so we had our sandwiches instead overlooking the rowing course. The day was overcast & cold. However, the walk was sunny & warm because of the company.