

## STROLLERS WALKING 2015

### JANUARY 2015: COLWICK COUNTRY PARK

With Christmas and New Year over it was time to blow off the cobwebs. Twenty one strollers decided to do just that. Having met at the Starting Gate pub, we set off at a brisk pace around Colwick Park, beautiful sunshine reflecting off the water and the stark winter landscape made the day perfect for the walk. Woods, water, historic buildings, two pubs and a good bus route, make Colwick Park a little gem. The walk and pleasant surroundings helped conversation. Christmas and New Year were obviously discussed, both good and bad.

People set their own pace and the group spread out, but all eventually reached the Starting Gate. Here members split up, some to the two pubs and some home. Whichever they chose, a good way to start the year.



### FEBRUARY 2015: THE PARK AND THE NOTTINGHAM CANAL

Thirty one people met at Beastmarket Hill and set off towards 'The Park' via Derby Road. We passed St Barnabas Cathedral and turned sharp left after St Joseph's School, going down through the car park, we entered The Park Tunnel, a Victorian edifice in modern day Nottingham. We came out into a completely different world of long ago. The tunnel had been built to take a coach and horses but because the gradient was too steep it was never used for this purpose. It is now only used by pedestrians.

The Park is private and owned and maintained by the residents. The access gates to The Park are closed once a year to keep its private status. Past the tennis courts on Tunnel Road we turned left onto Tattershall Drive. The Park houses all have very interesting architectural designs and are worth seeing. At a fork in the road is the site of the original hunting lodge, used when this was a playground for Kings. Taking the left hand fork we travelled down Park Ravine and left along Fishpond Drive. This is so named because it is where the fish were kept for feeding the castle.

Through a wrought iron gate we exited The Park onto Castle Boulevard and over the footbridge to the Nottingham Canal. We turned right on the towpath for a 'comfort stop' at Sainsbury's. Re-tracing our steps we walked along the towpath to the Midland Station. It was interesting to see the warehouses

beside the canal, some having been converted into flats. We eventually reached our destination. The weather had been kind and we beat the snow!

### **MARCH 2015: BOBBERS MILL TO TRENT BRIDGE**

On an overcast and windy Thursday thirty three members and myself, yes I did say thirty three, met on Beastmarket Hill for our monthly walk. After some confusion, mostly caused by the walk leader, the 77 bus was caught to Bobbers Mill. The walk approximately followed the River Leen. The walk was mostly through built up areas and on tarmac paths, chosen because I didn't know what the weather was going to be like at this time of year.

We passed through the new university campus which has been tastefully landscaped complete with lake, a good photo opportunity. We arrived eventually on Derby Road and the Rose and Crown pub, a welcome comfort stop and a coffee. Losing a couple of members to one of my 'Escape Routes', we continued through the grounds of Queens Medical Centre, passing the massive and imposing Lenton Priory. Well actually only half a column remains, it is my report and I can exaggerate if I want to.

With the headquarters of the Games Workshop on our right we negotiated the still not finished Tram extension and joined very briefly the Nottingham Canal. Some members left us here to follow the canal into town. Re-joining the Leen the remainder continued through the site of the ROF factory now a nature reserve to Queens Drive and the end of the walk. Most members caught the bus into town. The few remaining decided to walk to Trent Bridge. Passing where the Leen flows into the River Trent, we watched a tram crossing the river on the Toll Bridge. An unusual sight for anybody raised in Nottingham. It was obviously being tested. The Trent not the Leen navigated us to Trent Bridge. The few remaining strollers retired to the Riverside pub and the Trent Navigation, before going their separate ways.



### **APRIL 2015: HIGHFIELDS**

A respectable nineteen of us gathered on Beastmarket Hill for a walk through the university campus and Highfields. A 36 bus transported us to our starting point. In a complete contrast in the weather from the last walk, we set out in warm, spring sunshine. A beautiful stroll through the university grounds, the trees in blossom, a host of golden daffodils (sorry Wordsworth) and even a Woodpecker.

Enjoying the millennium garden with its fountains and flower beds looking very picturesque, we eventually arrived at the lake. Here by the stepping stones stood a heron. Cameras soon zoomed in on the statuesque bird (I'm sure he posed). Negotiating the stepping stones we followed the path to the Lakeside cafe. The outing terminated here, a short but pleasant walk. Most members made use of the facilities and had a coffee. A few of us with sandwiches, returned to the Millennium garden for our repast, then we headed down the hill to catch a bus into town where we went our separate ways.



### **MAY 2015: GEDLING COUNTRY PARK**

For this walk I thought we would recce the newly opened Gedling Country Park. Twenty one members and a dog met at the Lambley Lane car park. The day was cool and blustery with the threat of rain, which luckily stayed away for the whole walk. We set off and strolled to the two created ponds and took the winding path up the hill. Making a steady ascent we soon reached the summit. Here was laid the stone commemorating the opening of the park by Councillor John Clarke and the local MP Vernon Coaker.

After a short rest stop and a photo we continued our walk. The views from the top are fantastic. Even on well marked signposted paths I managed to take the wrong route and we found ourselves on Spring Lane. All was not lost. A short road walk brought us to the car park and access to the park. We continued past the solar farm, still enjoying the views and the bird life, Skylarks etc, we eventually descended to our starting point.



### **JUNE 2015: COLWICK WOODS**

After an inclement start Spring arrived, perfect walking weather. Seventeen members thought likewise and we met in the car park of the Fox & Hounds public house. We strolled through Bakersfield to Colwick Woods. The dappled shade of the trees opened out into a glade, where a lone tree boasted a rope swing. Of course certain members had to have a go.

Turning right and back into the trees we followed a stream up a hill. Again out of the trees a refreshment break was taken with an incredible view over the Trent Valley. We now continued down the hill and back into the woods, a steep climb eventually levelled out and we descended to the road and the finishing point. Another local pearl and a fine walk in perfect June sunshine.



## **JULY 2015: NEWSTEAD ABBEY**

Despite the heat of Tuesday and Wednesday, eight sun seekers met on Victoria bus station for a stroll through Newstead Abbey grounds. The Pronto bus ferried us to the gates and after parting with a pound admission fee, we walked up the drive. A woodland path ran parallel to the drive, providing welcome shade and an interesting mixture of rhododendrons and ancient trees.

[84306,]Gaining the drive again we proceeded to the Abbey. Cafe stop or trek on, no contest! After coffee, cake and teacake we decided to stroll round the gardens. What a delight! The Japanese garden, the rock garden and the lake, what a picture. The walk found us at the rear of the Abbey. Here the pool had no water! Just a notice saying that the piping providing water was damaged. However, the borders and the Spanish garden were picturesque. After reading the poignant poem on the tomb of Byron's dog, Boatswain, we found our way back to front of the building.



## **AUGUST 2015: CLIFTON GROVE**

On the bus the heavens opened and I thought: "Oh No!", but my fears were unfounded. Twelve other members too were undaunted by the cloud burst and were consequently rewarded by a beautiful day. The 10:45 no1 bus took us to Clifton Village to commence the walk. Passing through the village we entered Clifton Grove. A walk I have led before but still does not disappoint.

We left the grove and followed the River Trent to Wilford village and a refreshment stop at the Harvester public house. Here a member took advantage of an escape route. The rest of us backtracked to a path that joined the river at 'Bee' Bank. We continued through the church yard and past the Ferry Boat Inn. This boasted a 1940's menu, powdered egg and spam? I bet the menu wasn't 1940's prices.

We then followed the path past the two new schools, The Emmanuel and The Becket, a C of E and a Catholic school together! Reaching the Suspension Bridge two members left us. We crossed the

bridge and negotiated the embankment path which was busy with the preparations for the Riverside Festival. We eventually reached our final destination, Trent Bridge.

### **SEPTEMBER 2015: RUDDINGTON**

Eighteen members braved the elements (a slight exaggeration, the weather was overcast but mild). A bus awaited and deposited us in West Bridgford. The walk took along the old railway track from Victoria station to London (now a footpath). After a photo opportunity we climbed the steps and crossed Boundary Road. After a stile and a footpath we arrived on Melton Road opposite the old Edwalton hotel (now flats). Sadly we had to walk alongside the main road to Wheatcroft Garden Centre, now re-vamped and under the banner of Nottscutts, a nationwide chain. Because it was large, with many retail outlets and a cafe, I decided we should rendezvous in the car park in thirty five minutes.

Refreshed, we continued the walk, minus two members who had to get back. I forewarned the group that we would have to cross the busy A52. Sixteen ran the gauntlet and sixteen made it! After following a bridleway through pleasant countryside we reached our destination. Some elected to risk the fleshpots of Ruddington. The remainder took the safer option and caught the No. 10 bus to Nottingham.

### **OCTOBER 2015: THE ARBORETUM**

Ten members met again on Beastmarket Hill. I apologised that I had changed the walk from Strelley to the Arboretum etc. After a recce I decided it was too long for the strollers and there were no comfort stops! It will be an ideal walk for five miles and a cup of tea, because there is a lovely tea shop at Strelley Hall called The Mulberry Tree.

Back to my walk, we strolled up Derby Road to Canning Circus. I pointed out an observation window where you could see the old city wall and the entrance to The Park tunnel. A member also showed us where he went to senior school. I didn't even know there was a school there! We ran the gauntlet and crossed Derby Road and entered the General Cemetery through the passageway between the Alms Houses. Following a winding path we descended through the cemetery. We looked at the grave stones with their unusual Christian names and our conversation became quite maudlin. Regardless of your beliefs, cemeteries do make you aware of your own mortality.

After perusing the monument to the fallen of two world wars, we left the cemetery and entered the Arboretum. I have always been a fan of this municipal park, right from childhood when my parents used to take a picnic, to my teenage years (I went to the Bluecoat School on Mansfield Road). Little has changed. The birds are still in the aviary (different ones of course), the lake is the same and the layout is basically the same. We strolled past the Dahlias, (still in full bloom) under the road and we found ourselves on South Sherwood Street.

Most members elected to leave the walk to go into Town. Nobody was tempted by toffee apples and mushy peas at Goose Fair. The remaining four of us continued up Elm Avenue to the Reservoir and down the hill to Woodborough Road.

### **NOVEMBER 2015: WOLLATON PARK**

Even with an extra hour in bed, alas! only eight brave souls ventured on the walk. After a short bus journey, we alighted at the gates of Wollaton Park. We were confronted by a carpet of leaves and a notice warning us that the Deer were rutting. The day was overcast but mild the threat of rain never materialising. We strolled round the lake. A lovely setting with magnificent views of the Hall. This also provided us with a refreshment and comfort stop.

We looked at the monument to the US airborne troops, who were stationed here prior to D Day, a poignant reminder of the sacrifices of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. We elected to head for Ilkeston Road and Martin's Pond. Deer were espied but ignored us. (I think they had their minds on more earthly

matters). The Pond was soon reached, (A little known nature reserve well worth a visit). A notice informed us that it was the first nature reserve in Nottinghamshire. We saw a heron and a great crested grebe. After a walk round the Pond we arrived at our start point and Ilkeston Road.

### **DECEMBER 2015: TRENT BRIDGE**

Ten of us met at a new venue, Broadmarsh bus station. The day was overcast and blustery but dry. The walk was to be along the canal towpath to Trent Bridge. We were thwarted at the first hurdle, Nottingham City Council was planting trees and that part of the towpath was closed. Luckily a member found an alternative route, all was saved.

At Trent Bridge we all elected to go to the TBI for coffee etc. Here we split ranks. Two headed home, four went to try the new Castle Rock pub and the remainder followed the river to Wilford and caught the tram to town.