

Sunday - Watch the programme. Highlights included being close to the "longest spinney in England?!" (Withybrook Spinney); close also, to two prize white Shire Horses at Clouesley Farm

Rain fell before and during a John Gymer walk out of Bishops Itchington on May 27th., but again 12 enjoyed a gentle amble around Itchington Holt onto Harbury Heath in improving visibility, with all our most familiar landmarks identifiable. Other April walks by Richard Lillystone at Lapworth and with Di Weaver around Sawbridge were very well supported – 25 approximately on each – and both completed in fine, dry, sunny conditions. Alison Cragg, on 10th. June, After two nights of heavy rain, was still able to lead us out across firm ground from Moreton Morrel to Ashorne and Newbold Pacey; 23 in attendance.

The Sunday programme, recently rather storm-struck, has seen a much improved following, achieving double figures on 3 occasions out of 5; the other two, including Easter Sunday, with 6.

29th. March: Ted Buckle took 12 of us from Stoneleigh, by Sowe Valley and Bubbenhall to Ryton Bridge by Toll Bar Island to Rowley Road, where we passed the Jill Phipps' memorial stone (Animal Cruelty Protester killed here in 1995). We split then at the Lunt Fort, some of us going the extra mile to "The Oak" (formerly Baginton Oak), others remaining at the fort. We linked up again to pass through that hidden part of Baginton where once the castle and hall stood by the church (normally closed) where, among the tombstones, is one to Polish airmen, whose last mission was from Baginton Aerodrome and then, again, along the banks of the Sowe by Finham to Stoneleigh.

26th. April: Bob Dodd leading from Lower Quinton by Meon Hill, South Ilmington, Hidcote, Mickleton (garden pub stop); from here, back to Lower Quinton, absorbing on the way, the stunning views of the West face of Meon Hill.

WALK LEADERS ARE REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN OUR FORTNIGHTLY PROGRAMME. SEVERAL MEMBERS ARE WILLING TO ACCOMPANY ANYONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO PRE-WALK. PLEASE CONTACT ANY MEMBER OF COMMITTEE.

Mike Ridley



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Editorial

With no Social Secretary to arrange any events, it is becoming difficult to find enough material to make a Newsletter worthwhile. The Area news appears in the area newsletter, "Walk", so there is little point in repeating it here. You will have noticed that there was no newsletter for March.

Fortunately, this Quarter, Di Weaver has written an account of our annual 21 mile trek round the Harry Green Way, which twelve members did during the May Day Bank Holiday; the account follows. Mike Ridley has also prepared some reports of recent walks

By the time that you read this, many of the old way mark signs round the Harry Green Way will have been replaced with new, more durable ones. The discs were provided by the Warwickshire council and the work carried out by volunteers from our group. It was not possible to complete the task fully because of the state of some of the paths, as you will see from Di's report.

Isobel Whittaker and Richard Lillystone are experiencing difficulties in persuading members to volunteer to lead walks. It has been suggested that maybe some lady members are reluctant to volunteer because of the problems in carrying out the pre-walks on their own. If this is the case, then Richard has a list of members who would be happy to provide assistance with pre-walks. His phone number is in the walks programme; please give him a call if you are prepared to lead a walk but would like help.

I would like help, too. If anyone has anything, anything at all, which might be even slightly interesting to the members, please let me know before the end of August, so that it can be included in the September newsletter.

John Bushnell

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The Walk around the Harry Green Way - 2 May 2009

We walked the 21 miles of the Harry Green Way at the beginning of May.

Ten of us left Wood Street car park in Southam at 8.35 am, having waited for five minutes, just in case the three people from Daventry arrived. They phoned and expressed an interest in joining us.

We left Southam by the Church and recreation ground to the Holy Well. How sad it is that somebody has felt the urge to remove some of the decorative wood work. We then went past the Polo grounds and on to Bascote. We were going clockwise this year, so we took the path to the old allotments, marked on the map as such, but just a ploughed field now; crossed the old railway line and down into Long Itchington village, past the church, then behind the back of the houses to get to the canal at the Two Boats pub; following the canal to the Blue Lias pub at Stockton, we had our first stop for refreshments by the fishing pools at 10.30.

We now made our way towards Stockton village, crossing the busy A423, past Bob Dodd's childhood haunts, to the village and, yes, another church, when the clock struck 11 o'clock. Now the long path over New Zealand farm, towards the A425 at Napton Bridge Inn. This stretch always seems longer than I imagine it to be. We met Harry's widow, Janet and their son here. They were going in the opposite direction and were going to do the walk in two bites over two days. Having got to the canal again, we walked the long stretch of tow path to the Folly pub, arriving at approximately midday for a very welcome drink and snack break.

Refreshed, we set off in high spirits, only to be brought down to earth by the state of the path from Napton all the way to Ladbroke. The first obstacle was a wired-up field gate and sheep-netting fence. There were stiles buried in overgrown hedges, signposts missing and when we got to the Poplar plantation, the entrance was impossible to find: there were no direction signs through the wood and when we got to the other end, the path at Holt farm, was all ploughed up with a large drainage ditch, at least three feet deep, dug across our way. If anybody from Napton Parish Council reads this, please try to get the path put right. It would prevent other walkers getting lost.

Getting to the Southam/Marston Doles road we turned toward Southam, then left at the red brick cottage to go towards Ladbroke, again stiles and marker posts in a sorry state, and arriving at Ladbroke, we had to detour through the housing estate to get on our true course towards the beautifully maintained playing field, where we took a quick break for further refreshment. From there, we headed towards Bishop's Itchington by way of Ham bridge; a really good new footpath gate in here, since last year. By this time, the day was getting really warm and the writer was flagging a bit, so Bob lead us through the village to a welcome pub for a good long rest and plenty of liquid.

The end was in sight as we set off towards Harbury, which we left by the path over the railway line and England's longest and deepest railway cutting to get

to the Nature Reserve at Ufton. After Ufton, we headed toward Bascote and the Polo grounds; here we had footpath signs, but the state of the ground, where the horses had churned it up, was dreadful. Maybe it appeared to be so bad as we had now done about 20 miles and I know my poor old feet were extremely sore.

A very jolly but weary crew arrived back at Wood Street at approximately 5.30 pm. Ten set out and ten came home, although some had never intended to do the whole trip. I think it all goes down to Bob, our leader, setting just the right pace, good camaraderie in the troops and well planned stops. Will I do it again next year? I do hope so.

Di Weaver



The Jolly Crew.
(Before its members were weary and had sore feet)

Notes on Recent Walks and Pre-Walks

"It never rains on Walking Wednesdays"; how often have we heard it? So much so, it has become a local adage, accepted by many as true, or soon to become so. However, twice lately, subscribers to this have been confounded. After very loud, but quickly passing thunderstorms on 15th. April, 12 intrepid souls took off for Withybrook to walk quite easily to Shilton, returning by Hopsford Lane. A much longer, but perhaps more interesting walk in the opposite direction had been planned; this was shelved as several problematical fences and stiles had been encountered on the pre-walk. Pre-walks need never be wasted if not fairly soon acted upon, but always assigned to the "walk store" for future programming. On this occasion, the Hedgecraft Master's skills were much in demand and their exercise shall not have been in vain! It may have to be a