

Report on Village Walk 15 September 2018

As part of the Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan, the Environment Subgroup arranged a short circular walk round some of our footpaths. We included a scavenger hunt, which was completed with varying degrees of enthusiasm by the totally adult group, but the dogs helped.

Thirty three hardy souls plus excited dogs left the village hall at 2pm on a very pleasant sunny afternoon. We started with the footpath opposite Chapel Lane, stopping at the bridge, where Peter gave a short description of the soil types and landscape features. He confirmed that the soil round here is boulder clay, confirmed gloomily by the gardeners in the group.

Onwards and upwards towards Woolpit, then a right turn and down past Burt's farm, pausing to admire the house and barns. We went past Marsh Green Cottage, trying to keep the Labradors and Sam the spaniel in the party from swimming in the slightly muddy brook. We failed. A quick right turn along the footpath known as Arch Field then Bill fascinated us all with a short talk on the Roman roads to be found round Drinkstone. In honour of the legions, we set off again to a brisk call of *laevo, dextro*.

The next stop was at a lone oak, where the fairies had firmly shut their door earlier. This was a clue in the scavenger hunt, of course, and Lindi told us we had to be very quiet, as the fairies were having their afternoon nap. The site of the lone oak is also reputed to be where there was a roman villa in earlier times, but the fairies claimed squatters' rights.

Onwards to the green road heading west, where we had permission to go to the field pond. This was particularly fascinating to Sam the spaniel and Labradors, who couldn't resist several swims. Peter told us that Suffolk was particularly rich in field ponds. This one may have been dug out for clay or as a water source for farm animals.

A quick stop at Lane End stable yard, where there was another clue, then a welcome stop at Cora's Walk, where the fairies had placed a tin of Celebrations to raise the sugar profile of the team. Onwards to Cross Street, where Jo Stebbing, the new owner of Stotts Cottage, gave a fascinating talk on the restoration of this wonderful house.

Our next stop was at Nelson, our only heritage (veteran?) oak. It is reputed to have provided wood for Nelson's navy. There is a very slightly smaller oak which Dave Prior (the landowner and an ex-navy man) has called Hardy, in tribute to the heroic team.

We finally arrived back at the Village Hall, where Carole and Sheila were waiting with tea and cake. Thanks to Lorna for the lemon drizzle and Ann for the chocolate cake and to Carole and Sheila doing the honours.

Lindi and Lyn checked the scavenger hunt entries and awarded the prize - the fairy door which had mysteriously moved from the oak tree - to Sheila's team.

Thanks for everyone who took part, not forgetting the dogs.....

