

Polebrook August 2106

Our thanks to Terry Needham for leading the walk today (and Finbarr Fin as backmarker) and for his introduction, set out below:

“Polebrook is an ancient settlement which, at the time of the Domesday Survey, was known as POCHEBROC, meaning Goblin Brook. The two nearby, but now deserted, settlements of Kingsthorpe and Armston are listed in Domesday as having a combined population of 18.

The majority of the houses in the village are built of stone, with Collyweston slate or thatched roofs.

Of the two major buildings in the village, Polebrook Hall stands behind 18th century wrought iron gates. The building is Jacobean, but the modern porch bears the coat of arms of J F Ferguson. The great-grandparents of HRH, The Duchess of York, Brigadier-General Ferguson and his wife Margaret lived at the hall for over 50 years.

The church of All Saints – completed between 1175 and 1250 – contains a stained glass window in memory of Lifeguardsman Victor Ferguson, who fell in the First World War and a roll of honour lists the American Servicemen killed flying from Polebrook airbase in WW2.



For some time during the war, Clark Gable was stationed at Polebrook, and no doubt had a drink in the Kings Arms, a Grade II listed building, probably dating back to the late 17th century”.

We parked our car under the boughs of a spreading apple tree in the Kings Arms car park. Being early, only a small number of walkers had assembled there. Gradually more arrived and the process of signing in was completed. All that was left to do was order our meal for when we returned. One problem there, the Publican was nowhere to be seen and the Pub doors were locked. Thank goodness for mobile phones and their ability to rouse the sleepest landlords from their slumbers. After his final arrival he took note of our sustenance requirements and a complement of 17, plus a small Pomeranian dog called Elsa, set off.

The thatch and slate roofed village was still quiet at 10.30 am and the only resident to see us off was a saucy lady in a doorway to our left. A second look revealed it to be a concrete statue!



Leaving the village by a weedy path we crossed a foot bridge over an almost dry stream and neither hurdled over nor limboed under the one and only stile we were to see that day. The route was a gentle rise along a metalled farm track. To the left the harvest was home, to the right a swath of green asparagus stretched as far as the eye could see.

Reaching the brow of the rise, we made a sharp turn through a gate and ascended a rather bumpy field of grass. The copse at the top was a mix of conifers and deciduous trees. A Buzzard mewed over head after being disturbed by those at the front. We waited and caught our breath from the steepish climb, allowing the stragglers to catch up.



Leaving the copse, with the alarm call of a Jay behind us, we followed the path across fields of stubble now devoid of their crop and awaiting the turn of the plough. The sky looked a little threatening but the views across the fields to the far horizon raised our spirits as we ventured on. Leaving the fields for a short walk on a country road led us to a track through some trees to more stubbly fields. Elsa the dog, although the same colour as her namesake lion, only had little legs. The fields were rutted after the weeks of dry weather and the danger of her breaking a leg down, what to her was, a crevasse meant she had to be carried.



Now on the flat, and a promise of downhill all the way, our hopes were dashed by three consecutive fields in which the farmer had not reinstated the foot paths after ploughing. It was hard work on the feet and ankles, but we Shamblers are a hardy bunch and met it with grit and resolve.



The village of Polebrook suddenly appeared around a corner. Passing down the back streets we marvelled how onions could be grown in flower borders adjacent to the path without being illicitly harvested

There was the Kings Head in front of us and lunch was served to us in the very pleasant garden room at the rear.

