

## Rushton – May 2017

The walk this week started at the Thornhill Arms public house in Rushton. The car park at the rear was small and quickly occupied by the earliest arrivals, although there was plenty of parking in the street so all comers were accommodated. After the preliminary signing in Linda Hovland (our Walk Leader assisted by Anne Cottenham) gave a short description of the walk and a potted history of the village of Rushton.

With the sun shining, blue skies above and the mew of a Red Kite overhead, 21 of us set off out of the village on a side road which took us over the East Coast mainline and onto a well-defined grassy track. The path was good considering the previous week of rain and led us on through to Pipewell (pronounced Pipwell) the smallest hamlet and hosting the smallest church (built in 1881) in Northamptonshire. Pipewell Hall, a grade two listed building, was built around 1720 with the stone from a previous Abbey.



Leaving the village on a minor road, we made way for a sudden flock of Sunday cyclists who zoomed by giving us a wave and a cheery 'Good Morning'. Fortunately, they were the only traffic we met as we took the road for half a mile before diving through a gap in the hedge like an Alice in Wonderland rabbit.

The fields we now crossed had wide margins set aside as a wildlife haven. This was indicated by strategically placed signs. Gathering under the railway bridge we rested, ate our snacks and allowed the stragglers to catch up. A short walk brought us back to the road that returned us to Rushton.

A kind gentleman, mowing his verges, advised us to avoid the road and walk to the inside of the hedge for our return as the traffic was scarily fast along this stretch of road. Unfortunately, the majority had already strode out onto the road and were oblivious to this advice of a safer route.

This section of road was busy but we all reached the safe haven of the single width path starting at the Triangular Lodge situated in the grounds of Rushton Hall. The Tresham Family owned the Hall from 1458, becoming a school in the twentieth century and now a luxury Hotel with grounds of 275 acres, of which 30 acres are formal gardens. The Triangular Lodge is a folly built in 1593 by Thomas Tresham after spending sixteen years in prison for his Catholic beliefs. Every part is based on threes representing the Holy Trinity and a protest against the Protestant religion.





With the sandstone perimeter wall of the Hall stretching before us like the Great Wall of China the walk came to an end as we re-entered the village of Rushton and the Thornhill Arms came into sight. Before arriving at the Pub we passed the picturesque All Saints Church of Rushton.

The Pub was extremely popular and, half expecting a long wait for our meal, we were pleasantly surprised to be served our carvery meal so quickly. There were three dining rooms and ours was a converted barn decorated with a multitude of paper globe lamp shades of every shade and colour. Even Habitat never had stock like this in its heyday!

