

Sudborough – July 2018

With another hot day forecast, our Shamblers walking group assembled in the Vane Arms carpark in Sudborough. Only nine in number this week so, after ordering our lunch for later, we set off at 10.30am.

Sudborough is a small village in East Northamptonshire, and at the time of the 2001 census the population was 189 people, increasing to 202 at the 2011 Census. The village is in the boundaries of the ancient Rockingham Forest with its nearest town being Thrapston. The Church of England parish church is dedicated to All Saints.



The village was quiet as we wove our way past thatched roofed cottages with roses growing around their doors. We turned right off the Main Street onto a track that took us past derelict cars peeping out from beneath coats of brambles and stinging nettles. There was also an old tractor with chicken feather as eyebrows over corroded headlights - an artistic touch. With a fanfare of dogs barking and cockerels crowing we strode off to our first stile a field away.

The earth beneath our feet was cracked and baked hard, a vast contrast to the winter mud. It was difficult to find the gap in the hedge that was to take us across the A6116. Fortunately, two mountain bikers unceremoniously burst through the dense greenery showing our way through and over another stile.

They warned us that our route may pass through a Rave that had been going on from the previous night. On entering the farm track opposite the only sounds at that time were the songs of a Chiffchaff and Wren. To either side of the track were summer blooms of Cow Parsley, Wild Geraniums and Meadow Sweet. Large Whites and brown Gate Keeper butterflies skipped beside us as the temperature began to rise.

A number of vehicles drove by, their occupants visibly worst for wear, our clue to the obvious event ahead. Suddenly, as if awaiting our arrival, loud chest thumping music was switched on. Cars lined our route forward and most of the occupants stared back with glazed expressions. Bodies, some half-dressed, lay in the bushes almost the rubbish of beer cans and Rizla packets. Reaching the pounding heart of the Rave we were cordially invited to stay and join their happy throng. We politely declined and headed up the track leaving the throbbing beat a distant sound.



After a group photo, the route took us into the shade of Tichmarsh wood. This was not without its difficulties. Nettles and brambles, shoulder high in places, had to be tamed before progress could be made. Something Finbarr had made good progress with earlier that morning – thank you Finbarr. Armed with a stick in one hand and Dock leaf in the other, progress was made in the cool and shade of Beech, Oak and Hazel trees which touched overhead. One tree had fallen across the path, but a local lady had already taken a saw to it earlier to make the way over it easier.

The refreshing shade lasted for a good mile before we emerged out onto the road and a short walk back into the village of Sudborough. Most stayed for Sunday lunch at the Vane Arms which was very tasty.

