

## Abington Park, Northampton – July 2019

Our walk this Sunday was a change from the normal format. The meeting point was the Sensory Garden in Abington Park, not a traditional starting point but it would be different this month. The idea was to combine a short walk, a quiz with answers to be found around the park and then finish off with a picnic.



The weather forecast was good although it was certainly not reflected in the sky overhead. The park has a number of defined areas, some of which we would visit on our walk and others when seeking the answers to the quiz. Skirting the Museum building to the left we walked along the Aviary, an avenue of neatly kept cages housing a variety of squawking birds. The white peacock lay sand bathing in a corner unconcerned by our passing.

The route took us over the road passed the Ice-cream vans, with their clutch of demanding children, onto a tarmac path leading down to the main lake. Either side were various well designed exercise machines mostly in use by children, a hopeful sign.

During the cold winter of 1963 the lake was frozen solid and became an ice skating paradise for child and adult alike. Now adorned with health and safety warning signs about the hazards of drowning, how things have changed. A solitary fisherman, hunched over his rod and basket looked hopefully over the grey weed less surface. Who would think life would exist here but Roach, Rudd and Carp are to be found according to the man who had had not yet caught any?



Turning off solid ground a now dry muddy path through shady trees led the way past a gurgling stream into open parkland again. We walked around another smaller lake where a mother swan and her many cygnets were resting and feeding. Our walk then took us alongside another woodland area and slightly uphill. The grass is kept well-trimmed by the Council so was easy walking. At one time there was a pitch and putt golf course here, but is now an Ideal exercise arena for our canine friends.



We now started our return walking past the remaining two tall towers of a derelict folly and then to what was once a Dove Cote, now a towering home for a few feral pigeons. On towards the smallest lake that was once a boating lake on our left and then back up the tarmac path towards the road.





Before crossing the main road one member with little will power was magnetically drawn to the Ice-cream van. It will spoil your lunch was the cry - but this did not stop them.

Upon our return to the Sensory Garden the quiz sheets were handed out and some people went off in teams whilst others chose to go alone searching the park for the answers to the 24 clues. Time allowed was arbitrary, but the draw of the picnic soon brought a return of incomplete answer sheets. Some of the more cryptic clues had beaten the majority. Even so, most spent an enjoyable 40 minutes or more searching for the answers. Who knew there was so much history within the Park grounds!



Once everyone had enjoyed their picnic the sheets were swopped and marked by others. The team called 'The Two Josies (and Phil)' scored 18 and won by half a point - a valiant effort - and were awarded the prize of a bottle of Prosecco. Everyone agreed that the day had been a great success and we will do it again next year providing another suitable location can be found.