

## Ecton – January 2020

We were gathered in the carpark at the rear of the World's End public house in Ecton, this being the starting point for our January walk. The 'end of the world' fortunately did not happen for us this Sunday. How did it get this name you ask? During the middle ages a battle between the opposing armies of the King and his sons caused such a commotion that the locals thought it really was the end of the world.

The village of Ecton is steeped in history starting from Roman times, with the evidence of over 50 pottery kilns, followed by an occupation by the Saxons and then the Normans in the 11th century.

Once a thriving village with shops and even a Blacksmiths, it now has only two pubs and a Manor house. The Manor house, once owned by the Tresham family, had over a thousand acres of land. After the height of its splendour it went through a decline into dereliction, followed by its restoration and conversion into luxury flats. The Americans, however, hold the village in great esteem as Benjamin Franklin's ancestors hailed from here over 300 years ago and for them it is now a place of pilgrimage.



There had been a sharp frost the night before and the sun was shining in the lovely blue sky, so it promised to be a bracing walk. After the usual preliminary walk introduction, a larger than usual 26 of us set off out of the village to cross the busy Wellingborough Road (A4500) into the safety of a cow pasture on the other side.



The objective this morning was a circular walk around the reservoir in the Sywell Country Park. The route there took us past Manor Farm with its equine stabling. Walking through a couple of fields containing horses, a Shetland pony decided it would rather accompany us so we were followed all the way to the gate where we had to block its way.



Walking alongside the lane we went downhill for a while and then through the entrance of the park. Even at this early hour the carpark was busy with people, children and dogs.





Soon after a steep climb away from the chatter, the expanse of the reservoir spread out before us. The bright blue of this clear frosty morning reflected in its calm deep waters. Only the occasional Mallard dared to break its glassy surface. After a while, we stopped for our break and group photo before moving on.



The Park has put much effort into providing a mixed environment for its visitors. Young children have a sandy play area with frames and swings in addition to a wild forested nature area with tunnels and slides. The circular well surfaced path around the reservoir is a favourite for dog walkers of which quite a few were met. Over 1800 native trees and wildflower plugs have been planted in the last couple of years along with the production of wildlife habitats and ponds.

Now on our return, the low winter sun hung glaring in our eyes on the pull up the hill away from the

park to Manor Farm. The thoughts of the Sunday Roast soon to be had in the World's End sweetened and refreshed tired limbs. It was true the meal was excellent and the 18 who stayed would agree.

