

## Ringstead – August 2020 (Evening walk)

After a grey day with lots of rain, the sun finally appeared during the afternoon. At 6.30pm, 10 people gathered together by the Axe & Compass pub in Ringstead before our three mile walk, whilst trying to maintain social distancing.

Stuart, our co-walk leader, briefly gave an account of historical events in Ringstead in recent centuries and explained the details of the walk ahead. During the census of 2011, Ringstead had in excess of 1500 inhabitants. The church yard is said to be haunted by the ghost of Lydia Atley, who was murdered in 1850. What were thought to be her skeletal remains were unearthed in 1864 in a local orchard; the village butcher, Weekly Ball, was tried for Lydia's murder but acquitted because it proved impossible to conclusively identify the skeleton as that of the missing girl.

During the 1980s, major sand and gravel excavations took place all around Ringstead leaving many man-made lakes and islands. This is now a nature reserve – Kinewell Lakes – and forms part of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SSI, which supports many wintering wildfowl and other wildlife. It is the largest Pocket Park in the county and is owned by the village and managed by the Kinewell Lake Trust.

Ruth then led the walkers off through the village towards the Pocket Park, which was to take us around Kinewell Lake.



Due to all the recent rain, at times the path was rather muddy and slippery but all managed to negotiate this without any mishaps. Now and again, a glimpse of the calm waters of the lake with was spotted through the trees.



Very soon, we came across two white geese looking for food on the pathway ahead. At first, they seemed to ignore us, but then one of them took on a rather threatening stance so we ignored it as best we could and carried on.



Following the path around the lake eventually brought us to the River Nene where many small boats were moored.





In no time, we approached the road where the newly named 'Water Mill Tearooms' are situated, previously known as 'Woodford Mill Tearooms'. Across the road is the Willy Watt Marina where you can hire boats by the day or week. Margaret Thatcher's father, Alf Roberts, was born in nearby Woodford village.



Here, we turned right across a field towards the disused railway line and walked along this for a while until we turned off across a bridge and then onto the final pathway back to Ringstead. We then stopped for our group photo and a short break.



Resuming our walk along this path we had to negotiate some very large puddles.



As the sun was beginning to sink lower in the sky, we arrived back in Ringstead where we found our cars and bid farewell to each other. However, we should all be meeting up again soon at Carsington Water for our Away Day.

During the drive home we were treated to a fabulous sunset, which was a lovely end to the evening.

