

## Silverstone – February 2017



The meeting place for our walk this Sunday was the White Horse at Silverstone village. The name 'Silverstone' is universally associated with the noisy motor racing circuit, but the village is a quiet backwater during the winter months.

In ancient times, the village was hidden away in the larger expanse of Whittlewood Forest where their trades were with timber products, wood craft and logging. The village was named 'Silverstone' in the Domesday Book and had a hunting lodge used by Royalty.

Standing outside the pub, we were at the confluence of four roads, formally Little London. The name arose from the large number Londoners fleeing here to escape the Black Death. Unfortunately, they brought the plague with them which decimated half the inhabitants of Silverstone, all the poor souls in nearby Charlock and every Monk in Luffield Abbey to the east. The Monks were not forgotten for although the Abbey was built over as an air field in the Second World War and then became the race track, corners of the circuit were named Prior, Abbey and Luffield for posterity.

The Church of St Michael was built around 1884 and is a simple Victorian building with an odd Scandinavian style spire. The cost was stood by the then St Robert Loder of Whittlebury Lodge.

Our group of twenty left the village, passing the Church of St Michael and took a narrow twitchel to a wooden bridge leading us to a pasture field, to the right of which were medieval fishponds. We quickly strode on through two further fields and on the left was the site of the Plague ridden village of Charlock, which held no fears of contamination now. We then crossed over a brook to a field of frisky horses. One young brown one was particularly friendly but, heeding the notices not to feed the horses, it had to make do with a friendly pat.



Bucknell Wood lay in front of us and stretched far into the horizon. The entrance was accessed after a short walk down the road and we took a path to the left on entering. The wood of predominantly deciduous trees lay silent bar the 'teacher teacher' call of a Great Tit. The paths, though leaf strewn, were muddy in places and small detours were needed to navigate safely. The mile long path followed a relatively straight route and emerged out of the wood on to a concrete road way and open countryside, taking us back to Silverstone.

Although the pub had been rather remiss in a late opening for us at the start of our walk, they made up for it by providing a quick and well-presented Sunday lunch.

