

Riseley July 2017

The sky was grey and there was no hope of sun that day, but spirits were high in the Fox & Hounds car park. After a short introduction to the walk by Jean Mole with Ruth Gifford-Page as back marker, 15 walkers set off down Riseley linear High Street.



Riseley, as a small hamlet, was mentioned in the Domesday Book and also suffered the Plague in its time. The only other notable disasters were the crashing of a badly damaged B17 Flying Fortress in a Mrs Dobbs' back garden and a British fighter pilot making an unscheduled landing at the far end of the village.



After entering the village green space and a quick glance over the education display, we took a short back road to All Saints Church. On leaving this well managed grave yard there was some confusion as to the correct path to be taken. Riseley village and its surround is a maze of interlinking path ways and it is easy to get on the wrong route.

This may have been the case when the main road we had just left was observed to our right. Our intrepid leader's sixth sense soon put us back on track and the revised route took us through a field of undulating earth works and not unfriendly beasts. Discussion later arose as to the gender of these animals and, after a short Biology lesson, it was determined that they were neither male nor female and were destined for the dinner table. Electric fencing was in abundance around the field margins, maybe to stop the errant wanderings of lost ramblers and this guided us to a narrow concrete road adjacent to Flint's Wood.



The slight incline was bordered to most of its length by dense woodland. This was Coppice Wood where a number of Nissan Huts, virtually derelict other than their front façade, was the only remaining evidence of a Forward Gas Filling station used to charge bombs with deadly mustard agent. Apparently, the last remaining containers of gas were removed in 1970 and remnants of chemicals were removed from what is a fenced off area in 1988 and again in 1998. Our path took us alongside a magnificent blackberry hedge laden with unripen fruit. The proximity of the derelict Nissan shelters might however deter the jam makers.



Melchbourne Hall and its extensive park and lake opened out before us. Keen eyes spotted what appeared to be a tea party on the lawns, but in reality it was the Village Fete. Leaving Hillards Plantation, on the outskirts of the village was Woodeys Farm. From here a narrow perfectly straight concrete access road took us through Worley's Wood and out into the open fields again. The way twisted and turned through hedge gaps and over streams. Finally, taking a rise we were brought in sight again of All Saints Church in Riseley.

With the loud reports of gun shots from Riseley firing range we returned to the village and the welcome sight of the Fox & Hounds. The opportunity to enter the village from the opposite end and the chance to visit the Nudist Park was put off for perhaps another outing. The food and service in the pub was good and speedily finished off what had been an adventurous day's shambling.