

## Kimbolton - August 2017

Our walk this month was at Kimbolton, which is an historic market town in Huntingdonshire very near the Bedfordshire border. We were very lucky that we had such beautiful sunny weather that day.

Almost as soon as we had arrived at Kimbolton we were surprised to find that a fun run and half marathon had been scheduled for the very same morning. Runners set off down the main street in what seemed to be a never ending stream, but eventually all eight hundred entrants had run by. However our group of 15 walkers – a smaller number than usual due to holidays - set off behind the walk leader and with the back marker taking up the rear, a little later and at a more leisurely pace after a short talk given by the walk leader. The New Sun Inn had kindly opened early so that walkers had been able to choose and order their Sunday lunch and use the euphemistically named “facilities”.

We parked in the High Street, which owes its sizeable width to the charter it was given in 1200 to hold a fair and a market. It is flanked on either side with a variety of very pretty and handsome houses and individual shops.

At one end of the street stands an imposing stone building with crenellations fronted by a green where the road bends sharply. This splendid stone building, known as The Castle, was the home of the Manchester family for many generations but was sold to Kimbolton School in 1950. Katherine of Aragon



Our walk began in an unusual way, by walking up some steps and through a wooden door to one side of the school. This did not open into Narnia but led us through and around the school grounds on a public footpath and then through a new wooden gate and up Warren Hill near to Warren Spinney

From the midpoint on the hill we turned round so we could look down, beyond the stubble glistening in the sunlight in the early harvested field, towards the picturesque town and see the mellow stone of Kimbolton School. We could also

see a small almost circular group of dark green trees to our left, which is the site of where there once stood the original motte and bailey wooden castle. You can see this area marked on the ordnance survey map of the area.



After a short breather and a drink of water – we were quite hot by this time - we continued up the hill to meet a track called Pound Lane and then onwards past a farm and some houses. Opposite these, some (presumably) diseased old horse chestnut trees had been recently felled and were laid in a pile nearby.

Once past, we turned left with a small copse on our left and field to the right on the corner of which stood a large high stack of bales of straw, another sign of the harvest, and eventually turned left again at a footpath sign leading us on towards the B660 that leads through Pertenhall, Keysoe and other villages to Bedford.

Crossing this, and after walking a little way along to our right, was a track to the left with a small group of houses where we could hear chickens clucking in the garden. Our rural walk continued from there to the bend and then left down a gentle hill through some fields and along dry tracks until we reached the edge of the interestingly named Hatchett Lane.

After some twists and turns we found ourselves at the River Kym down by the road that will take you to St Neot's in one direction or Kimbolton and Rushden in the other. The little river, with its verdant foliage clinging to the bank edge, looked thoroughly benign, though when we investigated at a tiny bridge, there was evidence that it must sometimes swell to flood its surroundings as the houses had heavy solid metal gates at their boundaries, just in case!

From there we continued on the path with Kimbolton School's tall boundary wall towering next to us. Suddenly a small group of runners appeared around the corner jogging their way towards the town, no doubt they were tired and hoping they had each made good time.

We too headed in the same direction, but at a slower pace, and at the first sharp corner could see the butcher's shop which supplies the pub, then the gentlemen's outfitters (which we believe was once a workhouse) with its twisted wrought iron vertical struts at its windows.

Once back at the New Sun Inn, after our 4 mile walk, we quenched our thirst and enjoyed our Sunday roast. Several walkers expressed the opinion that the walk had been the 'right' length. We look forward now to September's walk.

