

Braunston – March 2018

The 'Beast from the East' had done its worst to prevent the Braunston walk but three valiant members braved the elements and were not to be beaten. After pre-ordering the Sunday lunch at the Old Plough and a short historical résumé of the walk by our leader Finbar Finn, we set off out of the car park and downhill to a path taking us out of the village and over the Grand Union Canal.



Passing Braunston Marina on our left, and the café boat 'Gongoozlers' on our right, we turned off the towpath to take a concrete gated road away from the village. The going was easy as the bells calling to Sunday prayers rang loudly from Braunston's only remaining church high on the hill. All Saints Church was built in 1848 and its majestic spire rises to 150 feet and is known as the Cathedral of the Canals.

Braunston has been a thriving community throughout the ages. When the junction of the Grand Union Canal was formed with the Oxford Canal trade came to the area. Later, it had two railway stations with the Weedon to Leamington Spa line and the more impressive Great Central Main line serving the village.

Braunstonbury and Wolfhampcote are two plague villages sites deserted after the Black Death which decimated many small hamlets. The only remains are the medieval Church of Saint Peter the second Braunston church. The third church was demolished after it had been defiled after Demonic practices had been performed there.

We had our first sight of this year's lambs in the fields, but they didn't seem to mind the snowy conditions.

Reaching the hamlet of Nethercote we rested and breathed in the distant vista over the County of Warwickshire. The biting wind had been behind us, but turning downhill to return along the Grand Union Canals, the wind hit full on. Over Bridge 101 and onto the towpath for the return to Braunston village. Only one Narrow boat passed by considering the cut was ice free. The late risers were still tucked up in the warmth from their wood burning stoves.





Reaching the end of our five mile journey, the ascent back up to the Old Plough did not seem so bad with the thought of a Roast Dinner and a warm fire drawing us on.