

Cosgrove – March 2020

The Barley Mow at Cosgrove has been the starting point for our monthly walk on more than one occasion. This time the start of our walk was in the rain, which to be fair was rare. However, this was better than Storm Dennis of last month that necessitated the cancelling of our walk. In spite of this, and the impending doom of the Coronavirus, 16 assembled in the Barley Mow car park. We had two guest walkers to welcome and our walk leader was Nick, who was leading his first walk for the group.



After donning waterproof clothing and walking boots, 10.30am arrived and we set off through the horse tunnel running beneath the Grand Union Canal to join the towpath on the other side. In the early times of canal transport the horses would be brought through the tunnel to the Cosgrove blacksmith for shoeing whilst the Barley Mow would have been a stop off for the Navies and Bargees.

On leaving the village the bells started ringing to remind us of the 13th century Saxon church of St Peter and St Paul nearby. The towpath had many boats moored up alongside, though there were very few people around. Some newly painted spic and span, others sadly scruffily rusted and draped with rotting firewood.



A short walk past the nearly flooded caravan park brought us to the forty foot aqueduct over the River Great Ouse. Built in 1811 to replace the arduous flight of eight locks, passage over was made so much easier. A flight of steps down took us into Cosgrove Country Park.



The rain was now becoming very heavy and persistent and with heads down we battled on along the path which after passing over the river ran parallel to the London mainline with the occasional whoosh of a passing train. The only cover available was the pedestrian tunnel beneath. Here refreshed with tea and bananas we regrouped before resuming our watery walk alongside a small industrial estate until finally reaching the outskirts of Castlethorpe village.



With grass now under our feet, good but occasionally muddy progress was made over four pasture fields. Care was taken at each gate where animals had churned up the mud to make it very slippery. Crossing the River Tove we knew that our return to Cosgrove and the shelter from the still persistent rain was imminent. The finale was a well-received Sunday Roast for 15 slightly damp but happy walkers in the Barley Mow.

