

## **STEPPING OUT**

### **A series of walks around the East Leake Area**

This month's walk is a straightforward circular walk from West Leake round the West Leake hills. It is just over 4 miles in length and has only two stiles. These are right at the beginning and can be avoided by a slight detour round the road.

If you do the walk in the morning why not have lunch at the Star Inn which has recently reopened

#### **West Leake Hills and the Cuckoo Bush from West Leake**

4½ miles; allow 2½ hours

In the centre of the village just across the road from the church take the footpath going initially between the houses. This leads to a stile into a field. Cross the field slightly to the right of the big tree in the middle and you will arrive at another stile in the fence. This stile is not easy to locate from a distance but it is almost directly in line with the tree from the first stile. Over the stile turn left along a well marked footpath which brings you out onto the Kingston road. It is called Dark Lane on the map but there is no road sign. Turn right and walk about 500m up the lane and you will come to a well marked bridleway on the right. This is Wossock Lane.

Turn right along this bridleway. After 300m there is a fork and the main track bears right; you follow the bridleway straight ahead. You now follow the track for just over a kilometre. Then as the track swings to the left there is a waymark post indicating your way to the right up the grassy hill. At the top of the hill pause for breath and to admire the view. In the distance are the hills of Charnwood; the two radio masts you can see are at Copt Oak which is about 16 miles away.

Continue along the track, through a metal gate and you arrive at a junction with another track alongside a wood. Turn right along this track and after about 400m you come to a wooden gate and the junction of four paths.

Your route is to continue straight ahead along the ridge with the hedge on your right. But before you continue it is worth going a few yards along the path to your left where you will find an information board of the Gotham Heritage Trail which will tell you about the Wise Men of Gotham and the Cuckoo Bush. There is a splendid view from here with the village of Gotham below you on the left then as your view sweeps right you can pick out many of the buildings in central Nottingham. Then there is Wilford Hill and to the right of that the hill-top village of Keyworth.

Continue walking along the ridge with the hedge on your right. You will go through a gate into a small wood from which you will emerge alongside the fourth green of the golf course. Continue alongside the fairway keeping close to the hedge on your right and out of the way of flying golf balls. As you

pass the teeing ground the track forks and you take the right fork which brings you to a field-edge path with the hedge on your left. At the end of this field there is another prominent path junction and you turn right along a track which goes to Fox Hill Farm. From this track there is a good bird's eye view of East Leake. It is interesting to see how the flood plain of Meadow Park divides the village with the new schools and the Gotham Lane development to the north and the older parts of the village to the south. Where the track swings left to the farm you go straight on and in another kilometre you reach the road at West Leake. Coming down the hill the view to the right is dominated by the power station at Ratcliffe on Soar. But to the left of this you can just make out the cooling towers of the smaller power station at Willington. Then further to the left very prominently on the horizon is the new control tower at the airport.

Dennis Fox