

STEPPING OUT – a series of walks around the East Leake Area.

This month's walk is a five mile circular walk from East Leake starting along the Frank Kirk way in Meadow Park. The Frank Kirk way is a new footpath first dedicated just two years ago and officially opened by County Councillor Lynn Sykes in September 2007. It has been very well used during its first two years and has become a real asset to the village. It is named in memory of Frank Kirk who farmed most of the land through which the path passes. The land is now farmed by Frank's son Tim and we are very grateful to Tim for his cooperation in getting the new path established. It is noteworthy that the Kirk family is the only family still farming in East Leake who were granted land by the original enclosure act of 1798.

Route: Meadow Park; Frank Kirk Way; West Leake Church; Calke Hall Farm; Rempston Road; The Nook.

8 km; 5 miles. Allow 2½ hours.

Enter Meadow Park along the asphalt footpath from Main Street alongside Manor Farm Meadow. At the yellow topped waymark post on your right, turn left along the stoned path. In the third field (Gibson's Field) the path swings left to the exit to Bateman Road. But at this point your route swings to the right in the direction of the railway embankment where you will clearly see the point at which the path goes underneath the railway through a short tunnel.

At the other side of the tunnel is a kissing gate at which you turn right to follow the path alongside the railway embankment to the Kingston Brook. At the brook turn left and continue with the brook on your right until you reach a bridge over the brook. Cross the brook and go towards a well-fenced pumping station which is pumping water from an old gypsum mine. Go round the fencing to your left and continue along the path with the brook on your left and a poplar tree plantation on your right.

You will leave the plantation at a wooden kissing gate. Here you turn right to go towards Fox Hill.

You come to another kissing gate and carry on up the hill through some bushy scrub. On emerging from the scrub you turn left then right along a field edge path that takes you fairly steeply up the hill to emerge onto the track from West Leake. Turn left along this track, go down the hill and on reaching the road turn right into West Leake.

When you reach the Church on your left turn left along the path through the churchyard.

On reaching the edge of the churchyard, go down the steps into the field and head off in a direction diagonally to the left where you can cross the Kingston Brook by a substantial footbridge. Just beyond the bridge you turn left along the footpath with the fence on your right.

This footpath meets the track to Manor Farm near its junction with the road. Turn right along the track and go up the hill to the farm. At the top of the hill just as the track begins its descent turn left on the bridleway along the ridge with the hedge on your left. Follow this bridleway all the way past Caspian Kennels at Calke Hall Farm and you will eventually come onto Woodgate Road as it comes out of East Leake.

Turn left along the road, cross the railway bridge and then turn right at the next junction along Rempstone Road. Continue past the top of Kirk Lea Road and then, after another 500yds, turn left over a stile to a footpath that takes you through a large field in the direction of East Leake. After the second field a bridge takes you across the Sheepwash Brook and you go straight up the next field with the hedge on your left.

Go through the kissing gate at the top of the field and down some steps into Burton Walk. Bear right down the road and a footpath straight ahead at the end of the road brings you to The Nook and out onto Main Street near the Three Horseshoes.

Dennis Fox