

PYW Peterborough Walkers

New Year adventure to Stratford upon Avon 2023/2024



Day 1: The grass is green—Mike our in house whisperer

Friday evening 30th December the **'Elite Motor Home Group'** enjoy fine private dining of Moussaka, wine, finest cheese and truffles, complimented with Mulberry Gin in chez Julie & Ian's motorhome. The less select dined at Wetherspoons, some even stayed at the Premier Inn. Others at fine B & B establishments.



Our first walking weekend away with an official 'PYW' chairman at the helm—onwards and upwards!

Saturday morning dawned and 17 walkers rendez vous'd 10.30 at the Stratford upon Avon tourist information centre, greeted by friendly informative staff. Walk leader Nigel summarised route and announced he had made a **'special arrangement'** (eyebrows raised) with a pub landlady - such that she would **'open up'** for us at lunchtime—an offer not to be refused! Nigel hosted a short open air Shakespeare quiz before setting off on a 9.5 mile walk. Out through Stratford's finest Suburbia of detached houses, manicured gardens and freshly washed cars. No sign of Margo (Penelope Keith) but sure nets twitched as Mrs Bouquet ensured we passed by in an orderly fashion.



Soon out into rolling countryside along lanes bounded by hedgerows separating the fields. Passing by farmhouses and through pretty manicured villages Nigel made sure we had safe passage protecting us from electric fences. The 'posh' ladies amongst us had ordered their Waitrose lunch, the remainder stopped by special arrangement at 'The New Inn' pub for lunch where mulled wine was on offer. The elite motorhome members found kindship with a group of fellow walkers who had escaped from a CAMC (Caravan & Motorhome Club) 'cruise' themed rally at the racecourse. Meanwhile entertainment was provided by a local gentleman (ex RAF) and his dog with wartime renditions.



We continued along Monarch Way railway path back towards Stratford, stopping off for further refreshment at the railway carriage cocktail and coffee bar before completing the walk at the RSC theatre.

In the evening the elite campers attempted using 'sustainable' public transport into town, failing miserably as the No 28 bus ignored Julie's frantic waving, sailing past at a great pace. No on the buses for us. Fortunately Alan the Turk came to the rescue with his taxi, so all arrived at El Greco to enjoy fine Greek dining. Branchio enjoyed pre dinner member massage FOC.



New Years Eve we headed out with car sharing to Broadway in the Cotswolds, meeting in the Leamington Road Car Park under the archway to shelter from the heavy rain for Sarah's walk intro.



Mud, mud glorious mud



Best described as wet!

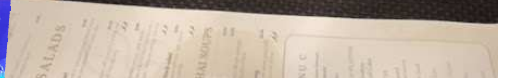
Un deterred, waterproofs on, 16 hardy walkers headed through the quaint stone village, picking up provisions on route, and out through some very muddy fields, up hill to take in some lovely valley views of trees and sharply undulating fields whilst walking along the Cotswold Way south to the village of Snowhill for a lunch top on the green, greeted by a local tractor run to the delight of Mr C! Luckily rain abated as we admired the Cotswold stone cottages, neat gardens and Christmas decorations.

Climbing again to the Broadway Tower and fine views across to the Malvern hills. Coffee and cake stop in the café before slipping (Kate literally) down muddy fields back into Broadway village at dusk we were treated to the twinkling of Christmas lights. Photo opportunity with direction from secretary Abbott.





Having slipped our way back to Broadway, we headed home to our respective accommodation to 'glam up' for New Years Eve in Stratford. NYE commenced with a thai meal at Sabai Sabai, good food served promptly and another first.... 'Carbon Friendly Dining' and 'global service charge' according to the bill at least!



Party goes amongst us headed to The Keys for live music by Jay and Eli. A hardy 5: Kate, Ian C, Ian J, Julie and Branchio toughed it out dancing into 2024!



New Years Day and the Tourist Information once again our starting point.



A 4 1/2 mile mud plugger walk along the canal, more neat, this time Edwardian suburbia and out through the Welcome Hills via the Obelisk for views of flooded valleys and



diversion to avoid the worst of the mud and down into Stratford for lunch in various establishments. Shhhh...some even went to Wetherspoons!



Followed by part 2 of the walk, a historic buildings guided tour to finish in the heavy rain at 3.30pm By which time Stratford and surrounding had become quite flooded! Some headed home, some for cream tea at Hudson's Tea Rooms.



For elite motorhome member Ian C, the day was completed with a ride home in a police car! Rescued by a kind PC after his bike was stolen from outside the TIC whilst walking. It just goes to show, sustainable transport isn't all its meant to be. Stratford have manicured Suburbia, but Stratford also has bike thieves!

Happy 2024!