

A walk through village history with SAVA

Going for a walk in the village for many people means a short tour around the rectangle of roads that encloses its green heart. It is far enough to become healthily breathless and varied enough to engage the attention, even without glancing through windows and commenting on the owner's choice of decor.

To give the walk a historical dimension, a few years ago SAVA produced a guided walk which now appears on the village website. It was decided, for the first time, to do a "live" version of it on Sunday 9th June, with SAVA members as guides. So, about 30 people, from near and far, gathered at the Sports and Rec to break new ground. Thematically, two historical dimensions were expounded. The first being the ancient church environs with its educational institutions and significant manors which lie along North Side. The second being South Side and Paines Hill, which saw in the new era of growing population and the burgeoning of business and trade in the lively middle 50 years of the 19th century. On the way we learned about the eponymous and enterprising John Paine, owner of the Fleur de Lys pub which became the Doctor's House then Paines Hill House. Along North Side we learned how Mr Burgin, after renting out various dwellings at The Gap, had narrowly avoided being transported to Australia for a misdemeanour.

SAVA is willing to repeat the live walk next year if there is sufficient demand, so if you are interested in impressing your weekend guests with your grasp of local history as you stroll around the village, let us know via SAVA's website www.steepleastonarchive.org.uk.

David Jarratt, SAVA



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