

Quorn Walks – No.5

Quorn Village (South-West)

This is five of the set of six

1.5 km (1 mile)

Pubs and cafés at start and end.

Terrain: Flat, mostly paved. Short section from Checkpoint 1 to Chaveney Road is gravel.

Bus stops: The Cross, Meeting Street and Chaveney Road (No. 154), Quorndon Fox (No.2, 127, 154, X26).

Here's a question for those who know Quorn well. Which is the greater: the current number of restaurants in the village or the number of different pubs that the village has seen over the years? This short walk and Walk 6 may help you with the answer, which is given at the end of Walk 6.

An accident at the Royal Oak drew the crowd as can be seen in the photograph on the right which was taken in about 1912



We start at **Quorn Cross**, the centre and main crossroads of the village. Before the railways, up to 32 timetabled coaches a day (and night) passed through Quorn and the **White Horse**, one of at least three coaching inns in the village included stabling for 15 horses. The High Street and Leicester Road were once part of the main London to Manchester highway, a turnpike and a trunk road the A6 until campaigning for a Quorn and Mountsorrel bypass which started in the 1920's finally reached fruition in 1991.

Setting off along Meeting Street once part of the ancient salt road that linked the midlands with the east coast, we pass the **Royal Oak** on the right. Two typical architectural features to look out for as you walk around the older parts of the village are walls built of granite, from the **Buddon Wood Quarry** which opened in 1821 and roofs with diminishing courses of Swithland slates (smaller slates higher up the roof). On the left, No.12 was the old blacksmith's, where Mr Holmes the smithy was one of three in the village whose customers included, of course, the Quorn Hunt and the stagecoach operators. The detached house set back a little after the **Blacksmith's Arms** used to be the **Three Crowns** inn, whose licence was transferred to the Manor House Hotel on Woodhouse Road in 1899 which had been opened to serve the new Great Central Railway.

Just beyond Sanders Road, notice that the award winning 1990s houses (Nos 43-47) reflect the design of the old blacksmiths. At this point, the sound of running water would have been even louder in the past as **Poultney Brook**, which now flows under No.49, used to flow freely over the street itself to join Buddon Brook. Hidden by the tall trees of Kaye's Plantation to the left lies **Quorn House**, built in 1820 by the village's hereditary 'squires', the Farnhams, on the site of the family's 14th century house: and was the headquarters for the Rosemary Conley

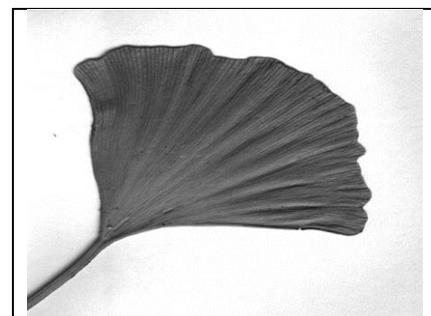
diet and fitness business and was purchased in 2015 for office use by Tarmac. We now pass two former churches on the right. No.83 is a former Primitive Methodist Church and a little past Spinney Drive, the **Meeting House**, a building dating from the 15th century, was where Baptist services were held from 1776 before the **Baptist Chapel** opposite was built and which included Thomas Cook amongst its preachers. Until the 20th century, the last building on the way out of the village was **Chaveney House** (opposite Elms Drive), originally owned by the Chaveney family and dating in parts from 1415, though largely rebuilt in the 1600 and 1700s. Its proximity to the road is explained by the fact that the side we see was originally the rear of the building. **No.33 Chaveney Road**, further along on the right, was frequently visited by D.H.Lawrence as his girlfriend Louise Burrows lived there.

Just after the road bends to the right, take the public right of way - bridleway on the right (**Checkpoint 1 on the map**) and continue along Craddock Drive passing **Caves Field** home of the Quorn Cricket Club since 1897. In the early 1990's the field was saved from a possible housing development by a combination of a local action group and the Parish Council. Often seen feeding on the short grass here are *piebald wagtails* and *mistle thrushes*. When passing or sitting to watch the game on summer match days watch out for the type of strike that has seen the end of several nearby windows!

At the corner, continue straight on along the path to cross **Tom Longs Meadow**, a strip of marsh land alongside Poultney Brook that was formerly a cattle grazed meadow until it became waterlogged in the 1990's and is now a Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife managed wetland site. It is noted for a fine show of *marsh marigold* and *ragged robin* but has lately become dominated by *sedge*, *bulrush*, *meadowsweet* and other tall herbage and *crack willows*. Just after the path to Woodthorpe has diverged to the left, this short section of the route becomes a footpath before reverting back to a bridleway so, caution and respect for other users is required.

On emerging on to Sanders Road turn left and then right, through a line of *beeches* and past a fine 18th century *maidenhair* tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) the very tall tree behind the wall of the **Quorndon Fox**. This tree with its unusual fan-shaped leaf (shown right), was thought to be nearly extinct when it was rediscovered in 17th century China. We emerge opposite **Rawlins School (Checkpoint 2)**.

Thomas Rawlins established a school in Woodhouse Eaves in 1691, but by 1864 its roll had shrunk to a single pupil, the master's son, and it closed.



Leaf of the Maidenhair Tree

In 1897 the Rawlins trustees opened this new school in Quorn and, with the acceptance of girls the following year, Rawlins is believed to have been the first co-educational school in England south of the Trent. The original school building is the one to the right of the current entrance; the detached building set back beyond the library is the **old vicarage**.

The **Quorndon Fox** dates from the 18th century and was formally called the Swan with Two Necks, Quorn Place and then the **Bulls Head**, the latter name having been transferred in 1939 from the Old Bulls Head further down High Street, now flats, but with its former incarnation evident from the sculpture atop the gable end. The **White Hart**, probably dating from the 16th century, is another inn that used to incorporate stables at the rear; opposite here we see the Jubilee gardens, redeveloped in 2004, incorporating a Q motif.



Further along High Street on the right we pass **Quorn Court** a Grade II listed building. Although there are no title deeds it is believed that it was built for the Duke of Dorset around 1746 for use as a hunting box. Thomas Cradock, a long-term resident used to relate that when he bought Quorn Court, one of the bedrooms was called the Duke of Bedford's Room. After the architect William Railton had been engaged for alterations, he went to see the progress made, and found that nearly the whole of the old house had been demolished with the exception of part of the ground floor, and the Duke of Bedford's Room above. These were incorporated in the new structure which include the addition of the top floor. Thomas Cradock was a 19th century solicitor and banker and a secretary of the Quorn Hunt who hosted the hunt balls there. The grounds used to extend as far back as Elms Drive. The former **Wesleyan Methodist Church** opposite dates from 1907 and has been converted into private apartments. Just before reaching the Cross, we pass the **old Post Office** on the left, now a furnishing store.

Quorn Walk Map 5

