

## Quorn Walks – No.6

### Quorn Village (North-East)

**This is six of the set of six**

1.5 km (1 mile)

Pubs and café at start and end.

Refreshments on route.

Terrain: Flat, paved.

Bus stops: The Cross, Unitt Road (No.127).



*The 1932 Floods- this part of the village was for many years dominated by Wright's Mill, some of which remains, but much of which has now been either demolished or converted into flats.*

**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 5 may help you with the answer, which is given at the end.

From **Quorn Cross**, set off along Leicester Road, crossing Buddon Brook where you may be lucky and catch site of a *Kingfisher*. This site on the left was first occupied by a flour mill, using the Brook for power, and then a number of small textile firms, before Michael Wright's company took over in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They made webbing and elastic for garments, using the brook again for both steam power and dyeing. Wright's soon became the village's biggest employer, with over 2,000 working in the complex during World War One. Among the mill buildings abutting Leicester Road there were two pubs: The **Mill House Inn** and the **Crown and Cushion**, the latter still standing as the company's registered office.

Turn left onto School Lane (**Checkpoint 1 on the map**). As you pass over the bridge, look out for *mallard ducks*, *herons*, *egrets* and *waterhen*, maybe even an *otter*, and from July to September, the handsome flowers of the *flowering rush*. The care home on the right was originally called **Soar Villa** and the award-winning park on the left were owned by the Staffords, a Quorn family since at least the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Stafford Orchard park was

bequeathed in perpetuity to the parish by a group of wealthy residents as a children's recreation area. The building on the left in the corner of the park is the '**Old School**' building named after St Bartholomew which opened in 1836 and closed as a primary school in the mid 1970's. The building now acts as a community hub and includes recreation spaces, a café and the parish office.

Further along on the right, is **Soar House** which has seen a few dramas. On a Sunday morning in the 1870s, one of the residents, John Sarson, drowned in mysterious circumstances in the nearby River Soar; and then in 1875, the Beardsley family were marooned here for six weeks during 'The Great Flood', receiving their bread through the windows from the baker's delivery boat. Still on the right, just past the outbuildings of **Wharf House** lies Quorn's old wharf on the Soar (still a public area), where coal from Derbyshire was unloaded in the early 1800s and used for steam power at the village's textile factories, which numbered seven by the 1840s. Spanning the river just downstream is the Santa Maria Bridge, whose elegance probably went unappreciated by its original users: hounds from Quorn Hall being taken to exercise in the fields on the right bank. (For Quorn Hall, see Walk 4.)

After Huntsman's Close on the right, turn left (**Checkpoint 2**) into the series of alleyways that lead eventually to the **Apple Tree**, whose front bar with the view down Station Road was added when this former private house was converted into a pub. It's not difficult to guess which house further down Station Road was formerly yet another pub: The **Pig and Whistle** (No. 60). Further along, on the right the Fish and Chips restaurant was formally, from 1912 the **Quorn Conservative Club**, and before that the Havelock Coffee House.



*The photograph shows Station Road around 1900, looking towards The Apple Tree; the newsagent's is Gamble's and the 'Teas & Ices' shop is Allen's.*

Opposite, in Dower House Gardens, the left-hand (eastern) part of the large house is **The Dower House** itself, originally owned by the Farnhams of Quorn House and thought to date from the 14th century. The right-hand part is a Victorian addition. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the enlarged house was owned for a while by Loughborough College and used as a student hostel.

The building housing **Bradley's Supermarket** was formerly the Co-op and before that **The Blue Ball Inn**. Opposite, however, the view has changed even more, since the current car park was formerly **Quorn village green**, where willows growing near the brook were used commercially for a while by local basket-makers. The **old lock-up**, known as the 'Dark Hole', is nowadays a little brighter, for it houses Bianca's Pizzas. This little building is also offered as one possible reason why a road with no railway station is called Station Road: formerly Barrow Street, it may have been named after the fire station, for the Dark Hole also housed the village's fire engine. The other possibility is that, before the Great Central Railway was built, this was the road to the Midland Railway station: in Barrow. Then when the GCR opened either direction from Station Road led to a Quorn Station, 'Barrow upon Soar & Quorn' and 'Quorn & Woodhouse'. Turn right past a thatched restaurant originally two 16<sup>th</sup> century cottages and also having seen life as a sweet shop, a bike shop and a butchers to approach the church along The Wedding Path.

**St Bartholomew's Church** a Grade 1 listed building was built from Mountsorrel granite and dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when it was originally a chapel of ease from the then mother church at Barrow. Quorn has at different times fallen within the diocese of Lincoln, Peterborough and Leicester. Parts of the original nave and chancel walls still remain, as does the Norman south doorway, tucked beyond the 14<sup>th</sup> century vaulted porch. The tower is also 14<sup>th</sup> century. The church interior includes the Farnham Chapel, dedicated to the important local family who were the original owners of Quorn House and Park. In the churchyard look out for *Jackdaws* and *Ravens* and during summer, screaming flocks of *swifts*.

***And the answer to that question?*** *At the date of writing, there are 12 restaurants in Quorn; but over the years, there have been 13 pubs. (Definitions open to argument!)*

Quorn Walk Map 6

