

“ANOTHER WORLD ON YOUR DOORSTEP”

A guided walk by Helsby Footpaths Society on Sunday 18th September 2005. This is one of the “Step into Cheshire” programme of walks promoted by Cheshire County Council.

Meet at 10.30am at the Railway Inn car park off Lower Rake Lane. The walk is about 3 miles and will take about an hour and a half. Stout shoes, suitable clothing in case of rain, bring binoculars if you have them. Children welcome, dogs + leads OK but they may need help over a few stiles.

Many residents and visitors go to the top of Helsby Hill for the outstanding views but few give more than a glance at the area below between Helsby and the banks of the Mersey. Here there are fields, waterways and pathways that appear to have little of interest but read on

Start down Rake Lane (F/p 23), over the railway bridge (built about 1850, good view of the station) past Magazine Cottages, (built about 1880, lovely brickwork, but why were they so called?) over the M56 bridge and past Spring Farm (why was the original house demolished and where is the spring now?). Turn right for a short distance and then left on F/p 5 (still called Rake Lane) towards Lordship Lane. Cross over the Parish boundary (there is a flap valve at that point - have you ever seen one?) into Frodsham (F/p 107). At Lordship Lane (F/p 106) a short diversion takes us to the Hornsmill Brook (also called the Hoolpool Gutter) that forms the boundary with Ellesmere Port. (It drains into the Mersey but how does it get past the Ship Canal?) We are at back of the nitric acid plant of the Kemira fertiliser factory but despite nearness and noise of this heavy industry, wildlife such as water rats, kingfishers, moorhens can sometimes be seen here.

Turning round and heading towards Frodsham the pathway is lined with drainage waterways with a wide diversity of plants and birdlife. The noise from the M56 is gone and it is so quiet you can hear the reeds rustling in the wind. Half a mile along the path and up a short slope there is a good view of the ship canal lagoons, both the old and the new (why are the lagoons needed?). A favourite spot for birdwatchers, you might see egrets and many other water birds.

From here we make our way back towards Helsby; Frodsham F/p 94 becomes Helsby F/p 4 follow the yellow and black marker posts put up by the Helsby Footpaths Society. Some bridges to cross, and we reach the footbridge over the M56 famously described in the local paper as the “bridge that goes nowhere” when the M56 was first built. Once over the bridge, up Smithy Lane to the main A56 road and back to the Railway Inn.

Numbers are limited so if you are interested and/or would like to book please ring Mike Culverhouse on 01928 722443 or Eamonn Ritchie on 01928 724460.

MJBC