

Winston

Winston, our own parish, an area of some 610 hectares or (1465 acres) has much for us to be thankful. Predominantly rural this undulating fertile slice of mother earth ticks all the boxes for those of us living here. One of the lowest rainfall areas in Britain, East Anglia generally has above average sunshine, and Winston benefits from both. We have our fair complement of unspoiled footpaths and bridle-ways, a river once a hive of activity now sluggishly descending seawards towards greater things, and a patchwork of surrounding fields some 80% arable, 15% meadow and 5% woodland where one can find an array of wildlife and where unusual species still flourish.

We have no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the parish, the highest designation for wildlife, but do have two important County Wildlife sites at Winston Green and Firs Farm. Sadly however, Suffolk as a whole has lost over 90% of its ancient meadows since 1900 and only within the last twenty years has the woodland cover been increased in the SE corner of the parish by the planting of numerous small woodlands. (The UK has the lowest percentage of woodland cover of any country in Europe).

But the physical appearance of our parish might have looked very different had the Mid Suffolk Railway continued its southward route from Debenham & Kenton prior to 1909 for the area would now have been a patchwork of cuttings and embankments. The line would have crossed the Winston Green road (B1115) on the Winston boundary and continued southwards passing some 400 yards west of Winston Hall towards a proposed station at Framsdon. Besides this line there was to be a branch cutting SW to Stonham Aspal.

Even the marker fence posts were in place before the full implication of 'engineering problems' in this 'hilly' countryside, and a lack of money halted the idea! No doubt Mr Beeching would then have closed the lines to leave us with a parish so physically different from today!!

Clinton Summers

NB One can still see one of the 'uncapped' railway bridge parapets on the road to Aspull.

