

Sevenoaks Ramblers

Oare Creek and Marshes - 10.9 miles

Sunday, 29th March

With an early start thanks to the clocks going forward and an hour's (car-shared) drive, plus admonitions to dress warmly against the prevailing north-easterly, it was impressive that 10 determined ramblers showed up. In fact, the wind had flipped round but it felt as cold and brisk as the normal breeze coming off the Swale. The tide was in so the creek looked pretty but without the mudflats there were fewer waterfowl than usual. However, little egrets, juvenile lapwings, oyster catchers, sandpipers and dippers were in evidence, identified with the help of binoculars and Stephen's bird book.

The morning concluded with a walk through the old Gunpowder Works, of great interest to our resident hydrologist, military WWI and II historian and the more tech-y among us. It was the anniversary of an explosion on 2 April 1916 that killed 109 men and boys working there (a Sunday, when women were forbidden to work), as well as firemen who came to the rescue. The explosion was strong enough to shatter windows in Southend, across the Thames Estuary.

Then there were eight, as two returned by prior arrangement at the figure-of-eight junction of the walk. After lunch on the wind-blasted recreation ground overlooking the village of Oare, the rest of us resumed the King Charles III National Coastal Path/Saxon Shore Way on the other side of the creek, stopping off for a drink at the heaving Shipwright's Arms. We crossed Ham Marshes for a glimpse of Faversham Creek and skirted the new 'Faversham Lakes Housing Development', which has swallowed up the footpaths, so we returned by road.

Thanks to Ray and Penny, who led a walk in this area previously unknown to the leader and so different from our West Kent landscape, Kate and Phil for the photos and all for coming.





