

Oakley Ramblers Club



Affiliated to HF Holidays Limited

Friday 19th October saw sixteen of us meet at the Red Lion, Overton for our annual skittles evening. On what was an impressive alley, with good food and drink, a very competitive and enjoyable evening was had by all.

After finding that my planned walk for 21st.October was impassable due to some of the route being ploughed up I decided to take what was one of our largest turnouts for some time, twenty one ramblers, to Blackwood Forest. I was unaware of this site until a week or so before the walk. It is located just off Larkwhistle Farm Road, Micheldever



and is Forest Holidays Park, part owned by The Forestry Commission and on Forest



Commission land. There are a number of circular walks in the Forest along well maintained paths away from the sixty log cabins located in amongst the tall beech trees. We were able to park at the Forest Retreat Café and our walk of about 5.5.miles started and finished at the Café. We had been warned that it could get busy at lunch time and that proved to be the case so most had a quick drink before heading back home.

Having had a couple of wonderful days to recce their inaugural walk, the forecast for Friday 26th October promised Annie & Rob and their merry band 'stair-rods'! Annie writes "Somewhat apprehensively therefore, and after deliberations re the need or not for waterproofs, the group of nine set off into the wilds of Burghclere from the newly refurbished and very pleasant Carpenters Arms (who were open for breakfast had we been so inclined).

Our stroll took us through the varied scenery of field, wood and water (oh, and there would be a waterfall, or so it was said – judge for yourself!). Two stragglers even discovered a disused and very overgrown railway en route, missed by the rest of the party. A 'heron', or similar, spotted at the side of a large pond in the grounds of a splendid manor house caused some debate ... 'Is it real?' 'Yes', 'No', and 'Yes, its head moved' - worrying for someone's eyesight, as a closer inspection established it to be very UNreal!



And it should be noted that the impressive iron gates of the manor were not quite the threat they appeared, as an alternative was provided alongside, thus belying the



photo...!

2½ hours after that apprehensive start found the group happily partaking of their pre-ordered lunches back at the warm and welcoming pub, after which visits were made by some to the Sandham Memorial Chapel; this now offers a far greater visitor experience since receiving lottery money 4 years ago.

AND, contrary as our weather reports can be, the sun had shone beautifully from a mostly blue sky over glorious views, highlighting some splendid autumn colours.

Altogether, a pleasant way to spend a Friday.”