

Oakley Ramblers Club



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Our walk on 12th June around the Mottisfont Abbey Estate was carefully timed to coincide with the peak of the rose season so that we could include a visit to the



famous walled rose garden after our walk. Christine writes “Unfortunately, the weather in the preceding two weeks had been unusually wet and windy so we were rather apprehensive that the roses would not be at their best. Luckily, our concern proved unfounded as there were many colourful and beautifully scented roses to enjoy and the weather remained sunny and dry for the entire day.

Mottisfont Abbey Roses

Six of us began at the National Trust Spearywell car park, a short drive from the Abbey. The path took us through a variety of landscapes starting with ancient woodland until it emerged at a bridge over the pretty River Dun. From here we continued through the wet meadows of Dunbridge Springs where three freshwater springs feed into the river and the area is carefully managed by the National Trust to protect the habitats of the local wildlife. In the next field we negotiated a herd of cows which were sprawled across the path and refused to move! Having crossed the railway the path took us uphill to a stand of trees which we had earmarked as a good place to stop for our picnic lunch as there were some conveniently placed tree trunks in a shady spot. However, to our dismay yet another large herd of cows had got there first and were taking advantage of the shade, so we had to settle for a less comfortable spot lower down the field!



A shady spot for lunch

Reinvigorated by our lunch we continued our walk through a sheep meadow until we reached the lane running adjacent to Mottisfont Abbey. We passed the high brick wall that borders the rose garden and passed through the grounds of the Abbey catching glimpses of the house as we passed. The path then took us through more ancient woodlands until we eventually arrived back at the car park where we had started.

Our exertions were well rewarded by our visit to the rose gardens and the obligatory tea and cake! We also tried the special rose flavoured ice cream on sale in the gardens which all agreed was a delicious treat after a really enjoyable day.”

Saturday 6th July saw us walk part of the Avon Valley Walk, in this case from Fordingbridge to Ringwood. This was the third section of the walk and was again ably led by Jonathan. He assured us the “there are no styles as far as I remember”

Originally it was planned to park in Ringwood, catch the bus to Fordingbridge and walk back but we decided to park in Fordingbridge, walk to Ringwood and bus back. On what was a beautiful day, if not a little warmer than we would have wished for, eight of us travelled through the New Forest to our starting point enjoying the views, ponies and the donkeys on the way. We were a bit late arriving due to the donkeys holding up the traffic at Godshill.

Our walking route took us through the centre of Fordingbridge past St Mary's churchyard and then headed south along the west bank of the River Avon before looping away past the small hamlets of Harbridge Green and Turmer. The path turned east crossing the water meadows, which are a conservation area where no fertilizers or pesticides are used. We continued onwards to the handsome bridge at Ibsley where our path crossed the main road before passing Ibsley Manor Farm and returning to the Forest at the village hall.



Avon River

After climbing up through paddocks to Summerlug Hill we descended to the road leading to Ibsley Village Hall where we stopped for our picnic lunch. At Rockford, after stopping at The Alice Lisle pub, the path back took us back onto the bridleway. This lead us between the lakes towards Ringwood, following a stream for some of its length then alongside Kingfisher Lake before arriving at the edge of Ringwood and our bus stop.



Anyone for a Swim?

The X3 bus arrived about ten minutes later, so after walking some ten miles and climbing over about a dozen styles (see above!), we arrived back in Fordingbridge about 20 minutes later! A lovely walk on a rather warm but lovely day.