



## East of England Region

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### Walks in the East of England During September 2022 In Celebration of our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Supporting u3as in Bedfordshire,  
Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire,  
Norfolk and Suffolk



**With huge thanks to the following u3as  
for their contributions to this  
excellent publication**

**Well done everyone and keep walking!**

**Collated by Hilary Holt, EofE Regional Team**

Aylsham & District	New Eastwood
Basildon & Billericay	Newmarket
Bedford	North Norfolk
Benfleet	North Walsham
Chelmsford	Norwich
Chiswell Green	Peterborough
Diss	Radlett & District
Dunstable	Ramsey & District
East Suffolk	Sarratt & District
Halesworth & District	South West Herts
Harlow	St Albans
Harpenden	Stanford-le-Hope & District
Hawkwell Village	Stevenage
Hertford & District & Ware	Sudbury
Hitchin	Thetford
Hockley & Hawkwell	Ver Colne Valley
Hutton	Welwyn Hatfield
Maldon & District	Wisbech

# Aylsham & District u3a

September Short Walk  
Reported by Andrew McKenzie

A small group of eight walkers met at Reepham Station NR10 4LJ for our September short walk. Distance 3.6 miles.



Leaving Reepham Station on a lovely sunny day we headed in the direction of Aylsham on Marriot's Way, then leaving the old railway line we took the footpath on the left towards the village of Salle, crossing over the B1145 and continuing into a field on our left, we then walked the path on the left hand side of the hedge in front of us. To the right of us we could see Salle Church standing proud on the edge of some trees and on the left we could just make out the gothic style church at the nearby village of Booton.

At the end of the hedge we turned left and then right through a small wood and field we crossed Wood Dalling Road and walked along the tree lined drive of Salle Moor Hall, at the end of the drive we turned left by a pond and across the farmyard of Salle Moor Farm, through a metal gate passing a field on the right full of wigwams! Over a wooden stile and along the path across a stubble field. At the group of trees we took the left path around the edge of the wood until the path turned into a wider vehicle track we then went left through a metal folding stile into a meadow with oak trees and blackberries on the right and several metal drinking troughs for livestock use. Then through another folding metal stile and over the Kerdiston Road and taking the steps to rejoin the Marriot's Way, left at the top, passing some allotments and walking the short distance back to our starting point where some of us enjoyed some lovely refreshments at the Reepham Station Cafe.



Longer Walks Group  
Reported by Chris England, Group Convenor



Our September walk was in the Kelling Heath area and what a great walk it was. Who said Norfolk was flat. The walk of just over 7 miles, covered heathland, the North Norfolk railway, the coast path and lots more.

Thirteen members of the Longer Walks Group set off from Kelling Heath, heading up towards the North Norfolk railway, known as the Poppy Line.

We followed the railway for a while and then turned towards the sea and Weybourne beach. We passed through Kelling Heath with its beautiful gorse and heather in bloom, by the tank of the Muckleburgh collection and up Muckleburgh Hill. The hard walking was to come, as we reached Weybourne beach and its shingle. That was a challenge, but the view was worth it.



We passed a small airfield and gun emplacement. Do we really need this to protect a conservation area? Or is this Norfolk's protection against invasion?

On reaching Water Hill we turned inland towards Weybourne Mill and the village. Passing through the village we continued up to the railway and Weybourne station where we stopped for a cuppa. Our timing was perfect as we saw a steam train arriving and departing. A reminder of the past. Following the railway, we passed Kelling Halt and on reaching a crossing we headed down through the Heath and back to our start. We completed the walk with a well-deserved lunch.



# Basildon & Billericay u3a

Reported by Brian Parker



Due to several people on holiday, we only had 10 members on the walk. The distance was 5.2 miles and was a circular walk and the weather was good. Predominantly walking across fields, we were using a recognised footpaths but did have to cross a few roads. The total distance was 5.2 miles. We all travelled by cars to the start of the walk as was about 15 miles from Billericay.



Our September 7<sup>th</sup> walk started at Little Waltham and was a circular walk to Great Waltham where we spent some time at a large country house called Langleys. Samuel Tuffnell bought the estate in 1711. He paid £5498 and it is now valued around £11 million. It has been described as the Blenheim Palace of Essex and the county's only great house. The estate is still owned by the descendants of Samuel Tuffnell.

Access to the house is not allowed and thus I was unable to get a decent photo of it, but you can see its 4 gate Houses, one of which is being renovated. Unusually, you can see the pet cemetery from the public footpath.



# Bedford u3a

Short Walks Group  
Reported by Alan Wooding, Group Leader

While Bedfordshire is generally regarded as a flat county, it means our Bedford U3A Short Walks Group is seldom troubled by hills. We meet every Thursday throughout the year at 10.30am and walk for approximately an hour, covering between 2.5 and 3.5 miles before ending up in a local pub, garden centre or golf club for refreshments and a general chat. Having retired a decade ago, I have been the Short Walks leader for eight years and have organised every weekly walk since then. We walk from approximately 40 different venues around Bedfordshire and need to make sure there's enough parking for at least 20 cars. Obviously the Covid pandemic halted our activities for a few months, but once the government's 'Rule of Six' came into being, we restarted our walks programme whilst adhering to the required gapping. We currently have 46 members but fortunately they don't all turn up together. However back in February we did have 41 arrive in 32 cars for our annual 3.4 mile 'Snowdrop' Walk which starts and finishes in the grounds of Moggerhanger Park... the average is now between 18-30 per week!

## 1 September – Brewer's Fayre Car Park, Kempston (Sat Nav: MK42 7FY)



*The Bedford U3A Short Walkers entered the Marston Vale Community Forest on their Brewer's Fayre walk from Kempston.*

There were 23 walkers on our 3.35 mile walk from the Brewer's Fayre in Kempston which takes in part of the Marston Vale Community Forest. In warm breezy conditions, we started from the pub's spacious car park before passing beneath Bedford's Western Bypass on a public footpath. Passing the industrial area, we followed the path to the south where we circumnavigate a large lake adjacent to the busy A412 road. From there we enter a forest pathway towards the village of Wootton. Back in the country park, an easy uphill path leads towards Kempston. On reaching the road, we use a different bypass tunnel after which we pass a Lidl supermarket on the left. Then crossing the road at pedestrian lights, we join a wide pathway which, after approximately three quarters of a mile, leads directly back to the pub where we stop for refreshments, the circular walk taking exactly 75 minutes.

## 8 September – Chicksands Woods / Rowney Warren (Sat Nav: SG17 5QB)



*It was back into the woods for our Chicksands / Rowney Warren walk.*

With just 18 walkers meeting in Sand Lane car park, today's 3.9 miles walk was spent entirely in pristine woodland and took exactly 85 minutes. Leaving the car park, we head south on a short 1.1 mile circular loop around Chicksands Woods which lies adjacent to the Former US Air Force military base. Crossing Sand Lane, we enter Rowney Warren for a 2.8 mile loop on undulating ground, passing by the large fenced-off private mountain bike area which was used by many athletes in preparation for the 2012 London Olympics. Afterwards we called for refreshments at The Greyhound pub in Haynes village.

## 9–12 September – Cotswolds Break



*Five Bedford U3A members enjoyed a long weekend in the Cotswolds and are pictured here taking a break in Lower Slaughter.*

In addition to our weekly walks, I also arranged for four fellow members to join me on a three-night Cotswolds break at HF Holidays' four-star Harrington House Hotel in Bourton-on-the-Water. The trip has been published in 18 local JPiMedia newspapers while it is also available to read on my own website at <https://always-on-the-go.co.uk/453197866>

**15 September – Cople Church, Cople** (Sat Nav: MK44 3TU)

Due to a friend's funeral, I missed this walk and handed responsibility to 85-year-old George Ruscoe, the only one who could actually remember what is a slightly complicated figure eight route. With 19 walkers turning up, fortunately some did remember the route and reached Water End Road. A marked footpath takes you on a circular loop before entering a new planting, an addition to the Marston Vale Community Forest before returning to the starting point via Cople Playing Fields. Unfortunately a couple of wrong turns meant the walk took 90 minutes but The Five Bells pub provided plenty of welcome refreshments.

**22 September – Pavenham Park Golf Club** (Sat Nav:MK43 7PE)

This is probably our shortest walk with just 20 of us circumnavigating the pristine 18-hole golf course before entering Pavenham village playing fields at the southern end. Passing tennis courts and the cricket pitch, we arrived at the road where a left turn after 100 yards took us back to a long driveway which leads back to the golf course car park. Refreshments were taken in the clubhouse while the 2.3 mile walk took just 50 minutes.

**29 September – Royal Oak, Roxton** (Sat Nav: MK44 3EA)

Our final walk of the month started outside the Royal Oak pub in Roxton village. I decided to reverse what is a familiar riverside walk, first passing through the churchyard and following a track down the River Great Ouse. We stopped for a photograph on the bridge which leads to the village of Tempsford before continuing towards Great Barford on the river's north bank. Eventually turning right, we returned to Roxton on a different path. In total there were 23 walkers who covered the 2.65 miles in 65 minutes. Afterwards we enjoyed refreshments at the Royal Oak cafe.



Longer Walks Group  
Group Leaders Bobby Noble & Jane Upstone  
Reported by Bobby Noble

We aim to do 4~5 miles every Monday morning come rain or shine.

This walk is starting in Eaton Socon PE19 8GW, lead by Alan Wooding with 14 walkers. This walk is 4.9 miles and takes you on a circular walk around St,Neots and back to Eaton Socon crossing the River Great Ouse. Back for coffee at The Mill.



**12th September 2022**

This walk was lead by Bobby Noble and had 16 walkers.

A circular walk from Mowesbury Park car park to Clapham Golf Course, this walk is 5 miles, a very scenic walk and beautiful countryside.



stopping at the cabin on hole 11 for bacon/sausage rolls and coffee.

**26th September 2022**

This is from The Polehill Arms, Renhold, MK41 0JP. This walk is led by Jane Upstone with 18 walkers and is across Bedfordshire countryside.



We stopped for lunch at The Polehill Arms which opened just for us.



# Benfleet u3a

Reported by Doreen Wiggans



The u3a "5 miles and over walking group" from Benfleet, Essex had their monthly walk on Thursday 22 September. We drove in shared cars to the Rose and Crown pub in Great Waltham, about 5 miles from Chelmsford where we parked and pre-ordered our meals for the end of the walk.

There were 16 members present which is a drop from the usual number of around 25, due mainly to holidays and COVID. We completed a nearly 7 mile walk through quiet country lanes and open countryside sometimes alongside a brook.. The weather was fine, a pleasant 20 degrees and sunny. We passed through the small village of Pleshey with a few thatched cottages and an 11th century motte and bailey castle. You can visit the remains of the castle by pre-arrangement which we didn't have.



The walk took about two and a half hours and finished with a superb lunch served by very friendly staff.

## Chelmsford u3a

All-day Walk Group  
Reported by Philip Heady

Walk Convenor, Berry Cornell; Walk Leaders, Clare Lyne and Philip Heady; Words, Philip Heady; Pictures, Alan Mayo

### Manningtree and Mistley

The Long Walk Group walk rather fewer miles than in times past but make a day of it by travelling just that little bit further in search of adventure. And the River Stour, forming the Essex boundary with Suffolk and inspiration to so many, gives the backdrop to this walk of around 8km.



The starting point is at the western end of The Walls, the riverside road between the two towns, the point's postcode CO11 1AS being that of the gallery at North House on the eastern edge of Manningtree (on street parking or use the car park off The Kilns). A well-timed start may give an opportunity for a beverage from a roadside kiosk to set one up. The walk goes eastwards along the river, passing the Hopping Bridge (on the south side of the road) and, treating the wildfowl with caution, reaching the striking Mistley Towers, an English Heritage site, two towers which flanked a now demolished church. The bridge and the towers are the subject of helpful information boards.



The walk now goes right into New Road, past a 1911 Arts and Craft Institute building and the Church of St Mary and St Michael on the right. After 300 metres it turns sharp left immediately before the Cricket Ground and uses a path with the church now on the left. The path discharges onto Mistley Green, fringed on one side by a dozen late 18<sup>th</sup> Century cottages, and goes diagonally across the green into a road, The Green, which junctions with High Street. An information board tells readers about on Matthew

Hopkins, the 'Witchfinder General' who may well have given his name to the earlier bridge.

Now in front of the walker on the opposite side of the road is a circular concrete pond with a concrete swan in the middle; one of the decorations seemingly commissioned by one Richard Rigby who around 1780 attempted to establish a spa at Mistley. He failed. Spending a few moments looking at the buildings in the area gives some idea of the prosperity that accrued to the community, a Stour port of which there remains some riverside evidence and some commercial activity even today.

Proceeding in an easterly direction again, after just few metres the route takes a right through the huge, active Mill works. Unusually the footpath, alongside a late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Listed redbrick mill building, is clearly marked on the ground and walkers ought to take care not to deviate from this short route which, at the works' end goes through some trees and growth before surmounting steps and going through a tunnel over which the local branch railway wends its way to Harwich.

Into the open at last the route continues in a well-defined straight line at right angles to the railway line until it reaches the tree line. This turns out to be a pathway at which walkers turn left and walk for a further 600 metres, some steeply uphill, before reaching, extraordinarily, Secret Bunker Road. Here a new development all but surrounds the 'secret bunker, a one-time underground Cold War facility which has one floor at ground level and more below; this following Ministry of Defence and County Council ownership, has been developed as luxury apartments. The route continues onto the Playing Field (there is a single public toilet accessed from the outside of the main pavilion).

The route is now diagonal across the playing field and into the wood, bearing slightly to the left after about 20 metres to go up a slight rise to Old Knobbley a famous 800-year-old oak tree which is the subject of a children's book. It's own website tells more including the tree's girth; information leaders ought to keep that to themselves but ask walkers to guess.

This is a good place to break for a picnic as there are fallen boughs etc plus some brick and concrete building foundations available for sitting.



With water on your left and wood on your right, keep on this path until it ends with a 'private sign' and a field where walkers turn right onto a public footpath and use the gentle uphill slope for 200 metres where they should turn right through a gate and take a path through some woodland which quickly opens up with a fine view of fields and Diary House the other side of a small cleft in the land. The path comes to a gate on the left but the route now goes sharp right down the cleft then up again, and, after 550 metres, the edge of the House's well-manicured grounds. Continue with the farm to the right and once passed it and the access road turn left into a wood where the path leads to a straight road where the route turns left. Almost immediately a narrow public footpath to the right is taken which leads walkers into the back streets of Manningtree.

The footpath becomes The Park. At it's end cross the road and on the other side take the left hand of the two roads opposite, Barnfield, and follow to the end and the footpath which brings you out in Trinity Road. There turn right and after the railway bridge the road begins the gentle drop into the town taking in the vistas over the valley. In Trinity Road note the Edward VII post box just before turning right into South Street which continues the drop into the town. This road includes several listed buildings demonstrating the prosperity achieved by this town too in days gone by.

Finally, the road comes to the town's main thoroughfare and a junction featuring no less than three places for refreshment (a point from which Manningtree mainline station is 1.25km to the west) with more in the town. Turning right into that High Street will lead you back to the cars at The Walls, a distance of 250 metres.

# Chiswell Green u3a

Reported by Joyce Stephens, Walk Leader



Chiswell Group U3a walking group is based in St Albans, Hertfordshire and we decided to have a short walk today 30<sup>th</sup> September around the historic city of St Albans. There were 15 people who enjoyed the walk today.

We walked around the Lake at Verulamium, Ye Olde Fighting Cocks, reputed to be the oldest pub in England, The Abbey and Cathedral Church and The Clocktower.

As some members cannot manage some of the longer walks, we alternate between shorter and longer ones each month.



## Diss u3a

### Diss U3A Walking Group – Wortham Walk Reported by Paul Somers

Our latest walk, undertaken by twelve members on 24<sup>th</sup> August, took us to Wortham in the north of Suffolk. From the renowned Wortham Tea Shop, we followed the northern edge of the village common before branching off to follow paths across recently harvested cereal fields. These led us eventually to Wortham Church (St Mary's) about a mile north of the village. The church is one of the many flint round tower churches in Suffolk and is reputed to be the largest such tower in England at almost thirty feet in diameter and sixty two feet high. Unfortunately, the roof collapsed in the 1780s, leaving the tower open to the sky.



From the church, we followed the lane back to the village and the tea shop for lunch. Distance covered 3.7 miles at our usual pace of about 2mph.

## Dunstable u3a

Tuesday 5 Milers  
Reported by Dave Hunt

This month we went on a very beautiful walk in the (mainly) Buckinghamshire countryside south of Tring (Hertfordshire). The walk started and finished on Cholesbury and Hawridge commons.

Since this walk was a little further than 'home' in Dunstable, we arranged to meet up in Dunstable to allow car sharing, helpful in these days of very high fuel prices and meet again at the car park in front of the cricket club in Cholesbury, one of the pleasantest villages in Southern England.

The walk encompassed Hawridge Common, Cholesbury Common, Cholesbury Fort (an iron age fort—the best preserved in Hertfordshire and probably Southern England) with its Church inside - delightful stained glass, good open countryside, delightful woods (some of the best Sally and I have walked through), blackberries and crab apples for the picking, unusual features such as a large drawbridge over a stream and a windmill.



At the end of the walk, some of us enjoyed refreshments at the 'Full Moon' Inn, a very friendly medieval establishment.



Thursday 2-mile Walking Group – September Walks  
Reported by Bernie Naughton

This group meet usually twice monthly on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. This month we only had one walk on the second Thursday as many of the group would be on holiday for the fourth Thursday. The walks are all around the 2-mile mark which allows us all to have a pleasant amble.



This walk was a new route, pioneered by Sally and Dave in a recce, around Ashridge woods taking us along paths, initially at the side of the woods, along a ridge with splendid views over the countryside below and then a return through the heart of Ashridge where we could admire the very different types of trees in the different groves we travelled through. The groves were of old woodland, more recent conifer plantations and specimen broad-leaved plantings. At its conclusion most of our walkers had a well-earned beverage at the National Trust Cafe, although some unfortunately sat on seats which appeared to have been dried by sun, but contained hidden moisture!

Thursday No 1 Walking Group  
Reported by Peter Tasker, Joint Group Leader

**Walk on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022** Members on walk 13 from a group of 24

Walk started in the Village of Wilstone near Tring Hertfordshire outside the Half Moon Pub which we had booked lunch at on our return The walk details are on the sheet below.

The distance was reduced to 4.6miles as some of the footpaths at the rear end of the walk had been closed off by local Farmers so a detour had been arranged by Ted the walker Leader. While on the walk starting from the Pub we met walkers from Stewkley U3A Group from Buckinghamshire who were doing mainly a shortened version of our walk. See attached photos of different sections of the walk. The weather was dry but a little over cast but no rain came on the drive home back to Dunstable.



# Welcome ... to the Black Poplar trail

Enjoy the sights    experience the sounds    smell the seasonal scents    a breath of fresh air!

The Black Poplar Trail is a 5 1/2 mile (9 km) walk on flat terrain between the villages of Wilstone and Long Marston. It follows public footpaths, quiet lanes and ditches to discover the best examples of Black Poplar trees, and provides delightful views of the Chilterns escarpment. The walk takes you through two attractive villages and across the distinctive flood plain landscape of the vale of Aylesbury. Some of the paths can be muddy in wet weather.

The walk starts and finishes at Wilstone village hall where there are car parking spaces, but it is possible to reach Wilstone by bus or bicycle from King and Leighton. Alternatively, you can start the walk in Long Marston. Please ring travel on 01753 600700 for details about public transport.

- Please be considerate to the countryside - keep to footpaths, especially through crops, and leave farm gates as you find them.
- Please keep dogs under control, on a leash in fields with livestock, and clean up after them.
- Please take your litter home and leave the wild flowers where they grow best.

## Why are Black Poplars rare?

The native Black Poplar is one of Britain's most endangered trees, and the Vale of Aylesbury is the last. (Other locations: Generally there are reckoned to be about 5,000 trees here, of which around 1,200 are in the Long Marston, Wilstone and Puttenham area.) Black Poplars prefer to grow with their roots in damp ground, so you find them mostly along streams, ditches and by ponds. Although this habitat is common in the locality, some ditches and ponds may be filling in because of lack of maintenance.

Individual trees are deciduous, that is, they are either male or female. Most of the Black Poplar trees were probably planted in the sixteenth century. Because the female trees produce masses of fluffy seed which can be incontinent, female cuttings were rarely used. Even if the male and female trees grow close to each other, the seed has to land on a piece of soil that stays wet for some days before a new tree germinates. Sometimes the tree will regenerate through branches falling into wet ground, but this means that reproduction produces a clone which attracts genetic variation. Often female trees are 'killed-off' quickly. The population of surviving trees is ageing and a few succumb to the wind and fall over every year.

For all reasons, the population of Black Poplar has declined.

## What have Black Poplars ever done for us?

Male and pollarded Black Poplars are an important element in the special landscape of the area, especially since the loss of lime trees. They follow the ditches and streams as they find their way through the clay vale. Black Poplars were a resource for the local economy. They grew fast. Their use as hedging stakes may account for the appearance of mature Black Poplar trees at regular intervals in hedgerows. The wood is soft and fire resistant, so it is said to have been utilised locally to make matches, beam poles, fruit baskets, wattle and the cattle fodder. People remember the wood being used in sheep hurdles to confine the sheep at night when they were brought down from the Dillon downsland, and some Black Poplar wood found its way into First World War rifle butts.



Poplar seed pods

Black Poplars are closely related to Willows and the bark, bark and leaves are rich in aspirin related salicylic acid, so they have been used in remedies for pain relief, heart, toxic, coughs, inflammation and inflammation.

Black Poplars are valuable as a wildlife habitat, especially for insects, such as the Black Poplar Hawk moth and Parus moth; holes in the trees provide nesting sites for owls and roosting sites for bats.

Perhaps because of its grooved bark, or the story that grey stinked black oak winter-very turned into Black Poplars in Roman mythology, the tree was once considered sacred. Because of their rapid growth rate, the trees may have been regarded as a fertility symbol and were once dressed as part of wedding ceremonies. An annual Black Poplar Day (showing an early link) occurs in Aylesbury Open Day in Stoughton.



Black Poplar tree

## Safeguarding a rare species

In the Long Marston and Wilstone area, a lot of work has been undertaken to safeguard the population for the future including surveying and mapping existing trees over 21 square kilometres. The survey work was undertaken as a community response to Local Agenda 21; it requires annual updating to monitor the effects of climate change and other events on the status of the trees. Many individual trees have been managed by careful pollarding and leaving cutting back heavy branches to prevent the tree from splitting. Some cuttings or 'branchwood' taken from trees in the vicinity, have been planted along ditches and in hedgerows.

Nowadays, the fallen timber is used to make charcoal for barbecues (a good example of sustainable use which means demand on forests abroad, and creates a small local industry).



## Walk on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September Woburn Abbey Estate

Number of walkers was 13 but 2 ladies decided to peel off after 3 miles as it was a 6.5 mile walk.

The walk started by the entry gates to the Estate on the road from the Village just past the Church. We walked along well maintained trails passing the old horse stables. We saw many of the deer that roam the Abbey grounds along with other wild life around the many lakes that are in the Abbey grounds the walk was mainly flat with very few inclines on good surface trails we finished the walk passing what is known as the Parish House a very up market restaurant in the grounds.



The History of Woburn Abbey goes back many years as follows:

Set in 3000 acres of beautiful countryside in Bedfordshire the deer park has 10 species of these animals roaming freely and are used to humans being in close proximity The Abbey has been the home of the Duke of Bedford for nearly 400 years with the current 15<sup>th</sup> Duke still living there today with his family The first Abbey was built in 1145 as a Cistercians monastery but was taken over by Henry VIII and was given to the John Russell family

which is the surname of the Duke in 1547 but was rebuilt by the architect Henry Flitcroft and Henry Holland using local stone called Totternhoe Clunch mined at the nearby Village of Totternhoe near Dunstable Downs The Abbey is currently closed for refurbishment until spring of 2024 it has a well- established Safari Park nearby.



## East Suffolk u3a

Reported by Jenny Wiggins, Walk Coordinator  
Tuesday Walkers 5 - 7 miles on alternate Tuesdays



Last week 22 members met on a beautiful warm morning at Snape Maltings for a 5.5 mile along the boardwalk beside the river Alde, with beautiful views across to Iken church. Our walk then followed footpaths through to Tunstall Forest to meet part of the Shandling's Walk towards Blaxhall Common before returning to Snape Maltings where we enjoyed a pleasant light lunch together.

The group have been walking together for many years, and we are always keen to welcome new members. Walks take place over the whole of East Suffolk therefore giving much variety. Each walk is lead by members of the group who have selected the route, done a simple risk assessment and found parking.

Walking is not only an opportunity to keep fit, It gives us the opportunity visit places of interest and churches on route, Friendships are made or rekindled, A chance to share mutual problems and celebrations, Watch nature - Not to mention the opportunity to forage from the hedgerows and share recipes. - In essence we take note of the U3A



## Halesworth & District u3a

Bird Watching group  
Reported by Chris Gardam

### Sizewell beach and woodland

Length 2-3 miles

17 participants

A circular walk from Sizewell beach car park IP16 4UH along the beach, through woodland and returning past Sizewell Hall to car park with a variety of sea birds, woodland birds and insects recorded. So a mixture of beach, woodland paths, bridleways and road.

Below is a photo of the group taken by Martin Stevens at Sizewell beach



Walking Group  
Walberswick Walk  
Reported by Martin Stevens

Some 15 of us met last Thursday morning 8th September, when Steve and John from our group led 15 of us on a walk starting at The Harbour Inn in Southwold. We then crossed the river using the footbridge undertaking an almost 5 mile circular walk around Walberswick. A very varied walk covering views over marshland, heath, fields, reed beds, estuary, and the sea. The weather was warm and sunny with a gentle breeze and some broken clouds. Many stayed on for a welcome lunch at the Harbour Inn (no need to book).

There is free parking near the start --- and usually space if you get there by mid morning.

Map and pics just follow link <https://photos.app.goo.gl/Yn4SApeEV5NKTc5y6>.

# Harlow u3a

Reported by Colin Moody

## Great Easton/Duton Hill/Broxted/Tilty (Explorer 195) (Walked 7 September 2022)

The drive from Harlow to Great Easton takes about 40 minutes. Take the B184 north from Great Dunmow, turn left to Great Easton, (Rolls Royce dealership at the turn off the B184). Park at the Village Hall, either in front or at the rear.



The walk starts behind the Village Hall **(10.15)** (*gate*) and goes uphill. Turn left at the footpath just before the school **(10.20)**. Cross a footbridge **(10.33)** and keep to the right edge of the field. At the road **(10.35)**, turn left to Duton Hill. At the bottom of the hill, turn right **(10.43)** on the road and take the small road left to Tilty Hill Farm. **(10.53)** Turn right along Delfits Lane (*Break on grass after 200 metres 10.55-11.10, no benches*).

Continue to Suckstead Green **(11.37)** Cross straight over the road and follow the minor road and take the path left at the bottom of the hill **(11.48)**. Go right through the hedge, across the field and left at the edge, right over a footbridge **(11.59)**, then right, then left onto the footpath at the edge of the field at the rear of Chaureth Hall Farm. Cross a stile **(12.08)** and straight over a field into the trees to a footbridge and stile **(12.13)**. Bear right to a narrow path, left over a stile **(12.24)** and across a field to Chickney Church (*12.35-13.15 Lunch break and view the church – no benches*).

Turn right on to the track. At the B1051**(13.25)**, turn left. At Chickney Hall Villas **(13.29)** take the footpath left, following the stream and **(13.48)** the footpath bears right, uphill to road **(13.54)**, turn left to Broxted Church **(13.56)** (*13.56-14.11 to view church*). Take footpath behind church, turn right at the road **(14.17)** and left at the next junction **(14.21)** and left at the footpath at the last house, Chestnuts **(14.23)**. Turn left about 2/3rds of the way across the field at an electricity pole at a junction of paths **(14.28)**, then right and come onto the

road with The Maltings **(14.31)** on your right. Turn right (downhill), cross bridge and take the footpath to the left (*gate*) **(14.35)**. Follow this directly across a road (*stile*) **(14.43)**. When track turns left, continue ahead on grass **(14.49)**. Bear left at the field corner **(14.52)**, bear left over a footbridge and stile and turn right. **(14.56)** Go through a gate and ahead to a stile and follow the path left and right. Cross a bridge and take the footpath ahead and at the far edge of the field, turn right **(15.06)**. Turn left at the mill **(15.08)** (*gate*) and sharp left uphill to Tilty Church (*gate*) (15.12-15.27 to view church). Follow the road and cross directly onto a footpath **(15.30)** which bears left after a footbridge, stile and hedge **(15.35)** (*Cattle*). At the road (*gate*) turn right for 40 metres and then left over a stile. **(15.43)** Cross a footbridge and 3 stiles and bear right, aiming for another footbridge**(15.45)**. Cross two more stiles and turn left at road and back to the Village Hall **(15.56)**.

**8.2 miles.**

# Harpenden u3a

Report submitted by Tessa Abberley and Steve Gledhill who provided photos  
Group organiser Tessa Abberley

## **12 September From the Marquis of Granby pub, Harpenden**

From the pub we crossed a bridge over the River Lea and then after a short walk along a main road we were in countryside; we headed north. First landmark was Mackerye End House, a Grade 1 listed Manor House dating from 1665 (photo 1). Continuing north for a short distance then east then south we passed through varied farming country pausing for a break on a conveniently located bench in open country (photo 2). We then entered the attractive village of Wheathampstead and headed for the next break, the delightful 'Crinkle Crankle Community Garden', which has a rare example of Victorian crinkle-crankle (wavy) walls – the only publicly accessible ones in Hertfordshire. The footpath from Wheathampstead back to our starting point followed the River Lea valley with varied scenery. The level path gave many views across the valley on the other side.

## **Walk 1: 12 September From the Marquis of Granby pub, Harpenden**

Photos:

1. Mackerye End 12 September 2022.jpg
  2. Heron's Farm 12 September 2022.jpg
- Map: Marquis of Granby 12 September 2022





### **Walk 2: 25 September Ayot St Lawrence circular walk**

We started from the ruined church at Ayot St Lawrence (photo 1). A short walk took us to a long country footpath southwards through an attractive mix of agricultural and wooded areas. This footpath, at the Southern extremity of this straight and narrow track, led to the Ayot Greenway an abandoned railway line which originally ran from Welwyn Garden City to Dunstable. A picnic area adjacent to the path, Robinson's Wood, has a few picnic tables where we had a break (photo 2). Near Wheathampstead the route then headed back north towards the start point following varied footpaths through Lamer Wood and to the east of the hamlet of Gustard Wood. Again, the route was through a mix of agricultural and wooded areas. We arrived back at our start point at Ayot St Lawrence which is famous for having had a silk farm (now closed), George Bernard Shaw's house (Shaw's Corner) and a pub, The Bocket Arms, a timber-framed building, probably early sixteenth century.

### **Walk 2: 25 September Ayot St Lawrence circular walk**

Photos:

1. Ayot St Lawrence 25 Sept 2022.jpg
2. Ayot Greenaway 25 Sept 2022.jpg

Map: Ayot St Lawrence map 26 September 2022





# Hawkwell Village u3a

Reported by Trevor Johnson

We are the walking group from Hawkwell Village u3a. We meet weekly on a Monday and start our walks from alternate venues.

One week from Hockley library, this will then entail us walking through Hockley woods on the various marked paths . During the drier months we may take a route which crosses the railway line near Hockley station, through fields and woods, across a ridge affording wonderful views towards the River Crouch, to St Peter and St. Paul church where the worlds strongest man Alexander Zass is buried.

Our other starting point is Clements Hall leisure centre in Hawkwell, this gives us many other routes to explore. Magnolia Park and its surrounding byways and Gusted Hall woods are particular favourites. Potash wood is a must for us during Bluebell time with truly spectacular sights and smells. We aim to avoid road walking as far as possible and endeavour to enjoy the countryside as much as we can . These two starting points allow us to follow and enjoy paths and lanes to their fullest.



Naturally after all that exertion a welcome drink to end the morning at a local coffee shop or garden centre is the order of the day.

We are usually a group of between ten and as high as twenty-two. We are a free and easy group and members join us as and when they feel able. This provides all our walkers the opportunity to walk with company in areas where they may not feel comfortable attempting on their own. We are usually out for around an hour to an hour and a half and cover around three miles.



## Hertford & District u3a and Ware u3a

Reported by Maurice Newman

6th September starting from the Bull Cottered, Herts. 5.5 miles 10 walking.  
Towards Whitehall following the chain walk and then back a different way to Cottered.

20th September starting from Marsh Lane carpark in Stanstead Abbots, Herts. 6 miles, 11 walkers walked towards Roydon on towards Hunsdon, on towards Little Briggens and then back to Stanstead Abbots. On way saw a new plaque commemorating plane crash and death of pilots in WW2.



Photo of new memorial to crashed RAF plane near Hunsdon airfield. We had walked past this point many times over the years and interested to see this new memorial.

29th September starting from The Cricketers in Clavering, Essex. 14 walking. 6.5 miles in the morning. After superb lunch in the pub which is where Jamie Oliver was brought up by his parents who owned the pub, we walked on for 3.5 miles in the afternoon.



# Hitchin u3a

Hitchin Walking Group  
Marian Pullinger Walking Group Leader

The Hitchin u3a had a walk round Panshanger Park near Hertford on 7<sup>th</sup> September. It is a bit outside our usual territory, but it was a very pleasant change. The park has very old oak trees, one in the picture, dating back to Elizabethan times. There are also lots of different habitats, woodland, lakes and grassy footpaths to explore.

Lots of information about the park is on the link below.

<https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/panshanger-park>



## **Walking with new friends - The u3a HOOP experience Reported by Pauline Harding**

As a walker and very new member of Hitchin u3a I was very excited when I learned that as part of u3a's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary the Walking Group would be walking around the famed Hitchin HOOP (Hitchin Outer Orbital Path to the uninitiated, a total distance of 12 miles)) on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September. I signed up immediately for the 12 miles (a bit rash I thought but knew that if I couldn't cut it I could always stop at one of the earlier sections) as it seemed a perfect opportunity for me to start to become really involved and to meet new people and to find out more of what Hitchin u3a had to offer.

On a sunny but brisk Saturday morning, a number of intrepid walkers gathered in Hitchin Market Place where the walk began. The walk would allow us to explore the history of Hitchin and surrounding villages travelling through beautiful Hertfordshire Countryside. The atmosphere was jovial and expectant. Some walkers planned to walk all four sections (later dubbed the twelve milers) others would walk one or more sections, leaving or joining en route, thus catering for all walking abilities.

As a newcomer to Hitchin and knowing only my family, I had joined u3a a few months previously in the hope that it would enable me to enjoy new experiences and make new friends. Walking the HOOP delivered this in spades. On leaving Hitchin Market Square at a moderate pace (Section 1 Hitchin to Ickleford 4.3 miles) I was immediately engaged in conversation with other members, some new like myself and others longer term and as we shared our lives, stories and laughter the miles melted away as we crossed the

Oughtonhead Common Nature Reserve. We halted on occasions so that photographs could be taken to document the event and soon it was 11.30am and a welcome break for coffee at Ickleford, the first section completed.



We left Ickleford at 12noon going to Cambridge Road (Section 2 - 2.9 miles). Here my education regarding the unique opportunities offered by u3a continued as I walked with a different group of people and learned about the zoom dance group and face to face dance choreography group and chatted to someone I had only seen

on the zoom Play Reading Group.. Here were some of the new experiences I had been seeking and I was making new friends as we went along. Suddenly we were at the end of Section 2 at Hitchin Garden Centre and more than halfway round.

Lunch at the The Hitchin Garden Centre was a well earned rest and there was much friendly banter between members who obviously knew each other very well and we all joined in the fun and ribaldry. Then after lunch on the road again to Section 3 (1.9 miles) from Cambridge Road to Wymondley Road with a brief stop for refreshments at the playground by St Ippolyts brook.



The final section was from Wymondley Road to Hitchin Market Square (2.9 miles) via The Piggery where we could have chosen to feed the pigs. No-one did as by now the prospect of tea and cake at Halsey's tearoom and a sit down increasingly beckoned and we hastened on. We arrived back at Hitchin Market Square

(the end of the HOOP walk) at 4.30pm and jubilantly high-fived – we had done it and we cheered Marion for her sterling work.

Completed as part of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations.

# Hockley & Hawkwell u3a

Reported by Frank Harvey



Here is my brief review of September's Walks.

We do three a month on the second Monday, the Ramble, a slightly longer walk. On the third Tuesday we do a pub walk and the last Friday we do an Amble shorter and more gentle.

For September's ramble Monday 12th September we we're going to walk through 5 London parks but postponed that until October due to the Queen's death. Instead we stayed local and walked around Wallasey nature reserve. The walk was about 6.5 miles though mostly flat there was plenty to see as we walked the sea wall on both our local rivers the roach and the crouch although we didn't see any seals unlucky. We did see a few birds and staff who were conducting a survey of bird life at high tide. There were eight of us on the walk which everyone enjoyed.

The pub walk on Tuesday 20th was around Woodham Mortimer starting at the Hurdlemakers Arms. It's about a 30 minute drive but is a lovely country pub with great food. Our walk was quite short at 3 miles through fields and woods around a quarry in a loop back to the pub. There were five of us for lunch.

The Amble on Friday 30th was along the seafront from old Leigh to chalkwell its through the old town and along the front for about 2 miles or so, and then back for coffee. There were only three of us for this walk which was unusual as it's usually our busiest.

# Hutton u3a

Easy Rambling Group  
Reported by Colin Shaper

This group is for members who do not feel confident in walking several miles. The walks are usually between two and three miles, circular, and invariably end up at a cafe for coffee and chat. Various members take turn volunteering to find a location and to lead the walk. We have only been running since April, hopefully over time we will build up a list of good places to go.

Here is a brief description of the two short walks undertaken by Hutton u3a Easy Rambling Group in September:

**5th September 2022**

Today in Bedford's Park we had six walkers in all. We were on the track for one and a half hours, but walked for only 65 minutes. The rest of the time was spent picking blackberries!

**16th September 2022**

Today's walk was a re-run of our April walk around the Thames Chase Forest Centre - this time in dry weather. No exciting wildlife spotted but plenty of blackberries and sloes to remind us it was nearly autumn. The distance was 1.8 miles, taking just over an hour, including rest stops. And followed, of course, by coffee in the cafe.

Thursday Rambles  
Reported by Chas Hammond  
27 members

**1st September 2022**

Ideal walking conditions today, some cloud cover, a gentle warm breeze. 9 set off from Great Burstead, along a path between houses with the longest back garden (I think) in Essex. Then over undulating fields with great views, past a flock of guinea fowl. Some of the biggest fields around with tractors harrowing and creating their own dust storm. What a change from last week's soaking and 4kg of Essex mud on each boot.

Through some woods and onto the golf course where we stopped by some benches for our packed lunch. Except for one who has decided to start a diet. Guess who forgot his rucksack with lunch in it??

Leaving the golf course and into Laindon Common, past St Basil's well. I hope he's not thirsty as it's dry. Then through a farmyard with a collection of antique tractors, along a path which had had a recent wildfire, and to our starting point.



Little Burstead Church



## 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Today's walk was mostly in Hornchurch Country Park. Previously WW1 used by The RFC and the RAF in WW2. It was the drome used by Douglas Bader. There is some remaining evidence of the previous occupants; Gun sights, Pill boxes, a 2 story sunken Battle HQ, and what I found oddest - Tett Turrets. A small circular vertical chamber, just big enough for one man, although the info sheet mentions a second (gun loader) with 33cm above ground used as an observation post and gun dugout. Costing £18 - then, but must have been claustrophobic to use.



*Tett Turret*



After 2 days of quite heavy rain, 9 started off, the sun came out - lovely. Through the park and along a road into Rainham Village to stop at Rainham Hall (NT) for an extended lunch as a heavy shower started. Then following a path alongside the River Ingrebourne, through a housing estate and back into the park avoiding a now flooded footpath. About 7 miles.

Spotting Egyptian Geese, and shoveler ducks. We had heard (I believe) juvenile buzzard all morning, finally spotted a pair in the distance.



### 15th September 2022

Today we started off from The Cricketers, PH, Mill Green, along Mapletree Lane, then skirting Deerslade Wood, around Ellis Wood. I could not resist some well laden damson trees, before stopping at Writtle Park Farm for lunch in the hey barn. Later heading towards Great Edney Wood, we saw a large herd of approx. 50 Fallow Deer in the field alongside us. Into the Writtle Park Woods, we passed an enclosure of free range turkeys, no doubt getting ready for Christmas.



I spotted a hornet having a drink down a bank, Trying to get a closeup photo, I gingerly went down, phone cam poised, photo taken - unfortunately, it flew off. I just got the bottom of the ditch in the pic. Along Ivy Barn Rd, up the hill and through Mill Green Common, back to the car park.



## 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022

What a lovely day for a walk, pleasant temperature, no wind, an autumnal feel in the air. We started off from The Red Lion, Margaretting, through the tunnel under the A12 and into lovely open fields, after a short distance, we escaped the noise from the A12 along St Peter's Way.

The walk passes numerous styles, mostly high and or wobbly but worth it for the great views of varied countryside.

A short way off, hearing a noise, I saw a fallow deer stag with full set of antlers. We stood to watch a red kite being mobbed by crows above us. At every turn we saw small herds of fallow deer most of the morning.

On entering a field we found it already occupied with the friendliest group of horses I have encountered. They wanted to get up close and personal with us. Unfortunately, not fully appreciated by all of our group.

Along Harding's Lane, whilst admiring the cyclamen flowering on 'The Mound' at a house of the same name, we were given an instructive talk regarding the history and myths of the mound itself!



*Learning the History of the Mound*

Along Mapletree Lane through Deerslade Woods, across Ingatestone Rd and into High Woods where some cut down tree trunks made a perfect lunch stop. The dappled sunlight reflecting off the silver birches made an excellent backdrop. A couple of recently ploughed fields felt like walking on rubble before making our way back under the A12 to the start.



## 29th September

Ideal walking weather today, warm and sunny. Welcome to Debra and Rob, recent joiners.

Starting from Bumbles Green, through an almost hidden by undergrowth footpath into fields , across Nazing Golf course, we found several rocky styles and a few hills to warm us up. An interesting sign on a barn!! Then into wide countryside views and antient farm buildings.

Stopping for our lunch in a field we saw a single crow mobbing a red kite. First heard then saw a kestrel nearby. And later three possibly buzzards very high above us.

Continuing along a farm track we found that about 50 yards of it were covered in quite deep mud. Some took the track widening option, I diverted through brambles, over a fence and along the field. Past a road where it seemed the local business is either re-homing greyhounds, or kennels. All eager to noisily warn all comers to our passing. Back into the woods and down to the car park.



*Passing an isolated farm house*



*Town v Country*

## Maldon & District u3a

Reported by Malcolm Case



Eight members of the group met at the Railway Tavern in Kelvedon on 27th September for a walk which encircled the village.

We started by crossing the main road bridge over the river Blackwater into Feering and turned right opposite the Sun Inn into the oddly named Worlds End Lane. We crossed Domsey Brook by a wooden bridge and, with the river and a small copse on the right reached Ewell Hall farm where we passed through the stable yard.

Walking down Ewell Hall Chase we reached Bridge Foot, an ancient and narrow road bridge where we turned left and crossed the A12 and turned right towards the Braxted wall. We didn't go that far, just 200 yards where we turned right down a footpath to the river which we crossed by a wooden footbridge and came out by the "fly under" where traffic coming out of Kelvedon joins the A12 southbound.

We crossed over into Crabbs Lane where we passed the wedding venue and farm and went over the railway bridge to the next farm where we turned down a footpath and reached Felix Place which we passed through and came out on the Silver End road. We carefully crossed the road and passed through a wooded area where we reached Park Farm from where we went down a farm track to the railway line which we didn't cross but went down the footpath past the new building site to reach the railway station bridge.

The pub was now a welcome sight as it was getting cold, windy and the air getting damper.

Seven of us started our walk from The Old Ship, Heybridge Basin, Maldon at 10.30am on Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> September, the weather was sunny but with a very cold northerly wind. The tide was out so plenty of mud and not much water but the wading birds were out searching for food. We had to cross the lock which is part of Heybridge Basin by walking over the lock gates and then we went along the bank of the River Blackwater by walking on the sea wall. There were several dilapidated boat wrecks on the way and across the river we saw a Maldon barge with its sails down. Soon Maldon came into view across the water We spotted the statue of Byrhtnoth at the end of the Prom.



We walked as far as we could along the river bank and then walked through an industrial estate towards the canal - the Chelmsford and Blackwater Navigation. The tow path was very busy with cyclists, walking groups and dog walkers. As we neared the end of our walk the number of moored boats increased along the banks and after nearly two hours we were back at the Old Ship.

## **New Eastwood u3a**

Reported by Catherine Welch

Walk in Cherry Orchard Park 9<sup>th</sup> September

Cherry Orchard Country Park stretches from Rochford to Rayleigh in Essex. It consists of ancient woodland, established plantations and meadows with a lake created to mark the millennium. The planned walk took us along an oak avenue then down towards the lake, which we skirted, then along the Roach brook towards Cherry Orchard lane. On our right we could see meadows and the Hornbeam Avenue planted to mark the Platinum Jubilee. Information about the park can be found at <http://www.friendsofcherryorchardpark.com>

From the lane we made our way to the Cock Inn for lunch making this about a two mile walk.



The earlier downpour, and rain forecast together with the sad news announced on the 8<sup>th</sup> put some people off but eight of us enjoyed the companionship of this social walk to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the u3a.

# Newmarket u3a

Walking Group

Walk on September 7<sup>th</sup> 2022 from The Red Lion, Kirtling , Newmarket.

Reported by Kath Gifkins



16 walkers took part in the walk through the Suffolk countryside on a bright dry morning over about 4.5 miles.

Turn right out of the Red Lion Car Park and right again at the road junction signed Woodditton.

Walk along the roadside past a Footpath sign on the right until a footpath sign is seen on the left (Great Bradley 2). Take this path.

The path skirts a pumping station and continues beyond by the side of weirs carrying water from the Ouse system into the Stour and on into Essex.



At the first weir cross the bridge and turn left to walk on the right-hand side of the watercourse, continue past a small copse on the right until you reach a small car parking area at the end of a very minor road leading right. Cross back over the watercourse here, turn right and continue with the watercourse now on your right.

Keep ahead with the weir system on your right ignoring way markers to the right. Continue to the end of the field on the left (there is a copse in the distance to the left and if you are lucky, you may see deer).

At the end of the field don't continue through the gap in the hedge to Great Bradley but turn left. The field continues to your left and beyond the undergrowth on your right is a deep ditch. Follow this path until the ditch becomes shallower and you can cross through a gap in the vegetation, at the bottom of the ditch turn slightly right then left up a rise to a pleasant, wooded area with a gate through to another field edge.

Turn right again and continue around this huge field passing a sign to a conservation area on the right. Keep the field to your left and as you reach the end continue around towards the left where there are some views over the Suffolk countryside and very often Buzzards overhead.



Ignore a drunken footpath sign to the right but continue and look out for the next footpath sign pointing right over a wooden bridge. This can be difficult to spot if the vegetation hasn't been cut back. Take this path between hedgerows and paddocks to the main road. Turn left and continue along the roadside until you return to the Woodditton road leading left. Cross the road and return to the Red Lion a few yards further on.



# North Norfolk

North Norfolk Pub Walking Group

Reported by Catherine King & Vaughn Balding



We walk once a month. This morning (15<sup>th</sup> September) we met at the Ostrich Pub for a 6.5 mile circular. This walk is featured on English heritages website. We passed the ford and the castle and used well-marked footpaths and trackways. We started at 10am and finished at 12.30pm. Then we repaired to the Ostrich for refreshments... There were 7 of us and a small cocker spaniel called Digby.

Sorry that we forgot to take a picture...

# North Walsham u3a

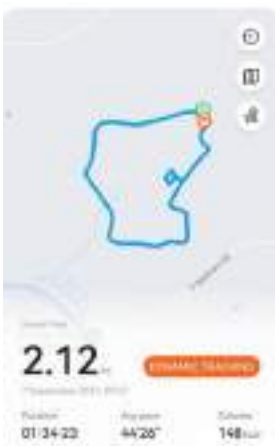
Reported by Chrissie Kimber, walking coordinator for the North Walsham u3a in Norfolk

We run 3 walks per month – a shorter and slower walk on the first Wednesday of the month, a longer walk on the second Wednesday and a longer walk on the fourth Friday.

## Shorter and Slower 7th September 10:00 am start approx. 2 miles

Leader Chrissie Kimber

Start point Bacton Woods Car park NR28 9UE



## Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 10 am start approx. 4 miles

Leader Judi McKenzie

Start point Butchers Arms East Ruston NR12 9JG



**Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September 10:00 am start approx. 4.5 miles**

Leader Chrissie Kimber

Park on the road alongside the Holy Trinity and All Saints Church. Address of church 1 Bulmer Ln, Winterton-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth NR29 4AF. Meet at the pathway to the left of the church. Lunch afterwards for those who wish to join us for lunch at the Fishermans Return Winterton.

<https://www.fishermansreturn.com/>



# Norwich u3a

Monday Long Distance Walkers

Reported by Esme Staniforth, Monday Long Distance Walkers Convener

**12th. September 2022**

Explorer 237 Norwich 139 977

14 walkers took part

Parking at at Norfolk Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve. NR16 1HB. Lower Wood Ashwellthorpe. (note Car Park on the right in Ashwellthorpe (well hidden) approx. half a mile past the church)



A gentle 7 mile walk on a glorious Autumn day, through a variety of Woodlands. Pass through the gate into Lower Wood, this is an ancient woodland, recorded in the Domesday Book. The manuscript record of the great survey completed in 1086. Ashwellthorpe wood, particularly noted for its large Oak Trees. Now the woods are extensively coppiced, encouraging rich ground flora. In spring. Blue bells, wild garlic, anemones, and a profusion of wild orchids, along with many butterflies, moths and deer.

Follow the map as best you can, enjoying the many paths throughout Lower Wood, exit into the field at the N.E. side, of wood. Pick up the trail, signed, over small bridge, along 2 fields, path clearly signed. turning into a shaded tunnel past the Old Rectory (old rectory lane) onto Wymondham Road. Walk along the field edge, 100yds, to Longs Wood, entrance on right. Take the left hand trail through the woods, noting the profusion of blackberries, damsons, elderberries,, crab apples It is now necessary to take to the road on exiting the woods, high common, for a short while, past a delightful Dutch style house and then the sign is off to the right, back into the woods. Finally coming out on to a board walk and into Wreningham village, turn right through the village and then left at the sign back into the fields, right by the



hedge to the road and right back into Wreningham. The school is on your left and on the right is a playground with a good selection of seats for lunch. At the cross roads, left past the old telephone box, resplendent in its new paint, it is the Village Book Swap. Note the Wizened old tree on left, hiding the local fairies.



If the Honey sign is out, do go in and speak to the Bee Keeper and marvel at his acreage. The next sign is right through the Farm/Stables into fields, then left, along the field to the church entrance, through Hall Garden. All Saints Church, Ashwellthorpe built in 14th. Century is a beautiful building, now a white walled,

barn type ceiling Church, full of light. Note the splendid alabaster memorials of Sir Edmund and Lady Jason Thorp.

Retrace your steps back through the Churchyard to the field and follow the edge back to Lower Wood and to your start point.



### September 25<sup>th</sup> 2022 A Trail of Two Commons

Explore 237. Norwich Whymondham. 194 011. Mulbarton 8 or 5 miles



On the edge of Mulbarton Common is an aged double-decker bus masquerading as a café. Sadly, the café is not open on Mondays, the day we choose to walk, but the car park by the cafe is a good place to meet.

As some of the members of our group have grown older, we have given thought on how to keep them involved in the group even if eight to ten miles may be too much for them. This walk took the form of a five mile walk from Mulbarton to Swardeston and back in *the morning, with lunch at Mulbarton Church and a three mile walk from Mulbarton to Swardeston and back in the afternoon, using some of the same paths as those used in the morning.*

It is a short walk along the edge of Mulbarton Common from the Bus Café to the Church. At the Church, we took the footpath along the southern edge of the churchyard, leading out into the open countryside east of Mulbarton. Here are flat, open fields. The route followed a wide track until turning off across the first of two stretches of cross-field path. This one had been rolled and was easy to follow to a small stretch of woodland, leading to the second cross-field path. How different this one was. The way marks had been removed and no attempt made to roll the route of the path. We chose to use headland areas around two sides of the field rather than struggle across the ploughed field. At the other end as we reached a minor road, the footpath sign had been removed.

The next stretch of route was along the minor road, fortunately very lightly trafficked. It was soon time to turn off at a public footpath sign, through a gap in the roadside hedge. Our route took us across a well-made path through a field of sugar beet and out to a short residential road in Swardeston. From here it was a short step, across the B1113 and to Swardeston Church, where we took a coffee break – some inside and some on the benches in the churchyard.

Swardeston is the birthplace of Edith Cavell, the British nurse murdered by the Germans in World War I. Her father was vicar of Swardeston for over forty years.

The next stage of the walk was a large loop across Swardeston Common before coming back almost to the Church. After a short stretch of open track, much of the walk back to Mulbarton was through wooded areas where, in a clearing, we came across a lady gathering some of the last of the blackberries and bemoaning the lack of sloes. The morning had been kind to us weather wise but for the last stretch into Mulbarton, we suffered a brief shower – enough to dampen our clothes but not our spirits.

Two members of the group left at lunchtime, taking advantage of the fact that we were back near the cars. After lunch we retraced our steps through the wooded area and back to Swardeston Church. Nobody minded covering the same ground, the views are different in the other direction. To the east of Swardeston, we were able to take a short cut which led us down past a field of alpacas. We stood and watched them watching us for quite a while before continuing to the wide track we had used at the start of the morning walk and thence back to Mulbarton Church and Common.



But the weather was to have the final word. On the last stretch up to Mulbarton Church, we suffered a rather heavy shower, sufficient to soak our outer garments.



Norwich U3A Tuesday 8-to-10-mile group

Reported by Peter and Sue Nelson

We meet fortnightly, nearly all members leading at least one walk a year.

September walk 1

Happisburgh. Taking advantage of good weather, we often head to the coast in summer.

9 miles, 16 walkers. Highlights are views of Happisburgh Lighthouse and church, Crostwight Heath and seeing the ever-crumbling cliffs along the coast path. Lunch at St Peters Ridlington





## September Walk 2

Starts from Manor Farm Barns, in the pretty village of Glandford with its ford across the Glaven river.

8.8 miles, 9 walkers. A real mix of Norfolk countryside and coast. Excellent views from Wiveton Downs (lots of fields with pigs in – pork for Waitrose!), squash (pumpkin) farm for coffee stop – and blackberry picking, then coast path to Blakeney where we had an extended stop and many bought coffee and cake. Lunch by the windmill in Cley-next-the-Sea. Back past the magnificent Cley church.





# Peterborough u3a

Walkie- Talkie Walking Group  
Reported by Roy Turner

## Market Overton 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022

As with all Walkie-Talkie walks we met at The Black Bull in Market Overton at 09:45 to order a meal and use the facilities. Leaving the village, passing the church, we set out into the countryside on a firm track. The planned walk went diagonally across 5 fields of beans towards Edmondthorpe. However the fields had been harvested and ploughed. Fortunately, this had been anticipated during the reccy a month earlier, so we had prepared a choice of three outbound routes and three return routes giving nine alternatives.

Choosing our longest alternative outbound route we took the firmer track to the left heading down to The Lodge gaining excellent views of Edmondthorpe Hall on the way and attracting the attention of their pedigree herd of brown cattle. From the road we passed through the stockyard and entered the village on a public footpath through the garden of a private house. We then went around the village through a pleasant and peaceful wood before stopping at the old village water pump outside the village hall.

After cakes, provided by one walker for his birthday that day, we set off back into the grounds of the Hall and headed across a grassy field, through a small wood and across a stubble field which had been recently harrowed. Joining the ridge we walked along the top, now in a narrow wood before emerging at the edge of another ploughed field. Although there was a public footpath across the field (which had not been walked since it was ploughed) we took our longest alternative return route staying on higher ground around the edge of the field until we turned right on to a path leading directly back to Market Overton.

After a 5.5 mile walk, taken at a gentle pace because of the warm weather, everyone was keen to get into the pub for a drink and a meal. As the walk was plotted on digital maps and navigated using a SatNav, the following page shows the tracklog of the walk and the basic statistics all downloaded from the SatNav.

**Fourteen Walkers. Distance Walked was 5.53 miles. Time Taken 2 hours and 36 minutes (Walking Time was 2 hour and 22 minutes, Stopped Time was 14 minutes). The weather was dry, sunny with some cloud and mild at 20 to 22 degrees. The going underfoot was a firm paths and tracks with some tarmac and bone dry fields. Average Walking Speed was 2.35 mph**





### **Fotheringhay 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

The second Walkie-Talkies walk in September was a circular walk from The Falcon in Fotheringhay. The pub, which has a large car park at the rear and easy roadside parking to the front welcomes walking groups. There were 10 members of the group walking on a dry, cloudy and rather humid day.

This easy circular walk of about 5.2 miles gave us views of the Church of St Mary & All Saints at Fotheringhay, the Old Mill at Elton, Elton House (at distance across the parkland), Warmington Mill and finally around the historic site of Fotheringhay Castle (birthplace of Richard 3rd in 1452 and place of execution of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587).

The walk was mainly flat, apart from 2 short and easy inclines, on a mix of tarmac, meadow footpaths and bridleways. There were a number of gates and bridges with just one stile.



Distance Walked was 5.17 miles. Time Taken was 2 hours and 15 minutes (Walking Time was 1 hour and 57 minutes, Stopped Time was 18 Minutes). The weather was initially cloudy at 16 degrees brightening to sun later and 22 degrees. The going underfoot was mainly grassy meadows and tracks with some tarmac and gravel paths. Average Walking Speed was 2.6 mph.





**Near the start of the walk outside the Fotheringhay Church**



**Over Elton parkland and a view of Elton House**

**The site of Fotheringhay Castle**



**Walking the same footpath - possibly members of the local Ewe 3A!**

## Stilton Glatton Circuit 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022

The third Walkie-Talkies walk in September was a 4.6 mile circular walk started at the Talbot Inn, Stilton, Cambridgeshire, on the edge of the Fens, towards Glatton.



A feature of this area is the knitted caps on post boxes and the latest one in stilton pays tribute to the late Queen Elizabeth (see picture lower down).

This is a rural walk with undulating terrain and no stiles. We began walking South out of Stilton along the old Roman Road, Ermine Street, across the now defunct Stilton Oaks golf course, then across grassy and ploughed fields to the edge of Glatton village. Turning North along a tree-lined bridleway we entered Denton which is a hamlet with a derelict church.

After a short drink stop, we headed East through a farmyard, across meadows and more ploughed fields with far-reaching views over the Fens, and back into Stilton, finishing at the Talbot Inn for lunch.

Due to many members taking advantage of cheaper holidays, now the schools have gone back, our numbers were reduced to just eight walkers this week.

Distance Walked was 4.56 miles. Time Taken was 2 hours and 3 minutes (Walking Time was 1 hour and 45 minutes, Stopped Time was 18 minutes). The weather was initially overcast but mild at 16 degrees, brightening later to sunny periods and about 20 degrees. The going underfoot was a little undulating with grassy paths, dried mud fields and some tarmac and concrete. Average Walking Speed was 2.6 mph.



## Castor 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Twelve members of the Peterborough U3A Walkie-Talkies walking group met at the The Prince of Wales Feathers pub at the usual time of 9.45 to order lunch before setting out in cloudy, chilly conditions for a 5.3 mile circular walk from Castor to the Milton Ferry Bridge over the River Nene, returning to Castor to enjoy a meal in the pub at 12:30. The weather improved during the walk, warming up to 19 degrees when the sun broke through.

The terrain varied from tarmac pathways to meadows. We also passed a derelict windmill before following a long section along the riverbank with just a few stiles along the way.

During the walk we encountered several dog-walkers and a flock of parakeets was spotted by one of our bird watching members.



Distance Walked was 5.3 miles. Time Taken was 2 hours and 18 minutes (Walking Time was 1 hour and 59 minutes, Stopped Time was 19 minutes). The weather was initially overcast at 15 degrees brightening later to sunny periods at 19 degrees. The going underfoot was flat on gravel paths and grassy meadow tracks followed by some tarmac. Average Walking Speed was 2.7 mph.



### **Going Walk About Group**

Reported by Roy Turner

The Going-Walkabout group only walk twice a month on the second and fourth Wednesdays but they live up to their Buy-Line of “Faster Further Higher”.

#### **Lyddington 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

Their walk from Lyddington on 14<sup>th</sup> September was 12.6 miles at an average walking speed of 3.0 mph. Only 4 members were on the Lyddington walk due to many of the group being spread across Europe.

The Peterborough U3A Going-Walkabout group left Lyddington at about 9:40 on Wednesday morning. The temperature was 14 degrees rising later to 22 degrees and the weather was a perfect September day for walking with a mix of sunshine with some clouds. The walk was 12.6 miles in the beautiful countryside of Rutland encircling the town of Uppingham. After a while walking along field edges, we reached Seaton and the path climbed upwards and over recently ploughed arable land before undulating across sheep pasture to the village of Bisbrooke. We had a drink break at the church and admired the lovely stained glass window.

Continuing along a track to the edge of Uppingham we turned and crossed a valley to

another long track along the North side of the town. Here we stopped for lunch perching on a piece of handy farm machinery. After lunch we followed part of the Rutland Round for a while before looking down on the very picturesque Eyebrook Reservoir. The reservoir was used for practice by The Dambusters before their raids on Germany in WW2. We finished the walk with a downhill stretch which was complicated by a footpath across a recently ploughed field with no visible path. Following the edge of the field end in nettles and a hawthorn hedge. So, we retraced our steps and followed the lane back to Lyddington.



Distance Walked was 12.6 miles. Time Taken was 4 hour and 59 minutes (Walking Time was 4 hours and 10 minutes, Stopped Time was 49 minutes). The weather was dry and initially cool at 14 degrees later brightening to 22 degrees. The going underfoot was grassy and ploughed fields, firm, dry paths and some tarmac. Average Walking Speed 3.0 mph.





### **Stamford 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

Four members of the Peterborough U3A Going-Walkabout group met up in the Cattle Market car park in Stamford as planned and walked between the expensive houses of Wothorpe and up to Easton on the Hill. The weather was cool but dry, a very pleasant temperature for walking. Passing straight through Easton we descended across fields on the combined Hereward and Jurassic Ways to Ketton road. We progressed via Geeston and Aldgate to our first stop at Ketton church. There were very few people about, just a few dog walkers, although we did pass another walking group near Easton.

After a sandwich and cup of coffee we went through the churchyard and across the main road heading north on a good track/path that led across and around the huge quarry that serves Ketton cement works. A lot of this quarry is now disused and we wondered what will happen to this area in the future. Quite a few sections seem to be 'returning to nature' with plenty of birdlife about.

Leaving the quarry behind we descended to the village of Tinwell where the churchyard wall provided an opportunity for another brief rest. After Tinwell the route continued along the river Welland which we followed back into Stamford. Our keen-eyed bird watcher, Mike, spotted a couple of Kingfishers on the river. On reaching Stamford we turned away from the car park and into the town where we found a café and enjoyed tea, coffee and cake before heading for home.



**Distance Walked was 12.1 miles. Time Taken was 4 hours and 35 minutes (Walking Time was 3 hours and 52 minutes, Stopped Time was 43 minutes). The weather was dry and cool at 12 degrees. The going underfoot was pavements, firm paths grassy meadows and tarmac. Average Walking Speed was 3.2 mph.**



# Radlett & District u3a

Radlett London Group

Reported by Oliver Cahn, Radlett & District u3a webmaster and Walking 4-5 miles co-ordinator,

Our walk today, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022. was about 6 miles so slightly over the target.

We got the train from Radlett to London St Pancras using Thameslink Railways, saw some very interesting relatively new developments at St Pancras (flats built within gasometers for example), alongside the Grand Union Canal to Camden Market, Chalk Farm (Roundhouse) Primrose Hill (great views of London), and back via Camden Market alongside the canal to St Pancras.

There were 9 participants and the leader was Christopher Langdon



Longer walking group walked on September 8th 2022

Reported by Fiona Turner, Group Leader

We met at Tewinbury farm complex on the B100 post code AL60JB

11 of us walked a circular walk of 9 miles , walking west to view the train viaduct then north to Burnham Green, after coffee stop we walked north and east through Bramfield woods to Bramfield for a lunch break-- good seats there!! before walking south and west back to Tewinbury.

This completed a set of 5 walks in this area.

## Ramsey & District u3a

Ramsey u3a short walking group  
Reported by Sandra Stapleton

Ramsey u3a Short Walking Group – September 2022:

Meeting once a month and taking a short walk in Huntingdonshire. The walks are circular where possible and approximately 2 miles in length normally followed by coffee and a chat. There are 18 members. 10 attended for this walk as several members were on holiday.

On 14<sup>th</sup> September the meeting point was the Old Nene Golf Club carpark. This walk would be in the lovely fenland landscape which surrounds Ramsey. It was a fresh sunny morning. From the carpark we took the footpath towards the High Lode, a river way cutting back to the centre of Ramsey.

It is a pleasant walk along the river bank to the junction with the River Nene Old Course at Saunders Bridge. Here, at the lock gate a narrow boat was heading upstream towards Ramsey.

We took a left turn along the bank of the River Nene upstream towards Ramsey St Mary as far as the sharp L hand bend with the wind turbines ahead.

From here we turned back to the lock and walked along Mill Drove which is flanked by trees on one side. After approximately half mile we turned back along the drove and retraced our steps across Saunders Bridge to finish at the Old Nene Golf course for coffee and a chat in their lovely restaurant.

The length of the walk was 2.04 miles within Ramsey



*High Lode*



*Lock Gates Old Nene*

*Narrow Boat on Old Nene*





Wind Turbines Near Ramsey

# Sarratt and District u3a

Walkers Group  
Reported by Frances Ashley

We are a group of some 25 occasional and regular walkers , setting out on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month. We average 12-13 participants on each walk , and cover 6-7 miles. Our September walks were on 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, in the Chilterns and the Colne Valley



## Circular Walk from Coombe Hill around the Prime Minister's Country Residence of Chequers

Map Reference: Explorer Map  
181 SP 852 063 .

Car Parking: Low Scrubs car park on Coombe Hill.

**Distance: 7 miles .** *This walk took place during the week of national mourning for the late Queen Elizabeth II, and just one week after she invited Liz Truss to lead her government. The PM was not at home when we passed by!*

The walk starts at Low Scrubs car park and proceeds in a north westerly, and then northly, direction to the Boer War Monument at the viewpoint on Coombe Hill. The monument was erected in November 1904 to the memory of the men from Buckinghamshire that died in the Boer War. From the monument (843ft above sea level) there are magnificent views over the Vale of Aylesbury. The walk then proceeds south along The Ridgeway for a short distance, with the first glimpse of Chequers nestling in the valley below. Turn right before descending steeply downhill and head to Ellesborough Church.



At the Church turn south west around the ancient monument of Beacon Hill with Cymbeline's Castle Motte and Bailey (now completely overgrown and not visible from the route). Continuing south (and then south easterly, the route goes over the Chequers Estate where there is a good sighting of Chequers .The house dates back to the sixteenth century. In 1917 Viscount Lee of Fareham made provision for the house to become the weekend retreat and place for Prime Ministers to entertain guests.





After leaving the Chequers Estate the route swings in a south easterly direction to Little Hampden first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. The route then turns east where, a short way down the path, a green dragon is waiting for you on the left-hand side. Follow the path to Hampdenleaf Wood and turn left onto the footpath north to Dunsmore Old Farm. Go left again at this point, until the path rejoins The Ridgeway gradually ascending to Coombe Hill. Leave The Ridgeway near the top of the hill and take the footpath on the right back to the car park.

*Photos: Coombe Hill Monument, Ellesborough Church with flag at half mast , Chequers, Green dragon*



### **ALDENHAM AND THE RIVER COLNE - 6 miles**

**OS Explorer Map 173 Grid Ref: TQ 139 984, Postcode: WD25 8BE. Park opposite church**  
 From Aldenham Parish Church keep to the right hand side of the Green, with a crescent of white cottages on left. Pass a modern house, The Chequers, on the bridleway path. Continue along the path until the track bears right, turn left at a waymark post – FP No 16. Follow this path through a belt of trees and scrub, crossing several golf course tracks, (1. on map) until you reach a steel, barred gate. Cross track, diagonally, to a low step-through stile and descend through a copse to the valley floor. At the junction pass to the left of the gate to the pumping station, cross the river by a footbridge and turn right, walking beside the river (photo below) until reaching a concrete hump bridge.





Bear slightly left and continue ahead to a stony path, where you turn right. Follow this path across open grassland to a sign for Munden House. Go through the gate and follow the path downhill to the River Colne, (2) with good views of Munden House to your right (*photo right.*)

Here the Colne widens into a pond/ford, (good place for a coffee stop). Continue to the crossroads by River Lodge and turn left, following this bridleway and crossing a step-over stile beside a gate. Beyond some electricity pylons the bridleway bears right. Climb to pass (3) a pumping station (not very visible, but audible

behind the hedge). At a junction turn right, near the entrance to Netherwild Farm, SP public bridleway No 72.

The path winds uphill to the C17<sup>th</sup> Hill Farm. Join a tarmac access road beside the farm. Pass the buildings and bear left to follow a track beside paddocks. At the junction turn right and go uphill on a track (4). Continue as it ascends to the ridge then descends to pass Blackbird Sewage Treatment works, joining a tarmac lane. Immediately past the main entrance gates go right, on to a bridleway. The path bears left, away from the sewage works, and becomes a metalled lane beyond a modern hay barn.



Descend through the farmyard of Blackbirds Farm ( C17<sup>th</sup> timber framing). Follow the faint painted footprints on the concrete path through the farmyard. Keep left uphill on a track, alongside some weatherboarded barns. Carry straight on, descending to the valley floor to turn left, going to the right of a hedge (5.) Walk along the grassy margin of an arable field, beside the hedge. Go to a kissing gate and then keep along the left hand side of the field towards Aldenham church. Continue ahead in the next field, keeping to the left edge, with white houses visible ahead. Pass a gate and keep to Path 10 in the corner. Join a track. Turn right at the road and return to the Green in Aldenham.

*Aldenham Church: Excellent monuments, as well as its unusually wide north aisle and off-centre chancel.*

## Rambling Group Reported by Donald Sutton

On the morning of Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022 seven members of the group met on Sarratt Green for our monthly ramble.

We started by observing a minutes silence in memory of the late Queen Elizabeth the Second by the flag pole, with the Union Flag flying at half-mast, and the small War Memorial surmounted by a piece of Hertfordshire Pudding Stone.



Our walk of about 4 miles took us out through the back of the village before taking us through Commonwood and along a short stretch of road to Bucks Hill before turning onto the path towards Jefferys Farm. There are records of the Carter family at Jefferys Farm going back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and Jimmy Carter the 39<sup>th</sup> President of the United States can trace his ancestry back to this family.

We then crossed the road to enter Chipperfield Common, this was in royal ownership from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. In 1936 it was sold by the Blackwell family to the local council 'for the purpose of a public open space' for ten shillings. It was interesting that we found some council employees in the woods and in talking to one of them it transpired that they were carrying out a survey to ascertain how many people used the area to enable them to assess future improvements, so the council still seem to be honouring their obligation. There are several large sweet chestnut trees in the woods which are said to have been grown from seeds brought back from the Mediterranean lands by the Crusaders. After leaving the common we passed through Penman's Green and across the track known locally as 'Under the Heavens' apparently because there was, at one time a pub there called The Plough (as in the star constellation). We finally made our way back to Sarratt after an enjoyable morning blessed with pleasant sunshine.



# South West Herts u3a

Pathfinders  
Reported by Patrick Turner

Our group is called Pathfinders and is slightly unusual in that maps of the route are provided to the members who are expected to lead themselves. The group leader then "back marks", only intervening if the group is about to go over a cliff!

Usual we have about 9 or 10 walkers. However, people of a certain age prefer to holiday in September, hence, for our September walk we could only muster 5 walkers! That month's walk was 7 miles, which is about the usual length.

Attached are photos of the depleted group on the move.



Walkers, September 2022  
Reported by Frances Beak

Thirteen members and a visiting grandson gathered at The Cross Keys pub in Gustard Wood, Wheathampstead, AL4 8LA on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September. The pub opened its door so we could place our lunch orders and use the facilities before starting out on our walks. 'Walks' plural because group members wish to continue meeting and, although walks are not as long as pre-Covid with this one being 3½ miles, various health issues mean that some prefer a shorter route. Our walk took us along well-maintained footpaths and a stretch of country road and, for the main party of nine walkers, featured glimpses of three notable houses and the hint of a fourth. We walked alongside Ayot Farm, with horses grazing in newly fenced paddocks and a menage for dressage, bypassed a sign to Shaw's Corner (home of George Bernard Shaw, a National Trust property but not open on a Thursday), and through the grounds of Bride Hall.

Access to the route cutting through the Bride Hall estate was a puzzle. The signpost clearly stated how far to go up the drive and then to turn left at the barn which we could see through grand wrought iron entrance gates. But these were locked. A challenge for the

group, until one keen eyed member spotted the wicket gate set within the ironwork, hidden in plain sight. We confessed that on the recce we started to consider a change of route from this point until a passing local helped us out!



*Lamer House*

The footpath led us through fields and woodland and we had a good view down the tree lined driveway to Lamer House.

Soon after this, we turned onto a footpath that took us gently uphill through shady Lamer Wood.

On exiting the far corner of the wood we re-joined

the route back to the pub and found the five members who had opted for a shorter walk already ensconced on tables in the garden, enjoying their drinks.



*In front of Bride Hall's puzzling gate*

Route from pub:  
cross road

diagonally left to find FP 36, cross FP 37 (Hertfordshire Way) and continue straight on FP13; emerge onto road and turn right along Bride Hall Lane until reach gates to Bride Hall; enter through the wicket gate to find FP42 and continue to Lamer House complex; turn left onto FP41, skirting the house on righthand side, and find FP85 on the right; follow FP85 until it meets FP36; turn left onto FP36 and retrace steps back to the pub.



*View of Herts Countryside*

## St Albans u3a

Walking Group 2  
Reported by Angela Bettridge

The members of this friendly walking group take it in turns to organise a walk for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month. This month's walk took place on Thursday 15th September, organised by 2 of our regular lady walkers. They had already recce'd the walk before sending details to be circulated. We generally aim to keep walks within a 30 minute drive from St Albans and meet at 9-45 for 10am start .

We were slightly fewer in number than is often the case, in part because the date clashed with a Rambler's Walk and a U3A coach trip, but nevertheless 9 of us turned up and 7 stayed for lunch afterwards. Here are the outline details from the organisers:-

We will be walking from Redbourn Common, parking at the Cricket Pavilion car park. From there we will go along the Nicky Line and Harpenden Golf Club past Hammond End and Redbournbury Mill. The distance is 5.3 miles and there are no stiles and just one main road to cross. Lunch can be taken at the Cricketers.



The weather was kind to us and despite a few days rain previously it was still dry underfoot. The route was rural, the crops had been harvested and paths reinstated; whilst it's a familiar area to many of us there are always aspects to enjoy and slightly different paths to take. We returned to the pub in good time for a light lunch out in the garden.

## Stanford-le-Hope & District u3a

Reported by Jenny Radford



On Thursday 15th September 2022, eighteen members of the Stanford and District U3A Ambling Group visited Langdon Nature Discovery Park, Basildon, Essex for their monthly amble. The Discovery Park is a nature reserve comprising woodland, meadows, lakes and former plotland gardens. There is also a Sensory garden, a Peter Rabbit trail and a small children's play area. It is managed by Essex Wildlife Trust and offers miles of excellent walks. Our circular walk covered about a mile and went through the different areas of the reserve. The route we chose was fairly flat, although if anyone wanted a challenge there are some commanding views from the higher ground. We were all happy with the lower ground and enjoyed the amble and the company of fellow amblers, finishing at the new Visitor Centre where we had refreshments whilst continuing chatting in the warm sunshine.

Photos taken by Michael Farnam.



# Stevenage u3a

Group Leader Wendy Price

Unfortunately we were only five people for Wednesday's walk, as we are normally eight walkers. The walkers have given their consent to have their photos printed in your booklet



The Stevenage u3a walking group was set up in August 2021 and we've been enjoying many circular walks through the Hertfordshire countryside meeting fortnightly on Wednesday mornings. Walks range from 5 miles to 6.5 miles. Our walks have taken us to various places, such as Pirton (near Hitchin) with a circular walk in the Chiltern hills; Graveley to Weston, and a circular walk from Waterend to via Wheathamstead. When we first set up we had six members and now



we are a group of eight and occasionally nine walkers. We are a very sociable group and it has given us the opportunity to make new friends. We especially enjoy walks with a pub or cafe stop where we enjoy refreshments and have a good chat.

Last Wednesday's walk was an anniversary walk as it was the same walk we did in August 2021.



Our walk on September 21st 2022 was a 5 mile circular walk starting from Norton Green (on the outskirts of Stevenage). Grid ref. 229232. Walking along public footpaths through Knebworth Park and pretty countryside. Part of the walk was through Graffidge Wood, and Langley. When going through Knebworth Park, we were delighted to see the magnificent Knebworth House in the distance and also viewed a herd of deer. Knebworth House is an English country house and is a Grade 11 listed building. The house has been the home of the Lytton family since

1490. Its most famous resident was Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873), the Victorian writer and dramatist. The writer, Charles Dickens was a friend of his and Dickens often stayed at Knebworth House. The house is open to members of the public and the grounds are used for music festivals and concerts.



One of the photos shows the very pretty lake which has been used for the private use of the Bulwer - Lytton family.

It was an interesting walk and the group commented how much they enjoyed it.



# Sudbury u3a

Walking Group  
September walk, Stanstead via  
Kentwell Downs OS Map 196,  
844490  
Reported by Moira Orton, Group Leader



Starting from the Community Centre, Stanstead, CO10 9AL, for a lovely varied 5.5 mile walk in open countryside with excellent views from this relatively high area of Suffolk. We walked along clearly defined paths and tracks, skirting fields and woodlands with little road walking and no stiles. Part of the Stour Valley Path led over the Kentwell Downs and past cottages to Mill Farm. We crossed the

River Glem and up a wide curving flight of brick built steps, set into a roadside embankment, leading on to the final part of our walk with magnificent views over the Stour Valley.

### **Architecture Group**

Reported by Jane Crumpton-Taylor



### **Filling in the Gaps 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

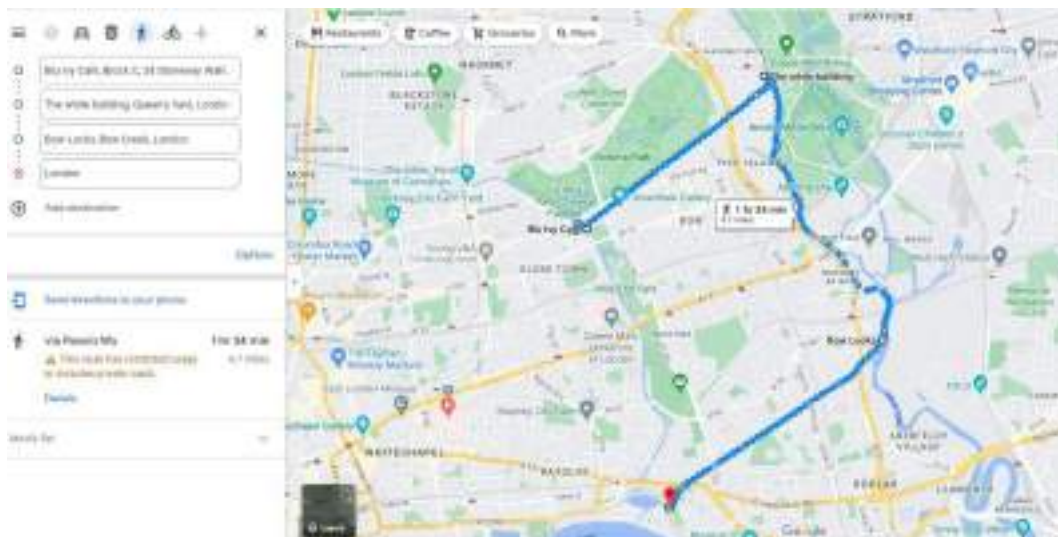
The Sudbury u3a Architecture group have previously walked canals in the Stratford, Limehouse, Victoria Park and Canary Wharf area, and have now completed their exploration with an 8 mile walk along the Hertford Union, part of the Lea Navigation and down the Limehouse Cut to the Limehouse Basin

There were 12 of us on the walk- here we are beside one of the three locks on the Hertford Union.



There was a lot of history, some birdlife and plenty of exciting graffiti

Here is the route- do not believe Google – the distance was, with walking to bus stops and other diversions, 8 miles.  
We used buses to get to the start and to get back to Stratford.



### **Tuesday Amblers Reported by Amicie Thompson, Group Leader**

Walk: Bildeston to Chelsworth 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Length: 3.3 miles 14 participants

This circular walk starts from Bildeston Market Place and takes you along quiet lanes out of the village and then along field paths and tracks across the fields to Chelsworth and back. Chelsworth is one of the prettiest villages in Suffolk with half-timbered houses, a pub and an 18<sup>th</sup> century hump-back bridge in a quiet spot by the River Brett. Along the way there are good views over the open rolling countryside and a lovely Grade 1 listed church.



Along the way there are good views over the open rolling countryside and a lovely Grade 1 listed church.



**Strollers**  
**Reported by Lyn Gray, Group Leader**

Sudbury u3a has 4 walking groups and I lead “Strollers”, which as it implies is for members who now walk at a more leisurely pace, but still want to be part of a walking group. We are lucky that our town centre is surrounded by water meadows – our Commonlands – and open to all for leisure activities.



Meeting twice monthly, on our September 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, 10 members walked for 90 minutes, covering just 2 to 2 and a half miles, as usual, following one of the many routes available. We saw grazing cows, a resting heron, sleepy ducks and crossed a couple of bridges, enjoying being out in the lovely countryside and chatting with friends – a perfect day!



# Thetford u3a

5-10 Mile Walking Group  
Submitted by Dee Skinner

Cambridge to Grantchester Walk – 14 September 2022



We had a beautiful day for our walk which started from Kings College, Cambridge. We very quickly left Cambridge and headed out alongside the River Cam across meadows, through a nature reserve and then along a lovely street of mainly older houses. This led us to Grantchester Meadows and we walked along by the river and came across a heron which did not seem worried about us walking past at all! We continued along the river until we came to Grantchester. We had drinks and cake at the famous Orchard Tea Garden which was delicious! We wandered through the village and stopped to look at the Church of St Andrew and St Mary and the Vicarage which are used in the Grantchester TV Series. We then headed out past the Red Lion pub and back onto the top path along the meadows. Once we had retraced our steps through the nature reserve we took a slightly different route back which took us past former mills and a pond. We crossed the river to walk behind the colleges which gave us lovely views of Kings College and punters along the Cam.



Distance: 6.1 miles  
Walkers: 4



## Ver Colne Valley u3a

Reported by Rod Harman

One of the Ver-Colne Valley u3a's four walking groups (of varying distances) it's Middy Walking group's September adventure was a four-and-a-half-mile circular jaunt starting and finishing (obviously) from one of the hostelrys in the village of Sarratt.

Twenty-one members (plus three canines of assorted sizes) enjoyed the mild late summer weather, strolling through the gently rolling hills and valleys of Hertfordshire lower Chilterns down to and around the now redundant watercress beds of the River Chess before retreating back to base for a well-deserved lunch.



## Welwyn Hatfield u3a

Welwyn Hatfield 27<sup>th</sup> September  
John Horsford

Fifteen of our group explored the five waterways at Hartham Common, Hertford today. (Rivers: Bean, Rib, Lea, and other waterways: Lea navigation and 'New River'). And we walked five miles in doing so, ending up at the Old Barge pub for lunch. I enclose a photo of the walkers.



# Wisbech u3a

Reported by Linda Watkins

## Wisbech u3a Walkers 5.5 mile walk

### 6th September Grimsted Warren / Roydon Common, Norfolk

There were seven cheery walkers on our September walk which started from Church Farm, Bawsey, near Kings Lynn ( Church Lane is opposite the entrance to the crematoria )

The walk starts on the farm tracks, which can be uneven and muddy in places, and passes the ruins of St James Church built in 1130's which stands on a hill and can be seen from A149.



Continuing on this path for about a mile and keeping left a lane is reached at a T junction. Turn right pass a house called Pitlochry on Sandy Lane and pass Warren Farm and then there are open views across Grimston Warren on the right and Roydon Common on the left, managed by Norfolk Wildlife Trust. The track is sandy and the route to Grimston Warren is downhill and through a gate on the right and is a haven for heathland birds. At this time of year it is covered with heather in bloom, a purple spectacle. White Cattle and Dartmoor ponies are used to help maintain the heathland and often can be seen and are not phased by people.

Taking a detour to the right up a hill is a wonderful panoramic view, notice boards and one of the two observation towers that were used for practice in the second world war. Down from the hill and following the path with the fence on the left there is a gate through to the Delft. From here the terrain changes and the heathland gives way to grassy paths. At Spot Farm turning left the paths retraces back to Church Farm.



**Wisbech Strollers 2 or 4 mile linear walk option**  
**13th September, Whitemoor nature reserve and Ringsend Nature reserve, March, Cambridgeshire**



Do many people meet up beside a prison for a pleasant and peaceful walk?

Beside HMP Whitemoor in March, they did for the September Strollers walk, a cheerful and chatty group of 11 walked on the flat footpaths through Whitemoor Nature Reserve which runs alongside the prison, Along the way there is a memorial site to the 9 people whose Lancaster Bomber crashed in 1941 on what is now the prison site. The walk passes a fishing pond where ducks and moorhens can be seen.

On the firm, grassy path, enclosed by various gnarled trees and scrubs, the 1 mile distance is soon reached at the Twenty Foot river where people can choose to retrace their steps for a two mile walk .

Continuing on and crossing over the B1101 the Rings End Nature reserve is reached with wide open views of the surrounding farmland. The footpath ends and the return is along the same paths with an option to take one of the short detours down from the bank to walk beside harvested fields. Along the paths there are wild flowers, blackberries and various birds which if not seen can be heard.

