

Thursday 28 November "A riverside walk from Exmouth to Darts Farm" with Rosemary Hatch

A group of 16 walkers and two dogs gathered outside M&S's Foodhall on Thursday 28 November to walk to Darts Farm. For the first time in many days it was not raining and we were blessed with some sunshine.

Rosemary set off at a good pace. Once we had left the urban sprawl of Exmouth behind we could enjoy Exe Estuary views and see bird life on the mudflats. Among the birds spotted along the shore were brent geese, dunlins, oyster catchers, turnstones; and the cry of the curlew could be heard. It was decided to leave the tarred 'cyclists' path and we took the narrower path to the south of the railway line. It was muddy and boggy in parts, but it afforded us an unimpeded view of the wide River Exe. And for a while, at least as far as Lypstone, we could stop worrying about cyclists coming up behind us.

We reached Lypstone Village at a convenient time for coffee stop/refreshments. A number of the group remained outside and enjoyed their snack sitting on the benches beside the sea wall overlooking the river and mudflats, others visited a local cafe nearby, and another enjoyed an early pint. The two dogs were able to be unleashed and had a great time getting muddy down by the water.

Back now to the main path, eyes and ears ready for cyclists, past the Barracks where Marines could be seen receiving instruction, and on to Exton where the path turned inland for a while, finally to Ebford. Now there was a parting of the ways; some of the group took the left path on to Topsham and the rest turned right to Darts Farm. From there some of the group caught a bus home and others visited the shops or had a picnic outside.

A lovely morning, very few hills, and, even better, no rain.

Thank you, Rosemary for leading us on this walk.

Jacqui Ruhlig