

CEC Walking Weekend 2023

The annual Walking Weekend was held in Wells-next-the-sea, Norfolk this year and many of the walkers took advantage of the block booking for accommodation and stayed at The Arch House Rooms.

On Friday afternoon we had a visit to the new RNLI station for a guided tour at 1.30pm. The station had been opened earlier this year and Martin Emerson, one of the RNLI team looking after the station and boats, met the group and told us about the station and the equipment. The station has a small inflatable rescue boat which is used for shorter distances and in shallow water, and a new Shannon class rescue boat that replaced the former smaller Mersey class lifeboat. The Shannon class is deployed using a tracked tractor and a tracked cradle, which has a launch and recovery system for the lifeboat. We were able to see the lifeboats from a viewing platform inside the station as well as floor level. We also visited the launch and recovery ramps. Due to the location of the station, and depending on the tide, the deployment can be close to the station or a two mile drive from the station. We had a collection for RLNI station and sent a cheque for £60. The round trip from the quay in Wells was about 2¼ miles.

On Friday evening 26 of us enjoyed an excellent meal at Ollie's Restaurant in the town.

On Saturday we met at 9.45am outside the Harbour Master's office for a circular walk that set off along the coast, followed a track alongside woodland and a path through the woods leading to the beach. There were many points of interest and fantastic views along the coast line, including novel flood defences, Holkham Beach, and a nature reserve as well as Holkham Park. We had a break for refreshments in The Outlook just inland from Holkham Beach, and a late lunch in The Courtyard Café at Holkham Hall. After lunch we took a walk through the grounds of Holkham Hall passing the house, lakes, obelisk and near the Great Barn on our return to Wells. Distance approx. 8 miles.

In the evening we met at the Golden Fleece at the quayside for a convivial dinner.

On Sunday there was a choice of taking a bus to Stiffkey for a 5 mile coastal walk back to Wells or going to Walsingham, a beautiful peaceful village with an Abbey and a Shrine both of which are open to the public. A group of 10 took a ride by the light railway steam train along the narrow-gauge railway from Wells to Walsingham which is bordered by fields with red poppies. Several of us visited the Shrine before returning to Wells along country lanes and paths through fields with a visit to the Carpenters Arms for some well deserved refreshments.

We walked approx. seven miles.

A total of 16 people took part in the walks on Sunday.

Thanks to Jean and Roger Venables for making the arrangements for such an excellent weekend.

Thanks to everybody who joined us.

Tony Barber

June 2023