

Barnwell Country Park – June 2021

As we gathered for a 10.30 start in the car park of the Barnwell Country Park, near the historic town of Oundle, on what was forecast to be the hottest day of the year, the sun had already started to beat down relentlessly. Above, three buzzards circled overhead like vultures in the Serengeti.



It was unusual for the Shamblers to have their walk in a Country Park, but this was the venue for our annual picnic walk and therefore different.

With everyone checked in, Finbarr informed us of future events prior to handing out our entertainment for the morning, an orienteering treasure hunt.

We set off in groups of two or three, armed with a map of the park and a pen. Our aim was to find 22 small square markers, distributed at various locations throughout the maze of shady Willow fringed paths between expanses of water.



Although the Park's perimeter ran to less than a couple of miles, we knew that to find these labels would entail walking much further. The Park Ranger had laid out the course a number of years previously, and we were warned that many of the markers may be overgrown or have fallen into disrepair.



Each location was marked on our quite detailed map, but this only gave an approximate position so only a good search amongst the undergrowth would reveal the prize. It was not going to be easy.

By 12.30pm even the keenest were back at the car park and had handed in their sheets. Surprisingly the winners managed 19 locations and claimed the prize of a bottle of Prosecco. Second and third were not disappointed.

Sitting in the shade of a tree, out came our picnic chairs and food and a time for discussion and planning of our next outing.





Barnwell Country Park had turned out to be a very pleasant experience. Once a two former gravel pits of 37 acres and now a mature site of established trees and lakes, the meandering paths take you through cool shaded pathways and aside the river Nene on its north side. Complimented with a cafe and entertainment for young children, it was not surprising the car park was rapidly filling as we left.