

## Out in the Countryside – 7 July 2022 – East Anglia, United Kingdom

A Note from Tom – July 17, 2022

*Yesterday the high was 71. Today the high is predicted to be 88. Monday 96. And Tuesday 103. But Wednesday its back to 73. Keep in mind our apartment has no air conditioning.*

*Nothing like being in the UK when it is having one of its hottest hot spells. My favorite headline: Climate models predicted current heat -- in 2050. The climate deniers continue to be correct -- the models are not perfect; the models keep predicting cooler weather than is occurring!*

*Stay cool, safe, healthy and avoid the Covid.*

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By Tom Allin

Out of the city and into the countryside. Life is better: no jet lag, Nancy's bag finally arrived, and we are walking paths not cobblestone streets and sidewalks.



View from the Ouse Fen RSPB wetlands project's parking lot. And it only gets better.

The plan for today is to stop at three Royal Society for the Protection of Birds nature reserves. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) was begun in 1889 and is the largest nature conservation charity in the United Kingdom. There are more than 150 reserves spread across the UK. For more on the RSPB go to: <https://www.rspb.org.uk>

My personal thought: Although the British are famous as birders or in their English language use – *twitters* rather than birders – the United Kingdom is not a country one goes to because of its great birds. Very few bird species and for the most part not colorful birds. However, when in the UK you or at least we bird what and where birds are available.



A muted swan I saw before leaving the parking lot. Saw five more before leaving the reserve.



One of the birding paths through the reserve.

There are lots of reasons that the English are walkers or hikers. One I have at the top of my list is: there are only three species of snakes in the UK and only ONE is poisonous and the poison of the Adder is very weak, good for immobilizing lizards and small birds not killing humans. As for wild animals that are known to attack people, I don't put any wild English animal in the same category as I do: cape buffalo, Grizzly or Polar bears, tigers, lions, bison, elephant, hippopotamus, etc. In summary, very little chance of having to run for it or look for a tree to climb due to the United Kingdom's wildlife.



Titchwell Marsh

Our next stop was Ouse Washes. It was closed due to construction maintenance. I got out and walked for maybe a half hour but didn't see anything of interest in the birding category but the scenery was pleasant.



Flowers in Titchwell Marsh.

Our last stop was Titchwell Marsh. I spent about two hours in the reserve's hides or walking the paths. The paths are built for wheelchairs until you get to the North Sea beach.



If you have never seen the North Sea, now you are.



Titchwell Marsh was an easy walk, interesting plants, fresh and saltwater marshes, benches to sit on, hides for the birders – given the chance I will return.

Next and final stop of our drive is The White House B & B on Sussex Farm Lane. The Sussex Farm Lane is an important identifying part of the identification when googling because there is another White House less than 15 minutes away from the B & B. You probably have guessed by now how I know this.



The entrance to The White House.



The entrance is around the right side of the building and I believe our room is the far left window on the second floor.

The White House serves dinner on Thursday through Saturday nights. We were in luck because today is Thursday. The dinner was great. I recommend the restaurant and the B & B. Before I forget, there aren't many breakfasts better than the one they serve. Our table for breakfast was in front of the far-right window before going around to the entrance.

The White House is surrounded by private estates and farms. The setting is beautiful. I wish we had spent two nights here to take advantage of the walking paths and the comforts of The White House.



The social room at The White House. To the left is the honor bar and doors to an enclosed patio.



Rutland Nature Reserve.

After a very good breakfast at The White House we began our drive to The Peak's District. I had a single stop planned at Rutland Nature Reserve's Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre. The entrance fee is 6 Pounds (or \$7.11)/person and includes parking. Nancy's back was feeling good so we spent several hours walking to the various bird hides or walking and looking.



Flowers outside of one of the bird hides.



A trail between hides.

Nancy bought sandwiches in the Centre's ticket and gift shop for our lunch. We stopped for lunch at one of the hides and snacked away. We spent two and half to three hours at Rutland Nature Reserve. It was a cool and pleasant day to be out and gave us a chance to stretch our legs.

Only one regret, we didn't see a European badger.

Side note: These wetlands have earned the Ramsar designation as has Caddo Lake outside Marshall, TX. After moving to Marshall, the first *Call-Out* (no longer a feature of the Marshall News-Messenger) I wrote was to call out the lies others were spreading about a Ramsar designation for Caddo Lake. My favorite was: If Caddo becomes a Ramsar designation first the U.N. and then Russia will be telling us how to manage and use Caddo Lake.



Driving into the Peak's District.



Driving is a challenge in the UK. This from a guy who has driven six months in India including a month in Nepal, Trinidad, Costa Rico, and 50 other countries. More on our – ours because Nancy is forever trying to keep me driving in the correct direction – driving experiences in a future blog post.