**Stour Valley, Saturday 17th October 2015**

9 walkers, 18 miles – leader Roderick Smith

A group of nine Kent and London Group members, four ladies and five men, met at Canterbury West station and set off at 1000 to walk to Sandwich. We walked past Canterbury's West Gate and east along the High Street before turning towards the Cathedral and thence along Burgate to St Augustine's Abbey. Continuing east we soon left the main road and joined the Stour Valley Path.

We passed a blue plaque in Fordwich commemorating John and Gregory Blaxland, early settlers in Australia, and reached our mid-morning tea and coffee stop at The Fordwich Arms by 1115 – beside the smallest and oldest Town Hall in England still in use. On to Stodmarsh and through a National Nature Reserve, walking beside the River Stour to lunch at The Grove Ferry Inn.

Lunch took a quick 45 minutes and we were on our way again by 1345. Crossing flat empty fields we reached West Stourmouth and went into its Churches Conservation Trust church.  Passing through East Stourmouth, we reached the Rose Garden Tearoom at Westmarsh by 1515, where David generously treated us to an excellent slice of cake each to accompany tea and coffee.

Walking through several miles of apple orchards full of heavy fruit, we turned up to the impressive 25-feet high walls of the Roman fort at Richborough (RVTVPIAE) by 1640. After crossing the railway line, we continued by the River Stour into Sandwich reaching its station by 1715 in good time for the 1725 train to London via Dover having walked about 18.5 miles in 7¼ hours. A fine day out despite the grey overcast and cool north-east wind.

Photographs by Roderick Smith