**Braintree to Maldon, Thursday 30th May 2019**

5 walkers, 18 miles – leader Ron Williamson

A walk which utilised two way marked routes North to South through mid-Essex.

The John Ray Walk starts conveniently at Braintree station and visits locations associated with an extraordinary man heralded as the father of English natural history. A comprehensive guide can be downloaded which describes the life and achievements of the 17th Century botanist. The visitor centre at the huge medieval barns of Cressing Temple proved to be an ideal refreshment stop. The last mile is at present difficult to follow as the official way seems to traverse a building site for a new housing development with no diversions indicated, probably best to stick to the main roads.

The Blackwater Trail closely follows the route of the former Witham to Maldon Railway. A pleasant green corridor between the two towns passing through the villages of Wickham and Langford the main points of interest being the only surviving wooden railway viaduct in the country and the restored station at Langford whose station master was the first female to hold such a position.

A satisfying stroll in unfamiliar country the unexpected bonus being the barns at Cressing Temple well worth a visit if you are in the area.

Photographs by Godfrey O'Callaghan