

Sunday 28th November, St Katherines, Savernake Forest & Tottenham Park 5.75 miles

The group met at St Katherine's Church at 10.00am, parking there by kind permission of the church wardens.

Eleven of us set off along the road to join the Grand Avenue through Savernake. We left the Grand Avenue to the right, crossed the avenue further along and walked deeper into the forest than on our Thursday walk, along a winding route to see some of Savernake's named oaks. We thought that the storm of the previous day might have brought some branches down to block our way but we saw relatively little damage and we were able to keep to our planned route. Some of the old named ancient oaks have already lost many of their limbs though and their new replacements have not reached maturity so did not have the magnificence of their namesakes. The named oaks we passed were the King and Queen oaks and the Spider oak. The weather was bright but freezing cold, the ground underfoot was icy and the small pond that we passed had a layer of thin ice.

We only stopped for a brief break because of the cold air and returned to St Katherine's through Tottenham Park pastures. In Tottenham Park we saw the extensive excavations and pipes being laid in the grounds. These pipes will supply Tottenham with heat through a ground collector horizontal array system of ground source heat pumps. In the distance we saw Tottenham House, still fully swathed in a huge plastic tent as renovations continue.

We were too late in the season to enjoy the autumn foliage but were able to appreciate the golden carpet of leaves underfoot.

Most of the paths through Savernake are not public rights of way but the forest is usually open to the public. However, the footpath through Tottenham Park is a public right-of-way. The map below gives an indication of our route.

