**Ramblers 3 Joydens Wood, August 2023**

I was waiting at the bus-stop (492) opposite my house and had just checked my phone to see when the bus was due, when a horn sounded and I was invited to join a couple of ladies for a lift to the “White Cross”. So thanks to Jackie. The 3 of us were joined in the car park by Bob & Sandra. From there we took our life in our hands crossing the roaring North Cray road. Heading up the footpath we crossed into a field filled with horses. Diagonally we veered across to enter a bridle way into Mount Mascal stables. The drive along from there is normally pitted with potholes and rutted through mud, but today it was dry. And so into the wood itself. My last trip had been up through the central path, past the dyk. But this time, I turned left upward and led along the perimeter path to reach the 5-ways fingerpost. Continuing straight on we headed towards Summerhill Drive, only stopping at the information board shortly before. I was fairly confident of the route, but pushed on alone to check. Sure enough, this marked the last chance to stay in the wood. So we struck off right along this perimeter path, passing the Scout Hut with its wooden statues, others claiming that they now knew where they were. After downs & ups we paralleled the golf course edge emerging onto the broad bridle way skirting the far edge. This time we went along the footpath bordering the “encampment” of mobile homes. Thus down to join the main bridle way again, eventually leading out past several new homes and some attractive old cottages at the top of Parsonage Lane. From here, one has large houses to one’s left and paddocks with horses on the right. Further still, the road plunges down steeply past other stables to debouch one at the North Cray road again. From there it was but a short step to lunch at the “White Cross”. Feeling that it had been rather a short walk, I opted to walk back over Footscray Meadows, almost immediately regretting it, certainly by the time I reached Five Arches, and that was only halfway back.