

29/10/2023

Railway Group Anglia Ranger Day Out to Woodbridge Tide Mill

The U3A railway group aren't just train spotters, railway enthusiasts & breakfast regulars at Wymondham Station Bistro!

We also like to visit other noteworthy engineering & mechanical projects. This time, a day trip to the Woodbridge Tide Mill combined with an Anglia Ranger ticket to travel on the iron roads.

If you want to see all the facets of the East Anglian countryside take the train take the strain with an Anglia day ranger ticket.

We travelled on the lines to Ely, to Ipswich, to Lowestoft (via Woodbridge), to Norwich & finally back to Wymondham. We saw Norfolk's arable lands, Thetford's forest, the Fens, the undulating mixed farming Suffolk countryside & the Southern Broads. In between which was a 3 hour stop-over in Woodbridge - for lunch, visiting the Tide Mill museum, seeing the Mill in operation & the Saxon Ship project on the adjacent quay.

Changing trains might seem like more strain than train but it allows the group to circulate & chat to everyone. There's no opportunity for cliques to form, everyone's involved, no lost voices, plenty of banter & of course a large dollop of Craic all round!



The Wymondham U3A Railway group, Woodbridge 14.07.23

Lunch pre-booked at the Whistlestop Café in the former station buildings. Highly recommended & enjoyed by all, portions were generous (though most members found room for a slice of cake or ice cream – large vase size!).

The Tide Mill

Woodbridge Tide Mill on the estuary of the River Deben dates back to the 12th century. Now fully restored, operates by a pond filled by the incoming tide. The present pond – smaller than the original – allows the Mill wheel, when the water is released, to turn from about 20 minutes. Their website gives details of operating times (woodbridgetidemill@gmail) so time your visit to see the water turn the main wheel.

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A marvel of early engineering, water mills were the cutting-edge technology for their time. Perfectly balanced and set up with Oak shafts & wheels, cogs of iron and sprockets with Hornbeam teeth. There are only a handful left in the world. The museum has many exhibits relating to corn & milling. An explanation of a Bushel – the Winchester Bushel – abolished in 1835, will appeal to historians.



One unexpected surprise was to visit the “**Sutton Hoo Ships Company,**” housed in the Longshed on an adjacent quay. They are building an exact replica (90 foot long) of King Raedwhal’s Sutton Hoo burial ship. We saw the team working on the ship, riveting planks, using axes to shape wooden sections & planing planks. When complete it will have 3,500 numbered rivets, oars for forty rowers (warriors?!) The boat is due to be launched in 2025 with final fitting out on the quayside.



A great day out, the group thoroughly recommend visiting both attractions. Check their websites for opening times & other information.