Sevenoaks Ramblers

Surrey Hills - 16 miles

Sunday, 26th April

It's an old cliché, but for good reason: on a warm spring day the UK countryside is the best place to be in the world. And so it was on Sunday 26 April 2026, when fifteen ramblers assembled in the chilly early morning air by St Barnabas Church near Ranmore Common, bracing themselves for the challenge of a sixteen mile walk on the Surrey Downs.

As we admired the stunning view from the top of the Common, Leith Hill, the highest point in Surrey and our lunch destination, stood clearly visible seven miles to the south. We first walked west along the North Downs Way before turning south down to the railway and the village of Wotton. A short bodily-fuel ingestion break at Holmbury St Mary fortified the party before it embarked on a steady climb up to Holmbury Hill (261 metres) where the views were stunning.

A steep descent from the Hill, bravely and skilfully managed by party members, even if some resorted to using their backsides as sledges, led us to a gentle path eastwards before a gradual but deceptively challenging ascent to the top of Leith Hill (294 metres) where we enjoyed in the sunshine a packed lunch and refreshments from the NT café as well as gob-smacking views north to London and south to the South Downs.

A well-defined and shaded path then took the party north through woods to the village of Westcott before its members re-crossed the railway line, to face the final challenge of a final climb past Denbies Wine Estate and Polesden Lacey NT property to return to the starting point.

Even though the conditions were ideal, this was a challenging and tiring route which, nonetheless, all fifteen managed in great spirits, even as the thought of warm baths and cups of tea baulked large in their minds as the end approached. Many thanks to all fifteen for coming, and their great company, as well as for the wonderful spring weather and English countryside which provided us with a timely reminder of the benefits of living in our 'sceptred isle'.



