Led by Terry Goble and Tony Letchford
There were 31 attending today, 26 members and 5 guests

There was a large gathering for this walk around the Upper Beeding Brooks. We all met at the top of Pound Lane near the former RDA stables. It was a glorious wintery afternoon. The sun was shining adding a little warmth, but the chilly breeze reminded us it really was November. Tony undertook all the formalities and gave a brief overview of the walk ahead and advice on staying safe.

Just before we set off a few birds were noted as a lapwing flew overhead and some wintering chiffchaff moved restlessly in the hedgerow opposite. We walked on towards the first open field.

A distant kestrel was our first raptor and showed well
eventually landing in a hawthorn bush in golden afternoon sun. The hawthorns were laden with juicy red berries and there were still many sloes on the blackthorn. Despite this feast the birds didn’t seem to have got their invites as we scratched around to find birds. A little concerning was that a few of the hedgerows lining the ditches had been dug out. Some of these hedgerows have been around a long time so it was sad to see them uprooted.

We gradually picked up a variety of species, with fieldfare flying through, Cetti's warblers exploding from the reeds. Linnets, meadow pipits and a female stonechat were all enjoyed.

The Egyptian geese flying over looked a little out of place on as chilly winter's day but appreciated none-the-less. The wet open field produced three snipe, but no sign of the short-eared owls that used to be regular at this spot. We continued around to the Eastern riverbank of the Adur and scanned for birds and found large flocks of corvids and gulls in the distance and oddly a grey heron silhouetted on a hill.
As it neared 4pm, the sun began to sink in the west, we continued down the bank side and the air became a little colder. The group had now strung out quite far as the stragglers kept an eye out for any owls that might start quartering at this part of the day. A small herd of roe deer were our only mammal sighting but looked lovely in the dusky light.

Despite our efforts we were unable to find any owls (First time on this walk no owls were seen!) and had to be content with green finches, more fieldfares (poor pic above) and distant buzzard.

The light was fast beginning to fade and identifying birds now a little tricky.
A kestrel flew close by as we descended the bank and headed back. We eventually made our way back to the parked cars, most of the group had already left, but those that remained bade each other ‘goodbye’ after a beautiful walk in fabulous winter weather. We agreed that a cold spell may bring the owls back to the area and we will set up an impromptu walk to find them if they arrive.

Birds List:
Grey heron
Mute swan
Mallard
Cormorant
Common snipe
Black-headed gull
Herring gull
Lesser black-backed gull

Ring-necked pheasant
Common buzzard
Common kestrel
Collared dove
Wood pigeon
Rook
Carrion crow
Jackdaw
Magpie
Common starling
Blackbird
Song thrush
Fieldfare
Blue tit
Chiffchaff
Cetti’s warbler
Meadow pipit
Stonechat
Linnet
Greenfinch
Gold finch