Twelve of us had an enjoyable and productive walk on the Chidham peninsula today. Skies were grey, but the rain held off and it wasn't too windy or cold.

We started with a couple of chiffs along the first hedge, then joined the path that goes alongside the edge of the estuary with views across the Bosham channel. On the stretch before the activity centre we had good views of the usual suspects - redshank, grey plover, oystercatcher, curlew - as well as some more unusual suspects - a greenshank, a whimbrel (heard only), and lots of black tailed godwits poking around in the mud. Good numbers of godwits were then present all through the walk, not in flocks but spaced out evenly along the waters edge on both banks busy feeding. On the pools to the right of the path we saw teal and a little egret, and then two great white egrets flew slowly overhead. We noted their size - similar to a heron in length - and on the return leg one was in the same pool but on the ground by the water, next to a little egret (hopefully photo to follow). There were brent geese everywhere, feeding in the shallower water along the shoreline on both banks. Before reaching the activity centre we had added reed bunting and buzzard.

Beyond the activity centre on the path to Cobnor Point the bird life increased in number and variety, as expected. We quickly added ringed plover, dunlin, shelduck, teal, great crested grebe, little grebe, turnstone, knot and started to get very good views of the black tailed godwits. Looking out across the channel to the deeper water we had our first three merganzers. We walked down the wooden steps onto the shore and then a few hundred yards to stop for lunch at the small hide provided by Chichester Harbour Conservancy. We scanned the water and found more merganzers, more great crested grebes, and then three great northern divers. Through the scopes we had excellent views as they were close in to the shore. Over lunch we also saw a shag.

On the return we were lucky to see a peregrine flying over Cobnor Point, and then soon after some of the group saw a marsh harrier. We added raven and chaffinch.

A good day out at one of my favourite locations which manages to be quite different one visit to the next.

Paul Emmerson