

## Birding, and more

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I spent some of the weekend in Snape, near the Suffolk coast. That was partly to have a break. It was also about some bird watching. And it was about trying out a lens because I have never really used a zoom telephoto, and as we are taking all the pictures for our YouTube thumbnails, as that avoids all potential copyright issues, meaning that taking photos is something I now need to do.

For those not familiar with the place, Snape is the home of an old Maltings that is now the main concert hall of Britten Pears Aldeburgh Festival:



The weather was variable, but that was fun. This barge is at the old quay, this being the limit of tidal navigation on the River Alde - and that, of course, is the reason for the maltings being where they are. The Christmas lights were on.



That tidal issue is important. This is a place where mudflats come, and go:





Just for variety, there is also great woodland and heath nearby, and I loved this bark:



That said, down the road at Hazlewood Marshes (which I have spelt correctly, and which is an amazing Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserve), where farmland has become inter-tidal marsh after the river wall was breached, the effect on the trees that now have their roots in salt water has been dramatic:



And there were birds, of course, but a moderately priced telephoto zoom was challenged by the light so getting photos was not easy. This avocet was looking, as they always do, serene. This is the Audrey Hepburn of the bird world. The black-tailed godwit was busy:



And this male teal was getting decidedly muddy, which is amusing for such a smart little duck:



There were a lot more photos, and I have not had time to look through them all. But it was definitely a good weekend, and the birding was quite exceptional. Frankly, if given the choice of Hazlewood Marches or the vastly RSPB better-known Minsmere, which is just up the road (but was not visited), I would definitely choose Snape. There were waders, ducks, passerines and the odd bird of prey, but almost no geese. Stonechat, linnet, turnstone, ringed plover, knots, a good selection of ducks, and waders galore - most especially dunlin, redshank, and those godwits and avocet, plus curlews and

others, made this a lot of fun.

There is more to life than economics - but I confess to doing quite a lot of this thinking as well. I couldn't help it with inspiration all around.