

## Pensthorp Visit Report

On Wednesday 10 June, 21 members of the art appreciation group visited Pensthorp park near Fakenham. Members travelled by car and I was taken by Jill who had organised the visit. As we travelled there was a heavy thunderstorm but luckily it stopped as we arrived. We got together in the cafe for coffee to start with. Jill had kindly arranged a group discount for us. With the ticket we were given a map so everyone chose their own route around the park. As I find walking difficult, I had arranged to hire a mobility scooter so I chose my own route meeting friends here and there. The grounds are extensive with many lakes. I decided to head for the cranes and flamingos while the weather was good. Heading through the wildlife habitat I enjoyed the many flowers in bloom and trickling stream. Going into the grassy area I encountered large numbers of grey lag geese and some mallard ducks roaming about. The path led through a gate which on my scooter I could not open so waited for others to catch me up and kindly open it. Approaching the crane and flamingo area I had the same problem again. I believe the gates are necessary to keep out foxes. I enjoyed the stately red crowned cranes which had two youngsters and also the beautiful crowned crane as well as the swallows that were nesting in the roof of their hide.



Next on to the flamingos many of which were nesting in a group. They build up mounds of soil to make the nests. Some were also bathing and showing off their beautiful bright pink underwings, always interesting to watch.



After spending some time with the flamingos, I travelled through some woodland and over the Monet style bridge to the millennium garden. The variety of flowers and foliage and pleasing layout of paths I thoroughly enjoyed. I returned to the main building over the main bridge and enjoyed tufted ducks and pochard on the water.



After a very pleasant morning we assembled at the courtyard cafe for a pleasant lunch with a good choice of options. I chose crab salad which was excellent. My next priority was to look at the art work in the gallery. This was a variety of landscapes and sea scrapes by Claire Frances Smith all of which I enjoyed. Following that I made my way into the aviary. This is a delight to me although it is a bit sad to see the birds flying and unable to get out. Wonderful to get close views of birds that are normally very shy and watch their behaviour. There were nesting avocets, displaying ruffs, flying bearded tits and turtle doves as well as black tailed godwits and garganey ducks. Another shower meant spending some time in the viewing gallery looking out at the pleasant lake. We were lucky to escape too many showers and I hope everyone enjoyed the day as much as I did.

**Report and images by Marian Rowe.**