

## A Walk around the Solar System. 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

Rodney Buckland took a group of us on a tour of the Solar System filled with fascinating facts on the journey.

Space is big, really big, but the good folk of *Otford* have built a scale model.

With the Sun resplendent on its plinth in the far reaches of the Otford Village Recreation Ground, both the physical sizes of the eight planets (and one ex-planet - Pluto) and their distances from the Sun are faithfully represented at a scale of 1:5 billion as are their positions around the Sun at 00:01 on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000.

The inner planets – Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars – can all be reached in a few minutes across the cricket field, but the outer planets – Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune will take us onto the high street and out of the village centre for half an hour or so.

Pluto – half an hour further on – requires an intrepid trek through fields north of *Pilgrims Way West*. Our tour of the Solar System took us about an hour and a half, allowing for discussion of what we know about each of the planets (and their many moons) from 55 years of probing by our mechatronic deep space explorers.

After the walk we retired to the Pond View Café for refreshments.



Otford Rec.



Start of the walk



The Sun



Plaque



Earth (small dot above name to scale)



Pluto