**West of Petersfield, Saturday 27th April 2013**

10 walkers, 20 miles – leader Roderick Smith

A group of ten delightful people met at 09:30 at Petersfield Station on Saturday 27 April 2013 for a 20-mile walk. After initial introductions, the group walked through Petersfield Square, past the statue of William III, to the Lake before returning to the Causeway and following the Hangers Way to Buriton. There was a splendid sight of wild primroses shortly before reaching Buriton pond, and then had our first steep climb of the day through the old chalk workings. We followed the Hangers Way to a welcome break for mid-morning coffee at the Queen Elizabeth Forest Visitor Centre.

Fortified by coffee and cake we climbed the South Downs Way to the top of Butser in a cool north-easterly breeze. Distant views to the Isle of Wight were enjoyed by all before descending north-west to the Izaak Walton pub at East Meon for an excellent lunch – reasonable prices and good service; recommended. Sadly three adjoining thatched cottages burnt out only a month or so previously.

We left the pub after an hour, and visited the church, a 3-star sight in Simon Jenkins’ book because of its 12th century Tournai marble font. The kneelers and Millennium tapestry were admired. The third steep climb of the day followed immediately, rewarded by a “bird’s-eye” view of the village, with far-reaching views of the South Downs partly obscured by a distant hailstorm.

We walked past Bordean House to Froxfield before crossing fields and stiles to reach the “pub with no name” aka the White Horse for afternoon refreshment. The leader decided not to visit Hawkley for a fourth steep climb so we had a level walk to rejoin the Hangers Way at the Shoulder of Mutton hill. A brief stop at the Poet’s Stone for a magnificent view of the South Downs to Chanctonbury Ring was followed by a steep but dry descent. Passing through Steep, a brisk walk took us to finish at Petersfield Station at 17:45. A thoroughly enjoyable walk of more than 20 miles (32k) in a total of just over 8 hours, with a moving average speed above 3mph (5kph).

Photo is of the group at the Poet’s Stone (Edward Thomas, Adlestrop).