**So and So, Tuesday 7th July 2015**

13 walkers, 9 miles – leader Roderick Smith

On a fine evening, a group of 13 met at Holborn Station and walked into Lincoln’s Inn Fields to Sir John Soane’s Museum. The usual queue of 100 or so visitors were waiting patiently for free admission on the first Tuesday of the month, but we walked away from the Museum to the side streets of Covent Garden and Soho. Crossing Drury Lane we noted Sainsburys opened their first shop, in the Lane in 1869, and a certain Dr Schweppe brought his drink from Geneva to the Lane in 1792. Via Denmark Street and the former home of Siebe (diving helmets), we passed the home of Christopher Smith, Handel’s secretary.

Through Hanover Square and Grosvenor Square where a summer concert was in progress, and past the Animals in War Memorial, we reached Hyde Park. A brief stop by the Italian Gardens near Lancaster Gate tube station and on to Kensington Gardens and Notting Hill. Side streets were used where possible before reaching Shepherds Bush. Acton Park provided a brief respite from the busy Uxbridge Road before we passed the site of the first Waitrose store and reached the tranquillity of Ealing Common. Via The Grove, we arrived at Pitzhanger, Soane’s country home 1800-1810. Most of the group continued to Ealing Broadway station to end the walk soon after 9pm, while three visited the Drapers’ Arms where a sparsely attended quiz night was in progress.

Although Pitzhanger is closed until 2018 for restoration, the attractive Walpole Park, west of the house, is fully open. The 10-mile walk connected Soane’s London home with his country home and followed, where possible, roads which Soane would have walked or ridden 200 years previously.

Photographs by Roderick Smith