**Wetlands Explorer, Saturday 19th March 2016**

26 walkers, 18 miles – leader Peter Aylmer

We started as 24, picked up new members Kyla and Katie at the Angel so peaking at 26, though after lunch at the Ferry Boat Inn in Tottenham one or two split off at intervals for mundane tasks such as cooking the dinner!

The group set off along the Regents' Canal, with a quick detour round Victoria Park, before tracing the course of the New River through Canonbury to Clissold Park in Stoke Newington – a good place for a morning stop. Just beyond here we had a look at the first of two London Wildlife Trust wetlands projects, the Woodberry Wetlands – it opens on 1 May so we were a bit early. A road stretch took us through Stamford Hill on the Sabbath, meeting the Ashkenazi Jewish community on their way to and from the synagogue, the married men resplendent in their brown shtreimels or fur hats – no ear covering alas, or some of us might willingly have borrowed them. The Lea then took us to the Ferry Boat Inn, which had an area ready for us.

Opposite the pub we entered the Walthamstow Fisheries, currently used for recreational angling but the site of another London Wildlife Trust project to create the Walthamstow Wetlands. When it's ready next year, there will be a through-route to Walthamstow Marshes, but for now we looped round reservoirs 2 and 3 and diverted through a pretty terraced estate by Blackhorse Road tube before reaching the marshes. We were soon back on the Lea, but cut off into the Middlesex Filter Beds – where once the reservoir water was made drinkable, now a nature reserve – where the 'Nature's Throne' artwork was a great place for the afternoon break. The Lea splits into navigation and river at the filter beds, and we chose the latter to continue before heading across Hackney Marshes and the Wick Woodlands before a longer Lea stretch took us to the wonderful Three Mills at Bromley-by-Bow. Had TfL been running the District Line, that would have been the walk end, but instead the twentieth mile took us to the Stratford finish.

Photographs by Peter Aylmer