**The Other Way in Essex, Saturday 25th June 2016**

12 walkers, 26 miles – leader Dick Bowman

At 26 miles, I believe that this was the longest group walk on the London LDWA calendar so far this summer. The walk largely followed two footpaths; the Essex Way from Epping Forest towards Toot Hill and Chipping Ongar, a little after which we picked up the Three Forests Way near Fyfield, towards Bishops Stortford.

There were four ‘pit stops’ on this walk, which were perfectly timed. The first at St Peter’s Church, Shelley after our first 9 miles, the second at Abbess Roding, then later at Bretts farm shop in White Roding, a great find, as was the Cock Inn Public House in Hatfield.

The unseasonably heavy rain we’ve had in the South East of England over the last couple of weeks was certainly evident under foot throughout the walk.

We were fortunate with the weather, being mostly sunny all day, but it was humid, especially in the fields. Despite the rumbles of thunder and spectacular lighting seen afar, the rain-heavy black clouds seemed to bypass our route until the very last few miles, as we headed towards our finish. It was quite refreshing! At least it gave us a boost to get to the station on time and to finish the walk in 10 hours, which included our well-earned breaks. Well done to all!

Report by Helen Franklin

Twelve walkers, well-led by Dick, set off on a 26 mile "marathon" trip around some of Essex's well- but also lesser-known paths.

We splashed through "some" mud and pools of lying water. (You were right Dick, we loved The Marsh!) but mainly followed beautiful long grassy trails, woodland tracks and "snaked" through fields of yellowing barley and fresh green wheat. Colours were heightened by bright sunshine under wide east country skies.  The tree-line views in the distances were at their Essex best.

Four much-needed and interesting refreshment breaks fuelled our progress, including one at Abbess Roding, site of St Edmunds church of which the medieval abbess of Barking was patron.

All twelve walkers finished the trail, well satisfied with our day's prowess.

Report by Dorothy Shepherd

Photographs by Joelle Paul & Gavin Fuller