**Ruislip Woods, Thursday 30th June 2016**

11 walkers, 6 miles – leader Peter Aylmer

The last in my series of three evening walks this month. As before, I got to take a back seat in leading, with walkers taking it in turns to interpret the directions I had drafted for my forthcoming Cicerone guide to London.

Things really got interesting when we reached the edge of Bayhurst Wood country park, with twenty yards or so of greasy mud-slime – not there the other times I've walked the path and a dramatic illustration of what a wet summer can do. Navigationally though the main problem lay in Mad Bess Wood. We were following in part the Hillingdon Trail, but here it has two sets of waymarkers, one old and one new, which don't tally with each other or even in one case within themselves – pointing us through more mud-slime when we didn't need to go there. So our attention might have been diverted away from the magnificent oak standards which help define these woods as a National Nature Reserve.

The concrete dam of Ruislip Lido was something of a relief after all that, and the local waymarking in Park Wood was exemplary. With no further alarums (though I had to change one 'left' to a 'right' – the guide-book writer's nightmare), we reached Northwood Hills tube, or for the majority, the Wetherspoons next door. It has been due to close for some time, goodness knows why as it seemed to be thriving, but they hung on just for us.

Photograph by Peter Aylmer