**Harlow to Chingford, Saturday 12th November 2016**

8 walkers, 18 miles – leader Keith Lane

The weather forecast was nearly right. It certainly rained heavily but not all the morning only about an hour and a half and then on it was mostly cloudy so having walked 4.5 miles along the River Stort and survived (just) trying to get on a makeshift swing it was uphill to an undulating route to Upville. The carefully planned route we took to circumvent the greens at Nazeing Golf Club wasn't necessary as it was deserted as were the riverbanks and subsequent footpaths.

The arrangements to ensure we had a decent lunch in a warm pub worked well and was very welcome – The Horseshoes pub at Upville did us proud. I said I would mention them in high places so Ron, when we are up on Helvellyn next year remind me to mention them.

After lunch we followed the Forest Way to High Beech for a hot drink before getting off the beaten track on our way to hug the old oak tree near Connaught Water. It was to accommodate Bola the tree hugger idea and under duress, you must understand, it took five of us holding hands to circumvent it.

The beech groves did not disappoint despite a misty dull light the colours were muted to shades of grey (maybe not 50) but never mind it was an impressionistic with expressionist black edges to the tree trunks. Stunning.

After walking along Connaught Water we headed for Chingford Station in time to catch the 16:25 train

A big thank you to the plucky 7 who, despite the overly pessimistic weather report, joined me for a memorable and fun day.

Photographs by Keith Lane (first 21; taken on the recce 10th November except the bedraggled ones) and Bola Baruwa (remaining 22)