**Going Loopy Part 3: Banstead to Hatton Cross, Saturday 25th March 2017**

13 walkers, 21 miles – leader Peter Aylmer

Seven of us braved the rail replacement bus from West Croydon to Banstead on a sunny but breezy morning, and immediately set off across Banstead Common. Unfortunately, the bus didn't go to Banstead station itself, where six more were waiting ... All resolved thankfully thanks to the use of mobile phone technology.

This stage of the Loop starts high, gets low and then stays there - in elevation terms, not loveliness quotient. After a mile and a bit of (mostly well-heeled) housing we came to the welcome open space of Nonsuch Park - one-time hunting grounds for Henry VIII - and not far from there, in Ewell village, we picked up the Hogsmill River at its source, which the Loop follows almost all the way to the Thames at Kingston, our lunch stop.

Soon after we were in Bushy Park, one of the great Royal Parks. The Loop traverses it for over two miles, and without doubt it's one of the highlights of the entire trail. Plenty of deer, plenty of daffodils, and plenty of Londoners - us included - simply having a good time. After a lengthy road stretch, we picked up another Thames tributary the Crane. It was beside us most of the way to the finish, apart from a diversion through Hounslow Heath, once a highwayman's haunt and still with a wild feel to it. The last few yards are beside the busy A30, but we were safely under the canopy of Hatton Cross tube a few minutes in advance of the promised 6pm.

Photographs by Peter Aylmer