**Upsome Downs, Saturday 15th April 2017**

30 walkers, 21 miles – leader Keith Lane

The Saga of the numbers

29 walkers gathered at Epsom Station for the "walk of two halves".  At the lunch venue on top of Boxhill another joined but shortly after 3 female walkers decided to leave making a Dent in the numbers. So the range consisted of 27 to 30.

The Saga of the morning

Leaving the station we walked through the park and heading for the bridleways ascending up to Epsom Downs where we headed for the highest spot close to the stadium where we could look back over London and Wembley Stadium and also looked forward to see prominent spire of the Church at Headley Heath which is where we were headed next.

Having walked through the tunnel to cross the racecourse we were walking towards the gap in the railings to cross it again when two horses and riders came through and were following a road down towards the stadium.  Suddenly a council vehicle arrived waving at us and telling us to stop walking as apparently we were spooking the horses which I think is probably a first on a LDWA walk.  A little surprising actually as the horses looked totally unspooked I suspect that the “jobsworths” were making a statement at the size of the group.

We steadily ascended out to the church where we stopped for a refreshment break before undulating our way to Mickleham Downs (Mickleham Gallops) which was the highest part of the walk before ascending Boxhill. Unfortunately there is a very sudden descent using the staircase to get to the foot of Boxhill before having to ascend Juniper Tops on the open escarpment.

As the morning was cloudy and relatively cold I did not expect too many people to be at the National Trust café but I had not allowed for an Easter egg event and the whole area was smothered by adults and children running wild through the woods and filling the queues at the café. However we all managed to re-fuel ourselves and continue after 45 minutes.

The Saga of the afternoon

I prophesied that the walk would go rapidly downhill after lunch and indeed it did when we descended directly from the viewing platform to the plain below which we would spend the afternoon walking on.

Skirting round Brockham we headed in an easterly direction with fabulous views of the North Downs until we were nearly due South of Colley Hill, enjoying warm and sunny weather, then headed South to the village pub in Leigh for the big decision of the day which was when we would leave to ensure we caught the hourly train at 18:19 which was the last train of the day.

After a discussion, in which one of the locals joined in, we decided to leave at 4 o'clock giving us another 45 minute break and in fact got to the station at 17:45. Another Dent in the numbers occurred when the late lunchtime joiner suddenly jumped on a bus rather than catching the train but the rest of us were back in London in fairly short shrift.

Photographs by Keith Lane and Ian Fairweather