**O Captain, My Captain, Sunday 5th November 2017**

13 walkers, 20 miles – leader Julie Welch

20 miles… plus a few more for the hard cases. 13 walkers convened at Upton Park on a lovely late autumn day to link the start and finish of the career of Bobby Moore, England’s only World Cup winning captain. At the West Ham end, we paused in Green Street to gaze upon the sad sight of the old Boleyn Ground, now a building site, and then, passing the statue of West Ham’s famous World Cup trio Moore, Hurst and Peters, with an add-on in the form of defender Ray Wilson, we detoured to ‘Flanders Field’, now a community run sports and social centre, to see the pitch where Bobby was discovered as a schoolboy in the 1950s by West Ham scout Wally St. Pierre (the name effortlessly remembered by stalwart West Ham fan Dave Williams). Then it was on to the Capital Ring and through the Woolwich foot tunnel to Greenwich for lunch.

The second part of the day took in the Thames Path south side, with several convenient bailing-out points for those who didn’t want to go quite the full distance. We enjoyed a lovely tea stop in the gloaming at the Riverside Café before crossing Vauxhall Bridge to the north side, by which time the fireworks were popping, the bridges were illuminated and the lights of London were reflected in the Thames – just beautiful.

The Flanders Field detour meant we had clocked up the full 20 miles by Chelsea Bridge, but three of us opted to go the distance and were rewarded by a wonderful moonlit panorama by the Thames, past Fulham Palace and through Bishop’s Park, to Fulham F.C.’s ground, Craven Cottage, where Bobby Moore finished his playing career.

Photographs by Julie Welch