**Option C, Sunday 11th February 2018**

22 walkers, 17 miles – leader Peter Jull

Despite an unintended clash with The Punchbowl, 22 gathered under clear blue skies and sheltered from the forecast strong winds at Higham station including one Neil Higham (eventually). Split half from Venus and half from Mars one from Sussex spoilt an equal split betwixt London & Kent. Once off road it was across fairly flat fields to the village of Cliffe. Leaving through the churchyard revealed a sparkling in the sunshine and positively perceived view across the Medway estuary, albeit dominated by the Grain oil terminal,  which was over appreciated by one who paused too long photographing and when combined with a bush break was lost off the back. Mutual mobile numbers enabled successful recovery directions to be given. A lakeside gravel track was a break from mud but weaving round plentiful puddles added distance. More weaving through puddly sheep fields was beside a well graffitied freight train waiting to collect gravel from the quarrying that had created the lakes. Across its tracks a few times (twice unintentionally) and Chalk churchyard was chosen for a picnic lunch stop. Walking on was ear bitingly exposed during explanations of which fields would succumb to the cutting and tunnel entrance of the Lower Thames Crossing Option C and across the golf course which would soon become two halves. Local youths on off road motor bikes were churning up woodland paths used to traverse between two footpaths in fields nearest the new A2 junction which will be truncated by the connection. Heading for home involved skirting Shorne Woods Country Park and village and Dickens’ Gads Hill home with up and downs now more pronounced. Gathering clouds had produced only one brief whitey shower before the final fields down to the station completed a pleasant winter walk.

Photographs by Peter Jull