**Winter Solstice Challenge Walk, Friday 21st December 2018**

16 walkers, 14 miles – leader Keith Lane

In the deep mid-winter 10 diehard walkers stood at Trafalgar Square to welcome Dawn. Unfortunately Dawn did not show up so we witnessed sunrise (08:03 actually) and more importantly the opening of The Lord Moon of the Mall (08:00 actually) upon which we descended for breakfast.

During the course of our meal 6 other walkers joined us and so it was that 16 walkers departed at 09:30 to walk through Covent Garden past the Law Courts and into the Temple to pause at Temple Church and the spot where the Great Fire of London was finally extinguished.

Using a route of Medieval alleyways we partook of the St Pauls conservation area and past the Monument to the Riverside and thence to Canary Wharf. The Second Wetherspoons was mobbed by de-mobbed Builders and a democratic decision was made to abort the coffee stop and stoically march on to Greenwich which was greatly aided by gale force winds in the Millwall area

The Clock House at Greenwich, thankfully had a couple of spare tables which afforded a pleasant, inexpensive and labour saving (using the App by some) Christmas lunch

Following the south bank of the Thames the tide had ebbed, the wind had dropped and, the clouds diminished to provide an unseasonal mild and partially sunny afternoon.

We ascended Stave Hill well before sunset and continued pausing at the appointed time (15:53 actually) to mark the end of the shortest of days and looked forward to the evenings lengthening and to the Spring.

At Tower Bridge, another democratic decision took place and instead of the appointed Wetherspoons, Liberty Bounds, Tower Hill we headed for the closer Pommelers Rest which also had the advantage to the Leader of being within a short distance of London Bridge station

Unfortunately by not using all the appointed Wetherspoons the Challenge Walk was not successful. Oh well, maybe next year?

Photographs by Keith Lane; more by Bola Baruwa, Ian Fairweather and Charlotte Minchell on the group Facebook site