**London 25th Anniversary Walk: North London, Saturday 12th September 2020**

6 walkers, 17.5 miles – leader Godfrey O’Callaghan

In the end, Colin was the only person to start at Oakwood; everyone else meet at Totteridge and Whetstone. Colin, who has been having trouble with his ankle decided not to go any further. There were two reasons for that – his ankle felt sore after a mid-week walk and he was expecting (and excited) about proofs of a novel he has recently completed – and they were arriving that morning. I will put in a plug for him here. The book’s title is *Fifty Paces Forward!* a murder mystery for walkers containing all the usual activities of a modern-day novel - the word ‘Fifty’ might give a clue. The book will be available at a special price for LDWA members.

If one artistic personality wasn’t enough we had another in the shape of Samoan-born Aivale Cole. Her website http://aivalecole.com provides a better introduction to her than I can. Just listen listen to her wonderful voice. I only learnt about Aivale after Susanne emailed me. This was her first walk and she did well to get through it.

The Dollis Valley Green Walk was followed for the first half of our walk; a pleasant meander along the water course in well wooded surroundings and dappled sunlight. At one point it follows a road for a short distance, passing under the impressive Dollis Valley Viaduct that carries the Norther Line to Mill Hill East.

Eventually the route turns to the different but no less delightful landscape of Hampstead Garden Village. However, before that, it passes through Little Wood. There took a break in a leafy glade featuring a secluded outdoor theatre. A local dog walker reminded us not to leave litter. Then on to Big Wood before reaching the homes and buildings of the Garden Village itself. The transition from village to Hampstead Heath extension is nicely thought out, even a little grand. and nicely sets one up for the path to Hill Park and the splendid surroundings of Pergola Gardens. They are a delight and we took our lunch break there.

Crossing Hampstead Heath it was fairly easy to find a quiet route but eventually the packed summit of Parliament Hill had to be faced for the view and obligatory photo over London. We moved quickly on though to Gospel Oak where we entered the eye-catching terraces of Oak Village and then, in contrast, the area of Lismore Circus.

There was a short transition between town and country as we headed towards Primrose Hill and Regents Park.  We took some time to enjoy Queen Mary’s Rose Garden and the surroundings of the Inner Circle.

The remainder of the walk to the finish wandered through and around Paddington Street Gardens, The Wallace Collection, Grosvenor Square, Mount Street Gardens, Shepherds Market before the finale of Green Park and St James’s before crossing the Mall to find Lonica, Paul and Adam, leaders of three other anniversary groups. The only thing to do then once all groups were assembled was to have a few photos taken by Gavin and open the Prosecco - Pop!

Photographs by Godfrey O’Callaghan