**The Thames in Autumn, Saturday 15th November 2008**

16 walkers, 22 miles – leader Jerome Ripp

8.30 Kingston station, a party of 16 adventurous walkers, mostly London group stalwarts but also some non-members who wanted to experience a Jerome 20-miler, they said they would join the LDWA, let's hope they do because it was a cracking walk. A mild autumn day, even patches of blue sky helped to speed us on our circuit of the western suburbs. Not a single stile was also a bonus. Via the parks of Bushey, Fulwell, Cranford and Hounslow Heath, a green corridor led us to the end of the runway at Heathrow with planes roaring just over our heads. For a variety of noise we crossed the M4 and then the Grand Union canal was our companion. Lunch at the Old Oak Tree came after 14.5 miles which according to Nicole, making a welcome reappearance after her Greece experience, was a record for a morning walk. There had been a few accidental extras where the leader had pretended to get lost but in the afternoon there were some genuine detours. The police had closed part of the canal towpath and later on, after Osterley Park, Syon Park with tea, we finally reached the Thames only to find severe flooding on both banks. We eventually made it back to Richmond with Rob and Don deciding to swim to the station. Some people claimed it was over 22 miles but what’s a few extra miles between friends!!