**Egham Windsor Park Runnymede Egham, Saturday 24th April 2021**

12 walkers, 16.6 miles – leader Paul Lawrence

Spring sunshine greeted us, with most meeting again for the first time since lockdown. Heading up Coopers Hill we briefly visited the Air Forces Memorial that remembers over 20,000 air men and women from the War with no known graves, a quiet site well kept by the War Graves Commission with views to west London. On into Windsor Great Park to walk among the late camellias and early rhododendrons in the Valley Gardens with views to Virginia Water, to lunch in the Heather Garden. With the dry spell, watering was already in full swing. Then across Smith’s Lawn, where in 1948 the Duke of Edinburgh had started the Olympic Road Cycle Race in the Austerity Olympics, and its more recent polo grounds, picking up the LDWA 2012 Games 100 route and passing the site of its final checkpoint. Using little-frequented paths we worked around to cross the Long Walk and up to Bishopsgate in shady woods with sightings of a hare (or was it a small deer?), parakeets and red kites, noting the welcome absence of the usual aircraft noise as this is a Heathrow approach. The final section descended to Runnymede meadows and visited the monuments for JFK, Magna Carta and Writ in Water, with the water in the last one covered in pond weed, so not reflecting as it should the Magna Carta text around it. Ending along the Thames Path, the world and its dog were at play, with ice creams consumed as river boats chugged by in the warm sun.

Pictures by Paul Lawrence and Godfrey O’Callaghan