**Founders’ Tree Walk: Long Distance, Saturday 9th October 2021**

15 walkers, 21.5 miles – leader Gavin Fuller

There was a good turnout at a misty Dorking station for the longest of the walks laid on to the Founders tree. The walk left the down through Denbies vineyard before climbing onto the North Downs where there were some interesting views over the mist and fog in the valley below as the route took in the two locations named for the LDWA’’s founders Steer’s Field and Blatchford Down before descending off the latter down a lesser-used path. The walk then passed through the atmospherically unlit Broomy Downs before heading past Paddington Farm to the quaint old houses of Sutton Abinger, and then to Peaslake to rendezvous with the shorter walk parties at the Hurtwood Inn, arriving bank on the booked time of 12.45 to the leader’s pleasure. After a longer-than-planned lunch stop it was them up en masse to the Founders Tree (see elsewhere for the report of what happened there) whence the exigencies of time meant this group (save one who decided to remain with the other walkers) had to be anti-social and head off to the toposcope at Pitch Hill ahead of the rest, who it met coming back off the hill for a final goodbye, Thence it was on to the highest point of the day at Holmbury Hill before an undulating return to Dorking, not uneventfully with the likes of a newly-fallen tree on a narrow path to negotiate meaning the return to Dorking was somewhat later then intended. This did enable the group to appreciate the magical evening stillness of the area however, which combined with the fact that the train those returning to London caught (save one, who found the lure of Dorking’s Lidl too hard to resist) was one Colin Saunders decided to get due to the previous one being full of drunken ramblers meant the lateness did have some upsides! Curiously both the distance and ascent (1,936ft) were more than when the leader and Barry the backmarker had previously recced the route!

Photographs by Ian Watson and Gavin Fuller