**North Wessex Noodle, Saturday 21st May 2022**

12 walkers, 21.4 miles – leader Gavin Fuller

Eight walkers from London Group were joined by three from Wiltshire and one from Thames Valley as we ventured to Kintbury station for the first time since 2011. Bright weather accompanied the tunnel-like path from Kintbury village out towards the downs, which were reached by a relatively easy climb. Passing Walbury Hill, Berkshire’s county top and at 974ft (297m), the highest point in South-East England elevenses were taken by a decidedly bracing Combe Gibbet, but the extensive views made up for the chilly gloom on top.

Continuing westwards along the North Wessex Downs, the views stated fine to the descent, taken after a lunchtime repast on a grassy sward at the path’s conclusion, the leader considering it better to have food before we went to Starveall Farm! The village of Shalbourne was reached by the most adventurous path of the day; this village and the next one of Ham having plenty of thatched cottages to admire.

After a restorative drink in the Crown & Anchor in Ham (one of the Sunday Telegraph’s recommended pubs for walkers in a 2021 article), it was on past wild flower meadows to Hungerford, passing a memorial to the tragic events of 1987 before exiting through a curious gate onto Hungerford Port Down swathed on buttercups, Fortunately the cows lying down didn’t bring the weather this portends, and it was a pleasant sunny stroll along the Kennet & Avon Canal back to Kintbury, where the group had been so quick that there was time for another drink for some before catching the train back after an enjoyable day out.

Photographs by Gavin Fuller