**Summer Hills, Saturday 6th June 2009**

18 walkers, 24 miles – leader Jerome Ripp

It was raining in London but as 18 of us set off from Brighton station at 9, it was dry, breezy and cool, ideal conditions for a fast-paced walk on the exposed South Downs. Through the town via Queens Park with its impressive gates and slowly climbing into the hills passing the racecourse. Over Falmer Hill and into the village for a rest on the village green. A long steady climb to the ridge and the route of the long-distance South Downs Way which we followed all the way to lunch at the Newmarket Inn on the A27. Good food and a much-needed rest as our pace was about 3.4 miles per hour. However the leader soon whipped the group up for a return to the ridge and a great view over the top and down to Kingston. This gave us the opportunity to climb back up again by a very steep path with an optional illegal extra but from here it was mainly downhill. Through a series of Bottoms and down to the Rottingdean windmill on Beacon Hill. A final stretch took us along the coast to the Marina where the party fragmented. It was too cold for a swim but some decided to stay for fish and beer while the rest had a race between the walkers and the bus users which seemed to be a dead heat at the station where we collapsed into the train after a 9 hour walk. About 24 miles and loads of contour lines crossed. Also I was told to mention the glorious poppies which adorned many of the fields near the ridge.