**Historic Colchester and Surrounding Villages, Saturday 20th June 2009**

13 walkers, 23 miles – leader Rob Myers

After promising to lead a walk in my home town of Colchester for the past ten years I finally did. It felt strange not to have to get up at the crack of dawn in order to make a London walk but instead to have everybody make a long journey to visit me. At the due departure time of 9am 9 walkers had gathered, however, after a half hour delay 13 walkers set out. The walk commenced with a stroll through Highwoods Country Park where the group got an excellent view of the town. Shortly afterwards the route joined the Camulodunum which is a 25 mile circular route surrounding Colchester that had been devised 25 years ago by long time LDWA member Derek Keeble. The route passed through Crockleford Heath and Salary Brook before reaching the ancient port of Hythe. There was at this point an attractive amble along the banks of the meandering River Colne to Fingringhoe. Halfway along this river walk was lunch at the Albion pub in the pretty village of Rowhedge. Simon the landlord of the Albion made us very welcome. The pub was a free house serving an excellent selection of Real Ale and pre-ordered substantial baguettes at £3.75. After Fingringhoe the walk passed through Friday Woods where the group were surprised to find a river crossing where a perfectly good bridge lay on the bank and the crossing was via an ill-assorted collection of unstable logs. I was quite impressed that only Laura managed to get her feet wet. After the pretty Roman River Valley Nature Reserve we left the Camulodunum to go to Gosbecks Archaeological Park where the outline of a Roman Theatre and Temple was carefully laid out on the grass field. Here I gave a brief talk on the history of Colchester. After leaving Gosbecks we headed via Grymes Dyke and Hilly Fields into the centre of town. The walk ended with a brief tour of the historic highlights of the town including the Balkerne Gate, St Mary's Church, Victorian Water Tower, our beautiful Victorian Town Hall, and of course our jewel in the crown Colchester Castle.