**Fishersgate to Ferring, Saturday 26th June 2010**

10 walkers, 25 miles – leader Mike Ratcliff

Probably the hottest day of the year so far was in store for the ten of us who set out from Fishersgate Station at 09.05 this particular Saturday morning. Starting in the urban sprawl of Southwick that stretches almost continuously west from Brighton, we soon left the town behind to ascend rapidly up towards the main ridge of the South Downs at Fulking Hill, just west of Devil's Dyke. With beautiful views looking north towards Surrey we swung left to walk the famous track that stretches west along the chalk ridge towards Amberley and eventually all the way to Winchester. However our mission for the day was far more modest with Goring by Sea as our target, back down at the coast. We ascended and descended the undulating hills with the hard chalk and even harder heat all around making progress rapid but tiring. We soon reached Truleigh Hill with its enormous radio masts and then descended one of the main valleys that dissect the downs where the River Adur passes through, soon to reach the sea near Shoreham. After walking through the district of Bramber and reaching a common section of track with the Monarch's Way, we were now approaching Chanctonbury Hill with its timeless, grand hill fort standing so mysterious but alluring as ever. Surely one of the most highly charged points in the region! After a pause to take in the moment at this magical place we were then greeted by our first views of the village of Washington below us to our right as we continued the final stretch of our mornings walk. The Frankland Arms gave us a well-earned lunch stop and a chance to refuel and cool down with the fierce heat and humidity of the day now at its most intense. After more than an hour of rest and recuperation and a good deal of lounging in the sun with drinks, we continued our way on with a fairly brisk ascent back up into the hills near Sullington. Approaching Chantry Post, an old and familiar junction of the South Downs Way just east of Amberley, we finally said farewell to the beautiful long distance past that had provided us with our route for most of the day and made our final descent of the chalk ridge, now travelling south towards the coast. Passing by numerous ancient tumuli and equally ancient field systems, the historically charged landscape with its many ghosts started to flatten out as we re-crossed the Monarch's Way to pass through the quaint old village of Patching with its fabulous church. Crossing the A27 for the second time that day we proceeded towards our final Hill of the day with arguably some of the most awe-inspiring views in the area. At Highdown Hill we didn't just find ourselves amongst the ancient earthworks of another exquisite Iron Age hill fort but were confronted by a shock of blues and greens of the Channel gleaming at us through the clear afternoon air, now free from the humid haze that had characterised much of the morning's walking. After twenty-five long and sweaty miles, we now made our way from Highdown with a short walk down to the station and our train taking us back along the coast.