**The Western South Downs, Saturday 28th August 2010**

15 walkers, 24 miles – leader Jerome Ripp

15 gathered at Winchester station representing a cross section of LDWA groups; 3 from Thames valley, 3 from Surrey, 1 from Wessex and 2 from the canine club. The leader began with a short guided cultural tour of the city, cathedral, college, and ancient city walls. We headed north along the Itchen Way through pleasant fields a trifle muddy from the recent rains, but we were fortunate in having clear skies and sunshine for most of the day. A break at Itchen Abbas and then we left the valley and steadily climbed up into the south downs to reach our picnic lunch spot in a field at Cheesefoot Head with good views over to Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, according to our Wessex member. A long track south on the Kings Way and a short sharp climb to join a Roman road and the Monarch's Way to Owlesbury and the church in a typical quiet village setting. The final section took us over the rolling hills of Hazeley and Twyford Downs with Winchester appearing directly in front. But there was still some way to go as we skirted St. Catherine's Hill and then a long stretch by the Itchen, the last mile in particular seemed rather lengthy but we all made it back to Winchester in good spirits having covered about 22 miles according to the leader but our feet, the general level of tiredness and the GPS suggested that we had done 24 miles.