**A Literary/Scientific Walk, Saturday 4th February 2012**

10 walkers, 23 miles – leader Jerome Ripp

A bitterly cold day with sub-zero temperatures and the prospect of snow still managed to attract a group of 10 hardy Arctic explorers. The weather, the firm underfoot conditions and the almost complete absence of stiles enabled a brisk pace to be maintained and 23 miles were covered despite a late start due to the leader not checking underground closures. The route followed sections of the Chiltern Way and Hertfordshire Way and although never steep did have a significant number of undulations (1,800 feet of ascent) giving a variety of fine views over the agricultural and lightly wooded landscape. The literary Highlight of the walk was the house of George Bernard Shaw at Ayot St. Lawrence where we also had lunch in a lovely 14th Century pub with oak beams, roaring fires and good food. The scientific highlight was the agricultural research station in Rothansted Park and surrounding fields where the first experiment to analyse crop yields and develop fertilisers was started in 1843 and is still ongoing. Other highlights were an ancient earthwork, "Devil's Dyke" supposed to be the site of a battle where Julius Ceasar defeated the British king; a Grecian temple, a view of Luton Hoo, now a luxury hotel, and of course members of the group.