**The North Chiltern Hills, Sunday 29th April 2012**

19 walkers, 21 miles – leader Godfrey O’Callaghan

The forecast was appalling. So I rather hoped that no one would turn up. Think again. The ticket office at Berkhamsted quickly filled with 19 walkers, smiling faces the lot. Admittedly the ranks were swelled by 8 affiliated members getting in some miles before a London to Brighton 100 km charity walk, but it showed the irrepressible spirit of people who, having the choice of staying in bed or walking all day in pouring rain, chose the latter. If evidence of sanity – or otherwise – of LDWA members was needed then this was surely it. As it turned out the weather was not quite so bad as predicted. Much of the morning consisted of lightish rain and high winds. Only for the last thirty minutes before lunch was the great hosepipe in the sky turned fully on. After lunch the rain quickly cleared away and, eventually, blue sky and sunshine made for an agreeable finale.

The walk began by climbing up to and crossing Albury Common. From there the route descended steeply to Aldbury – not before one person managed to dirty their pants – before heading towards Invinghoe. Spurning the direct path we headed for the canal towpath at Bulbourne. The canal there is particularly picturesque; snaking around contours and descending via a series locks, it passes several old bridges, colourful canal boats, wetland nature reserves and two branching canals. After lunch, at the Rose and Crown, a long climb to and the steep ascent of Ivinghoe Beacon warmed everyone up. Easier paths then led to the National Trust's Dockey Woods, renowned for their display of bluebells. The remainder of the walk took the group across the varied scenery of the Aldbury estate before finally descending to the finish. We were fortunate to get a last train back to London with all others cancelled following a train breakdown elsewhere. Agreeable company and an enjoyable day.