

The Inaugural Ramble December 23rd, 1951

The following company met at 10.0 a.m. on Sunday Dec. 23rd 1951 at the junction of Valley Rd. & Bridge Rd, W.G.C. for the first ramble of the Mid-Herts Football Society:-

The Misses M. & G. Pollard, Messrs Basin, Buttenworth, Mr & Mrs Byles, Messrs Davis, Eden, Gairrod, de Fayh, Sir Francis Peake, & Mr Whittenburg.

The route of the ramble was through Sharnardspark Wood, keeping to the path close to the railway. This was crossed at the first opportunity at a level crossing, then up-hill to the path skirting the golf links & thence to the Great North Road, noting en route that this path was becoming rather obstructed by bushes in parts. Emerging against the Waggoner's public house, we crossed almost directly opposite to a stile & skirting a large pond, entered the plantations of Brocket Park. It is rather curious that this path which is obviously well used & signposted is not shown on the 6" or 2½" maps. Soon, we joined another path running to the right at the rear of Brocket Hall & then across the park to the Bluebell Wood & so to the boundary of the park. Here we diverged for a few yards along a forbidden (?) path & viewed the clear waters of the River Lea. Resuming our path, we soon reached Waterend & its lovely old house, Tudor or Jacobean to judge by

its external appearance. We admired the openings made in the garden fences so that passers-by could enjoy a glimpse of trim lawns & flower beds. We also noticed one or two misleading "Private" notices, which might deter the stranger from using the path. At the House, we turned left down the road, crossing the line & noting that the ford had now been concreted to facilitate passage of cars. We also noted the picturesque cottages (14th century?) on the right hand side of the road. We soon reached a cross roads & decided to take the road leading to

Coleman Green. It is curious that this hamlet is not ~~not~~ named on the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " map. Following the road, we passed some countrymen and shortly & indeed at that precise moment they had just caught me, driven from its burrow by a fence. No doubt, it would provide a good meal in the very near future. Chalkwell Farm, on the right, was soon reached & just opposite we turned left off the road on a path, which at first ~~passed~~ passed a deep hollow, on whose origin we speculated.

It seems the name of the farm would suggest a chalk pit. The path appeared to follow the dividing line between two fields, marked by a line of trees, but was obviously very little used. It led down hill to Drax's Lane, which appeared to be sadly overgrown, & then, after a slight diversion to the left, over a gate into a field up-hill. We noticed that the gate was locked & partly

obstructed by branches. There was no sign of the path but, following the map, we hiked to the ledge to the top of the hill & then bearing away to the left, we found some signs of a path. This took us very close to Upper Green Hyde Farm on the right & ~~immediately~~ immediately after passing the farm, we saw a stile ahead leading into a what I have found two cottages & then into the Green Hyde lane. Here we turned left & reached the Chaggers Farm in about half a mile. It was unanimously agreed to make a stop for refreshment. Opportunity was also taken for some discussion of the Society's affairs. The walk was then resumed on the path, almost opposite the Chaggers, near Ditchel Park to Longford Mill, thence by path, over the golf links back to W.C. We arrived back about 1.15 pm & all the party appeared to have enjoyed the morning's walk.

It should be mentioned that the weather throughout had been fine although rather misty.

It was felt that useful work had been accomplished by walking the path from Chalkdell Farm to Green Hyde since this was obviously very little used.

N.B. No named reader

Ramble Sunday Jan 6, 1952

The meeting place was, as hoped, at the corner of Valley Rd & Bridge Rd at 10 am & 13 persons assembled. Fortunately for the superstitious, one of the ladies had brought a dog, so that the party could probably be said to consist of 14.

The route started from Roundwood Drive & into Seward's Wood by well marked tracks, turning right at the top of the rising was rather damp & misty & we speculated on the relative advantages or disadvantages of horses built in close proximity to the trees. Arriving at the top of the hill, we bore away to the right & were here joined by another member who had been late at the starting point. We emerged from the trees at a point overlooking Templewood School away down on the right. We continued straight ahead following an acknowledged foot path for a short distance, & when this bore away to the left, indulging in a little mild "trespass" for a short distance to cross a very muddy cart track. Arriving, this is not marked on the 6" & 2 1/2" map. This led us to the top of Dispwell Hill. The trigonometrical point should have been visible but was not seen, possibly because of the mist. Our route then led over the long established but little used path from the Dispwell Rd to Dispwell church. This starts through a gate & within a few yards comes to a stile in a wire fence. The stile is partially blocked with

wire netting & there is no stile. The wire fence is not shown on the 6" x 2 1/2" maps. There was a faint indication of the path on the ploughed field slanting away & down to the right to the corner of the next field. The stile here was in a fair condition. In the next field, the path was completely obscured in parts by a crop of kale. It was possible to follow the path roughly by gaps in the crop & it seemed as if a diversion had intended down the right hand side of the field & then across the centre. The stile out of this field was in fair condition but lacked a step, & the rest of the path to the Church was plainly marked. Just short of the Church we turned right & followed a path (of? public) in the general direction of the R. Minson. The lake here was obviously badly in need of attention & drainage & it was suggested that the lake could be made into a very pleasant boating lake as a further amenity of the Lyden City. Following the rather indefinite path along the bank, we eventually reached an excellent stile leading to a wooden bridge on the stream. Here we noticed an angler & some of the party fell into conversation. It appeared he was H. Hughes from the Mill House, Dismill & was much interested in our Society. After a little further talk, he invited our members to visit his house & garden later in the year, & his invitation was very gratefully accepted. Meanwhile, other members of the party had gone ahead to meet the last member of the party arriving

by train at Welwyn North Station. This successfully
 carried out, the party now numbered 15, & proceeded
 along the concrete path running along the north edge
 of Twin Park. After about half a mile, we turned
 left along a hedge, following parallel with a rifle
 range lying in small valley on our right. Just short
 of a chalk quarry, where the targets for the range
 were at one time placed, we turned abruptly right
 & followed a wire fence into a wood (Dawley Wood)
 on the hillside. This was a muddy & rather
 slippery path but once over the hill, the going
 became easier. Shortly after leaving the wood, the
 party divided, one group following a path
 to the left leading directly to Twin
 Common. This group found the path possible but
 indistinct. The second group pursued the original
 path to the corner of a small lane, ^{where it turned}
 left. Owing to the excessive mud in the lane, ^{from the 6th group at Haver}
 the party walked in the field bordering the lane,
 & soon emerged also in Twin Common.
 The party assembled at the ~~Post Office~~ ^{Post Office & Tavern}
 Inn for refreshment & some discussion of
 the business of the society. The walk was resumed
 down the main road through the village. A short
 distance past the Fox & Crow Inn, a path was
 taken on the right which shortly led diagonally
 across a field to the road again. Just as we
 rejoined the road, we passed an ancient farm
 with the remains of a large timber barn. We
 continued down the road until we joined the Hartford

road where we turned right of soon left
 on the cinder path leading past the little
 hamlet of Black Fan. Nothing is now left
 of the ancient cottages ~~that~~ that once stood here.
 Soon we reached the outskirts of WGC with its
 sewage works & factories of so headed the
 end of the morning's walk.

WB

No Named Leader

Ramble Sunday Jan 20, 1952

A party of seven caught the 10.20 am bus to Welwyn & picked up five more members en route. Slighting at Welwyn Garden City, we followed the Colindale road for a short space, passing Gressons House. We then turned left on the small lane between Hinman & leaving left at the end of the two lanes soon reached Limes Farm. The morning was sharply frosty, with bright sun & rapidly clearing views, & as we climbed the hill to Limes Farm we enjoyed a fine sweeping view to the North & East. Just short of Limes Farm we noticed a stile in good preservation on the right but no path was shown either on the 2 1/2" or 6" maps. It was thought that it might be a short path linking up with the lane running north in front of the farm. We turned down this lane for a few yards, then through a gateway on the left & followed a rutted track. After two fields this led to a stile in rather poor shape at the foot of an uphill ploughed field. There was no hint of the path but the map showed the path as crossing the field at a slight angle to the top & then continuing on the far side of the hedge to Ryefield Farm. We followed this course as far as possible but at the top of the ~~hill~~ field we found a barbed wire fence. This was successfully negotiated & we then found in approximately the right spot, what looked to be the remains of a stile. There was no trace of the path ^{on the ploughed field} on the far side of the stile but

along the near side of the ledge was a rough track in the direction of the farm. This we followed, reached a gate leading into a pumyard thickly covered with mud. We passed through a second into even deeper mud & then on to a gravelled drive leading slightly N.W. from the farm. On this drive we met a man employed at the farm who told us that the path with which we had difficulty now took a more diagonal path over the uphill field & came out through a gate close to the farmhouse. We continued down the drive crossed directly any road leading to Codrington & on the opposite side ~~found~~ a path following the field hedge uphill, until it reached a field track to the left. We followed this track for a short distance & at the first ledge on the left we joined the bridle path from St. Peter's Church in August & Peter. We turned right to follow the path over two fields into August St. Lawrence.

Here we encountered a party of youth Hottelars from St. Albans, including the Warden of Whitwell Hostel, Mr. Long. After some conversation re footpaths, we inquired of the Brocket farms. But were disappointed to find that there were still a few minutes before opening time & so we decided to push on without writing. We noticed the ruins of St. Lawrence's church & in the background the new church in pseudo-Grecian style. It was suggested that ~~that~~ this looked like St. Pancras & some gaspion ensued until it was made clear that St. Pancras church was intended ~~not~~ the railway

station! We continued down the road, passing
 Shaw's corner on our right, down till & then a
 sharp left bend brought us to a narrow
 overgrown track leading ^{S.E.} away from the road. This
 we followed for about a mile, at last emerging
 on the road alongside the wood with the interesting
 name of Stocking Pines. This track was passable
 but becoming grown over in parts. One of the
 party said he had used a path coming up
 from Norfolk Cottages (further along the road
 from Sgt W. Lawrence) & joining ~~our~~ track at a
 spot which avoided the most difficult points.
 No sign of this path occurs on the 2nd map.
 We now crossed the Loddon road, which we had
 previously crossed in the opposite direction from
 Ryefield Farm & continued on a further skirting
 the edge of Dowdell & Warren Wood, passing
 between the latter & Bladwell Wood, then passing
 to the other side of the hedge & finally passing
 underneath the railway. Here the main path
 comes on in a S.E. direction, but one of the
 party mentioned a path leading along the railway
 to the left. This is not shown on the map. We walked
 along this path, which was very indistinct, & noticed
 soon a path coming in from the left near the railway.
 The map does not show this path on the N
 side of the railway but it was understood to
 lead into the drive of Sgt Place & thence to the
 road. We continued our route along the S side
 of the railway, this being shown on the 2nd map.

to the left

13.

We then left the railway slightly & climbed over a wire fence in a small copse. This spot looked as if it had been a stile at one time & members of the party were certain that at no time it had been regularly used. We carried on along a narrow field between two copses & reached the foot of Peter road just where it passes under the railway. Further evidence of the right of way of the path we had just walked was given by the fact that two sections of the fence bordering on the road had been left unwired. We carried forward parallel with the railway to the site of Ayot Station & then by the road to Ayot Green, noting the old Chapel building & blacksmith shop & the site of the house demolished by the fall of a large tree during a gale. We crossed the North road & after some welcome refreshments at the Waggoner's, proceeded over walk by the ~~old~~ golf links path (described in the first ramble) to ~~Brookwood Lane~~ W.G.C.

113

No Named Leader

Ramble Sunday Feb. 3rd, 1952

A party of thirteen assembled on a beautifully sunny, crisp winter morning. One seemed ~~to~~ daunted by our unlikely number & the party set off by Dingsell Farm & Black Fan Rd. Turning right at the sewage farm (unbeautiful spot!) we followed a well marked track across the fields with the railway a short distance away on the right. Reaching a road, we turned right for a short distance & then left at Olive Hall to follow a rutted track across the fields. Our progress to Panshanger aerodrome was soon made clear by the number of low-flying planes. We soon met our first obstacle in the form of an electrified fence but investigation showed that a section was detachable in safety & we continued along the track, uncertain whether to classify this as an official obstacle or not. (It should be mentioned that another walker had now joined us giving us a party of 14). We soon found a more serious obstacle. Just where the track crosses the unfenced track, becoming a fenced track, a barbed wire fence had been constructed presumably by the RAF as we had now reached the edge of the aerodrome. We managed to scramble under & over this fence & emerged at the junction of Green Lane & Mary Hole Lane.

From this point, the track we had been following is shown - the map to be continued as a bridle road running at the side of Birchall Wood to join the road running round Panchanger Park. Of this there was no sign whatever, only a barbed wire fence & a ploughed field.

It was decided to walk northwards along Macy Hole Lane in the hope of being able to traverse one of the ditches shown on the map through Birchall Wood. We reached the wood without incident, although passing close to aerodrome buildings & not very clear as to the public access to the road. In the wood, we went slightly astray & made our way directly east through the wood & then across a field on what appeared to be a path, but which is not shown on the 2 1/2" map. The path led on to the road around Panchanger Park close to a cottage but another barbed wire fence first had to be surmounted.

It seems doubtful whether this path (!) is really a right of way. We turned left in the road & made our way in the direction of the entrance to Panchanger Park at Poplars Green. We passed on our left a track through Birchall Wood, apparently dead & which was presumably the one we had intended to traverse.

Entering Panchanger Park, we very soon saw a notice on the right of the main drive indicating

what was ~~says~~ claimed to be the only
 right of way through the Park. Whether this
 is true had to be proved. The path led
 forward up a hill + gave us a fine view
 of ~~the~~ Parichangey house, now an
 repository of valuable local records to
 which access is not permitted. The path
 led to a ladder stile, without hand rails
 + a little difficult to climb or descend.

Here, it was suggested that photographs
 of our walks would be interesting + it was
 thought that it would be particularly
 impressive to have a photograph of one
 of our more distinguished members cutting
 barbed wire across a right of way!

We had now reached the boundary of the
 Park proper + we walked diagonally to
 the left across the field, across another
 electrified fence by a rather decrepit stile
 + then through ~~along~~ a small herring gate
 in a hedge. We turned left along the
 hedge, through another hedge + then diagonally
 for a few yards to a track leading to
 the main road to Hatfield at Birch Green.
 This ended the actual walk but the question
 of refreshment arose. There was a strong
 suspicion that the inn at Cole Green had
 only a six day licence, so that it was
 decided to walk to Bertinsfordbury as being
 a more certain source of refreshment.

Unfortunately, by the time of the majority of the party arrived at the goal, there was ~~only~~ only time to catch the bus back to W.G.C. Only a few of the more fleet-footed (a distinction?) managed to obtain the intended refreshment.

[Handwritten signature]

No. Name. Address

Ramble, Sunday Feby 17th 52

Sixteen walkers met at Valley Road corner of Bridge Rd at ten o'clock, these included six ladies and three 'new-comers'.

There was some preliminary discussion on two unfortunate points - first the absence of our Secretary (Mr Basin was away in the Peak Dist for a week end holiday) and our Chairman (Mr Fred Farrod) had been unexpectedly detained by a machinery breakdown at his place of business - The other disappointment was the damp weather. The morning was a rainy one of the drizzly type and after the recent thaw it was considered very likely the field paths would be mung and make heavy going.

Nevertheless everyone was keen to make the walk and a start was made about 10.10 am via Handside Lane, Turnmore Dale, Parkway South into Stanborough Lane.

At the bottom of the slope just before the bridge over the R. Lea we took the field path ^{east} westward. It was very wet and thick mud until the farm road the far side of Woodhall Farm was reached. Along this to the cottages and to the gateway

to the ^{Hatfield} Hyde / Mill Green road - we turned left to avoid walking on the main Hatfield Kelford Road and crossed this from the lane - near Mill Green Cumb - and into the lane opposite leading down to Lord Salisbury's Saw Mill in Hatfield Park.

The view of the water from the bridge was enjoyed and after crossing the Lea we took the gravel road bordering the Eastern boundary of Hatfield Park.

At the corner where this turns right - The continuing path was noted giving a riverside walk for about a mile + a half to Essendon Mill - famed for having been in work for three hundred years -

It was decided that owing to the wet ground the path across the farming fields was not good enough and it would be better to keep to the quiet road via West End - This was a pleasant way, the lane climbing and turning thro' high banking and giving wide view over the Lea valley, unfortunately not at its best in the rain -

The party turned left at the top, thro' the hamlet, (leaving the lane from the Hatfield - Brookmans Pk road on

the right. We began to descend and noted at the bottom on the left the stile we intended to use terminating the field path - Then a very stiff climb up to Essenden Village with the church tower surmounting the top of the hill. The village was pleasant - clean & tidy - in spite of the dull weather.

At the invitation of the Rector who happened to meet us some of the party visited the old church. The tower is fifteenth century and has some ancient brasses, and in the font is a christening bowl made by Josiah Wedgwood himself. The altar is decorated by a painting of Our Lord serving the last supper.

The whole party then took shelter and comfort with refreshment in ^{P. Salshing} the local inn 'The Kings Coat' - Here we were reminded that the first Zeppelin was brought down at Guffley after bombing the village and church at Essenden in Sept 1916.

Mr Davis informed our party that the Committee had appointed Mr Bullen as Treasurer and he would be glad to receive any subscriptions - half a crown or five shillings as previously proposed. Also that our next ramble was to Wheat-

Hamstead via Coopers Green on March 2nd
and that on Easter Monday a full days
tramp to Beddington was on the programme
Several members said they would be away
for the Easter holiday

When our ramble was resumed
it was raining more decidedly and we ~~travellers~~
left + took the field path - over a stile (at the
right hand side of the hill leading down to
Essendon Mill) - and across very large wheat
fields to the Hatfield Hertford road which
was immediately crossed and the climb
commenced, after crossing the lane, up to
the village of Letch Green. This was very
uneven walk - with clumps of trees
protected by a round of hedging to be
seen in the fields.

We turned left, leaving the
~~lane~~ ^{road} to Brack Green in the right and
passing the Cooper Arms road house and
the disused railway station + came to
Cole Green about eight minutes before
the bus from Hertford to Hempsford Lane
was due

Two of the ladies had come
without any money but managed get into
the inn and the bus and obtain their
respective services - Home again at 1.30 pm

Leader Mr. Whitebury S.J.W.