

WALK 17 42

Ramble Sat night / Sunday morning
June 7th / 8th 1952

A party of 14 met outside the Cherry Tree Hotel at 10.20 pm. Leader Mr Whittenbury.
This was to be our first all-night ramble & the weather conditions were good, with no wind a clearing sky & a nearly full moon. Everyone was in good spirits as we caught the 10.30 pm bus to Cole Green. As we left the bus, we were wished good luck by the bus conductor. I hope his greeting was meant kindly & not sarcastically. We ~~followed~~ ^{took} the road through Letty Green down to the Hatfield - Hatford road just beyond the bridge over the river Lea, & then followed the sandy cart track immediately opposite, with a lodge house on the left. We followed this track for about a mile & the moon had now risen somewhat higher & was giving quite a good light. Nevertheless, there was quite a lot of stumbling about on the uneven surface of the track. We were also made very vividly aware of the presence of a drainage ditch on one side of the track. At one point, the party was called to a halt to listen to the nightingale, but with no success. We now reached Bedwell Park Lodge gates & turned sharp left through a small white gate, on to a rising path behind the path. This led upwards through woods & torches were used for the first time.
On leaving the wood, we came out into

an open space + in the bright moonlight we could see for a considerable distance. We were interested to see numerous glow-worms along the path, shining brightly with a bluish-green glow. We continued the path past a farm + then to a cottage on the road at Little Berkhurst. Stopping just short of the road, we turned right down the hill, through the wood with a bridge over the stream at the bottom of the hill. Then up hill from the bridge to a cart track where we turned left for a few yards to emerge on the Essendon road.

The time was now about 12.30 a.m. + all the party appeared to be in the best of spirits. We turned right in the road, round Bushell Park + on to the village of Essendon. Tramping through the village there were numerous suggestions as to the opinions that would be expressed in the village next day after hearing our passage. These suggestions varied from the Home Guard to the Palmerston invasion, complete with snow on the boots. Just ~~past~~^{past} the Church, we stopped at the Wheatheat Inn, closed now of course. Our leader, when surveying the route, had noticed the presence of benches outside the inn, + a few benches we now rested + consumed food + drink.

The remaining character of the time +

place appealed to the imagination of many of the party & there were numerous speculations as to the reactions of the inhabitants of the inn on hearing, as they must have done, our conversation, which was not always carried on in whispers. Four members of the party seated on a small bench reminded us irresistibly of pictures of the destitute on the Thames Embankment & it seemed a pity that no photography was possible.

Essendon Busch Truck 1 a.m. while we sat there & shortly afterwards we decided to move, as the air was now quite chilly. We continued down hill & then took a field path on the right. The moon was now at its brightest & with its help we were able to make our way through a small copse but the path then apparently disappeared. However, we made our way across the fields in the general direction of the path & were amused to note the long shadows we were casting in the moonlight.

We were able to find what might have been a stile & crossing this, came into a lane. Here we turned right & then soon left to reach a large farm, through which we passed. We turned right again, past a herd of stambury cows to reach the River Lea at Mill Green. Shortly before this, a robin was heard faintly chirping in the distance & the sky began to lighten appreciably in the east.

After crossing the river, we crossed the main Hatfield road & then along the Hatfield Hyde road. At the cross-roads, some of the party decided to return directly to the garden city & the rest turned left & then left again along the track past Woodhall Farm. Shortly after passing under the railway bridge, the first bird songs were heard, namely by sedge-wrens & one or two others which were not identified. The eastern sky was now quite bright & giving fine silhouettes of trees against the sky line. The moon was becoming fainter & clouds were partly obscuring it.

We continued along the path to Stanborough Lane, then across the path by the swimming pool, with the light becoming even stronger & more & more birds starting to sing. Cocks were now crowing the approach of dawn.

The party now began to split up & return home & the writer & friend reached home at ~~4~~ 9.15, in almost full daylight, with the birds' choruses in full swing. The most enjoyable & unusual ramble.

W. G.

Ramble - Sunday June 29, 1952

This fixture was a special trip to Tollerbury + the Essex Marshes led by Mr. Lywood, whose boyhood home was in this district.

A party of 37, including a number of guests + children left the Cherry Tree at 9.0 am + by way of Wentford, Bishop's, Wentford, Braintree, Coggeshall, Tiptree reached Tollerbury at about 11.15, where we were very kindly welcomed by one of the local women councillors. We were told that unfortunately the Marine Pool was empty pending alterations + there was something of a disappointment to the children.

After a brief tour of the village (+ a visit to the local hotel), the bus took the children + some of the party to the edge of Woodroffe Creech, while the rest of the party set off across the fields + by a winding lane + via Roll's Farm to the sea wall + River Blackwater estuary.

After a short walk along the wall, we stopped for lunch, prior to which some members enjoyed a dip, but had some difficulty in finding sufficient depth in which to swim. The day had turned out brilliantly sunny + hot but there was a cool breeze which made conditions reasonably pleasant.

After lunch, we resumed our walk along

the sea wall in an easterly direction. The going was quite difficult, since the ground was uneven, slippery with the dry weather & extremely hard, so that it was necessary to exert some care to avoid stumbling. Indeed, any attempt to advance the view out to sea, almost inevitably ended in a fall.

The tide was now coming in rapidly & we were able to admire several yachts & other craft which made their appearance.

After a considerable detour inland, we came to the site of a disused light railway & some of the party took the opportunity of following this track back to Tollerbury.

The rest continued the walk along the sea wall & the going seemed to become even more rough as we entered on to the actual marshy land. The land was, of course, flat in the extreme & cut up by many ditches & water-courses. Away to sea, many more yachts could be seen sailing in the Tollerbury regatta.

Eventually we reached Shinglehead Point the most easterly point of our walk, & we now turned along the south shore of Tollerbury Tollerbury Fleet, reaching Tollerbury just in time to see the return of the winning yachts.

Here we met the remainder of the

party who had enjoyed a long day by the water edge. Had we had tea although some of the party had to be content with mineral to drink, the demands of the party having exhausted the resources of the local cafe.

After collecting baskets of fruit which we had ordered, on arrival in the morning, we started back about 7.30, arriving W.G.C. about 10.15, after a most successful & ~~was~~ unusual day.

W.S.

Ramble - Saturday July 12, 1952

A party of ten assembled at 2.30 p.m. with Miss B. Reynolds as leader. Miss D. Womack who should have been co-leader was unfortunately absent owing to illness.

We caught the 303 bus to the bottom of Mandley Hill. From here, we walked along Hobbley Bottom Lane & the Roman Rd to Datchworth Green where we were fortunate to see a village cricket match in play, in the traditional setting on the village green. From Datchworth Green, we walked east for a ~~short~~ short distance & then turned right into Back Lane.

This was at first was a broad green lane giving us some fine distant views away on the left. The lane gradually became narrower & more overgrown & then widened again, & after about a mile & a quarter we reached a crossing lane in which we turned right, passing a hut set back from the lane a few yards after turning. This lane led through fields of scrubby land, & we were amused to see, after reaching the Branfield Lane, that this tract of land was designated Branfield State Forest. In the road, we turned right & then shortly left & very soon reached Ainslie Wood Hall.

A bridle-path passing to the right of the Hall gave us an excellent view of the well known building & garden. A fine view of fields & woods also stretched away in front of us as we descended a slight hill & the path they had ~~into~~ along the edge of Bramfield Park Wood & became very overgrown in places & was obviously little used, but undisturbed. Emerging from the wood, we immediately turned right, down a hedgerow & then followed a gully a few hundred yards to a road, in which we turned right & reached Tewin in a few minutes.

~~Here we were~~, almost exactly at the appointed time of 5 pm.

Here we enjoyed a rest & a good tea at the Rose & Crown.

Afterwards, we took the path leading from the back of the inn, across the fields to the well known concrete tracks leading eventually to Digswell. Here we took the path on the left, immediately under the viaduct, then a stile on the right & path along the Mineam. After climbing an iron fence, we struck off diagonally to the left & eventually joined the path leading to Digswell Church & so home via Mark's walk & Stenards Wood.

Ramble - Sunday July 27th 1952

A party of eleven assembled at 10.0 am, leader
Mr Francis Parker, for a full day's ramble.

We left Wolsey Garden City by Sharnard Wood
+ came out on the Great North Road opposite the
Red Lion Inn. We took the footpath immediately to
the left of the inn + then bore to the right through
iron ~~submerged~~ kissing gates near the railway. Turning
left along the railway, we followed its course for a
short distance to the bridge + then turned left +
climbed over a gate immediately in front. This
led us to a grassy track between two small
woods, Long Spring + Mitchell's Wood* + at the
far end we climbed over ~~a~~ ~~an~~ rather awkward
fence (barbed wire) + again followed the line
of the railway ~~westward~~ ~~westward~~ ^{westerly} after about
^{1/4} mile, we came to a tunnel on our
right, through which we turned following
a well marked path. This took us along
the edge of Fish Wood, then directly across a
road ~~but~~ along the edge of Stocking Springs. The
path gradually widened to a track which
brought us out on the road on the outskirts
of St. Lawrence. We turned right along
the road, past Shaw's Corner + then took
the path on the left leading to the new church
of St. Lawrence.

This building, in the form of a Grecian
temple, seems rather incongruous in its setting.

* Not now a right-of-way!

& indeed suggested one of the manor houses than
 church. We rose diagonally to our right away
 from the church & following a rather poorly
 marked path down a slight slope came to a gate
 with ~~and~~ the remains of a stile. Passing
 through this the path led through an area
 of scrub wood up a short hill & then
 in an almost dead straight line across a field
 of barley to the top of the hill, where we had
 an extensive view of the countryside.

Here we rested awhile & ate our lunch &
 then resumed the path which led us in a few
 yards to a road in which we turned right.
 A slight gap in the ^{left hand} hedge a few yards down the
 road ~~on the left~~ led us to a path spurling
 a recreation ground & then turning right to lead
 down hill into Kimpton. Here we pursued
 at the White Hart Inn (?) to quench our thirst
 engendered by sandwiches eaten earlier.

From the inn, we turned in an easterly
 direction & then took the first road on the left.
 In a short distance, this brought us to a fork
 where we took the right hand road which
 led us into the grounds of Hoor Park & The
 Hoor Hall, the latter now owned by ICI Ltd.
 There was no real right of way but our
 leader felt that we were unlikely to be
 turned back. On this road, a number of
 cars passed us & we soon discovered that
 Kimpton Cricket Club was playing a match in

the grounds. However, none of the audience seemed to object to our party. We pursued our way along the road round to the front of the Hall & then turned away to the left down hill to the road. Crossing the river Mincem just before reaching the road, we commented on the poor condition & low level of the river. In the road, we turned right & in a few yards took a path on the right, following closely the course of the river, passing Rose-bud Farm & then into a road. We carried on down the road for a few yards to Kimpton Mill, passing to see the large water cross led's on the right of the road. At the Mill, we turned left along the road & then in a few yards crossed a footbridge on the left, diagonally across a marshy field where a broken footbridge necessitated paddling across the stream. A stile, topped with barbed wire, led into a narrow green lane in which we turned right & continued until reaching Cockle Mill where we turned right & then left on to the road back to Welwyn.

We reached Welwyn about 4.30 & had tea & cakes at Rose Cottage Cafe, & resuming our journey to W.G.C. via the Bedford road to the by-pass bridge & then by a path on the right of the road leading to Dignell House, Mark's Walk, Steward's Wood & W.G.C. which we reached about 6.30.

11/3

Rambles - Saturday Aug 9, 1952

A party of five assembled at 2.30 pm, leader Mr. Bavin + the smallest muster we have had up to date. * This may have been due partly to the threatening weather + partly to the holiday season.

Our way lay at first along the well known path at the side of the golf links to Lamford Mill + then across Brocket Park to the Claydon Inn. Here we took the lower Hyde Lane + just after passing a few cottages on the left, we turned left along a cart track. A few yards before reaching the opposite side of the field, a path led off to the right into the next field + followed the right hand side of the hedge to a gateway in the next field, worn with use. Here we built a straight line across the field, aiming for a numerous stile on the opposite side. Here the path turned half right + followed the line of the hedge, but it was impossible to follow the exact line owing to barbed wire + undergrowth.

We kept to the right hand of the hedge, until we reached the corner of the field. Here the path should have gone into the next field + the stile could be seen, but it was completely obstructed by thorn + barbed wire. We turned right along the hedge + after about 100 yds. diversion found a gate, also fastened with barbed wire but which could be climbed. This led us into the next field + we joined the proper line of

* See however 30th March!

The path by going straight across the field to a small copse & then following the line of the hedge to Simon's Hyde Farm. Evidently, this path requires attention to ensure that the obstructions are removed.

We passed through the grounds of Simon's Hyde Farm to the road where we turned right until we reached Titmuck's wood on our right. ~~Here~~ we walked along the edge of the wood parallel to the road, ~~to~~ as a pleasant alternative to the road until a stile was seen on the opposite side of the road. This led us to a path through Bulbottle Wood. The path kept straight ahead for about 100 yards & then at a junction, we turned left & in a few yards found ourselves walking along the edge of an old gravel pit or quarry. After passing this, we turned right & after about 200 or 300 yards came to a locked gate at the edge of the wood.

We followed a faint path up the slight hill, bearing slightly to the right & soon emerged on the road almost opposite Hammer's Farm. We crossed the road, through the gate of the farm & bearing slightly left followed the right side of the hedge for two fields & then straight across the Cambridge lane to follow the line of the hedge again. At a ~~the~~ windbreak, the line of the hedge turned to the left & the path ~~followed~~ followed it, passing

Nonamstead Farm on our left. After passing a large pond & five barbed gates we came to a wicket gate, leading to a farm track. Here we turned right & in 100 yards or so reached Nonamstead Common. We crossed the Wheathampstead road & walked over the common in a N.W. direction to reach the Three Oaks Public House.

Here an excellent tea & welcome ~~was~~ awaited us. It was laid out in an old cottage in the garden of the inn & greatly appealed to the party. It was agreed by all that a return visit was indicated.

The weather up to now had been quite good with the exception of a shower or two but while we were having tea, it rained heavily. We waited until the storm had passed & remained over night by turning left outside the inn & then taking the first short lane on the left which led alongside a farm on to the common in a northerly direction. At the hedge marking the northern limit of the common we found a gap & followed the line of the hedge bearing northward until we reached a cross hedge. Through a gap in this we turned left & then right following the line of the hedge until the first houses of Wheathampstead were reached on the left. Here we turned down a short road & then D'right

down the hill to Wheathampstead by the
 Somwell Road.

The weather here looked very threatening but
 after a short conference, the party decided
 to take the river path back to Waterend
 & Woburn Garden City. From that point
 therefore the route was as described
 for the ramble of April 26.

Just after leaving Somford, we
 encountered the heaviest storm of the
 afternoon & reached home rather
 wet but quite pleased with our
 excursion.

MS

Ramble - Sunday Aug 24, 1952

A party of 14 (leader Mrs Chinn) set off at 10.0 a.m. via the footpath to Lansford, then through Brocket Park to Waterend. Here we turned ~~to~~ right up the hill until we reached a farm on the left hand side of the road. Here we took the track through the farm yard & then turned to the right over ~~to~~ Sparrowhall Bridge over the railway. We followed the shires cart track on the other side of the bridge, passing Coney Dell Spring on the right & reaching Three Grass Wood. Here one of the party recalled that at one time there was a track leading through the wood but there was no sign of that now. Instead we followed the track for a few yards round the right hand side of the wood & then followed the line of the hedge to the right across the field to the edge of Dowdell ~~the~~ Wood to join a bridle road. This we followed northwards. In a few yards we crossed the Wheatthorpe road & continued almost straight across to the path running down the edge of Stocking Springs & then following the line of the hedge. Shortly, the path became a hedged track, rather muddy but quite well used, which eventually emerged on the road on the outskirts of Hyet St.

Lawrence. We followed the road through the village, past Shaw's Corner & the old ruined church. We debated whether we should wait 10 minutes at the end of which time the Brochet Arms would be able to supply refreshment but decided to push on. Keeping to the right ~~as~~ at the fork just beyond the Brochet Arms, a swing gate on the left of the road gave access to a bridle path, leading a very straight course over the fields to the ruins of St Peter's Church at Eyot St Peter. Some of the fields had been ploughed up, making the going rather heavy here & there & at one point a diversion to the other side of the hedge was obviously an advantage. From Eyot St Peter, we kept to the windy lane to Eyot Green & here crossed the Great North Rd to the Waggoner's Inn for some very welcome refreshment.

From here, the party split up, ~~each~~ each to find his or her own way home to the writing Sunday lunch.

MB.

Ramble, Saturday afternoon, 6th Sept. 1952.

Lockleys, Harmer Green, Gallants, Banastrey.

A party of six, including one newcomer, met at the north end of Valley Road for the walk planned by Miss Byles, & led in her absence by her husband, suitably briefed beforehand. All the way to Welwyn by bus we met a procession of cars & cyclists supporting & advertising the "Daily Express Tour of Britain Contest", but we saw nothing of the contest itself.

From Welwyn Church we walked through the old drive which used to lead to Lockleys before the by-pass was built, & then along the by-pass to Messrs Taylor's display of beehives opposite the Clock restaurant. We took the path beside the beehives, up the hill by the edge of the wood & across Lockleys' estate, with the farms above us & the manor (now housing the senior boarders of Sharnwood School) hidden below. The wide view of rolling countryside to the east & south was very pleasing.

As we followed the path down a dip between the hills a train was seen rushing into the tunnel nearest to Welwyn North Station, & up over this tunnel we went through Lockleys' wood, past Harmer Green Stables to the road. A short walk up the hill brought us to the little chapel & the

Green. We found to admire a fine herd of black & white milking goats, & the lady in charge told us that we needn't be frightened of them!

It was a warm bright afternoon & the road towards Burnham Green was quiet & unfragmented. After $\frac{1}{2}$ mile we took the path on the left at Kid's Corner, the first house on that side, where a notorious old country character formerly had her shack. To our astonishment a newly erected notice "STRICTLY PRIVATE" stood at the beginning of the path, but we were not deterred & no attempt was made to stop us using it. Subsequently two of our party, who used the path a day or two later, reported that the notice had been removed.

We crossed the field to Hamlet Green Wood & followed a well marked track through the wood & over another tunnel, then bearing left along the southern edge of the wood we came with Turpin's Ride & so down to the Great North Road to Ballast Cafe where we enjoyed a pleasant tea & chat.

After tea we walked up the road past the "North Star" & took the first turning on the left, crossing Mardley Heath, over the road into Winnings Wood & following the path through to the fig farm

We turned left before reaching the road, down a long dune at the end of which a footpath on the right led out to the road, where we turned left again.

A hundred yards or so further on we got over a stile on the right to Donnell's Farm, & continued through the fields to the squat water tower, by the side of which the footpath, with grass knee high, ran between fowling runs to Danesbury Park Road along which we branched right for a short distance to pick up the path described on the walk of May 11th, a pleasant footpath through Danesbury Park. So back to Welwyn & the 6:33 bus to the Garden City after a very enjoyable outing.

E.F.B.