

Ramble - Sunday ~~Nov.~~ <sup>Nov.</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1952

WALK 27 74

A party of 10 met at 10.0 am, London  
M. Gurnel, on a rather dull, ominous looking  
morning & set off via Dignell Rd to  
Black Fan Rd. At the bend in the road,  
almost opposite the main entrance to I.C.I. Planters  
Works, we turned left, through a small opening, on  
a well defined cart track. After a rather  
muddy quarter of a mile we turned left  
through a gap in the hedge & again right  
to follow the track on the opposite side of the hedge.  
At this point, we were able to see the line of  
the path leading from the Dignell Vicarage to  
Black Fan Rd, which crossed our own track.

Continuing along the muddy track, we passed  
the site of some old gravel or quarry workings  
of essentially emerged through a gap on to the  
Dignell - Herford road, just on the outskirts of  
Dignell.

We turned right along the road for about  
half a mile & then crossed a stile on the left  
into Tain Water Park. The path led away to the  
left for a short distance & then by another stile  
turned right, across the stream by a rather shabby  
bridge, & past the edge of some kitchen gardens.  
Here could be seen the sight of eminently  
respectable citizens searching discarded heaps of  
vegetable refuse for tomatoes & cucumbers!!  
However, it was not the joy of acquisition



rather than sheer hunger that prompted this remarkable performance.

We resumed our way, crossing the main drive to the house & continuing up till ~~to~~ the concrete foot-path. Here we turned right for a short space & then left, along the line of a hedge. On reaching the first fence we crossed it by a stile & turned right along the fence up hill & through a small wood. We followed the track across the sea fields & arrived at a narrow, very muddy lane, where we turned left & soon emerged on Tain Green.

The weather had now turned very wet & we were ~~at~~ behind schedule on account of the heavy going, so that it was decided to omit Woodman Green & make for Burnham Green & Hamden Green. We therefore turned left along the road for about a quarter of a mile, we then took a short track on the left leading to a stile. This led forward & then through a gate to the right & brought us to Burnham Green. Turning to the left, we ~~then~~ passed across some allotments to reach a narrow track running Southwards to the rear of Hamden Green. This led us to the Keepers Cottage where we turned right along the road & then left down the New Road in the direction of Woburn. Here some of the party became separated but the rest went on to Woburn North station, where, after some refreshment

at the "Louisa Arms", some of the party  
returned by train to W.S.C. + the remainder  
walked back by way of the footpath following  
the line of the railway.

We arrived back about 1.30 p.m., somewhat wet  
but quite pleased with our morning's walk.

W.S.C.



Ramble - Saturday, Nov. 15, 1952

Seven members, leader Ma B. Bair, met at Valley Rd corner at 2:15 pm - a most depressing November afternoon & after a little discussion decided to carry on with the walk. We caught the 2:18 bus to Lodwick Lodge & then walked forward, past the Kimpton road, to a corner of the main road where a footpath leads off on the left along the edge of a ploughed field. There was no sign of the path but we kept along the edge & then right across the corner of the next field to pick up the hedge again & follow it forward. Just before reaching the next hedge, a stile led through the hedge, across the corner of the field to a second rather decrepit ~~field~~ stile & hence into the adjoining field. Here we turned right for a few yards on to a fairly well marked track running alongside a wood. We turned left & followed the track till it reached a wooded gate. Here we passed through a gap a few yards to the left of the gate & continued along the track, passing a Ken plantation on the left. We emerged on the road at "Three Acres" & turned ~~down the road~~ to the left for two or three hundred yards. A gap in the hedge on the right led us to a path which followed the line of the hedges, through board gates for two or three fields & finally led

↑  
not right - & way!



~~was~~ slightly to the left across a field +  
 up an incline to another hard gate. This should  
 have led to a field-track, but nothing  
 remained of this but a thick line of undergrowth  
 + hedge. We followed the line of the hedge  
 forward in a N.W. direction until we had nearly  
 reached the next field, then turned right  
 through a gap in the hedge + along the line  
 of hedge until we reached a small wood where  
 we turned left in a N.W. direction again.  
 The track led past a small plantation  
 on the left + into a muddy, deeply rutted  
 track shown on the 2 1/2' map as Norton Street  
 Lane. Here we turned left for a few yards  
 & then left right through a gap in the bank  
 to follow a wide, double avenue of trees  
 in a straight line for about half a mile  
 down to the main road + then up again  
 a short distance to emerge on the main drive  
 in front of the large house known as "the Bury".  
 Here we turned right + when the main drive  
 turned right down to the main road, we  
 kept left, past the rather remote front of a  
 solitary house up a wooded track to emerge  
 on the road opposite St. Paul's Walden Church.  
 Here we turned left + continued along  
 the road, which soon became a rather rough  
 gravel track, down the hill past the front  
 of lodge of ~~Stagenhoe~~ house + then at the  
 point where our track ~~was~~ met another



at right angles, we went forward over a rather awkward stile in the iron railings. Bearing slightly to the right, we climbed a ~~steep~~ railing leading to a small lane running at the back of the cricket ground. This continued forward + downward by stiles + gates + eventually brought us out in the park again. Here we carried on down the hill in a S.

direction, across a stone bridge over a narrow dry watercourse, + up the hill again following a narrow obvious track. This gradually bore away to the right + we should have had a good view of the lake here. The fog + gathering dusk prevented this however.

The track passed through a gate + continued down hill through an avenue of golf trees, eventually emerging on the road on the outskirts of Whitwell. Here we turned left into the village + enjoyed a very pleasant tea at "The Eagle + Child". After tea, it now being quite dark, we walked along the road to Kimpton, where we caught a bus to Welwyn + about immediately another bus from here to W.G.C. We arrived home about 7.15 pm, very glad that the prospect of bad weather, which did not materialise, had not deterred us.



Ramble - Saturday Nov. 29, 1952.

A party of 10 met at 2:30 pm & started off up Brookwood Lane & on the path by the golf course, led by Sir Francis Peake. We crossed the Great North Road & followed the road over Ayot Green, keeping left at the bridge under the railway & continuing on past Mann Farm & Soraps Farm until a gate on the right at a bend in the road led us to the bridle path passing under the railway at Hunter's Bridge. Here we were surprised to find the gate fastened but still easily climbed. Passing under the bridge, we were interested to see two donkeys in the field on the right & much to our pleasure they seemed to recognize a kindred soul in our leader!

Continuing along the path on the edge of Dondell's wood, we crossed the Wheathampstead road & followed the path along the edge of Stocking Shings & here met with our second surprising episode. One member of the party saw a fox passing through the woods & wild hulloos endeavored to catch it, manfully assisted by other members & spurred on by wild hunting cries from the rest of the party. In spite of the animal being hindered by what appeared to be a trap on its leg, it eluded its enthusiastic pursuers, but at least it could be said that the hunt had had a good run!



After this excitement, we realised that the weather had turned a good deal colder, with an ominously grey sky & a few flakes of snow started to fall. We continued along the path, which now became a hedged track leading into the road at the southern extremity of Sgt W. Lawrence. A few yards along the road in the direction of the village brought us to a sharp corner & we crossed a stile on the left hand side of the road & continued forward along the line of the hedge, across another stile partly obstructed by a fallen tree & by the edge of a fir plantation. This brought us soon to a drive leading to Lower House, which we crossed & continued along the northern edge of Lower Park, crossing a good stile on route. The snow by this time was beginning to fall steadily & it seemed likely to be the start of a heavy fall. We pushed on across the Park in fading light until we came to a fastened handgate at the edge of a wood with a stile on our right leading to Bilb's Hall. We climbed the gate & made our way through the wood & brushwood & down the edge of a fir plantation to come out at a very dark descent of the stile.

From here, we crossed a field, to confront another most amazing stile, which crossed the fence by a single plank fastened about six feet from the ground. Fortunately, we



discovered that the path could be followed round the stile & thus avoided the farmer's crossing. We were now close to a large house which we took to be Bleak House & expected to strike the main Wetherhamstead road within a few yards.

To our surprise however, the path seemed to disappear into the back yard of the house & the only road we could discover was a narrow carriage drive. It was now about dark & ~~the~~ snowing heavily & we decided to enquire our whereabouts at the house.

Here we were regarded with some suspicion but put on our road for the two days, Gustard Common. We were told to follow the drive we had already found with it joined the main road & then turn right up the hill to the inn. This we did & reached our destination though rapidly thickening snow. We were given a hospitable welcome here & a very welcome tea was soon put before us. A study of the map showed that we must have inadvertently turned south after leaving Lower Park, instead of keeping west, & had actually emerged in the grounds of Hamer House instead of Bleak House. An easy mistake to make in the snow & darkness!

After a very pleasant tea, we sallied out into the storm & walked down the road to Wetherhamstead in time to catch



the train for W.G.C.

But the day was not ended. The "surprise" which had previously been announced without any further details was now revealed to be an invitation to supper by Mrs. Chinn! Hence the request to bring slippers.

When we reached Dignall Rd, the snow was falling harder than ever, but our welcome soon made us forget the storm outside.

~~Large~~ Huge dishes of turkey + mince + mashed potatoes disappeared as if attacked by locusts + the same thing happened to the apple pie which followed. Our hostess could have been left in no doubt as to our appreciation of her fare!

After this Olympian meal, we adjourned to the lounge with a glorious feeling of peace + contentment, compounded partly of our enjoyable walk + the struggle against the snow + partly of our glorious feeling of repletion!

The day's events + past rambles were mullled over in an hour's pleasant conversation + then we took leave of our host + hostess with many thanks for such a good finish to a memorable walk.

WS



Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1952

St. Offley, Telegraph Hill, Cogden, Litley, Leader P. Byatt

The meeting place at the top of Valley Road was deserted when the leader and his wife arrived at the appointed hour, 9.45 a.m., but one member, Mrs. Stansfield, was waiting on the opposite side of the road, & soon the bus arrived with Mr & Mrs. Chinn already aboard. A new member joined us at Valley Road corner, & the party of six proceeded to Hitchin, noting a thin covering of snow north of Mandley Hill. It was rather cold, so instead of waiting in Hitchin for the Offley bus, we walked on for a mile or so. The bus picked us up at Offley Cross & dropped us just beyond St. Offley, where we took a narrow footpath on the right, close by two disused red petrol pumps, leading between back gardens & chicken runs to an open field of stubble with a broad path & a fine prospect of open country. The winter sun on the sprinkling of snow gave promise of attractive conditions for a real good walk.

The path became a rutted lane with pools of ice covered water, but the mud though soft was not sticky, & soon we came out on the broad flat top of Litley Hill, where we turned right, in a westerly direction, along the path to Telegraph Hill, which from this approach scarcely seems to be a hill at all, though it is reputed to be the highest point in Hertfordshire at 602 ft. There were sheep here, or rather full grown lambs, moving for what

\* v.e. later became Hedy & Hough



they could find to eat beneath the snow.

Continuing north, we crossed the Deliaid way at the back of Telegraph Hill & came upon the brink of a deep gully, carved into side of the hill, which was a striking & unexpected feature to those unacquainted with the district. We speculated as to how far it was natural & how much it had been worked for chalk or other purposes, as the steeply sloping sides & flat bottom, stepped at the closed end, suggested something of the sort. A path not shown on the map skirted the eastern side of the dip & we came down a less steep slope into Pagdon, flushing two hares on the way, both of which ran downhill away from us.

Sandwiches & liquid refreshment were enjoyed at the "Linn & Let Linn" in Pagdon when we were welcome round the fire & a lunch was brought in to provide seating accommodation for us. Three or four local inhabitants provided interesting stories & advice, ranging from a suggestion that we should walk along a bridle path right through to Luton, to another that we could pick up a bus almost at the door. Mrs. Chinn found that one of them had formerly worked for the Harkness family, when she lived well, & there was much interchange of news about the various members thereof.

We went on to Hoston, partly by a lane leading into the long drive to Hoston House, & partly along the road which is the "Golden Mile" when the Luton trees are in bloom. Left, i.e. south, at Hoston cross-



roads, shortly bearing right through a gate along the middle path referred to at the inn, which climbs the hill between the plantations & goes along the edge of the wood at the top, though there is little trace of it now apart from the gate. The soil was somewhat sloped & the pine trees seemed more like Scotch or even Austrian than Hartfordshire. The county boundary, by the way, is very irregular & anomalous, Heston standing in a promontory as it were of Hartfordshire, enclosing a broad lagoon of Bedfordshire in the district round Pagedale.

The last gate we saw of this neglected middle path was lying in the hedge at the S.E. corner of the wood at the top of the hill. A single stone gatepost showed where it had formerly hung. There we turned left up on to Grand Hill, straight across the road, continuing along the side of a field of cabbages & then over a field of winter wheat, where a track shown on the map could be traced by two parallel depressions which the snow showed up more clearly. We turned right at the wooden fence & fell on the far side of the field & so came to the Delia way again at the bottom of Telegraph Hill, which was indeed appeared as a hill, though only a little one. A short climb brought us to the flat top with its clump of trees, & we were soon among the sheep again, this time making for Liley. We passed the Appleby lane by which we had come in the morning & got nearly bogged down in mud & ruts left by horses clearing potatoes, but struggled on to



From ground at the southern end of Lillay Hill, turned right, down a steep narrow path, which became a lane between fields at the bottom of the hill, & entered in the village opposite to the Post Office.

After shaking & wiping some of the mud off our feet, we walked down through Lillay to the Silver Line on the main road, where we had just a few minutes to wait for the 4.12 bus to Hitchin. As we got off the bus in the dusk of Hitchin High Street our eyes were drawn out attention to Venus shining brightly over the houses in the S.W. & Jupiter rising above the chimney pots in the S.E. This, we thought, definitely showed us mind fixed on higher things, causing us to become quite thoughtful as we passed through the churchyard to St. Mary's Square, where our bus was waiting to take us home. Truly a Sabbath well spent in the open air in such interesting country & pleasant company.

P.B.



Ramble - Sunday Dec 28, 1952

This was our first anniversary ramble + a party of ten met at 10.0 am at the corner of Lonsdale Lane + Handcove Lane, Leiden, N. Whittenbury.

It had been suggested that we should explore the more remote parts of Hatfield Park but the secretary had received a rather discouraging ~~reply~~ reply from the Lymington Local Estates Ltd in answer to his request for permission to use the Mill Green Gate. However, it was decided to stick to our plans + to see what happened.

Consequently, we set off via the path to the swimming pool + Stanlow Lane; then across the lane + along the cart-track leading past Woodhall Farm to the Hatfield Hyde Lane where we turned right for a short distance till we reached the main Hatfield road. On the opposite side of the road was Mill Green Lodge + the gate through which we would pass.

A ring at the gate produced the lodge keeper, who was quickly satisfied with our story + a sight of the official heading on our letter. Fortunately, he did not ask to inspect the letter closely + did not insist on our paying any entrance fee.

Immediately inside the gate we turned to the



right near a charming stretch of the river Lea,  
 known as the Broadwater. We continued up a  
 slope along a well marked track, veering to  
 the ~~right~~ <sup>left</sup> all the time. Soon we came out  
 on a straight track, alongside a ~~timbered~~  
 battlemented building. Here we turned right  
 + soon came to an intersection with another avenue  
 at the site of Queen Elizabeth's oak. Here  
 we turned ~~left~~ <sup>left</sup> for about half a mile +  
 then right along a grassy field track  
 leading diagonally towards a wood. The  
 track at the entrance of the woods was  
 obstructed by wire, so we turned right along  
 the edge of the wood, hoping to find another  
 easier entrance so that we could rejoin the  
 track in the wood. Soon, we were surprised  
 to see two deer bound away from the  
 wood + rapidly disappear into the mist.  
 The mist has persisted all morning +  
 combined with the hard frost gave a very  
 wintry touch to the landscape.

We soon found a spot where we could  
 enter the wood more easily + rejoined the  
 track + walking in a southerly direction. The  
 track left the wood, climbed a gentle slope  
 + then plunged into another wood ~~where~~ <sup>where</sup> it  
 pursued a somewhat zig-zag course, finally  
 bringing us out another thin avenue, flanked  
 another ~~track~~ track bearing away N.W.  
 We turned left along the main avenue



→ pursued a southerly course for about half a mile on the verge of the wooded area of the Park. We then gradually turned westwards & came to a deep ditch which soon gave place to a broad double avenue of trees

leading N. to Hatfield House. Within sight of the House, we turned through a gate on the right leading to a track which led round the lake & then back to the main entrance to Hatfield Park & House, opposite to Hatfield Station.

Here we boarded a bus for W.G.C. when we arrived about 1.0 pm, well pleased with our morning's exploration of Hatfield Park.

And with this ramble, we concluded one year's walks with the Mid-Herts Football Society.

