

A party of 16 set out through the woods to Ayot Green. The weather was fine but it had rained hard in the night and it was very wet underfoot. We took the Water End road from Ayot Green, turned ~~off~~^{right} across the fields under Hunkies Bridge & continued to the Wheatthompson Road. Here we turned left along the road for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile and then turned ~~off~~^{right} half way along a track we had not previously taken to Justard Wood. After passing some dense and very dark pine plantations we emerged from Lamer Park near the Rough (continued across the Common to the Cross Keys where we had lunch. Mr. Frame & Mr. Ken Bree joined us here but three of the party who had got very wet feet made straight for home after lunch.

After lunch we took the path to Ayot St. Lawrence. Owing either to the chilly weather or the Justard Wood being the party walked faster than the leader had bargained for, so instead of making straight for Codrington, we made a detour through Pinner Wood to Kimpton, across the Kimpton Road towards The Holt & then into The Hoe Estate. As we came down the drive towards the river we suddenly became aware of a loud high-pitched noise which someone likened to the sound of rushing water. It was caused by the shattering of myriads of starlings wheeling round the darkening sky in a great cloud & then settling

in dense black masses on the bushes I hear & see
 along the stream. At a clap of the hand ^{they rise} in a great
 chattering swarm making a loud rushing noise with
 their wings.

It was an unusual & inspiring sight and we
 were loth to leave the spot. We took the track
 to Kempton Mill and along Green Lane, arriving
 at the Forge & Dragon, Codicote in the dark to
 find a great log fire and tea with lots of hot
 buttered toast & sandwiches.

After tea the party caught the 6.9. Bus to
 bus home — except a few diehards who
 hadn't had enough & got off the bus at Welwyn
 to walk home. The distance to Codicote was
 about 15 miles, a little more than had been
 planned. Even that wasn't enough for some.

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Annual Dinner & Social Evening - Nov 27, 1954

Mid-Herts Footpaths Society, Saturday,
27 November, Dinner and Social evening
at Wellington Hotel, Welwyn. Dinner at
7.15 p.m. prompt. Members wishing to
walk to Welwyn, weather permitting,
should meet at the corner of Valley Road
and Bridge Road, at 6.15 p.m.

A party of 29 assembled at the Wellington Hotel, Welwyn on a typically stormy November evening; 28 of these had travelled by car or bus from W.G.C.; one stalwart member had defied the elements & walked, so that the event may still be considered to be a ramble.*

After preliminary drinks, the party adjourned to its private room where the tables had been attractively arranged & decorated. Grace was said by the Chairman & then a most enjoyable meal was rapidly served to the party & almost as rapidly disposed of.

The meal over, an entertainment programme was begun. This consisted of a panel game, at which one member of the panel showed remarkable skill at guessing identities, a ghost story specially written & told by another member, a game based on the names of well-known spots visited on rambles, & community singing.

The evening passed remarkably quickly & at 10.30 pm when the party broke up, it was generally agreed that the event had been most successful.

* But it was not included in our walk tables.

W. James

showed road '54'

Sat - Dec 11th 1945

A grand afternoon everywhere was in the grip of a hard frost, and fourteen members set off through Sherwood woods for a grand walk to Lwin.

The walk, plus the keen air gave all a mighty appetite. On entering the Rose & Crown on entering, it struck one as being a real Christmas postcard, a huge log burning on the hearth, tables all set out ready for tea to add to this the smell of roast pork was coming from the kitchen, this was for some lucky people before in the evening.

However everyone enjoyed a huge luncheon and after the exchange of seasonal greetings, the party split up, some going home by bus the other half decided to walk home by the way of Black farm, this proved to be very adventurous as the path had been chucked up by the contractors, then froze like concrete but we all enjoyed the walk very much. Alas next morning we woke to find it pouring with rain (Lester & Gerry)

Ramble - Sunday Dec 26, 1954

Mid-Herts Footpaths Society meet
 Sunday, 26 December at 10 a.m. at corner
 of Valley Road and Bridge Road, Leighton
 Mr. Basin, Secy; Nonresident, Brigg
 Leach. Home for tea, 7-8 miles.

A party of 11 assembled eager to take advantage of the opportunity to walk off the food + drink consumed on the previous day. The weather was cold but dry + bright intervals were predicted. We set off across the well known Waterend path across Brocket Park + noted with dismay that part of the path had almost disappeared during the ploughing of the field beyond Bluebell Wood. It was decided to get in touch with the land agent about this matter.

We continued our walk past Waterend along the inside path. The leader pointed out that a track on the right was the commencement of an alternative path but this was badly obstructed by closure of a railway bridge. After a little over half a mile we ~~turned~~ turned slightly ~~left~~ right up the bank + through a gate in the corner of a field. This led us to a track running to the left. To our right we could see the bridge already referred to (Black Bridge) + some members of the party inspected the obstruction more closely. We carried along the track, turned left in a lane for a few yards + then right again along another track, which brought us again to the

edge of the River Lea, along which we
 continued into Wheatthamstead, emerging near
 Messrs Murphy's Chemical Works. We turned
 left in the main street for a short distance
 up the hill & then ~~to~~ right through the dunes beyond.
 This brought us to Church Lane, in which we
 turned right for a few yards & then, almost
 opposite the school, crossed the road &
 going through a large gap in the hedge, turned
 right & followed a path up the hill, just
 at the ~~the~~ back of the hedge. At the top of the
 hill, from which there was an extensive view,
 against a solitary tree, we turned slightly
 left along a ~~the~~ grassy track, past the
 end of a new road & new houses & followed
 the hedge down the hill. When we came to the
 corner of the field, we turned right through
 a somewhat obstructed gap in the hedge &
 then turned ~~left~~ half left to some
 haystacks from which we followed a cart
 track downhill to a gate & stile. Keeping
 straight down by the hedge, we climbed two
 more stiles, which brought us into a narrow
 hedged-in track, through which we pushed
 our way, to emerge in the road only a few
 yards from the Three Oaks inn, to the right.

Here we were received with our usual warm greeting + we were able to enjoy our sandwiches (turkey?) + drinks + note the sun shining outside. A very pleasant air of Xmas festivity was abroad + some appropriate use was made of the mistletoe hanging in the bar.

After lunch, we turned left from the inn down the road for a short distance + then crossed the common diagonally to the left, crossing the main St. Albans road just a few yards north of the Hapenden road junction. A few yards on the ~~west~~^{east} side of the main road, a track led in the direction of Nonamstead Farm but a hunting gate on the left gave access to a path bypassing the farm - our right. Passing a water pump + following straight down the line of a hedge, we crossed a ^(Roman ramp) road + through a gap directly opposite the path continued through Hammond's farm. Emerging on Hollybush Lane, we turned left up the hill or continued on the road until we came to Chalkwell Wood on our right. Just past a house called Longacre (?) we turned right along a track + then slightly left to pass an old quarry on our right.

We kept on this path, ignoring a path to the right, crossed a broad grassy track & then in a few more yards we came to a second track, in which we turned left for about 200-300 yards. Then we turned right along a rather indistinct path, which ran southwards & brought us ~~to~~ out ~~of~~ of Simonsbyre Wood. In a clearing on the edge of the wood, we turned left into the road & almost immediately opposite, we took a track along the edge of Fuge field ~~wood~~ wood. Just before the track emerged from the wood through a gate, we took a path on the right which followed the edge of the wood & brought us out on the St. Albans Road, on the edge of the de Havilland aerodrome. Here we turned left & then ~~left~~ right past Strick Thana Farm. Here two of the party left us to walk back to Sturminster & the rest carried on along the road to the Barnet by pass road, where a bus was very conveniently caught back to the Garden City. And so ended yet another year of ramblers with the Mid. Parts Footpaths Society.

