

August Bank Holiday Tuesday rambles. Aug. 1<sup>st</sup> 1988.

12 of us met at Stanbury Green at 10 minutes past nine o'clock and already the heat was becoming apparent. As the bus service to Hatfield is rather inadequate on Sunday (or August Bank Holiday/Tuesday) morning we walked to Mill Green & caught a 241 - transferring at Hatfield to another bus to Watford Arms. Here the sight of an open café started a train of thought which was to be with us throughout the day. At this point the 'beast' was unleashed and we started walking immediately. Unfortunately the sight of water running along the edge of our first field proved even more of a temptation and four of the party became <sup>temporarily</sup> detached from the main body & went for a swim. The rest of us followed the footpath which led under the railway & turning left dropped down to the bank of the river Beane which we followed north for most of the morning. At Stopleford a quiet look was taken at the Church & we continued by way of the farm on the estate of P. & A. Smith to Hatfield Lodge. Crossing the road we continued along footpaths 25 and 9 up to Wotton Green. The main dirt path (24) is at present completely overgrown &, particularly at the Wotton end No. 9 is also in very poor shape. The last field before Wotton Green was a most pathetic weed patch in which a few desiccated and straggled *Fragaria* fought for survival. At Wotton Green we deviated from our route in order to inspect 'The Bull' at Wotton but before reaching this we had a look at the Church. The vicar was present and gave us a very interesting short talk on

its history since its beginning in the 18th Century. One or two brasses were in excellent condition. The Bull was very comfortable & we dined on Oxenford's Christie's & ate our sandwiches. After lunch two walkers decided to return by bus and <sup>the</sup> remaining 10 retraced our steps to Waller Green & followed Perrywood lane until just before Perrywood Farm, a path on the right drops down to footpath 22. We followed this cross country to Back Lane but in the heat of the afternoon it proved necessary to take a rest in the hay half way. At Back Lane we picked some wild pea pods which were sweet & succulent to eat. Twenty left to Dunsborough Green we were all overjoyed to find a little shop open which supplied us with tea and ice. After that we inspected the old shipping port on the green & then went on along the footpath which links up with the Roman road to Hardley Hill. On the way I had another stop for tea & at the edge of Haslem Green wood we divided, 5 people making for the bus and the other 5 for the Spinram. We followed the edge of the wood, linked up with the tunnel path and so on to Draycote where we had a dip in the river. We had to make a small detour here as two swans had taken possession of the area where we had intended to cross the water by a narrow wall. From there we made for Frank's walk stopping for a final cup of tea & a game of ball with a wet bathing costume en route. And so home - happy but rather tired after a day made fairly strenuous by the unusual heat.

Yours Truly,  
The Knight

Saturday: August 13th 1955

Wheatthampton, Quotard Wood, Mackercye End

A party of 12 caught the 2.29 pm train to Wheatthampton happily conjecturing that the rain which had just started to fall was only a shower. It was still raining heavily when we reached Wheatthampton, but the general feeling was that we should follow out the ramble as arranged, and this we set out to do.

We took the footpath back to Marford (giving an impression to some that we were just going home after all), and from there struck north a short way up the lane, then left through a copse field to cross the railway, thence across another field which brought us out opposite the entrance to Lower Park. By then most people were pretty wet, and a short conference was held as to whether we should continue. As a result, two members went straight back to Wheatthampton to catch the next train home, but the remainder walked on through lanes, past the Home Farm, and edging our way, preceded by two capable "walking-sticks", round the edge of a cornfield, came out at Quotard Wood.

We followed the road north past Blackmore End and turned left down a lane which opened out into Home Grove, an unexpectedly attractive avenue of dwelling houses. At the

end is a gate leading to an existing lowing path to Poles End. This, however, is not a public path, but was made at some time to connect Poles End with Blacmore End when two branches of the same family were living in these two houses. The present owner of Poles End has kindly allowed our Society access to a public path running further north across the Kington - Mackerenge End road, through this gate, and we took the opportunity of trying it out. Passing through the gate, we struck due north and surmounted an almost unclimbable obstruction in the way of broken fences and branches of trees, and from there continued north across the next field, where we joined the path. This follows the hedge of two fields across into the road just north of Poles End.

The last field was under clover, and the footpath as such being practically non-existent, everyone was thoroughly wet by then. It was consequently decided to keep to the road, past Mackerenge End, and straight down into Harpenden. We ate our tea in the booking-hall cum waiting-rooms at Harpenden Station, and caught the 6.14 train home, very wet, but with spirit undimmed! About 7 miles in continuous rain, but apparently enjoyed by all.

Phyllis Crowder

28 AUGUST

Mid-Rivets Footpaths Society, Sunday  
 18 August, start 9.10 a.m. at junction of  
 Valley Road and Great North Road, for  
 9.15 a.m. back bus to Midland, London  
at 11.15 a.m. Route: The Icknield Way and  
 Telegraph Hill, back to bus. Home for  
 us approximately 8.20 p.m. 8.19 miles.

WALK 103

41

## The Icknield Way & Telegraph Hill

Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> August 1955

Ten of us met at the Rivets bus stop near Valley Road and on a dull morning which everyone hoped would soon brighten up. We filled all the vacant seats on the upper deck of the bus so that a member who joined us at Welwyn Church had to travel downstairs. All were in good spirits, noting points en route familiar from previous outings, & this time we went right through Hitchin, alighting a mile or so beyond the town at the Ickleford town, where the Icknield Way crosses the Bedford road. It seems likely that Ickleford is a corruption of Icknield Ford - over the river Hiz.

"Thank God, that's done! & I'll take the road,

Quit of my youth & you,

The Roman road to Wendover.

By Tring & Lilley Hoo,

As a free man may do." (Rupert Brooke, <sup>"The</sup> ~~Chiltern~~)

The Icknield Way was here even before the Romans, however, an ancient British track linking the Fen country with the South.

A drizzly mist into which we stepped from the bus brought out our mass but did not damp our

spirits. We followed the Schmiel way to Puck's Cross, at first a Larnac road, then becoming a country lane &, after crossing the Pivon road, a track along the side of a field. One gipsy family & caravan was all that was left of a large encampment seen there a month previously. We came out on the Hitchin-Hendon road after passing a pair of cottages on our right, with an inscription which for a moment suggested to one of the party the letters S.P.Q.R. & a date.

The Schmiel way now became a pleasant country road for about a mile & then diverged to the left up the slope to Deacon Hill. We took a path on the right up on to the hill, but the mist was so thick that we could see nothing beyond our immediate surroundings & an Ordnance Survey instrument pedestal to suggest the view that might have been. But even the enclosing mist was turned to advantage with the steep slopes about us - we might have been on Helvellyn or Pen-y-ghent of the Peak.

We had our picnic lunatic under some trees further along the hill, & the members improved the occasion by climbing a large tree, with

encouraging comments from the rest of the party. As somebody remarked, "One couldn't very often have the chance to see a Fir & a Headwater climbing a tree together!"

So down a farm track to Poydon (Hollis, NO FOOTPATH, at the far end) for drinks at the "Line & Let Line", where arrangements were discussed for accommodation on Oct 8<sup>th</sup>, our week-end walk, with much fun about who should sleep where. Then back to the hill again by the path up the side of Noon Hill from a stile opposite the lodge gates of Hoxton Manor. The mist had thinned so that we could see from the top where we had come from & a bit more.

Here we rejoined the Dequid Way & followed it for a short way, leaving left to the clump of trees marking Telegraph Hill proper, reputed to be the highest point in Hertfordshire. The 1" O.S. however gives the height as 602', while Galley Hill two miles to the south-west is marked as 614'. But has Galley Hill a clump of trees? <sup>[Galley Hill is in Hertfordshire!]</sup>

The walk across Lillay Hoe is always delightful. Some of the barley was not yet cut, while other land which had carried barley was already ploughed. We

took the path to Offley Mill (Blind Cottage) used on previous occasions in the reverse direction. A large scarecrow on high beside the path wore a remarkably good coat, giving rise to chaff about the cultural use of one member & remarks about teacher pay.

Had the day been fine for lazing on the hill-top the walk would have ended here on the bus route to Hitchin. One of the party who was catching the night train to Scotland left us to get the 3.5 bus from Offley. The rest of us crossed the road & walked by field tracks, lane & road, to Chalk Hill, Well Head & Spollitts Cross Roads, the route taken (in the reverse direction) on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 1954. A halt for rest & refreshment was made near Temple End, with a view of Pinnacle Hill, & as the leader had somewhat underestimated the distance, we just missed the 4.52 Bus, & walked through Spollitts, turning left at the church & then right for Ashbrook on the Stevenage road to wait for the next 303 bus, which brought us home soon after six, after an excellent walk of 14 or 15 miles.

"White mist above the black hedgerows,  
The slumbering Midland plains,  
The silence where the clover grows,  
And the dead leaves in the lanes,  
Certainly, these remain." (Ibid.)

E.F.B.  
6.7.



Lockley's, Burnham Green, The Tunnels.

Sat. 10<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1955.

This was a delightfully impromptu walk, made up more or less as we went along, for our official leader was on the train to Torquay. It is a boon to eliminate hurry & the need to get somewhere at a certain time, or indeed to get anywhere at all - if only for an afternoon & evening.

Nine of us including one new member took the 2.20 bus to Welwyn Church, picking up one more at Valley Road corner. We walked up towards "The Clock" & through the lane beside the old swimming pool across the Bay-Pass to Taylor's Beckins & the path over the hill by Lockley Farm. Entering the little wood above the beehives we left traffic & hurry behind, emerging at the top beside Baron's pigs to a wide view of the rolling countryside, rather uncommon in Hertfordshire. The new roads on Bigswell hill, to serve the houses to be built, showed up plainly. The path took us through stubble fields & hales to the wood above one of the tunnels & out to the road by the stables at Harmer Green. We walked up to the pond at the top of the hill, now very shallow & stagnant,

& took the lane on the other side down towards  
 Tevin Woods. Near the bottom of the hill we took  
 the footpath on the left - close to the rifle range.

A pleasant walk was taken in the afternoon  
 sunshine on the fringe of the wood, & it was  
 decided to walk to Hamel Green Woods, & picnic  
 in the fields near Widd's Farm. We therefore  
 continued up the path to Brownham Green, thro'  
 the village & down the Woodland Green road for  
 a short distance taking a path on the left, up  
 a sloping bank beside a tree, along the side of  
 a field of clover, where there was little or no  
 evidence of path, to a double rail in a wire fence  
 where it joins the path which links the home road  
 with Kit's corner through "Barnes Wood". Here we  
 turned right by a small copse (Perry's Grove) &  
 over a fallen stile by a gate where a wooden bank  
 divides the fields. A pleasant spot was found  
 for picnic tea on the far side near the wood,  
 with a fine view of stubble fields & stacks over  
 Datchworth way, & a combine harvester still  
 busy in the barley.

After tea we entered Little Barnes Wood by the  
 stile in the corner where a portion of woodland

juts out into the field, continuing southwards roughly  
 parallel with the railway until the path was blocked  
 by tree felling & we took instead the broad way  
 cleared by the tractors to our right, & wandered  
 somewhat circuitously until we reached the  
 telegraph wires marking the line of the tunnel.

We then followed the Tunnel path, crossing  
 the way we had come earlier in the afternoon,  
 until we were overlooking the line through below  
 North Station & over the Viaduct. Here we turned  
 right through a field, soon to be built on, & a  
 short road, & then left to pick up the footpath  
 near the Cooper Arms. So to the Minnow, where  
 some waded in to gather waterweed, thence to  
 Monks' Walk & the Woods, where we divided,  
 some going home by the level-crossing & others  
 via the Waggoners & (later) the golf course.

Peter Byles → P.B.

Mid-Herts Footpaths Society, Bushey,  
23 September, Mon. 9.20. at Watford  
Garden City Station for 9.30 am. - via  
Law bus to Bell Bus, Uxbridge, by 10.15  
Bus. Bell Bus to Harpenden, approx. 15  
min. Bring lunch and picnic set.

Bell Bus to Harpenden, Sunday,  
28 Sept 1953

This was really our Secretary's walk, & I was deputising for him, after a full day over the route together on a previous Sunday, in order to allow him to walk the Pennine Way with old friends in the Midlands.

Eight of us took the Green Line coach to Bell Bus, near Brookman's Park Wireless Station, straggling almost opposite the stile in the hedge on the left where our walk began. We crossed the first field of rough pasture to another stile, then across a field of stubble to a gate in the far corner, - left along Embro Lane for a few paces, then right again through another gate, following the line of the path to a small copse, to the right of which a stile & an old bridle gate were badly mixed up, & we had to crawl underneath. At the far end of the next field, stile & footboard were completely mixed but we used the gate on the right of it; along the bottom of the next field to another footboard & stile, & across two fields out to the road by "The Woodman" at Liddich. Turning left along the road, & then first right by a gay garden of flowers in the direction of West.

End, after the S-bend at the top of the hill we took the lane on the right into Harefield Wood, where we found a check-point for a motor-cycle trial with a very difficult bank to be negotiated by competitors who had not yet arrived.

We followed the lane, much overgrown in places, for half-a-mile or so, & then took the footpath on the right leading downhill & up the other side to Ellendon recreation ground & the village post office. Down School Lane, turning right for Redwell Park Farm where we gathered some fine blackberries & passed a large flock of turkeys. Up through the white gate by the lodge to the lane through the wood & so to Domes farm the road near Little Parkhamstead. A gate up the road on the right took us into a field where a stile led to the recreation ground, on the other side of which was the fine Horsehoeas with a pleasant garden at the back where we enjoyed our picnic lunch.

The weather clouded over as if for rain but soon cleared for a brighter afternoon. Our next path was by the lych-gate of the church crossing the lane by the tower, where we saw an amusing family of small pigs, into a lane with

an iron gate + a fine old chestnut tree in a garden on the left. As we went down towards the wood we passed three dilapidated wooden stiles, unnecessary because there were now no fences. At the third stile we bore  $\frac{1}{2}$  left to cross the field down to the foot bridge at the far corner. The stream was only a trickle but its winter spate has carved a deep gully. Straight up the path through the wood, crossing a wide track on the way, along a ledge + out into the road by a lane at the side of Bayford House, a fine square brick mansion.

We turned left + walked along the road to Bayford, where one member who had to get back early caught the 2:30 train to Redford. The rest continued over the cross road past the lovely red brick Manor + took a footpath on the right to the railway. A footbridge marked on the  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " + 6" maps has been demolished, as we knew from previous reconnaissance, so we crossed the line further north at the end of the cutting + took a track at the end of Harmond Wood into Back Lane which we followed southward for  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile or so to a path by a ledge on the left leading out on to the road by a small overland

Here we turned southwards again & stopped to buy apples at a cottage. The sun was quite hot. Having left pass Bona Orchard to a stile at the end of the lane, we crossed a field & entered Cowhale Wood where a sugar-pole pointed back to Brickendon & on to Poxborough, making the path through these extensive woods look quite important - like the paths in a German forest.

After about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile we came to the long straight path which runs in a NE direction for 2 or 3 miles to Huddersley & this we followed as far as Pevine Street, with several diversions where the path was evidently a quagmire in a wet season. We followed the delightful old home road north to the village of Hatford Heath, with a pleasant rest for picnic tea on the way.

After a few hundred yards on the grass verge of a fairly busy road we took a foot-path on the left, & came by pleasant field paths & a short bit of road at Swallow Bone Farm to Morgan's Walk, & so down into Hatford by All Saints' Church, with Evansong in progress, just in time to catch the 7 o'clock bus for the Garden City, after a most enjoyable walk of about 14 miles.

E. J. B.

Week-end on the Barton Hills (Sat/Sunday)  
Oct 8/9 1955

Only 5 turned out to catch the 9.30 Bird Bus to Peter's farm, with the prospect of a long walk and a night in a tent and another long walk on the next day. A gale had been blowing on Thursday night when we took our tents over to Barton in preparation and it was too windy to put them up but we set out on Sat morning in light rain which soon turned to hot sunshine.

From Chilton farm we took a grass track in the fork of the road which curves round the <sup>(east)</sup> side of Norton and with a short stretch of hard road leads into Stopoley. Here at the "Sportsman" in the middle of the town we drank beer and ate sandwiches. We bought some cakes for tea & then took a path across Stopoley Common and then a track leaving Warden Hill on our left. We rested in the sun on top of Galley Hill (614 feet) & just below it struck the Skirret way when we had a long chat with a gamekeeper who was watching the beaters during the game. From there to Barton Hill Farm. A mile beyond, the road drops suddenly into a deep creek just like the M100 at



Telegraph Hill. We sat here & had tea and tried to pick out the house in Barton which was our objective. We climbed down into the deep valley up the other side then a beautiful walk down into Barton and at length to the back of "Radswall House" where we were to stay. Two of the party scrambled through the fence; the others more politely made for the gate so as to approach the front of the house but unfortunately a bull almost brought their plans to disaster.

Our hostess at "Radswall" gave us tea; we put up the tents & made things ready for the night. Then came dinner - tomato soup, roast beef and Yorkshire and apple pie & cream. A walk round the village and then to bed, assisted by a lot of rum & orange.

It was a perfect night, still and not too cold. The sky was clear & full of stars and when the moon rose at midnight ~~it was perfect~~ and illuminated the weeping willows by the lake it made a picture to be remembered.

We all had a good night. Morning tea made on a Porcupine arrived rather early - between 5 & 6 o'clock - from then until 8 we pottered about & packed up everything but the tents which were too wet with dew.

We had a wonderful breakfast & felt most grateful to our hostess for the meals & the loan of two tent-poles.

and of a camp bed for one of our party

he left soon after nine for our long trek of 10 miles to meet the Sunday party at Breachwood Green. He managed it but it was very hard going in the hot sunshine. Our route was over the Barton Hills past Ward's Wood to Lilly, round Putteridge Busy to Cokerhoe Green, a bridle track to Wand on End across fields ploughed right up to the hedge and then a footpath somewhat difficult to find to Breachwood Green. We warmed our sausages & made some tea in the Primus and we had just finished when the Sunday party arrived. They had already had lunch and when they left for Codicote we hoped to pack up and catch them up on the way. In fact they had finished tea when we reached the Red Lion but that was because they had taken the bus from Kimpton Mill and gained  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour or so.

All agreed that the week end experiment was thoroughly successful even though we were all very tired afterwards.



SIR FRANCIS PEAKE