

Ramble to Ayot-St-Lawrence Dec 10th 1955
~~Walk~~ Led by Percy Rutterworth

For our afternoon walk 14 members turned out, mostly ladies; our Hon. Secy. could not be with us because of sickness at home. The start was a little later than usual in order to fit in with the tea arrangement at the Rocket Arms. Our way was westward through the woods, across the North Rd by the Red Lion and through the fields to Ayot Station, (that was) down the Station approach, over the gate immediately ahead of us and alongside the railway (Luton Rd) by the edge of the fields, recently ploughed. As there had not been much rain for a week or so the going was good and we did not need to have one's eyes on the ground, unusual at this time of year. Passing under the railway bridge we proceeded northwards through the edge of the wood to the fields running alongside. The path is well defined and gates & stiles were in good order. Crossing the Wheatcroft Rd the track continued by the fringe of the wood, where daffodils, Rock Roses & Spindle bloom in their respective seasons. On the fields so far covered rabbits abounded 2 yrs ago, they have since been exterminated by *Myxomatosis*. From the high ground hereabouts the views were charming, embellished by the

Getting down. Now the path became a sort of alleyway, the hedge on either side being high and almost meeting overhead, this part of the lane was, I understand, a favourite walk of the late G. B. Shaw. Turning right on a peaching a by road connecting with the Wheat-amped Rd., and passing Shaw's Corner we soon reached our rendezvous and refreshment. Tea was served quickly and in abundance, everyone relaxed and rested.

By now it was quite dark but it was decided to return by the field tracks. Several members having evening appointments left a little ahead of the main party, in the care of Sir Francis. Turning into the fields through a hand gate opposite the old ~~smithy~~ smithy, we experienced no difficulty, as the glow from the surrounding towns and villages relieved the darkness somewhat, so we had no need to put much strain on our torches.

Crossing the Bodicote Rd. we reached the Wheatamped Rd. opposite the old St. Aylet & Peter's Church and finished our ramble through the woods from Aylet Green.

This short walk is, in the opinion of the writer, one of the most delightful in our own locality. It was an ideal afternoon for the ramble ^{which} ~~about~~ was thoroughly enjoyed.

Distance 8 miles

Percy Rutter

Ramble - Monday Dec 26, 1955

This ramble on Boxing Day is becoming almost an established part of the Christmas Holidays + this year it marked the end of the fourth year of rambles with the Mid-Herts Footpaths Society.

A party of nine met at the corner of Valley Rd & Bridge Rd, undeterred by the gloomy weather forecasts. At the start the weather was mild but mainly overcast.

The leader, N. Bavin, followed precisely the route he used the previous year + which is described under Dec 26, 1954, so that there is no need to describe the route again in detail. Suffice to say, that it led through Watland, to Wheathampstead, thence to Nonmotland + lunch at the Three Oaks. During this part of the walk, the rain fell steadily + we soon had to don protective clothing. On reaching the path of Wheathampstead Hill, we were sorry to see that building operations were in progress + obviously, very soon this path will

be badly obstructed. On the top of the hill, we were met by a full blast of wind + rain but we pushed on by the thought of lunch not far distant. However, two more obstacles had to be overcome before reaching this tavern, namely a ploughed field + a badly over-grown narrow lane. Nevertheless, we reached the Three Oaks in good time + received our usual hospitable welcome. The loan was decorated with holly + mistletoe + the latter was put to its time-honored use by certain members of the party.

After lunch, the weather improved considerably + the sun appeared. Our route lay past Norwood Farm, Hammond's Farm, Hollybush, Sainsbyde Wood + Fazezfield Wood to the de Hailland airfield + then to the Great North Rd. Between the two farms named above, we were interested to see a beagle hunt in full swing + speculated whether the members of the hunt or ourselves had the more strenuous task. Eventually, we lost sight of the hunt + continued our way. Incidents were not

finished, however, since about at the end of the ramble we lost three members of the party in Fingefield Wood. Happily, they were found again fairly soon, rather unconcerned but admitting the blame was theirs & not the leader's!

We were ~~at~~ now quite dry from the morning's rain but, unfortunately, during the last half ~~to~~ mile down the road at the side of the airfield, another violent storm broke & again we got rather wet where we were not protected by macs etc.

~~However~~ Two members had previously decided to walk back via Stanborough, another decided to walk back via the lgt North Rd but the remainder decided to return from de Havillands by bus.

The whole route was about 10-11 miles but in spite of the weather, all the party appeared to enjoy the opportunity of walking off the effects of the Xmas Festivities.

W.B.

JANUARY
 Mid-Herts. Footpaths Society, Meet-
 ings at 7.15 p.m. at 100, High Street,
 2 St. Albans, Herts. SG 1 2AA. Contact
 Harold Smith, 125, 125th, Wilby, Cambs.
 Approximate 1956 miles.

The New Year got off to a rather poor start, for the day was marred by considerable fog. Nevertheless, 14 stalwarts assembled & set off by the familiar route through the woods & the North Walk to Bigswell. It was, when here that building had taken place unpleasantly close to the concrete path skirting Devin Water bank.

The intention was to make for Hammer Green across the field on path 26 but in view of the weather & the state of the ground, the party voted to do their part by the road (North Road) beyond Hammer Green. We left the road NE of Kettle House & turned NW by path 27 to Hammer Green Wood. Instead of continuing into the wood, where the paths have been badly cut up by woodcutting operations, we skirted its southern boundary (where there is no official path) & picked up path 27 running north above the railway tunnel.

Again we turned out of the wood instead of using the orthodox route into it (for reasons of wind also) and at its northern tip joined path 30. This path has not been previously used by the Society; it is well marked, though was muddy in parts, & in spite of the fog we were able to see that it was finely situated & in favourable conditions would afford

of tannic views

In about 2 miles we joined path 38 which runs across country from Harrowden via Hockley Park to Hockley & is very well known. We now turned west & dropped pleasantly down into Walsby to enjoy tea, already ordered, at Rose Cottage.

On returning, the majority of the party decided to go home by bus as it was now fully dark but a few hardy ones elected for the walk back over the normal path.

W.P. PERKE ↓ MARGUERITE THOMAS ↓ MICHAEL BURS ↓ *Cliff* ↓ CLARE BURS



Opposite Upper Beach Hyde Farm,
Sunday, 22nd January.

1956.

Fourteen set out on Sunday morning
Jan. 23rd 1956 in the direction of Newbold. We went
through the Park by way of the Bluebell Wood to
Water End and then along the river to Mansford.

Here there was quite a bit of mud about
and one member of the party declared "Have
we got to go through that?"

We made a short visit at the Lord Nelson
a bit higher up but not to have a
drink. Then we went through the Devil in
Dyke and turned left at the next farm
along a lane not considered a bridle way.

At the end of this we met three of
the party who had daltied and got a bit
lost. Another member had returned to look
for them and he in turn had another
looking for him. Bingham is was all in
the day's play and we had a drink at
Coleman's Green - two of the party preferring
to go home via Water End.

Three of us drank near the well outside
- the sunshine being wonderful. We proceeded
to Crown Hyde and saw a hare on the way.
We came back to Newbold by the Chequers.

C. M. Byles.

4 Feb. 1956.



There were signs that the great frost was coming to an end when the path - nineteen strong - cut out through the woods. The path underfoot was as hard as iron, but before the walk was over ~~the path~~ was becoming bumpy in places.

The leader had unfortunately found it impossible to arrange tea at Quotand Wood and in the circumstances had booked it at Codrict. The party took the usual route to Aycliff S. Lawrence - down the Water End road from Aycliff Green (footpath under the railway and so direct to Aycliff S. Lawrence). We passed Shaw's corner and after walking through the village took the path that drops into the Munsam Valley in Codrict Bottom. Here we turned right & soon afterwards took the footpath to the left which crosses the stream by a wooden footbridge. No one wanted to paddle - at any rate, not very much - and by 4.45 we were ensconced in the George & Dragon having a very good tea.

Most of the party caught the Birch Bus after tea but some found their way by the maze of footpaths east of Codrict to Old Lodge & took the bus home from there. It had been a pleasant outing day overall and underfoot but owing to the mist-visibility was not too good.

P.A.

A.G.M. & Party February 11th 1956 6.30 until 11.30

Backbone Room

This evening marked the try-out of a new idea. Our annual general meetings are not usually very well attended and it was hoped that by combining this one with a party at the Backbone Room the number present would be greatly increased.

Unfortunately weather conditions were against us. Cold biting air and snow on the ground made a number of people prefer to come after the A.G.M. and join in immediately with the warmer activities of the social gathering.

We got off to a really poor start finding that the water pipes were frozen and having to carry cans of water in from the house of a member who, luckily, lives very near. The room was terribly cold and the A.G.M. was a very comfortable affair. The fire did its best to enliven proceedings by staying a minute ^{or so} before blowing out, unfortunately, ruining one of our member's stockings.

After the A.G.M. it was decided that a cup of tea would be welcomed & while this was being prepared the first game got under way. From then on the evening went with increasing swing. The fire really began to warm the room & the vigorous activities of the 25 members now present combined with the welcome tea brought about a complete change of atmosphere. A number of very lustrous games were played & all those present are to be thanked for joining in with such vigour, and creating by

there was enjoyment in a really successful evening which could not possibly have been envisaged at 7.30 p.m.

A special vote of thanks should also be given to the members who quietly & without fuss did that most thankless job - the washing up!

Maryine Sheehy.

MICHAEL
AIRS



PETER BYLES

Outside the "Prince of Wales",
Coleman Green, 22nd January.

19th February 1956. Massey Hill, Datchworth Green, Watton-at-Stone,
 Brownfield, Tewin, Disperswell. ^{Leeds}
 Ralph & Ben. Beagh

Weather Forecast - snow & blizzards. The morning started bright and 4 members turned up for the bus (one more joined later in the day) to Massey Hill. Here the walk ^{begun} ~~started~~ along the Roman Road to Datchworth Green, through the village & just past Bode Lane turned left along track No 25. The foot made walking possible, as otherwise the ground would have been mud & water.

At the junction of No 6 the lane between banks was completely overgrown with brushwood & we had to skirt the hedge (on the south side!) after a short pause for hot coffee from Theomor. At the sharp bend in the field boundary just south of Hoggground Spring we found the bank full of hazel. Between us we fathered a large armful which was carried around with us for the rest of the day & now perhaps adorns someone's home.

Haystack more overgrown similar track to S. corner of Stalving Grove. Here the way through the stile was difficult to penetrate with brambles & we spent a few minutes cutting them back before going through to continue by the obvious way across to broom Hall. Round the back of the "Hall" and by farm track (No 14) to the road leading into Watton.

Here lunch.

As we started off again up to the church a few flakes of snow began to fall. Across the green, where the way in by Path No 24 is not too

obvious, but having got our bearings by the brook we followed the western edge (9) to the end of the first long field, then turned right to the railway line and crossed it by the cart-bridge. Path 25 quite invisible, but followed its supposed route by map to W. corner of Foxwell Wood, then (in heavy snow) to save the detour cut across to the opposite corner of the field, slashed into by a heavy snow-laden wind from the North, and joined path No 13 to Gobins Farm.

Coming in by the gates the map shows the route as passing immediately in front of the farm house to the right, but we took what looked the more natural way forward & then bearing right round the farm buildings, then on by B.R. where we had to negotiate a new barbed wire fence about half way between the old knot-pit & the rear corner of Blackbuck's Wood.

On the draft map this path No 14 seems to come to a dead end on entering the wood (Forestry Commission!) & it is indeed wired across. But this seems a pointless right of way unless it is to lead on (as it so naturally does) to join Back Lane by Sally Rainbow's dell; and the writer feels it should be checked against the draft map and claimed if necessary.

On leaving Bramfield the snow storm had become so thick & violent that visibility was only a few yards, and we dashed to the ex-salopump now a memorial shelter. Exchanged greetings with two "lady hikers" from N. London looking out a route for their club and gave them some sound advice - don't try to go as far as they've intended.

The ferry having somewhat abated we carried on past the Commission Arms by path 7 - great difficulty in following the route round the moat in front of Bramfield Rectory - no stile over the fence and very overgrown, ^{or had it been obliterated?} - thereafter no difficulty. Decided that the last bit, path No 4, which is a gully would be impossible after wet weather as several field drains appear to empty into it.

Arrived before *E.T.A. at the Rose & Crown, but made very welcome and put into the Residents lounge to dry our feet whilst waiting for tea. Pleasant place, hospitable people, not a bad tea. Highly recommendable.

Final lap, across the field behind the Rose & Crown, past the Poultry Farm & by the concrete path route to Dipwell Water. Thence home through the new building area just to see what progress is being made here.

Total distance back to the Campus, 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles.

RT-B.

Mid-Herts Footpaths Society. Meet
corner of Valley Road and Bridge Road at
2.30 p.m. for 2.30 p.m. bus to the bus
back Road. Leader: Mr. [unclear] [unclear]
Knobworth Park, [unclear] Wood, [unclear]
[unclear] [unclear]. Free to all paths.

Knobworth Park, Three Housas,
Codicote, Sat. 3rd March 1956

It was a wet day - but a mild Spring
drizzle after the long cold spell which
broke up at the beginning of the week. It
was gratifying to find ten cheerful souls,
including one new member, assembling for
the walk. Our Treasurer remarked that
this was just the weather he enjoyed
walking in, & another said it was better
to be out in it than sitting at home cursing
the weather. Our Secretary brought a
messenger to take the number for tea to
be telephoned from his house - very convenient,
& then we picked up one more at Affleckoff
Road.

From the Roebuck we took the lane under
the railway, noting where a former grassy track
we had used from the golf course had now
disappeared under the plough, then we turned
right & entered Knobworth Park by North Lodge.
There is a fine avenue of limes & the drive
leads on down to the lake, now rippling in

the wind, where skaters were gliding the previous Sunday when all the Park was under snow.

We skated the lake & followed the path along by the stream to the gate at the corner of Wintergreen Wood, crossing the Hitchin road & taking the path opposite right through Grafton Wood, without finding the later portion, leaving off at a slight angle from the main side, claimed as a right-of-way. At the road we turned right for about a quarter of a mile until we came to the path previously used which follows the west side of Holl Lane Wood. We turned in through the gate beside the cottage, & the cottager informed us that Birmingham City had beaten Arsenal 3-1. At the far end of the wood the path inclines left diagonally across a field to Three Houses, & here barbed wire had to be surmounted.

On the usual path from Three Houses to Codicote we crossed a piece of very sticky frozen land & spent some minutes cleaning it off. We enjoyed a good tea in a cosy room at the Red Lion, & five members walked home undeterred by rain, or by mud & barbed wire in the dark at Hyefield Farm. Altogether a very good outing.

E.F.B.

18 MARCH
Mid-Notts Footpaths Society. Meet 8.15
a.m. at corner of Valley Road and Great
North Road for 8.15 a.m. Walk out to
Lilleshall, Loughborough, Notts.
Duckton Road, Little Gyley, Leicestershire
2021. Bring food and drink for lunch. Meet
for tea (about 6 p.m.) 9-10 miles.

Doughton Head, Little Gyley,
Telegraph Hill. Sunday, 18th March, 1956

It was a fine morning with a rather cold wind
& the Birds bus put down our party of eleven
at the new house just before Schlawford, where
the R. Doughton runs under the road on its
way to join the Hvy. A well defined path
beside the river made a delightful walk
in the morning sunshine, & after half-a-mile
we came to West Mill, with extensive pens for
greyhounds, & lovely patches of snowdrops seen
across the mill-stream.

We followed the river through a reedy, marshy
stretch, where it was overhung with alders & gave
people reminiscent of the Norfolk Broads, into a
grove of tall trees, beech & chestnut, at the
end of which was its source, Doughton Head.
There was one tree sloping out over the wide
shallow stream, which a number cautiously climbed
& sat on the top to be photographed.

The path led us to the Pilton road & we
crossed the field opposite, shown as a footpath on the
1" map but not on the 2½", to the Hanton road where

we turned right & took the second lane on the left. Two brimstone butterflies were seen, one as we crossed the field & one in this pleasant grassy lane, which ended at Gravelhill plantation & became a walk along the edge of a ploughed field. The earth was dry & no longer sticky as it had been a week before.

We rested awhile & retraced our steps down in the bottom, & soon after turned right up the slope to Welbury Low Wood, along a path overgrown with brambles but evidently still used, to the road at the top which we followed down a little hill to a fine grove of beeches. The map (25") shows a bridle road through here & the spinney beyond, but we found no sign of it until we came to the top of the hill, looking down on Welbury House which is beautifully situated in the valley among the woods. It is not a school & we could see boys roller-skating in the playground. We turned left into a good track leading to Little Offley.

The manor house has been empty for 2 or 3 years & we made a little detour to walk up the drive & see a lovely clump of snowdrops & acornils, & get back to our path round some outbuildings. It

happened that the agent was there looking round with the new tenants & they were most surprised to see us, but quite friendly when we explained & apologized for intruding.

The path goes through the field at the back of the big house & down the side of Longgrove Wood & becomes very overgrown with thorn bushes as it leads up on to Lillay Hill & vanishes into ploughed land. We crossed about 50 yds of plough to reach the main track running N. across the Hill, & followed this to the Schield Way, crossing a field to reach Poynton Hill with the steep slopes & wide view over the Redfordshire plain. Here we enjoyed a very pleasant picnic lunch in the bush, but later it clouded over & the wind fell cold.

Two of the party decided to walk back to Spoffhills & left first, while the remainder, including the leader, had a gentle afternoon stroll round by Telegraph Hill, over the Hill & across the fields to Offley Mill, bus to Hitchin & 300 bus home. A most enjoyable day - "B party" 8-9 miles, "A party" 12-14 miles.

P.B.