



# Bishop's Stortford & District Footpaths Association

Founded: 1957

Registered Charity No: 1068733

Website: [www.walksaroundstortford.org.uk](http://www.walksaroundstortford.org.uk) e-mail: [contact@walksaroundstortford.org.uk](mailto:contact@walksaroundstortford.org.uk)

## NEWSLETTER



## Autumn 2010

**Chairman:**

Dave Webber

**Vice Chairman :**

Phil Tripp

**Membership  
Secretary &  
Treasurer:**

Christine Ross

**Footpaths  
Secretary:**

Paul Elliot

**Website  
Manager:**

Brian Hayes

**Association  
Address:**

6 Hawthorn Rise  
Thorley Street  
Bishop's Stortford  
Herts  
CM23 4AW

### Note from the Chairman:

Welcome to the Autumn newsletter.

Unfortunately since the AGM in March, Sylvia McDonald has resigned as Chairman and committee member. Vice-Chairman Dave Webber has stepped in to take over as Chairman until the next AGM.

This is my first as Chairman following Sylvia McDonald's decision to stand down from the committee. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sylvia for the considerable work she has done for the Association over many years.

Your Association has been actively campaigning to preserve and protect the public rights of way around Bishop's Stortford for over half a century. This has only been possible through the hard work of your committee who organise the walking programmes, pursue footpath problems and promote our local rights of way network.

New committee members are always very welcome and so this is a request for you to consider whether you too would be willing to help to maintain the vitality of our Association. The work is not too onerous with tasks divided and meetings taking place on alternate months. Please contact me if you would be willing to join our team.

We do value your views and our new website is a great way of keeping in touch with us. As well as providing details of our walking programme and the latest local footpath issues it has useful links to other like minded organisations. Why not tell us about your favourite local walks, send us your photographs (we may be able to use them in our next walking booklet) or just share your ideas for the Association. We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your continued support.

Dave Webber, Chairman  
Bishop's Stortford & District Footpaths Association

## Report on 2010 AGM

The Association's AGM took place on the evening of Tuesday March 16th and ended in fine style with our meeting hall full of members applauding in amazement the exploits of guest speaker and walker par excellence, John Merrill – a veritable child of nature, himself still in some wonderment about how or why his compulsion to walk great distances began for him at the age of six and a half and became his all absorbing career after monumental, even determined, failure to collect any academic achievements en route. Yet he has written well over 300 books. And he still has more of the world to walk!

Earlier in the evening the chairman gave her report from the chair, telling members that there had been little progress with any of the problems that were still ongoing concerns, but that the Committee continued vigilant. Her main message was that the new website would allow the Committee to communicate with members all year round instead of only twice yearly. It would also allow them to engage in dialogue with the Committee on the reporting of footpaths problems and on opinions held regarding matters of policy or campaigning. She was optimistic for the future of the Association, but called on 'new blood' to join and strengthen the Committee.

Phil Tripp and Linda Kettridge, valiantly stepped in at the last moment to take minutes and give the Treasurer's report. Forecasts showed that the impact of increased postage costs, reduced bank interest rates and additional website related expenditure was being felt. A proposal was made and seconded to increase the yearly family subscription to £2; no objections were raised.

The new Committee was approved; with Sylvia McDonald as Chairman, Dave Webber vice Chairman and Christine Ross as secretary/treasurer for another year. A general discussion followed. The main points related (a) to the treasurer's report and (b) to the failed attempt by local waterways and towpath users to halt British Waterways' policy of wholesale felling of trees, specifically in the vicinity of Twyford Lock, before opportunity could be given for local councilors and interested parties to discuss on site with British Waterways the justification for so doing in our area.

Since our last Walks Booklet was published 10 years ago, we have another small subcommittee working on another venture which will lead to a new Walks Booklet later in the year.



An electric fence blocking access to a kissing gate on a footpath near Little Canfield.

# NEWS

## BAA shelve plans for 2nd runway at Stansted

In May the owners of Stansted Airport announced that the application to build a second runway has been withdrawn. This follows the change in Government at the General Election. However it would appear that the airport authorities will continue to purchase properties that are in the area of the proposed runway should an increase in airport capacity be allowed in the future.

## Plans to rebuild existing schools in greenbelt are dashed.

East Herts District Council met in September to consider the proposal for moving the Herts and Essex High School and Bishop's Stortford High School to a green belt land site in Whittington Way. Our Association member, Cllr Mrs Sylvia McDonald, attended the meeting and has provided the following report:

"Walking along with streams of purposeful people making their way, on the evening of 30th September, to the Charis Centre in Bishop's Stortford, I was wondering, in doubtful hope, if we really could save our rural heritage from the ever present threat of harm, even destruction, that comes from the single-minded intentions of profit-seeking business working with bureaucratic process.

But we can, and on this occasion, we did! Our elected district councillors - what pleasant surprise - reacted to the dozen or so compelling speeches of ordinary people supported by a packed-to-standing audience, and voted unanimously to refuse the planning applications proposing the joint move of two town schools to a vast campus for 3000 pupils to be created on green belt land in Thorley.

Much credit must go to one of our long time Association members, Cllr Ralph Gilbert, who moved the proposal that secured this success. And we very much appreciate the written support sent in by Kate Ashbrook of the Open Spaces Society and also published in the Herts & Essex Observer.

This outcome means that the Thorley section of the Hertfordshire Way is saved [for the time being!] from what would have been savage disfigurement. A survey in 2008 showed that this Right of Way is a favourite and well-used footpath for many local people, and for families with children at weekends, as well as being a popular path linking the towpath to the parish church.

It was to have been the dividing boundary between the extensive car parking area and the school buildings [is this not reminiscent of the Hockerill FP 53 situation?]. The path would have been enclosed by 2-metre high security fencing, hard surfaced with hedging removed at six crossing points, and all its views and openness lost.

Members may be assured that Thorley parish council will stay vigilant to keep this footpath safe."

## Web site Update:

The website has now been available since December 2009 and averages about 130 new visits every month. We have had many new walkers joining us on our walks, having found us on the website.

We have recently added three new walking groups on our "links" page: Uttlesford Health walks, Essex Health walks and Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust - Stort Valley. We hope our members will find these useful. Our website is now available as a link on other like minded websites.

One of our more popular features is the monthly walks that are kindly researched and written by Tony Wellings. We try to update these each month with the "Walk of the Month" and previously featured walks are available on the "Featured Walks" page.

Currently we have eight footpath problems on our "Footpath Problem Page". Seven are ongoing and one is resolved to our complete satisfaction. This page is regularly updated as new problems are brought to our attention and when we receive feed back from the Rights of Way officers at Herts and Essex Councils.

As ever, we welcome your feedback - either by e-mail or post to the contact details found on the front of this newsletter.

## Walks Booklet

The Walks Booklet sub-committee was formed in September 2009 and meet approximately once a month with the aim of producing Vol 4 of Walks in Herts and Essex. The last booklet, Vol 3 was published in 1999 and it is aimed to publish Vol 4 by Spring 2011. The Walks Booklet will consist of 20 Walks with diagrams like previous volumes and hopefully photographs.

All Walks have been planned and walked and must have two Test Walks. Currently, about half of the Walks have had a first Test Walk. The Sub-committee require more volunteers to do Test Walks. These Walks cover an area of approximately 12 miles radius from the centre of Bishop's Stortford and the distance of each Walk is generally about 7 or 8 miles, but in some cases may be a little longer or shorter.

If you wish to volunteer, please contact any member of the committee by post (address on the front of this newsletter or via the website e-mail address:

[contact@walksaroundstortford.org.uk](mailto:contact@walksaroundstortford.org.uk)

## Footpaths Update

Our new Footpaths Secretary, Paul Elliot, has been very busy since his election to the post. If you would like to inform us of any problems that you encounter, please use the contact details on the front of this newsletter.

Currently the Association is aware of a number of problems in our area. These include: electric fences and wooden fences across footpaths; finger posts / waymarkers hidden in overgrown vegetation or missing.

A recent success for the Association is the removal of obstructions between Great Hallingbury and Howe Green. Essex County Council PRoW have cleared the area and have replaced the obstructions with Kissing Gates.

There is an ongoing Mineral and Waste Extraction development at Crumps Farm, Little Canfield and a proposal for Mineral and Waste Extraction development at the old WW2 military airfield at Little Easton. Both these developments will be long term developments and will affect some footpaths in the area. The permission at Crumps Farm, Little Canfield allows mineral working until 2042. The proposal for Little Easton is estimated to be 15 years duration.

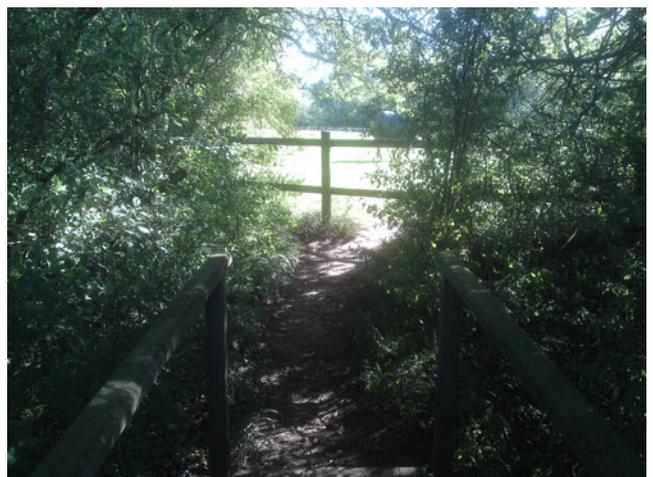
#### Crumps Farm – Mineral and Waste Development

There are three public rights of way (footpaths 8, 12 and 19) as well as the Flich Way that are affected. The Association has registered its concerns with ECC PRow about the impaired visibility at Flich Way/Service Road Crossing in all directions due to vegetation and trees. The Flich Way is likely to be used even more due to recent housing developments nearby and the Service Road will also undergo increased HGV usage. (Derived from source doc. ECC DR/31/10, dated 30th April 2010)

#### Little Easton – Mineral and Waste Development

Affected footpaths, 5,22 & 24 which criss-cross the application site, would be temporarily diverted during mineral and infilling operations but re-instated as the restoration progresses. On completion of restoration, the diverted paths would be re-instated along their definitive routes and an additional permissive path would be created extending the east/west route to link up with public footpaths westwards of the site. (Derived from ECC doc. DR/42/10, dated 28th May 2010)

The ECC documents are available from the council. There is also more information on these problems and others on our website.



A wooden fence blocking a footpath leading to a bridge over a stream at Matching Green.

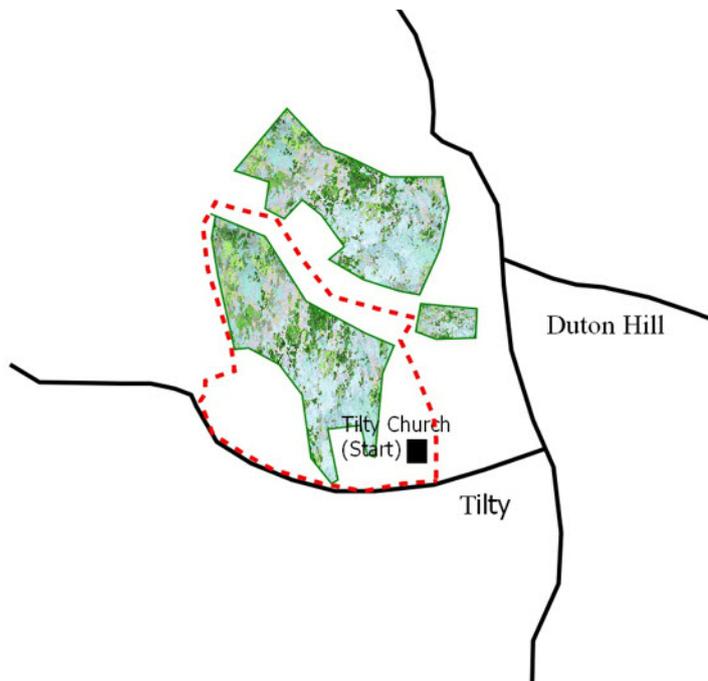


The remains of a footpath waymark post, on a footpath near Matching Tye

## A short walk in Tilty.

Following the news about the second runway at Stansted on page 3, we thought we would feature a walk that would have been lost had the proposal been successful:

This is a short walk in lovely, peaceful countryside. If the proposed second runway at Stansted Airport had gone ahead this area would have been directly in line with and only about two miles from the end of the runway, but thankfully this threat has gone away for the present. Tilty church was once the gate chapel to St. Mary's Abbey and in the porch you will see a pictorial plan of the abbey buildings and the surrounding landscape and we recommend that you look at this before setting off on the walk.



**Start:** Parking area behind Tilty Church.  
OS Map Ref; TL600265

**Distance:** Less than 2 miles.

**Surface:** Country lane and good grass paths.

**Obstacles:** 3 stiles

Starting from the churchyard gate go back along the access road with views across the valley to Great Easton and turn right up the country lane. Follow the lane for about half a mile going past the Grange and Abbey Barns.

Where the lane turns sharp left go over the stile on the right next to the wooden gate. The large trees here are wych elms and the view facing you from the stile is towards Duton Hill. Turn left and follow the track which bears right and then left to reach another stile by a metal gate. Go over this and follow the hedge down the mown field. Through the bushes a few yards down this hedge you will be able to see the burrows of a badger set in the ancient woodbank.

At the bottom of the field go over the stile. A few yards to the left is a world war II concrete pill box which was part of the defensive line through this area. Go over a bridge and turn right to follow the path along the stream through meadows rich with wild flowers. You will come to a concrete bridge beyond which a waymark post indicates footpaths to the right and straight ahead. The path to the right will follow the leat which took water to the watermill further on, but this path is often overgrown and the leat is mainly dry, so you go straight ahead.

At the hedge at the end of the field turn right through the metal gate. You will pass a pill box on the right hidden in an old cart shed. Soon after there is a waymark post on the right where the path following the leat emerges. If you go a yard or two up this path you will be able to glimpse the old waterwheel in the derelict mill.

Back to the path and a few yards further on towards the cream house go through the wooden gate on the left and follow the path up the field towards the church at the top. The section of ruined wall over to the left is all that remains of the old abbey.

## Membership application/Subscription renewal Form

The Bishop's Stortford & District Footpaths Association was founded in 1957 to "watch and take appropriate action for the safeguarding of public rights in respect of paths, bridleways, green lanes, commons, village greens and roadside verges" in the Hertford- shire and Essex border area around Bishop's Stortford extending across a radius of about 10 miles. We liaise with local Planning and Highways authorities and monitor proposals affecting Rights of Way. The Association can and does protest, if necessary, at a Public Inquiry.

We have published to date seven booklets recommending mainly circular walks of distances varying between 5 and 10 miles, which if still in print may be purchased in town bookshops and the Tourist Information Office. A new Walks Booklet is due to be published next year and "Walks of the Month" are offered on our website.

We lead weekend walks of 5-7 miles throughout the year and also midweek evening walks of 2-4 miles in the summer. Details are found in the Walks Programmes published in the Newsletter and on the website. All are welcome.

If you would like to support our aims, please become a member and return this page with your details to the Membership Secretary c/o:

6 Hawthorn Rise, Thorley Street, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM23 4AW.

The cost of annual subscription for family membership is £2.

I enclose a cheque for £..... being my/our subscription for 2010/2011 (made payable to Bishop's Stortford & District Footpaths Association)

**Name: (BLOCK LETTERS)** .....

**Address:** .....

.....

.....

**Tel. No:** .....

**Email:** .....

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# Bishop's Stortford & District Footpaths Association

## Winter Walks 2010/11

The walks are generally 5 - 6 miles long and normally last between 2 and 2 ½ hours.  
For further information on each walk, please go to our website:

[www.walksaroundstortford.org.uk](http://www.walksaroundstortford.org.uk)

Date / Time	Start & Grid Reference	Walk Leader/Contact No
Sunday 7th Nov 10 am	GREEN TYE "Prince of Wales" GR: 443184	Sylvia Tel: 01279 656478
Sunday 21st Nov 10 am	HENHAM "The Cock" (near the church) GR: 544286	Brian Tel: 01279 812574
Sunday 5th Dec 10 am	LITTLE CANFIELD Church GR: 587209	Paul Tel: 01279 501596
Sunday 19th Dec 10 am	EASTWICK War Memorial GR: 434117	Peter Tel: 01279 835036
Sunday 26th Dec 10.15 am	BISHOP'S STORTFORD Tesco car park, far end GR: 472216	Pat Tel: 01279 654050
Sunday 9th Jan 10 am	SAWBRIDGEWORTH Bell St car park GR: 482148	Sarah Tel: 01279 723829
Sunday 23rd Jan 10 am	MANUDEN School GR: 491265	Gordon Tel: 01279 325058
Sunday 6th Feb 10.am	HUNSDON Post Office GR: 416140	Peter Tel: 01279 835036
Sunday 20th Feb 2 pm	GREAT HALLINGBURY Bedlars Green GR: 523202	Heather Tel: 01279 659071
Saturday 5th Mar 10 am	TILTY Church GR: 599264	Paul Tel: 01279 501596
Sunday 20th Mar 10 am	BISHOP'S STORTFORD Link Road car park GR: 489215	Linda Tel: 01279 813424