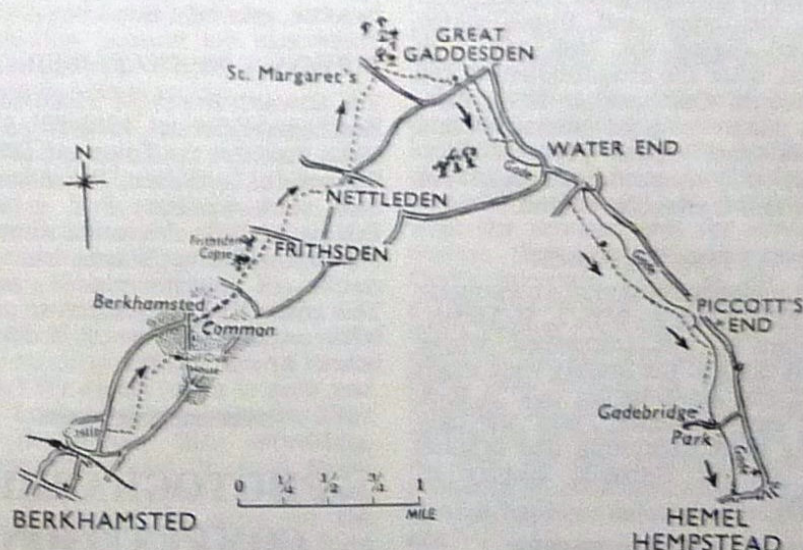


BERKHAMSTED'S BEST WALKS—5

THE FIELDPATH WAY TO THE GADE VALLEY

by Townsman



No one in a hurry goes from Berkhamsted to Hemel Hempstead via Nettleden and Great Gaddesden. But people who enjoy walking rarely choose the shortest route. This month's walk, 7½ miles, could be described as 'Hertfordshire in a Nutshell,' for we sample so many different types of scenery.

After a splendid ridge walk to the Common we take the woodland way to Frithsden, enjoy splendid views on the way to Nettleden, and take little-known fieldpaths to Great Gaddesden. Then it's a level, or almost level, walk all the way down the Gade valley to Hemel Hempstead.

There are good subjects for the camera wherever we go. Nettleden, small and old, appropriately has a small, old church. Great Gaddesden, being Great, has a larger and very historic church in the heart of a village which is both old and new. Water End, like Frithsden, has no church, but its houses and bridges are beautiful. And so to Gadebridge Park, where we cross the

Gade bridges to see the old High Street, the Norman parish church, and the beautiful walled garden before leaving the Old Town for the New Town. Yes, contrasts all the way.

But many readers will not have time and energy to go all the way. If you go no farther than the Common, you will be rewarded by the views from the signposted but surprisingly little used fieldpath which runs high above New Road. Do at least try this breezy ridgeway—it may become your favourite walk.

THE ROUTE

From the traffic lights go along Lower King's Road and under the second railway bridge beyond the station. Take the forward road (not the steep one-way road, Whitehill). Opposite the high mound of the Castle, cross the stile beside a fieldgate (signposted 'Public Footpath'), go to the top of the meadow, and then left along the ridge to the Common.

On reaching the Common, go straight ahead along a rough road to the metalled road; turn left in this road and, just before reaching the war memorial, turn right along the track signposted 'Bridle Path.' Veer left at a fork, and on leaving the Common go ahead along a fenced path which crosses a road and runs to the Frithsden valley road.

Turn right in this road for about 60 yards, and just beyond the flint house go left through a gap in the wall and take the uphill path. Go over a stile at the top of the hill (fine view of Golden Valley and Ashridge House) and turn sharp right to the end of the field; then go downhill, hedge on your right. Alternatively, go down the little lane on the far side of the hedge; it is deep-cut with flint and brick walls, crossed by a bridge.

On reaching the road in the valley, turn left for a few yards (just past a house) and take the uphill path, right; keep straight on (the path eventually runs beside a school playing field) to the road in the hamlet of St. Margaret's. Turn left in this road for a short distance.

At the corner of a rough track (right) you will see a rather obscure stile (just beyond an old fieldgate) in the corner of the hedge. Go over the stile and continue downhill by a footpath which skirts a wood on your left. Keep straight on over the next meadow, making for a stepless stile behind the electricity pylon with two posts. Keeping in the same direction, continue towards the low wall above the churchyard; turn down the path which runs beside the fence at the far side of the churchyard.

Turn right in a little road to another road, in which go right for a few yards and then left along a track below large greenhouses. This is marked 'Public Footpath to Water End, ½ mile.' At the end of a large field, the path suddenly veers left through the hedge to a stile; take the diagonal path, half left, which crosses a plank bridge over the Gade to the main road. (Good views of Gaddesden Place from this meadow.)

Go right along the road for about half a mile, passing through the hamlet of Water End, and just before reaching the second bridge, turn right along the road signposted 'Potten End' for about 200 yards. Turn left along a stony lane (signposted 'Public Footpath to Hemel Hempstead 2 miles') and keep straight on beside the large field, hedge on your left. Eventually this path runs beside a tall iron fence and enters a little lane; go ahead along this lane and just before

Continued overleaf

THE FIELDPATH WAY TO THE GADE VALLEY (contd.)

it turns left (and also goes ahead to a house) look for a gap in the hedge, right. Go over the stile and then left. Keep straight on; at the end of a large field the path veers slightly left over a small meadow to an iron swing gate. Keep on with the iron fence on your left, and on reaching a little road, turn left to the new main road. Go right along the footpath beside this busy road until you reach Galley Hill, a road on your right. But veer *left* over the grass, beside the Gade, and keep straight on, parallel with the road until you come to two bridges. Cross either of these bridges and then go ahead to Hemel Hempstead. A path (left) leads to the parish church and the ancient High Street; or you may prefer to visit the walled garden on your way to Marlowes and the bus station.

ST. PETERS HARVEST SUPPER

St. Peters Harvest Supper will be held on Saturday 11th October at 7.30 p.m. Tickets, price 6 shillings, will be available from Weatherhead's shop from the middle of September.

BERKHAMSTED AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Autumn Programme 1969

All meetings in the Sessions Hall at 8.15 p.m.

TUESDAY 7th OCTOBER

'THE OLD ENGLISH FIREPLACE'. Mr. Gordon Moodey, hon. secretary of the East Herts Archaeological Society, will discuss the types and forms which developed during the 16th and 17th centuries, after the abandonment of the open hearth. Our speaker has undertaken much original research and examples from various parts of Hertfordshire will illustrate his talk. An unusual and fascinating subject!

TUESDAY, 30th OCTOBER

'THE RELIGIOUS FOUNDATION AT ASHRIDGE 1280-1535'. A talk by Mrs. L. B. Turner, a member of our committee, whose previous talks to the Society were much enjoyed. She sub-titles her talk 'A look at the new evidence,' and we may expect a most interesting and original survey of the monastic history of Ashridge.

TUESDAY, 18th NOVEMBER

'BERKHAMSTED CASTLE'. A talk, with coloured slides, by Mr. P. C. Birtchnell, based on the material he is using in a

new 'History of Berkhamsted'. Was there a stronghold before the Conquest? What was the Castle's influence on the town? What happened in the centuries of neglect before the ruins became an 'ancient monument'? Over 900 years of history will be dealt with in what, to some, may be a novel way.

TUESDAY, 9th DECEMBER

'DR. EDWARD BARTRUM' Headmaster of Berkhamsted School, 1864-87. A review of his work for the Town and School by Colonel A. L. Wilson. It is a very long time since we have had a talk on Berkhamsted in Victorian times, and once again Colonel Wilson draws on the results of much original research. This talk will be a sequel to two previous talks on the History of Berkhamsted School by our speaker.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Turn to page 25 to see details of our summer photographic competition.