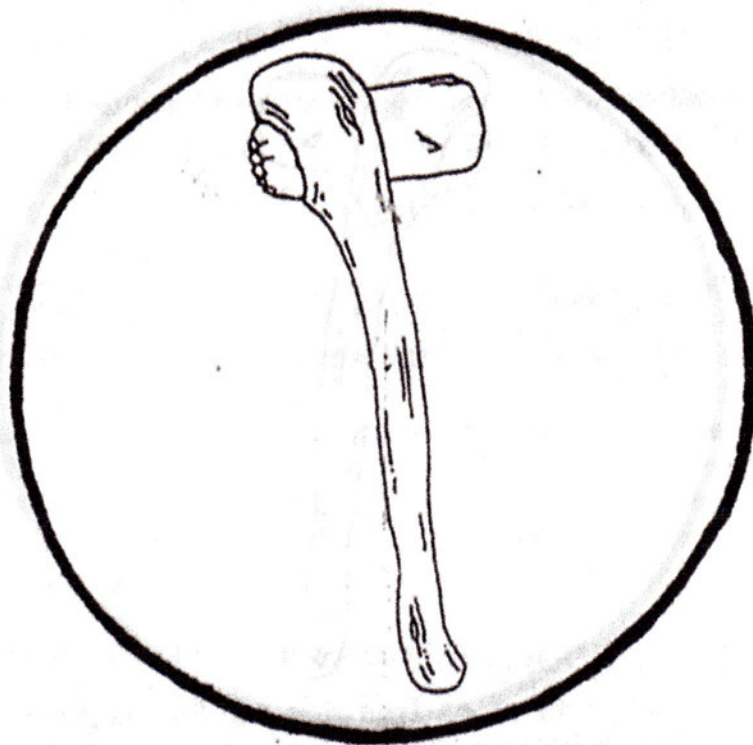


THE ICKNIELD WAY ASSOCIATION



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**THE AGM IN 2010 WILL BE HELD ON
SATURDAY 9TH OCTOBER
AT HADSTOCK, NEAR LINTON, CAMBS**

**Meet at Hadstock Village Hall, at 10.15 a.m. ready for a walk
along the Icknield Way commencing at 10.30 a.m.**

Hadstock is a small village south of Linton on the B1052. It has good links with the Icknield Way which follows higher ground to the west.

The hall is located next to St. Botolph's Church - be prepared to Use overflow parking. There is a pub, The King's Head, serving beer but sadly not food so bring a picnic lunch to enjoy with the beer or buy a snack from the village Co-op.

The afternoon meeting will begin at 2.30 pm in the Hall.

OUR FORMER PRESIDENT ENJOYS A CELEBRATION!

On what must have been one of the hottest afternoons of the summer on Sunday 27 June, a huge and lively crowd gathered in Cambridge for a celebration of Professor Thurstan Shaw's 96th birthday. Such were the numbers attending that guests were re-directed from Hartingdon Grove Friends Meeting House to a nearby Hotel!!

Thurstan held court (there is no other way to describe it!) seated in a large and imposing chair dressed in the dramatic and bright costume of honorary chief of the Igbo-Ukwu people of south-eastern Nigeria whilst relatives, friends and colleagues from all over the world queued to greet him. Circular tables were laid out with a red rose for each guest, a large bowl of strawberries and jugs of cream and beautifully decorated cup cakes. Such was the warmth in the conservatory (even though shaded) that the thirst of the guests must have been great and the hotel staff were hard-pressed to keep up with demand for the many varieties of tea.

One of the tables displayed hundreds of black and white – and – colour photographs of Thurstan, his family and colleagues in Cambridge, Nigeria and Ghana. Many were in albums and even if as an 'ordinary' guest I was not already aware of the high regard in which Thurstan is held, these photographs told the story of his long, active and influential life.

Moving speeches from family and colleagues gave thanks for the many good things initiated by Thurstan, in particular for his work in establishing the archaeology faculty at the University of Ibadan in western Nigeria. Very soon the importance of this became clear as the son of a former colleague told the guests how Thurstan's research and excavation of the burial site of the Igbo – Ukwu chiefs had proved that the early people in Nigeria were also capable of

crafting beautiful bronze vessels. In effect, Thurstan had given the people their history and in return they had made him their chief.

A group of Nigerian colleagues then sang a special birthday tribute, with echoes from a very tiny boy named 'Thurstan' in honour of his much older friend. Those of our members who know Thurston will also know that he is now very frail and his sight and hearing are impaired, but when I left the party at 5pm, he was still 'going strong'. Fantastic!

The IWA should indeed be thankful that we have such an honoured archaeologist as our Founder and former President. Thank you Thurston, for giving us the inspiration ahead all those years ago.

A short video on youtube can be accessed by
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6xxrS92CxE>

Chris James



THEATRE ON THE MOVE

"Bristol to Bury St. Edmunds in a fortnight – you must be bonkers!" That was the reaction of Derek Blake's wife to his proposal to undertake a 221 mile walk with friends, from the Old Vic Theatre in Bristol to the Theatre Royal in Bury St. Edmunds, in April 2009. Derek is Chairman of the Bury theatre and his aim is to link regional Georgian theatres. In 2006 he walked from the Theatre Royal in Richmond, Yorkshire, to Bury St. Eds, a distance of 388 miles, at the same time raising funds for his theatre's restoration. This time the beneficiaries were to be two of the theatre's outreach projects, the rural tour of *Three Men in a Boat* and the See a Voice project for the hearing and visually impaired.

A 'simple' route, using the Kennet and Avon Canal Path, via Bath, (visiting the Theatre Royal there), the Ridgeway and the Icknield Way Path, was devised and, having purchased a copy of the IWP guide, Fifth Edition, Derek realised that the current route would add about nine miles to his intended total. This was when we received his plea for help; details of the now abandoned 'through Luton' route, as included in previous editions, were requested, (and soon provided).

On the 5th April 2009, the party of four, (with supporters walking the first day), set off from Bristol and, after nine days, arrived at Ivinghoe Beacon and joined the Icknield Way Path.

Derek writes:

The views from Dunstable Downs are quite breathtaking and we had to drag some of our party away from the visitor centre, where they were getting far too cosy. Because of our schedule, we decided to take the original Icknield Way (Path) through Dunstable and Luton, rather than the more northerly one now adopted. We walked from Ivinghoe Beacon to Warden Hill in a day of some 14.7 miles. The walk down to Dunstable was lovely and the town was more interesting than we had thought, with a quite magnificent Priory Church.

Luton was less exciting but, once we reached Warden Hill, we knew that we would be in open country straight away on the following morning.

The rest of the route was really beautiful and we definitely preferred the Icknield Way to the Ridgeway. It must be the ancient green lanes, in parts really wide, and at other times, narrow tracks through forest land, but nearly always, (there are exceptions, e.g. parts of Letchworth), going through lovely countryside. We did not always follow the Path because, as in Luton, earlier versions sometimes offered us a more direct route, (e.g. between Royston and Great Chesterford, and from Baldock we took the northern route through Ashwell, since the theatre's Artistic Director lives there and his wife had offered us coffee and sticky buns!

The weather improved from Royston onwards and by our last day on Sunday 19th April, it was glorious, and the countryside just got better and better. The walk from Balsham to Lidgate, (some of it off the Icknield Way Path) which, sadly, we had had to leave at Burrough Green, was just sublime.

NEWS FROM THE WEST

It may have been noticed by the sharper eyed, that a new recruit to the Wardening system was added to the list, in the Spring edition. This was Tom Chevalier, and Tom has made the following excellent contribution to the Autumn Newsletter as follows –

It was reported in the last Newsletter that I have taken on the role of watching over the Toddington sections, so I thought I could introduce myself and highlight what is going on around here....I have been interested in the Rights of Way (including I.W.) around Toddington for a long time and have lived in the village for 20 years. Over recent years I have ensured that the two IW path routes around Toddington were correctly way marked, particularly from Chalgrave Church through to Sundon Hills Country Park.

There is currently a closure of part of the route beside Chalgrave golf course for the next few months, up to date details are on the Website. This is to enable the golf course to do various earthworks adjacent to the path. Part of the work involves creation of a new length of path parallel to the A5120 inside the golf course hedge. This will then form part of a safer route for the IW, replacing the existing walking route along the verge of the busy A5120. It will upgrade the part of the IW trail route to bridleway status whilst also improving the drainage of the path.

In recent years we have been making considerable efforts to remove all stiles in the Toddington Parish. This has meant the removal of 15 stiles from the IW route in Toddington, now there are no stiles left on either of the two routes through the village. During 2010/11 (and onwards) Central Beds. Council is going to work on Chalgrave parish. The IW has two stiles in Chalgrave parish, hopefully these can be replaced with kissing gates. If this can be achieved there will be no stiles from Dunstable Downs through to Sundon Hills (and probably beyond). This could be a major promotional opportunity for the IW.

There are two major road schemes on this section of the IW path. The M1 'managed motorway scheme' has commenced work on site. Other than the disruption of trees/hedges being cut down the two bridges that IW uses to cross the motorway are remaining in place and are accessible. But walkers need to be aware of increased activity around the motorway from construction workers. At the moment I see no reason why the path should be closed due to any construction work.

The A5 - M1 link road (Dunstable northern bypass) would have impacted the IW path. This was due to be considered at a public enquiry at the end of June, although this has now been postponed as part of the government spending review.

The paths in Toddington and the IW are now in the best condition that they have ever been, but, if you find a problem send me an E-mail. If you want a circular walk you can always try the two sections together, you will find a warm welcome at any of the six pubs in our village centre.

Tom Chevalier

SUCCESS FOR KEN (BUT THERE IS A 'BUT')

Ken Payne, one of the founders of the IWA (He is No. 5), writes to Newsletter with mixed news.

In the last years Autumn Newsletter Ken appealed for evidence of usage of a corner of a field adjacent to the Stotfold – Hitchin road and Icknield Way Letchworth, this was to enable this section to be included as a Right of Way on the Definitive Map for the area. At present this is not so, and therefore there is a gap in the route which could be subject to development.

The good news is that Ken has received notice that this section has been prioritised as position 25th out of over 200 and HCC say this is likely to be investigated in the next year or so. Ken feels that the fact that it is included in a published guidebook has placed it in this fairly high position.

Here comes the 'but'

But Ken feels that in spite of his efforts the appeal may not succeed due lack of evidence. There was virtually no response to the Newsletter article mentioned above and therefore I have included in this edition, a repeat of the appeal, as a loose sheet in order to prompt members or others, who remember this leg to respond to it.

Ken, still an indefatigable worker on such matters at 92 years of age, deserves some help here and he contrasts this 'good' response, with a another former application for the use on the O.S. maps of 'Gothic Lettering' traditional IW style, between the B655 near Pirton and Westmill Lane.

This was applied for in 1995 and he has been told that though this investigation was virtually complete, there was still a dispute whether it should be 'byway' or 'bridleway' that was not yet settled.

This route has been in use for thousands of years and is listed by the County Council as a 'highway maintained at public expense'.

He has written to the RA and the Open Spaces about this ridiculous state of affairs which they say they are trying to get rationalized nationally.

VOLUNTARY WARDENS

Here is a list of all our wardens. If you find a problem on the Icknield Way when out walking during the year, please phone either the relevant warden or one of the committee.

Helen Fletcher-Rogers	Beds	01582 472300	Maps 1,2,3
Tom Chevalier	Beds	01525 873986	Maps 4, 33-34
Tony Northwood	Beds	01582 883155	Maps 5,6
Liz Hunter	Herts	01462 433859	Maps 7,8,9,10
David Allard	Herts	01763 242677	Maps 11,12,13
Jane Benson	Cambs/Essex	01799 527407	Maps 4,15,16,17
John Quantrill	Essex/ Cambs	01279 653899	Maps 18,19

Geoff Gardiner	Cambs	01638 730880	Maps 20,21,22,23
Phil Prigg	Cambs/Suffolk	01638 751289	Maps 24 to 27
Roger Amey	Suffolk	01263 713476	Maps 8,29,30(part)
Ken & Di Barrell	Suffolk	01379 642125	Maps 30 (p't),31 32

Thanks must be given to Tom Chevalier who has recently volunteered to help warden the new sections of the route around Dunstable

THE WEB-SITE

A reminder of the address: www.icknielldwaypath.co.uk

Sue Prigg has spent some very useful time on the Association's behalf sorting out some anomalies on the web-site and bringing it under the full control of the committee. It is now possible for her to directly add material including 'hot off the press' items.

However, the site is still short of attractive photographs promoting the route, so if you have taken any good (preferably digital) shots of landscapes, historic features or landmarks, special buildings or interesting places to visit along the Icknield Way, please send them to Sue Prigg sue@prigg.co.uk who will find a good home for them on the relevant page of the web site.

YOUR COMMITTEE FOR 2010

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