

Founded: 1957

Registered Charity No: 1068733



Bishop's Stortford & District Footpaths Association



Safeguarding your Public Rights of Way in and around Bishop's Stortford



Chairman:	Dave Webber
Vice Chairman:	Phil Tripp
Membership Secretary & Treasurer:	Christine Ross
Footpath Secretary:	Paul Elliot
Website Manager:	Brian Hayes
Newsletter Editor:	Peter Hales
Association Address:	6 Hawthorn Rise, Thorley Street, Bishop's Stortford, Herts, CM23 4AW
Association Website:	www.walksaroundstortford.org.uk

To contact any of the committee members, please e-mail:
contact@walksaroundstortford.org.uk

Note from the Chairman

Welcome to the spring newsletter.

We've had a very busy and productive winter. Our walks programme has gone from strength to strength with over twenty walkers (plus at least one dog) regularly joining our Sunday morning rambles. The unusually mild and dry conditions have certainly helped but we are seeing increasing numbers discovering our walks programme through the website. There is clearly a strong demand for led walks and I have been encouraged by the very positive feedback our walks leaders have received. A full summer walks programme has been planned and details can be found later in the newsletter.

Many of you have been asking when our next walks booklet will be available. The good news is that our booklet team (Joyce, Phil and Paul) are now very close to the production stage and we are hoping to have a new publication ready later this year. The booklet will retail at £6 and will cover 21 walks of approximately 6-7 miles in length. Please keep an eye on our website for further news.

We have continued to invest in our website and have been encouraged by the rising number of visitors to it. What we would ideally like to see is a little more interaction with our members. If you become aware of any footpath problems, have feedback on our walks programme or would like to share photographs of the local area, then please get in touch. We would love to hear from you.

Unfortunately it is necessary for me to end on a negative note. At the past two AGMs I have appealed for members to come forward to support our committee. The response has been poor and as a consequence we are now having difficulty meeting our objectives. The issue will be brought to a head in a few months time when our long serving secretary and treasurer, Christine Ross, leaves the area to join her family in the west country. Unless we can find volunteers to take on her role (it could be shared by two to three people) we will need to consider our future viability. Please get in contact if you can assist as we don't want the next AGM to be our last!

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

Notification of AGM

The **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** will be held on: **Wednesday 28th March 2012 at 7.45 pm**

in the Day Centre, Apton Road, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 3SN.

Parking is available in Apton Road car park nearby.

At the conclusion of official business there will be a break for refreshments followed by a talk.

AGENDA

- 1. Minutes of the AGM held on 6th April 2011**
- 2. Chairman's Statement and Report**
- 3. Secretary and Treasurer's Report**
- 4. Election or Confirmation of reappointment of Officers**
 - a. Chairman**
 - b. Vice chairman**
 - c. Secretary**
 - d. Treasurer**
- 6. Election of members to the Committee**
- 7. Reappointment of Independent Examiner**
- 8. Questions from Members and Discussion**

BREAK FOR REFRESHMENTS

- 9. Talk entitled: "Uttlesford Way" by Peter Cooper**

History and a Cry for Help

Phil Tripp, Vice Chairman

It seems unlikely that Indian independence and the dismantling of the Raj would affect footpaths around Bishop's Stortford. However, among the servants of the Raj who returned to the UK was Will Turner, who came to Bishop's Stortford and was the leader in opposing a path closure in Twyford – establishing this Association at a public meeting in March 1957.

The purpose of the Association is to provide, preserve and protect public rights of way – in particular those within 10 miles of Bishop's Stortford. During the last 55 years we have had many hard working officers and members whose influence on local authorities has helped to preserve the network of local footpaths. Our publication of walks booklets and the programme of guided walks have helped to introduce local people to the footpaths in our area. The Association has made determined efforts to solve footpath problems. The present committee and officers need help. Older members become less able or pass away. Younger members have tended to move away because of work or family commitments.

We appeal to all members to take part, however small, in keeping our Association in being. Join the Committee, volunteer to walk paths, to lead guided walks or investigate path problems. Without more helpers the Association will simply fade away.....**HELP!**

About the Speaker

Peter Cooper is a very experienced walker, and in 2010 completed a 10 year project to walk from Lands End to John O Groats. On this and many other walks he used guide books of varying quality and used these guide book experiences in trying to put together a book that is both clear and informative.

"Discover Uttlesford" is a guide to the Uttlesford Way, compiled over several years of walking in the district. The talk, supported by slides, will give a taste of each of the 16 linked walks in

the book and describe various ways the book can be used depending on the ability of the walker.

The book describes over 125 miles of walking and he will give a flavour of some of the interesting features of this undulating part of the county.

The book will be on sale at the end of the evening at £7.50 each when the speaker will sign copies if required.

Thorley Wash

Dave Webber, Chairman

Regular walkers along the River Stort will be familiar with Thorley Wash - a forty acre floodplain situated north of Spellbrook. It recently came under the protection of the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) and we asked Dr Tom Day, Head of Living Landscapes at HMWT to share with us their plans for the site.

"We are very excited about the plans for Thorley Wash because it offers so much potential both for wildlife and people's access to enjoy the wildlife. HMWT acquired Thorley Wash in December 2010. It is Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on account of its botanical diversity and forms a key part of the Stort Valley Living Landscape. Unfortunately, due to lack of management in previous years, the site is currently considered to be in 'unfavourable ecological condition' in the view of Natural England, the government body responsible for these sites. Accordingly, the Trust aims to restore Thorley Wash to its former glory. In order to do that, access for maintenance needs to be improved. The Trust will be building a new bridge from Spellbrook Lane East later this year. The bridge will enable grazing animals to be moved onto the reserve, as well as machinery to carry out habitat restoration works. Much of the wet grassland has become overgrown with scrub, shading out some of the rarer plants and some of this will be removed. The works will also greatly increase the value of the site for birds and bird watching. Alongside the ecological restoration work, access for people will be enhanced through the creation of routes which will enable visitors to get close-up views of the special wildlife living on the reserve. The work is expected to take several years to complete and will depend on the Trust securing the necessary funding. The exact location of these routes has not yet been decided and will depend upon many factors, such as funding, ground wetness, wildlife sensitivities, grazing animals and how people would like to use the site".

A footpath runs through the reserve from Thorley Wash farm through to the River Stort towpath - but take care as it crosses the busy B1383 and the Cambridge main line railway if you approach the site from the west.

Reminder:

Have you paid your subscription for this year?

If not, please fill in and post the form on page 6.

Footpaths Report

Paul Elliot, Footpath Secretary

The Association has been made aware of some planning applications affecting Public Rights of Way (directly or indirectly) as well as some Public Path Diversion Orders:

Standon FP91 - Relating to St. Edmund's College off Ermine Street (the old A10).

Circa 2006, East Herts Footpath Society submitted a Definitive Map application to record a footpath that existed in the Standon Inclosure in the 1830s. There was no evidence that this footpath was 'stopped up' and therefore a Modification Order was introduced by Herts CC PRoW in 2006 to record the footpath. The Modification Order was never confirmed because it was unacceptable to the College. A Public Path Diversion Order has been made to record a footpath which takes a slightly different route. This is acceptable to the College so, provided that there are no objections, Herts CC PRoW will confirm the Diversion Order and Standon FP91 will come into being in due course.

The Association have raised no objection and support the Diversion Order because a footpath will have been gained that provides a link between Standon FP18 up to Ermine Street and Standon FP25 off Old Hall Green Lane.

Proposed Change of Use of Part of an Industrial Building for the Processing of End of Life Vehicles at Hadham Industrial Estate, Little Hadham.

A planning application was made to the Spatial and Land Use Planning Unit at Herts CC for a Change of Use of an existing Industrial building at Hadham Industrial Estate for the processing of End of Life Vehicles (ELV). The application indirectly affects footpath users crossing the access road as it is anticipated that this would generate an average of 44 (22 in, 22 out) daily vehicle movements of which 24 (12 in, 12 out) would be HGV movements and create a hazard to footpath users crossing the road. Access would be from the A120 onto the narrow road that runs past the church.

The Association has objected to the application.

Change of use from an agricultural land to a green waste composting facility at Church End Little Hadham

A planning application has been submitted for change of use from agricultural land to a green waste composting facility where the proposed composting facility would actually be in the Albury parish. The application site is a parcel of farmland approximately 0.9ha in size and access would be from the A120 into the lane at Church End and via existing farm tracks that run north of Hadham Hall to the site. This would generate an additional 6 daily HGV movements (3 in, 3 out) onto Little Hadham Bridleway BW37, the Hertfordshire Way (Little Hadham BW35 & Albury BW10) and the composting site. The Association opposed this application. The applicant has since withdrawn the application but the Association retains a watching brief.

Footpath Bishop's Stortford FP63

The Association is pleased to report that, at last, the stile on the Hertfordshire side of the footbridge crossing the River Stort (Herts / Essex boundary) has been repaired (see photo, right). This is the footpath from Michaels Road to the River Stort at the Herts/Essex border.



When is a public footpath not a public right of way in Bishop's Stortford?

Frances Clapp, Committee Member

Much has been written and said on the subject of the proposed Old River Lane development in Bishop's Stortford over the past year, but whatever one's views one positive outcome has been the highlighting of an omission from the Definitive Map.

The Definitive Map of the county details all public rights of way and should be amended to reflect Modification or Diversion Orders which have been made. It is important that the Definitive Map is as accurate as possible as the information on it is then used by the Ordnance Survey to show public rights of way on OS maps; the OS maps show non-definitive paths as well. The Definitive Statement is "a list describing each right of way shown on the Definitive Map." see <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/envplan/countryside/walkingandriding/row/defmap/>

The Map and Statement are maintained by Hertfordshire County Council.

During residents' investigations into Henderson Global Investors' plan to create a Flood Compensation Area (FCA) on part of the Town Meads it came to light that the footpath running from Bryan Road adjacent to Hunt's Garage (which provides an access point onto the land on the western bank of the River Stort) does not appear on the Definitive Map. This town path has been used by residents and visitors to Bishop's Stortford for some forty years. It is hoped that with supporting documentary evidence the footpath can be added to the Definitive Map and Statement.

It is known that, inevitably, there have been omissions from the Hertfordshire Definitive Map over the years. It is possible that there may be other footpaths within the parish of Bishop's Stortford, in regular use, that may also have failed to make it onto the Definitive Map.

If you are aware of paths in your part of the town which have been used without challenge or interruption for at least twenty years, and they do not appear on the OS map, you may wish to investigate further. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 allows anyone to apply to the County Council to make an order to change the Definitive Map and Statement if they believe the map is incorrect. A starting point for the collection of evidence of use of a path could be to contact your local town councillor or community association, and to talk to long-term residents. We can all take action to protect our rights of way.

Source for information about the Definitive Map and Statement: www.hertsdirect.org

Source for information about the Definitive Map and Statement – www.hertsdirect.org

What do you think?

Please let us know your views on anything raised in this Newsletter.

Postal and e-mail addresses are on the front cover.

Militant Walking

Tony Wellings, BSDFA member

Some years ago many cross-field paths were ploughed up and cropped over whereas nowadays they are mostly reinstated after sowing. Walkers generally had been brought up to abide by the rule that one never walked on crops and they were reluctant to follow the paths once the crops were growing. Often there were simple and sensible diversions round field edges, but sometimes that was not an option and the paths were effectively closed.

Where it was feared that paths beyond these obstructed rights of way were becoming overgrown or disappearing due to lack of use, a group of BSFA members embarked on a programme of "Militant Walking". This involved tramping along a path across a cropped field, sometimes in groups but often on their own, until the line of the path was clearly visible. The project achieved some success with walkers once more using the paths and in some instances paths are, even to this day, reclaimed each year by locals using the same method.



The picture shows a reclaimed cross-field path. After the crop was planted I used to drag a sack filled with stones along the path to mark its route. Needless to say, I was younger and fitter in those days.

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 Hertfordshire 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 in 2012 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 2012 (made payable to Bishop's Stortford & District Footpaths Association)

Name: (BLOCK LETTERS)

Address:

.....

Tel. No:

Email:

Please indicate below how you would like to receive your Newsletters: (circle as appropriate)

Post

Email

Download from Website

Members' details are held on record in compliance with Data Protection Act 1998

Summer Walks 2012

For further information on each walk, please go to our website:
www.walksaroundstortford.org.uk

Date / Time	Start & Grid Reference	Walk Leader / Contact No
Sunday 15th April 10am	NEWPORT Railway station GR: 522335	Dave 07920254825
Sunday 29th April 10am	MATCHING TYE The Fox pub GR: 515112	Peter 01279 835036
Anyone wishing to eat after the walk will need to book beforehand		
Sunday 13th May 10am	STANDON Church GR: 396222	Paul 01279 501596
Sunday 27th May 2pm	TILTY Church GR: 600265	Tony 01279 813614
Tuesday 12th June 7:30pm	BIRCHANGER WOOD Water Tower GR: 502223	Pat 01279 652095
This is a short evening walk around Birchanger Wood guided by the Warden.		
Wednesday 20th June 7:15pm	MUCH HADHAM The old Red Lion Inn GR: 428197	Barbara 01279 842352
Sunday 1st July 10am *	BURTON END, STANSTED The Ash pub GR: 533237	Brian 01279 812574
Anyone wishing to eat after the walk will need to book beforehand		
Sunday 8th July 10am	GREEN TYE Prince of Wales pub GR: 444184	John 07799804429
Sunday 22nd July 10am	THORLEY Church GR: 476188	Linda 01279 465702
Sunday 12th August 10am	BRICKEND, BROXTED (The Prince of Wales) GR: 572258	Brian 01279 812574
Sunday 2nd September 10am	ALBURY Village Hall car park GR: 441248	Paul 01279 501596
Sunday 16th September 10am	HARLOW Moorhen pub GR: 446113	Sarah 01279 723829
Sunday 30th September 10am	EASTWICK War Memorial GR: 434117	Peter 01279 835036
Sunday 14th October 10am	CLAVERING Cricket field (Hill Green) GR: 481323	Dave 07920254825

NOTE:

This Newsletter is available on the website. To respect members' privacy, leaders' surnames are no longer be included in the Programme. The website will give more details on the walk, including expected distance and any last minute changes. Those without internet access should continue to telephone the walk leaders.

The weekend walks are generally 5 - 6 miles long and normally last between 2 and 2 ½ hours. Evening walks are shorter (approx 4 miles) and are normally no longer than 2 hours.

* Joint walk with the Uttlesford Ramblers. ***Bold Italics:*** Denotes evening walk.