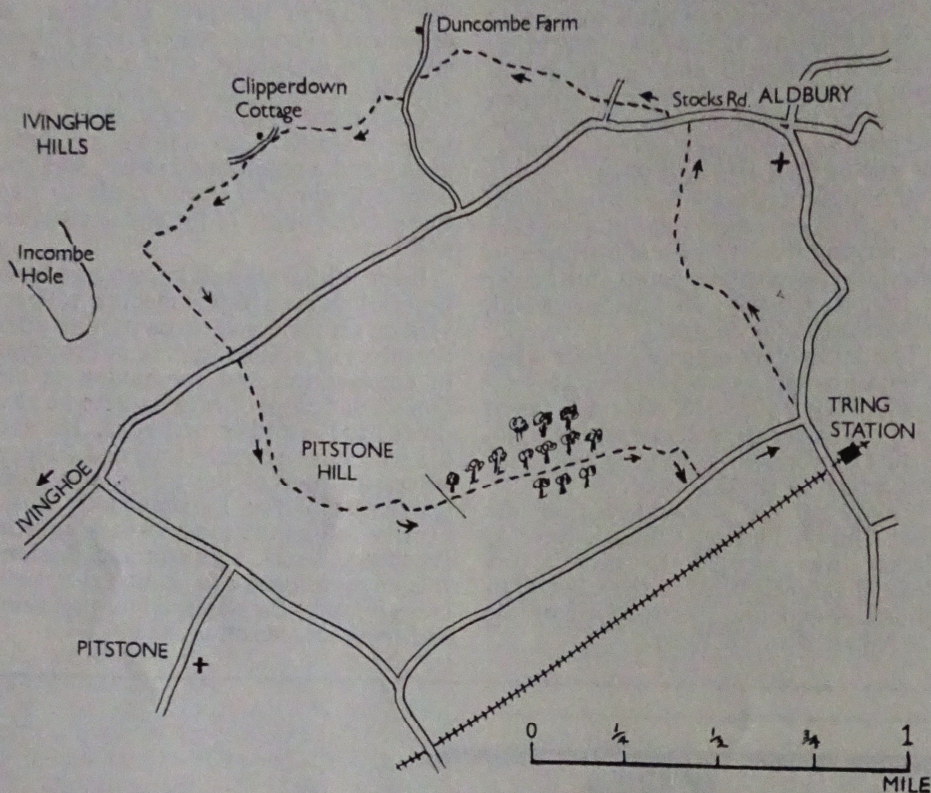


BERKHAMSTED'S BEST WALKS—11

CLIPPERDOWN AND PITSTONE HILL

by Townsman



Now is the time to plan a good Easter walk for your family and your guests.

It would be quite impossible to exaggerate the delights of this month's recommendation. It is perfect. I have walked the route in rain, in sunshine, in snow, and even in fog. One of the joys of not waiting for a fine day is that one sees the countryside in so many moods. But my own mood is always a happy one when tramping the hills of Inghoe and Pitstone.

Can a route which starts at Tring Station fairly be called one of *Berkhamsted's* best walks? Certainly! The most distant point is just five miles, as a sober crow flies, from the town centre.

Of course, you can walk all the way from Berkhamsted if you wish. The canal towpath is a good and cheap way to Tring Station. But the railway fare is only 1s. 3d. each way (no 'off-peak' or excursion tickets are available), there is a train every hour, and most people will find our 5½ miles' route as much as they wish to tackle until they are in their full springtime stride.

No need to talk this month about historic buildings; Aldbury is by-passed with the best of intentions, to see and enjoy the countryside. But on Pitstone Hill you will see and walk along some

very ancient tracks which score the hillside. You may even come across a pre-historic flint mine. Here, on the chalk-hills high above the Icknield Way, early man made his home. His was a rough, tough existence, yet there must have been times when, like ourselves, he rejoiced in the birdsong, the sunshine, the sight of young leaf, the smell of flowers, and the wonderful views over the plain. For part of the way you will walk along tracks that were used long before the Romans came.

THE ROUTE

On leaving Tring Station, turn right, over the bridge, and about 80 yards beyond the road junction you will see a 'Public Bridleway to Stocks Road' signpost. Take this path, which runs on the right side of some trees, through a hedge, and straight ahead over an open field and then on the left side of a hedge. Where the path veers left, look out for a little green lane, right. This takes you to Stocks Road.

Turn left along the road for a very short distance and look out for a 'Public footpath' sign on your right. Take this path (hedge on your left) for about 50 yards, then go over the stile, left, and veer slightly right across the field towards the smaller (and lower) of two

houses. Cross the road and keep straight on; the path runs beside a fence to a stile, then along a slight ridge to a gap in the hedge, and then across a smaller field to a stile, where Duncombe Farm comes in view. Cross the field ahead diagonally, left, to the lane, making for the 'Footpath' sign. Turn left along the lane for about 200 yards, then right up a little green lane. Beyond a fieldgate, a wide grass track, left, winds round the hillside and then rises rather steeply to run into a little lane near Clipperdown Cottage, which you see on your right.

Turn left along the lane. After about 200 yards a track leaves the lane on the left and continues in a forward direction. Follow this track but leave it where it swings sharp left after about 100 yards, then take the forward path, which runs on the right side of a wire fence. Shortly after going through a gate you will see, left, a stile. Go over this stile and take the forward path (wire fence on your left) to a road.

Cross this road and, just beyond a narrow enclosure, go over a stile. Ahead you will see two wide upland tracks; take the one on the left and keep straight on, fence to your left. At the highest point there are good views over the Vale of Aylesbury. Follow the fence until it turns sharp left; keep straight on, and about 30 yards beyond the corner of the fence you will enter a wide grass ditch (an ancient earthwork); go along this ditch, which swings left and brings you to a fence, where there is a stile and a 'footpath' sign. Go over the fence and keep straight on. The footpath first runs below some trees and then through a wood. An occasional 'footpath' sign helps to keep you on the right track.

On leaving the wood, the path runs over open ground for a short distance, veering slightly left; just beyond a steep dip the path crosses a track. Turn right along this track, which veers slightly left and runs through an avenue of trees to the road, about half a mile from Tring Station.

BOOKS ON WHEELS

The appeal for voluntary helpers for a books on wheels service has been very encouraging. The idea is that old or housebound people can be helped by having library books brought to them by the volunteers. Not only will this provide with books, those who are unable to get out but it will also offer them the change of some social contact.

The scheme is to be run by the Library and the Womens Royal Voluntary Service. If you can spare a couple of hours each week and are interested, or know of a housebound person who could use the service please contact either Miss Mellish at the Library or Mrs. Livingstone of the W.R.V.S. (phone: Berkhamsted 5034).

BERKHAMSTED LIBRARY

The County Library in Kings Road will be open:

Daily 10—8, except Saturday 9.30—5, and Wednesday—closed.