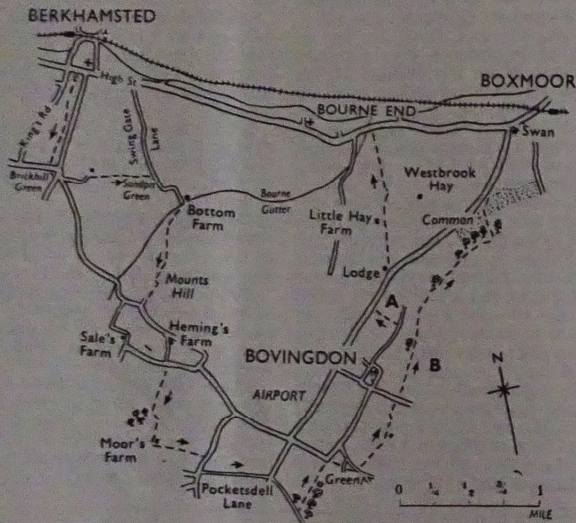


# THE HILLTOP WAY TO BOVINGDON GREEN

by Townsman



Here is a walk with a difference—a strange claim to make for a route which, for the first three miles, has figured in earlier articles. But there is a limited number of ways out of the town, and a certain amount of repetition is inevitable.

Bovingdon is seldom visited by local ramblers. One of the reasons for this neglect is the closing of some well-loved fieldpaths; the airport turned footways into runways, and I think I would rather be chased by a bull than by an aeroplane.

But there are still pleasant green lanes and footpaths around Bovingdon, and I think you will especially like the long downhill walks from the village to the Bulbourne valley. Two alternatives are suggested, one to Bourne End, the other to Boxmoor. The latter is the nicer of the two.

The route includes a walk across Bovingdon Green, a lovely open space where cricket has been played for generations. As one of our alternative routes

takes you through Bovingdon churchyard, no doubt you will find time to visit the well-proportioned church, an 1840 rebuilding and enlargement of a church which has stood on the site since 1200.

Total distance: about nine miles. But there is no need to walk all the way: perhaps a friend will drive you to Hemings Farm or Bovingdon. The return home is no problem: there are buses on the A41.

For a good *short* walk, try combining the two alternatives, A and B, starting at Bourne End (up the little lane which starts almost opposite the Village Hall) and then, to compensate you for a stiffish uphill climb, returning down the path from Bovingdon to the Swan, Boxmoor.

Warning! If you cannot abide mud, wait for a long, dry spell. In any case plod well shod. A friend and I made our final test run on a snowy day and were described as muddled oafs when we returned home. But we enjoyed the walk.

## THE ROUTE

To regular readers it is unnecessary to give in detail a description of the first part of this walk. Follow the footpath from Butts Meadow to Brickhill Green, then the road towards Ashlyns Hall: but leave this road where it veers left and go ahead along a track which passes through Sandpit Green to Swing Gate Lane. Turn right in this lane to Bottom Farm; beyond the farm buildings and the dry river bed, turn right along a track which, in about a mile, takes you to a narrow road.

Go ahead (not right!) along this road for a little over a third of a mile; you will see, right, Hemings Farm. Just before reaching this farm, take the track which runs half right for a short distance and continues (wire fence on your left) to a road. Directly opposite, take the track (signposted 'Public Footpath and Bridleway') over a field. If in doubt, head for the centre of the wood ahead, where you will see a swing-gate. Here you enter the wood, veering left along a path which soon runs out of the wood and continues left of an orchard and field; at the end of

this field turn right, hedge on your left, to Moor's Farm.

Just beyond the farm buildings, turn left along a wide track to a road, in which turn right for about 150 yards. Where the road starts to turn right (not 50 yards farther on, where there is a small road), take the track, known as Pocketsdell Lane, which at first runs uphill through a spinney and then level and straight to a road. Cross the road and continue along the forward road for a short half mile. Just before reaching a bungalow, take the track which runs left, first between barbed wire fences and then beside derelict war-time buildings. Keep straight on, along a path which runs left of a tall water tower to a road.

Here, on your right, is Bovingdon Green. Turn right across this green, hedge and sports pavilion on your right, and shortly before reaching the end of the green look on the left side of the road for a signpost 'Public Footpath to Bovingdon Village.' Go along this path, which eventually runs into a track beside the flint garden wall of a house; at the end of this wall, go left over a stile, and continue to an estate road (Austins Mead) to the Bovingdon road.

Here the walker has two interesting alternatives:

A. Turn left along the road as far as the pond and fork right along a little

road for a short distance, then turn left through the churchyard. Turn right in the road for 50 yards, then left along a lane, at the entrance to which is a fieldgate, for a third of a mile. Near the top of a rise turn left along a footpath which starts at a barn, fieldgate and stile. This path leads to a road, in which turn right for a quarter of a mile. On reaching a lodge, left, go ahead along the farm road (*not* the private gated road). In about a third of a mile you pass Little Hay Farm, left, and see two bungalows ahead. Turn right along the signposted path which runs round the garden of the lower bungalow into a track, in which turn right for a short distance; then follow the 'Footpath to Bourne End' path (signposted), which, with splendid views, takes you to the village, almost opposite the Village Hall.

B. Cross the road, go right for a very short distance, and starting between the houses numbered 43 and 47, go along a track which runs beside several fields, keeping right of the woods. About a mile and a third ahead, in a little valley just beyond a farm on the right, turn left along the fenced track through Bury Wood and when in sight of the Bovingdon-Boxmoor road, veer right over Sheethanger Common to join this road lower in the valley. The road leads to the A41 road; bus stop at Swan public-house.

## THE MELANESIAN MISSION

The Melanesian Mission, founded in 1849, is one of those missions which are supported by St. Peters and All Saints Churches. Melanesia is the name given to islands in the S.W. Pacific. It includes the New Hebrides, Banks and Torres islands, Santa Cruz and the Solomon islands.

In the main the religion of the people is ancestor worship and the heathen native is careful to involve his ancestral ghosts in all that he sets out to do.

Formerly incantations to ghosts were the remedy for illness, but now the mission has definite medical work. At present there are at the Epiphany hospital 20 native nurses in training and last year 1,938 patients were admitted to hospital and 4,375 outpatients were treated.

There are schools for boys and girls, the boys being trained for the teaching of religion and government service while the girls life is related to that of their homes.

Much evangelistic work is done by native brothers (Franciscans) who go to remote villages and islands to carry the message of the Gospel.

There are several branches of the Mothers' Union and the members take their promises very seriously.

Altogether this is a mission which is well worth supporting as it raises its own funds and receives no help from other missionary societies.



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