

Beating the Bounds of Clavering



Pause for a rest in the woods during the 2000 Beating the Bounds

Beating the bounds was an important custom in times past, before Ordnance Survey maps developed and at a time when local administration was still at parish level, and it was important to know where one parish ended and the next begun.

Although it continued sporadically later on, the only historical record was on 15 April 1823 when the Vicar, Rev Lancelot Pepys Stephens accompanied up to 30 farmers and other inhabitants, tramped the whole circuit of almost 12 miles. They took with them a measuring wheel and marked various points along the way, as shown in the following account which has survived in one of the parish registers. Most of the field names are recognizable through the Tithe Award map and the boundary is largely unchanged today.

A revival of the ancient custom took place in Rogationtide 2000 to celebrate the Millennium, when upwards of 200 people took part. This was repeated in 2010, both events organised by Peter Cooper – it is hoped it may happen again in 2020 and take place every decade but new volunteers will be needed to organise this. Although some short diversions had to be undertaken to avoid growing crops, it followed as near as possible to the original course set out below.



Negotiating the mud



Finish of the walk!

Beating of the Bounds of Clavering in 1823

(as recorded in Clavering parish records)

"Starting from the Four want Way up Millfield Common, down Mr Seabrook's Hills to the corner of Mr Mumford's Mead; from thence straight to the bottom of Parsonage Lane, going then into Killy belonging to Mr Beard, up the side, along the top, about the middle – **1 mile...**

Thence across Killyand Killys corner straight to corner of Parsonage Wood belonging to Mr Seabrooke - marked elm tree- then straight across Cranham and Stocking to Dewlands belonging to Mr Jn. Cole – marked elm tree – along inside of Dewlands to Pelham Gate – marked oak tree – down Pelham Close to The Moors belonging to Mr Rayment, about 5 poles from Pelham Close hedge – **2 miles...**

From thence towards Roost field; up the inside of them to a field called Hertfordshire belonging to Mr J. Barker; from thence through Oxborough Wood, along bottom of Haghill at the lower corner – **3 miles...**

From thence to bottom of Rumsteads across Glasscock's little field into his meadow, then towards the bridge at Saily along the bottom about half way – marked ash tree - then straight up the land to the bottom of a field belonging to Mr Pavitt called 10 Acres- marked ash tree – then across 10 Acres to Winding field, straight across that to the lane leading to Langley - marked gate post – Then up Pale's Croft to corner of Lilly hedge – marked oak tree in the hedge – and inside corner of Lilly – **4 miles...**

From thence along to topp of Lilly, Sloughfield Common and Briants towards the gate in the lane leading to Langley Upper Green; then through the hedge down B... Green field behind the barn; then down B... Lane leading to C... – **5 miles...**

From thence along inside of Clark's field and Broadfield into Broadfield Lane – made a cross inside the lane - marked several trees in the lane; out of the lane into Mr Hurrel's field called 16 Acres into another field called Nomans Land, a few poles from the gate, **6 miles...**

From thence along a field called 4 Acres belonging to Mr Hurrel; then across the Downs, Homefield Wood into Homefield, along the top about half way – **7 miles...**

From thence along the fields leading to Arkesden Lane, cross the lane, down B. towards Stocking Grove – marked Ash tree corner of Upper Stocking; from thence round outside of Stocking Grove along Ponstreet

field about half way – **8 miles..**

. From thence down Lower Stocking to Wicken Green; then up Bradley towards Mr Canning's field, up to Dancroft Gate, take 6 ridges inside Dancroft down towards Mr Canning's yard gate, through the yard and stables and pond into Jobercroft, about 5 poles from the bottom, making mark on tree, corner of Laird's hedge about 9 poles before the mark was – **9 miles...**

From thence up the field to Jobercroft Lane along Mr Newport's Jobercrofts inside towards Rickling Lane, along top of Rickling hedge piece, and at the bottom – **10 miles...**

From thence down Highfield Common across the brook at the bottom into Poorbridge Mead, up to Mr Seabrook's field to the corner of Cockscroft belonging to Mr Cole; from thence along the centre of the road to the Four Want – **11 miles and about 9 poles."**