

Beating the bounds, 11th May 2024

The weather was pleasant as we convened at the village hall at 9.00 am. Margot Eagle gave a short welcome to walkers, then Revd Hilary Young said some words about the Christian significance of the Rogation Walk and led us in prayer. Thirty-five walkers including four children, together with three dogs, started off at 9.25 am. We walked up Buff Lane then round the boundary of Hatley parish in a clockwise direction. The sun soon broke through and stayed out for the rest of the day. It was interesting to see our countryside from a different perspective than from familiar public footpaths and bridleways. The walk was an opportunity to catch up with friends and meet new people. The route took us round field boundaries and through woodland. Several of us were grateful for helping hands to cross a few ditches!

Some walkers left the group at each of the four exit points. In a shady corner of a field shortly before the four-mile-exit point, Al Smith gave a very interesting talk about birdsong identification and communication. At the south west corner of Hayley Wood Rebecca Neal, alias Becca Badger, the local Wildlife Trust's Communications and Education Officer joined the group. She talked about the plants and trees while walking round the wood and down a muddy footpath edged by many plants including early purple orchids. After a short lunch break the group walked on for a while with Becca, talking about wildlife and the impacts of climate change. The group then continued round the southern section of the boundary. Near the end of the walk, Neil Barton gave a very informative and interesting talk on swifts. The group arrived back at the village hall at 4.50 pm, rather tired and hot but happy after 'beating the bounds' of Hatley parish, a distance of 11.7 miles.

The day was made complete with the village hall being open for returning walkers for refreshments. There was a display of local history and wildlife, and some memories of Ishbel Beatty's contribution to local history and poetry. Ishbel died one year ago. Her article on the [Perambulation Walk](#) round Hatley gave Nicola the idea for this event. We are most grateful to Joyce Denby for preparing information on the history of Hatley's parish boundaries, for setting up the display which included her meticulously researched tome on Hatley's history, and for manning the display during the day. Nicola prepared a note on the tradition of beating the bounds and set up the wildlife display. We owe sincere thanks to Linda Hudson for helping at the village hall throughout the day, and to Amy Jones who helped for a while. And thank you to everyone who made and donated cakes, they were much appreciated.

A sincere vote of thanks is due to Margot Eagle and Mark Wilsher for their time and effort preparing for the event, which included trial walks round the boundary, once Margot had obtained the kind permission of landowners. Mark undertook the tricky tasks of working out four exit points and preparing the map. Margot drafted flyers advertising the event and the registration and disclaimer forms, with help from Nicola, and Judith Smith designed them, for which we owe thanks.

We would like to thank the owners of the following farms around the parish boundary for giving us permission to walk on their land: Hatley Park Estate, Fullers Hill Farm, Peter Cox Farms Ltd, Copy Yard Farm, D&A Sapsed, Holbeins Farm and Top Farm.

Last but not least, thank you, Hatley Parish Council for supporting the event.

We are pleased the walk went well – so many joined in, it was enjoyable, interesting, with no accidents or injuries, and we were blessed with beautiful weather. We have asked for feedback on the day and very much hope we can arrange something similar next year.