

Beating the Bounds

“The Parish of Melbourne in the County of Cambridge, (to wit). The Bounds of this Parish were on the 4th day of June 1798 had and taken by the Churchwarden with the Principal and other Inhabitants of the said Parish as follows: Beginning at the Ashen Tree marked or cut with a Cross there on at the Melbourne End of the Bridge leading to Meldreth Town, walking from the Tree to the Mill Mouth up to the Mill Wheel marking the Mill Axel Tree with a cut Cross, taking the whole of the Mill Wheel towards the West End and advancing thro’ the Mill on the West side of the River. Along the river Bank thro’ The Bury mead unto the Hedghe parting the Mowed mead from the pasture, taking in the Motes on the Left, digging a Cross in the Sward opposite The Bury Orchard, likewise another Cross a little further on the same Bank. Proceeding to The Bury Horse Pond, marking a cross on a small tree growing in the Hedge opposite the Pond, and going through the Pond under the Cartshed. Then between The Bury House and the Hen House leaving the Garden on the left hand and the Pound on the Right. Then cutting a Cross on a Timber Ash Tree growing in Mr Fordham’s Hedge next the Lane. Crossing over the Hedge and the Road to the opposite side along the Bank towards Bury Rookery corner where a cross is cut on the Sward. Proceeding up Ashwell Street along the Bank on Meldreth side as far as Kneesworth Bars, making a cross on the

Corner of Bull Field, and another on the Sward on White Hill opposite a long row of Bushes in Kneesworth field and another Cross a little below Kneesworth Bars. Proceeding straight up through one furlong at the end of the Furlong, straight up a Balk called Bonny Hill. At the further end of the same Balk is dug a Cross near to a Bush growing on the same Balk towards the Kneesworth side.

Then turning a little on the Right Hand up a Headland Piece. Then on the Left down a Headland. One Furlong along Kneesworth Joint; going up a Headland on the left, then another Headland on the Right to a Balk making another Cross on the Sward and going up to the Windmill leaving the Mill on the left side. Then along the Miller’s Path to Mr Beldam’s Enclosures, going between the Park and the High Road as far as the Corner of Mr Lewer’s close crossing the Road up and along the Bank as far as the Royston Towns End where another Cross is made at the corner of a field on the Sward.

Then crossing the New Turn Pike Road going along the Bank up to Mr Wortham’s Enclosure, called Great Burlows, making near the Gate Way at the bottom a Cross, and on the lower most corner of Little Burlows another Cross on the Sward. Advancing towards the Folley House, digging several crosses on the Ends of the Baulks and Lands of the Common field which belong to the Parish of Barley. And making two more crosses about one Furlong distance, the lower Cross being

at Waterdrain next to the Folley, Crossing to the outside of Waterdrain along Waldon Way to Picking Cross Way leaving the Folly on the left and Barley Field on the Right making Four Crosses, one of which is at the Corner of Barley Gravel Pits. Another Cross one Furlong further, another one Furlong further, another Cross one furlong still further and another at Picking Cross Way.

Then advancing towards Melbourne as far as Waterdraine making a Cross at the corner thereof by the side of the Baulk in little Chishall fields. Then proceeding as far as the New Bridge along Waterdraine upon the other Bank making a Cross near the Bridge on the Chissall side. Then proceeding to Branditch taking in Waterdraine making two crosses on the Foulmire side of Branditch near the Arch; one cross of each side of the Bournbridge Road. Then proceeding down Branditch as far as the Moore, taking in all the Ditch, digging a Cross where the Road from Melbourne crosses Branditch along Pottersway. Then another Cross at the Bottom of Branditch next the Moore opposite the Spring Head.

Then from the Spring Head towards Foulmire Mill along Melbourne side of the Bank crossing the water which leads from Read Well adjoining the Springs. Proceeding along the Bank as far as Foulmire Mill on the Melbourne side cutting a Cross on the West Corner of the Mill, turning short on the Left crossing the Ford down Dunsbridge Riddey to

Dunsbridge Turnpike, cutting a Cross on a post of the Turnpike Gate.

Then over the Garden and Hedge along the Inner side of Dunsbridge Riddey to the bottom of Hollow Lands where a Cross is cut near Dunsbridge Riddey on the Moore going along the ditch which leads to some Willow Trees at the bottom of Hollow Sands. Along the Moore at the Bottom of Hollow as far as Hollow Baulk where a Cross is cut. Crossing the Moore to Common Downe then along the Bottom of Downe to Scollops Willows crossing the Riddey going along the Bank on Melbourne side as far as Mr Fisher’s Osseys leading under the Hedge thereof upon the Right hand to Inclosures belonging to the Corporation of Chard, in the Tenure of Mr Stallabrass. Going up a ditch which divides Chard’s Inclosures from Fisher’s Inclosures up to the River. Then going along the River Bank Melbourne side as far as the Mill Bridge to the Ashen Tree where the Bounds were first taken.’

(‘Sward’ or ‘sward’ – a term for grass ‘Osseys’ are osiers i.e. young willows)

The beaters started from what is now known as Ward’s Mill. Some of the village officials in 1798 were; John Hitch junr, Churchwarden, Thomas Newling and James Faircloth, Overseers; Jonathan Ellis, Constable; James Day, Pinder, and James Carter, Herdsman.

P.R. Salmon

Herts and Cambs Reporter 22 August 1932

This account of the event traces out the boundary of the parish as it was in 1798, The peculiar spelling, with capital letters, and without punctuation, is exactly as it was written then.