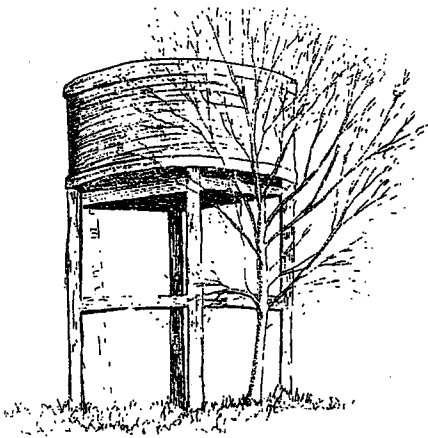


Parish Path Group

A figure of 8 – before it's too late! Walk No.4



This 'figure of eight' (more like 'a pair of spectacles') begins and ends at the bus stops in Westy Road, Pury End (1). If possible try and arrive on foot – or by bus! – as parking can be tricky. There is only room here to describe one walk in some detail. In the Wood Burcote region (where we are heading) there are a lot of interconnected paths and the signing is not too good, so please take a proper map with you if you want to do more than the walk set out below. The numbers in the text correspond to the numbers on the map overleaf.

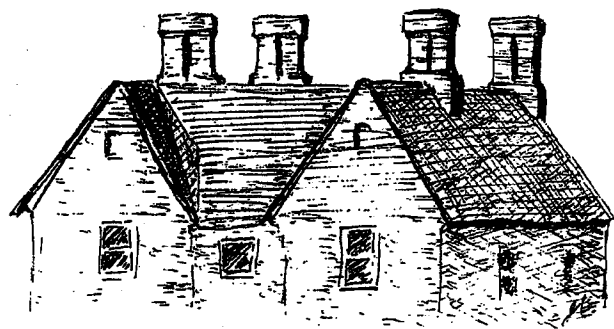
The first place to note, right by the bus stop, is the old Primitive Methodist chapel erected in 1862. Many of us still think of this as "Frank Payne's chapel". It is now a private house so we had better not stand and stare for too long. Turn towards the main part of the village and then right on to Careys Road. The street was named after William Carey the weaver's son who became a famous Baptist missionary. He was born just here in 1761. Look for the memorial stone almost immediately on your left (2).

Continue along Careys Road then bear right on to the bridleway just past the old Bricklayers Arms. For much of this walk we will be on the Grafton Way. On the 1820 Enclosure map this bridleway is marked as Nicholls Wood Road but our older residents knew it as Bretts Lane. After passing through the gate pause in the next gateway on your left and look back for lovely views of Long Row with the Church behind. Carry on to a rather gothic water tower 'tucked away' here in 1937/8 (3). A few yards further on you should turn right through double metal gates. A rather indistinct arrow signs the Grafton Way. You are now on one of the few paths in the village that follows the Parish Boundary which makes me think that it could be a very old pathway. The 1820 map labels it as 'Paulerspury Highway' though it cannot have ever been much more than a track.



Walk straight ahead till you meet the metalled road (Cowpastures). Turn right and go the short distance to the top of Westy Road, being very wary of lunatic drivers. Cross Cowpastures and find the bridleway again just by the road signs (4). This photograph was taken at the beginning of 1978. The old sign was much more picturesque than the present one - and what happened to the trees? A small arrow confirms that you are still on the Grafton Way though any day now there might also be a new green bridleway fingerpost to look out for. Follow the path downhill. Pre-Enclosure one of the village's Open Fields, Great Westy Field, would have stretched away to your right.

At the bottom, where the path crosses a stream (5), we meet the Parish Boundary again. Here we will cross boldly into Towcester parish! The footpath splits with the Grafton Way going straight ahead. The arrows are confusing as they both seem to point in the same direction but if you look on the ground you can clearly see another path bearing away to the right and this is the one to take. First timers should have a good look round at this spot as we will come back this way and the signs are not particularly good. Follow the right hand path till you reach the metalled road in Wood Burcote. For most of the way you will see these lovely chimneys ahead of you. Please enjoy this stretch of countryside before it gets covered in houses.



At the end of the bridleway in Wood Burcote turn left along the road and walk to the edge of the hamlet where the Grafton Way, with shiny new green fingerposts, crosses the road in front of you. Before turning left to complete the walk go to the metal gate on the right (6) and look at the view of Towcester ahead of you. We are all aware of Watling Street (A5) being a Roman road but from here, in Roman times, you would have seen the traffic moving to and fro on another Roman road – the Alchester road. It would have met Watling Street in the centre of Lactodorum (Towcester) somewhere between the end of what is now Park Street and the Saracens Head.

Now cross back over the road and go through the blue metal gate. Unfortunately the signs are poor in the next section so take a while to get your bearings. Looking slightly diagonally across the field you should be able to see the remains of an old way marker (now just a pole) in a gap to the left of an old tree. Walk straight to the pole. Look ahead again. In the middle distance, going to the right, is a strip of woodland. Continue walking in the same straight line that you have been on and aim just to the left of the woodland. This brings you to a gap in a rather stunted hedge. Go through the gap and stop just short of a solitary old oak tree.

From this point scan the middle distance over to your left (bear left rather than sharp left) and you should be able to see a white way marker (of the lollipop variety) leaning in a small bush. Make for the marker. The second part of this section is easier as you can follow another low

hedge that stops just short of the marker. From here keep walking in a straight line; there are no signs but the path is visible on the ground. This takes you back to the point where the paths diverged earlier (5). An arrow signs the Grafton Way up the hill to Cowpastures (4). This time cross directly over the road and head down the road opposite - Westy Road.

Len Goff's map of Paulerspury shows that there was a World War 2 Signals Unit located on your right hand side (7). That must have gone long long ago but the last thing I will mention is very much still there – the quarry on your left (8). Most of the time we probably try and pretend that it isn't there, but it is quite interesting. Some of Northamptonshire's finest buildings are made of local stone and restoration work gets harder if the stone cannot be matched. Old maps show that there used to be dozens of quarries and stone pits in the County but this is now the only working quarry supplying the famous Blisworth Limestone. Limestone is originally laid down in seas (in this case the Jurassic sea) and often shows remains of sea life. Oysters were once visible in the Blisworth Clay at this quarry. Some Limestone in other parts of South Northants has even been found to host sharks' teeth! So don't loiter as you walk up the hill and back to the bus stop from where you set out.

This walk should be suitable for all ages, though not for buggies. It is advisable to wear good shoes or boots. One or two of the gates are a bit fiddly. The worst feature of this walk is the rather poor signing in the middle section but that is outside our Parish and not within our remit! To compensate, I have tried to make the instructions as clear as possible. The map shows only the roads and paths mentioned in the text.

Distance: Approx 3¼ miles (5.35 Km)
Time required: Approx 1¼ - 1½ hours

