
THE BUTTS AND BOUNDS OF KIMPTON

by **I. P. Freeman**

The boundaries of the parish of Kimpton were described by Thomas Oney in 1710, and recorded by Edward Steele in his Hertfordshire Notebook.¹ This description reads as follows:

The Butts and Bounds of Kimpton Parish, beginning Northward 5 furlongs from the church.

	M	F	P
To the going in to the Wood		1	09
To Kuckolds Cross		3	00
To Thistle Field		3	00
To the going out of Mr. Hills middle field		4	10
To Walden field Stile		5	14
To the top of Great Walden Field		6	05
To Appletree field		7	35
To the five Ashes in the Hoo Parck	1	2	00
To the going out of the lower Parck	1	3	2
To the going out of Sand-Pitts	1	5	00
To the first coming to the River	1	5	22
To Knebworth Mill	1	7	18
To Kimpton Mill	2	3	24
To Nabeshey Laine	2	5	26
To fifteen Acres	2	6	30
To Pryers Wood	3	3	00
To Pryers Close	3	4	16
To the going out of Samms Close	3	6	09
To Lammer Parck	4	0	30
To the Park gate next Bibs well	4	3	18
To the going out of Old House Close	4	4	29
To the further corner of Lammer Wood	4	5	15
To the Wilton Osmans on Gustardwood.	4	6	23
To Blackmer End Laine	5	0	02
To the Cross in Blackmer End Laine	5	0	30
To Cheristeads Cross	5	7	12
To Reasons Lane	6	1	04
To Catch Pool Cross	6	3	24
To Round Bishey	6	5	30
To Bishey Wood	6	6	16
To the laine beyond Bishey Wood	6	7	16
To the Wheathampstead Acre Cross	7	2	22
To Pathe field Cross	7	3	25
To Chiltern Green	8	4	22
To the Cross at the Smiths Shop	8	5	09
To the Cross going to Mr. Biggs ground	9	0	04
To Laurence End	9	1	07
To the Cross in Mr. Biggs pasture	9	3	10
To Newland Cross	9	4	08
To Mr. Biggs Wood	10	0	00
To the further end of Sallow hurst wood	10	0	38
To White Way Cross	10	2	27
To the Cross at Egnall Corner	11	4	03
To the Cross in the Holt Common	11	6	00
To the first Crosse again	12	1	16

This account taken Anno 1710 by Thos. Oney.

The numbers in the right hand columns give the distance in miles, furlongs and poles, from the starting point to each reference point. If we take the starting point to be the southern corner of Horsleys Wood (map. ref. 172194) and follow the line of the present boundary as marked on the O.S. map, then recognisable reference points fall nicely into place, indicating that the boundary has not changed substantially since 1710. It is therefore a simple matter to fit in all the other reference points with some precision.

Most of the place names are recognisable despite the spelling variations. 'Nabeshey', for Abbotshay, is perhaps less obvious than most. Others seem to have been lost altogether so the boundary description provides a useful way of locating them.

'Cheristeads', for instance, was at the cross roads on Porters End just east of Raisins Farm (map ref. 159167) and 'Catch Pool' was on the Kimpton to Harpenden road, north of Raisins Farm (map ref. 157173).

'The Wilton Osmans on Gustardwood' appears to have been The Cross Keys.

Knebworth Mill turns out to have been on the Mimram about 400yds north of Rye End Farm (map ref. 195194). This is presumably the mill referred to in the V.C.H. (vol.III p.116) "A mill is mentioned in Knebworth in 1086 and in 1611 but does not appear to exist now". It appears to coincide with the mill marked on Drury and Andrews map of 1766 as 'Rye End Mill'. Judging from the current 6" O.S. map the mill pond and water channels are still in existence.

'Old House Close' is the field to the west of Bibb's Hall (map ref. 179168). The Kimpton Tithes Map shows a field here called Olders Close. It is interesting to speculate about the 'Old House' referred to. Could it be the building described by the Rev. Canon Davys as a 'wayside chapel'²? Canon Davys discovered this building when he noticed a king-post in the upper room of a dilapidated cottage at Gustardwood. He decided it was a wayside chapel because "the whole (timber framing) is far too rich in character for simple domestic purposes". However there is nothing in his description which is incompatible with a small manor house or prosperous yeoman's house.

One final point noticeable in the boundary description is the numerous references to crosses. One wonders what became of all these and whether there may not be the odd one still mouldering away among the brambles at one of the reference points.

REFERENCES

1. Bodleian Library, Gough, Herts MSS 4 (See *Herts Archaeology* 2 1970 pp. 105-8).
2. St. Albans Architectural and Archaeological Society Transactions 1888, p.13.