

## St Peters Way - Part 2

Written by Ian Mitchell - Last Updated Monday, 27 September 2010 21:15

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Yesterday, Sunday the 26th September 2010, early on a windy, clouding Sunday morning, on a day when the clouds couldn't decide on whether to glide on by or rain on us there and then, 7 Scouts met at the Billericay train station with the sole aim of undertaking the second part of the St Peters Way. This is the story of that hike.

Back in May of this year to raise funds for our up coming, but now long past, trip to Switzerland many of the Scouts walked the first part of the St Peters Way (20 Kilometres) from Ongar to Stock. This time we were doing the second part - backwards - from Cold Norton back to Stock. We all met at 9am and caught the Rail replacement bus from Billericay to Wickford and then one on to Farnbridge. Once dropped off by the bus we headed north to the point where the road intersected with St Peters Way. After what seemed an eternity, and a pitstop at a local 'Quicky Mart' type shop, we finally reach the start of the walk. From there we entered beautiful, but open countryside, with the wind directly in our faces. At this point we knew this was going to be a tough hike, one that was going to push all of the Scouts to their limits.

After several hours of winding footpaths, lost gates and trudging up, down, up, down, through recently furrowed fields we finally found a sheltered place to stop for lunch that had, by luck, the only log to sit on on the whole trip. After a quick debate and a lesson in back to back ground sitting for the Scouts it was agreed that the leaders, who if they sat on the ground wouldn't get up, should have the log to sit on for lunch. Once fed, watered, rested and relieved we set off again. Within a couple of Kilometres, whilst out in the middle of no-where, the heavens decide to finally open up and to open up for good. Not with that big rain that bounces off you, oh no, but with that fine drizzly rain that you only find in the UK and which is able to find its way down the back of your neck, into your boots and eventually through everything into your underpants. Probably a bit too much information, but we did still had 12 kilometres to go!

From that point on the rain didn't stop. Even trees gave no shelter and when walking across the fields, with the wind behind you, one could feel the cold clammy cling of your sodden trousers being stuck to the backs of your legs. Suddenly when we reached the brow of a hill and without warning we could see Hanningfield reservoir poke its head through the trees in the distance. We were nearly home! We trudged on, over the A128 via the big blue bridge (remember us when you drive under it next) and into West Hanningfield. I must confess, when we reached the pub I was very tempted to stop there, get in the dry and divert the parents to pick up the Scouts from there, but we were so close.

In the end the call of the walk pulled us on, past the reservoir and on into Stock. Once in Stock

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and round through the back streets the village hall popped into sight. Finally at the end. At the end, of not the wettest walk I have ever done, but at the end of one of the wettest.

Sitting, today, in dry warm clothes, looking back in reflection, I wouldn't have missed it for the world. It was great fun, pleasant company and challenging. A great achievement for all the Scouts who went. Oh, how long was the walk? well it was an incredible 26.7 Kilometres + any walking to the Station, which was 2.3 Kilometres for Matthew and me. Well done everyone, see you at St Peters Way - Part 3, the final chapter, which for three Scouts will be an opportunity to have walked the whole length of St Peters way. If they join this final hike in the spring that is!