

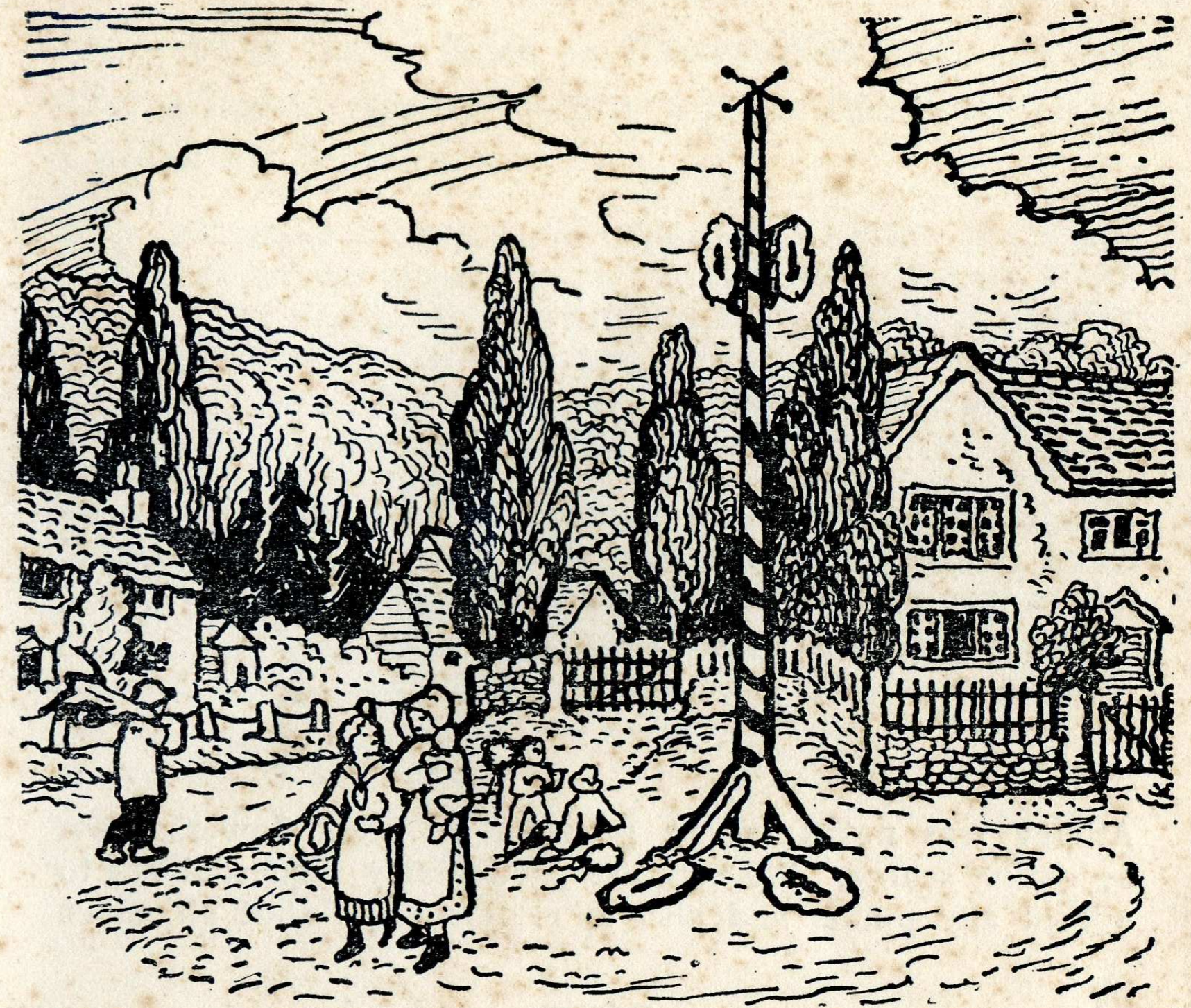
Walks Round Albury, Surrey, by O.M. Heath

OLIVE MARY HEATH (1879-1959), LOCAL HISTORIAN

Olive Heath was the daughter of Captain Edward Heath, a minister in the Catholic Apostolic church. Miss Heath lived at Albury House.

Albury History Society - [alburyhistory.org.uk](http://alburyhistory.org.uk)

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# Walks Round Albury

Surrey

*With notes on its history by*

O. M. HEATH

PRICE

- -

ONE SHILLING

### *Note*

The following walks are assumed to start from the Drummond Arms, facing the bus shelter, so that "turn right" means turning westward towards Guildford, and "turn left" means turning eastward towards Dorking.

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Albury was noted in the past for its wild flowers, now becoming scarce. Walkers are particularly requested not to uproot any plants and also to remember to shut all gates.

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The parish of Albury contains the two manors of Albury and Weston. These two manors were for hundreds of years entirely separate properties, each with its own lord of the manor, its own tenants, and its own manor courts and customs. Mr. Drummond bought Albury manor in 1819 and Weston in 1824, since when the two manors have become one property.

## **WALK 1**

**Silent Pool, Drove Road on Downs, Newlands Corner, Water Lane. Approximately 4 miles by Water Lane, 5 miles by White Lane.**

Turn left at the Drummond Arms and follow the main road to Shere for about a mile (or, alternatively, take a bus to the Silent Pool). At the junction of the Shere road with the Guildford-Dorking road turn left for a few yards and enter the gate on the right near a cottage. The path to the Silent Pool is entered by a small gate on the right beyond the turning to the farm and the Pool is the second of the two ponds. On leaving the Pool turn right as you come out of the small gate and follow a path uphill, avoiding a turning on the left about halfway up. At the top of the hill, where there is a well-defined cross-roads, turn left into the Drove Road and continue straight on to Newlands Corner for about a mile, avoiding forks on the left. To return to Albury by Water Lane, cross the main road at Newlands Corner and take the sunken track which runs downhill past a chalk pit into Water Lane and so to Albury village, distance approximately  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles. Alternatively, continue over the Downs till a lane is reached and then turn sharp left downhill. This road, which is called White Lane on the Downs and Guildford Lane further down, leads to the foot of St. Martha's Hill and then down to Albury village. Distance from Newlands Corner approximately  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles.

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### **The Silent Pool**

Any early history or tradition about the Silent Pool has been more or less forgotten since Martin Tupper wrote his romance about it nearly a hundred years ago. It was he who called it the Silent Pool instead of its ancient name of Sherborne. There was, however, something of interest here before Tupper's day, something which seems to have developed in later times into the Sherborne Palm Sunday

Fair. This fair was of ancient, and possibly of pagan, origin, though an effort seems to have been made to turn it into Christian channels. In the poem written by Mr. Lovell, Schoolmaster of Albury, in 1854, it is suggested that the Sherborne water was held sacred by the pagan priests of Roman times, and he adds that people used to go to Sherborne not only to "pluck its palms" but also to buy a mug of Roman water. Great crowds used to gather at Sherborne for the Palm Sunday Fair, and there were games and dancing and many other forms of amusement. This went on till 1811, and then, on the representations of the Rector, the Fair was prohibited. Instead of this Palm Sunday Fair, the Rector then instituted a May Day Fair, which was to be held in Weston Street, now Albury village, and he gave a maypole, which was set up outside Pratt's Stores. This Fair seems to have spread from the bridge over the stream, along the village street and into the field behind the Bakery. A cromlech which stood near Sherborne is said to have once been the site of the Sherborne Fair.

### The Drove Road

This road takes its name from the large droves of Welsh cattle that came over the Downs, part of the great cattle trade between Wales and England from the 15th to the 19th century. These droves are still remembered by people living in Albury. They consisted of small black cattle, usually numbering about five or six hundred, and they came over the Hog's Back to Guildford, up to the Downs, and then on either eastward to Dorking or else down through Albury to Horsham. The field with the stream near the Silent Pool was a favourite one into which they could be turned, and local farmers often supplied hay. The route then continued up to Albury Heath, Shere Heath, Ewhurst and so on to Horsham. Albury and Shere Heaths were sometimes black with cattle. As a boy, Mr. Browne, of Albury, helped more than once in driving the local cattle off the Heath and hurrying it up to Farley Heath in order to get it clear. That was the great danger: local cattle might get caught up into the droves and might go for miles before they could be retrieved.

The local farmers, however, had some warning of approaching droves, for the drovers made a tremendous noise and shouting which carried a long way. Some horsemen and two or three of the cattle acted as leaders to the rest and the men kept calling and shouting the whole time.

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### WALK 2

**Church Lane, Albury Heath, Albury Park, Old Church. Approximately 3½ miles.**

At the Drummond Arms turn right and then left into Church Lane. At the first corner turn left again to the Church. About four minutes' walk beyond the Church turn into the sunken Warren Lane, passing the remarkable roots of an ancient beech tree on the way. There is an alternative footpath on the top of the left bank. Further up the Warren there is a seat on the left, after which the path bears left to the Warren Gates. Beyond the gates continue straight on, with the wood on the left, and turn right at the metalled road. At the signpost to Peaslake turn left and follow the straight road by the side of the Park to the lodge gates on the left. Enter the Park and take the public footpath to the Old Church which starts between the fifth and sixth chestnut trees on the left. Follow the footpath straight on, past a notice board and avoiding all intersecting paths. At the first intersection after the path begins to descend there is a choice of two paths on the opposite side. Take the right-hand one and, descending steeply, keep straight on through a small gate to the Park Drive and across the drive to the Old Church. This footpath is public, but the Park is, of course, private property. On leaving the Church, follow the road westward with the stream on the right, to the Park Gates, and in the same direction along the main road to Albury village.

## Church Lane

Two of the few remaining old cottages in Albury, both probably three hundred years old, can be seen in Church Lane, one at the first corner opposite Birmingham Lane and the other on the right just after passing the new Parish Church. The monument outside the Church gates is to the memory of Louisa, Duchess of Northumberland, a much beloved benefactress to Albury, who died in 1890. She was the daughter of Mr. Henry Drummond, lord of the manor of Albury, who bought the estate in 1819. The present Duke of Northumberland is her great-grandson.

## Lords of the Manor

So far as is known, the lords of Albury Manor have always had their house in the same place, and the site of the Park House, which has been several times rebuilt, is probably where the Saxon landowner named Azor held his manor courts before the time of William the Conqueror. After the Conquest, Albury came into the possession of Roger D'Abernon, a Norman knight, who seems to have had his home in a little village called Abernon in Normandy, and who came over with his overlord to fight for William. He was already settled here in 1086, when William's commissioners made their survey of the manor, and it is recorded in Domesday Book that there was in Albury at that date a church, a mill, so many free tenants, so many lesser tenants, four serfs, large herds of pigs and eight and a half teams of oxen. As each of these plough-teams consisted of eight oxen, the number of cattle was large. There was also a knight who held part of Roger's land, possibly the land afterwards known as Weston Manor. For nearly five hundred years Roger D'Abernon's descendants held Albury Manor, until in 1551 they finally sold it to Henry Polsted. There had been a failure of male heirs more than once and the last of the family to possess the manor was the heiress Jane Halleighwell, who married the lord of the manor of Shere and became Lady Bray. She was the lady of Albury Manor for fifty years and died in 1557, leaving six daughters and no son. So ended the long connection of this family with Albury. Neither the Polsteds nor the Randalls, who followed

the D'Abernons, were long in Albury, and the Duke of Norfolk's family, who came in 1638, were here for less than forty years. After this the estate was sold to Heneage Finch, first Earl of Aylesford, and it was a member of this family, Captain Clement Finch, R.N., who made so many changes in the Park, most of which are commonly, though falsely, attributed to Mr. Drummond. Having captured a Spanish ship in the American war, Captain Finch was able to buy Albury from his brother, and settled here, quite as a young man, to make many changes. In 1784 and 1785 he obtained magistrates' orders for closing the road from Shere to the Old Church, which passed at the back of the Park House, and also for altering the road from the stream to Sherborne, which passed the old Inn. This Inn, now two cottages, is still standing and can be seen from the Park drive. Besides altering roads, Captain Finch is said to have taken off a corner of the churchyard and put it into his garden; he also enclosed with close oak fencing the village green by the Church, a piece of which had previously been taken into the gardens by one of his predecessors. He died suddenly in 1794, and though his immediate successor, Mr. Thornton, did not follow in his ways, the next owner, Mr. Wall, carried on the changes, pulling down many of the old cottages, putting up fences and fixing a gate across the Mill Road. Mr. Wall died in 1815, his widow remaining at the Park till 1819, when Mr. Drummond bought it.

## The Old Church

This was the parish church of Albury for many hundreds of years, and originally the thatched cottages of the villagers stood round it. After the many changes that had taken place in Albury, few of the parishioners were living near the Old Church, and when the new one was built in 1842 the old one was closed for public worship. It has been opened in recent years for occasional services in the summer. There are few indications of Saxon work to be seen in the fabric of the church, but some parts of it are said to date from pre-Conquest times. Under the D'Abernon family many alterations and additions were made: the Norman tower was built; a new chancel, now in ruins, was thrown out;

the south aisle and south transept were added; and later still a three-storied gabled transept was added on the north side of the tower. This transept, a part of which was used as a vestry, was pulled down in 1842. Pictures of the Church in the 17th century show that it had a short spire at that time. This is said to have been destroyed by lightning, when the curious little dome was put up in its place. There is a wall painting of St. Christopher opposite the main entrance; this can be seen from the north window. The decorations in the south chapel, now a mortuary chapel, were done by Pugin in 1842. The old porch, dating from the 16th century, is considered to be one of the best and most perfect remaining in Surrey.

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### WALK 3

**Birmingham Lane, Blackheath, Roman Temple on Farley Heath. Approximately 4½ miles the whole way; 2½ miles returning by bus.**

At the Drummond Arms turn right and then left into Church Lane. At the first corner, where the signpost says to Blackheath, keep straight on up Birmingham Lane. At the top of the first hill pass Birgate Hill on the right and follow the lane downhill under the railway arch, over White Oak stream and on to the cottages on the right at the top of the lane. Avoid the left turning opposite the cottages, but take the left fork a few yards further on. Climb up to the open heath and continue as straight as possible, keeping some clumps of silver birch on the left and a war-time rampart of earth and stones on the right. Avoid all intersecting paths and go straight on, downhill past a small holding in the hollow and up again past Jelly's Copse on the right and a cottage on the left till the open heath is again reached. The path now joins the metalled road from Farley Green to Shamley Green, but just before reaching it

turn down a broad track to the left. The site of the Temple is on the left, a green patch surrounded by heather and bracken. To return to Albury, turn left down the metalled road for about half-a-mile to the bus terminus at the bottom of the heath (buses at 23 minutes past each hour except Sunday morning). Alternatively, continue along the road to Brook and back to the Drummond Arms via Albury Heath and the Warren.

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### Birmingham Lane

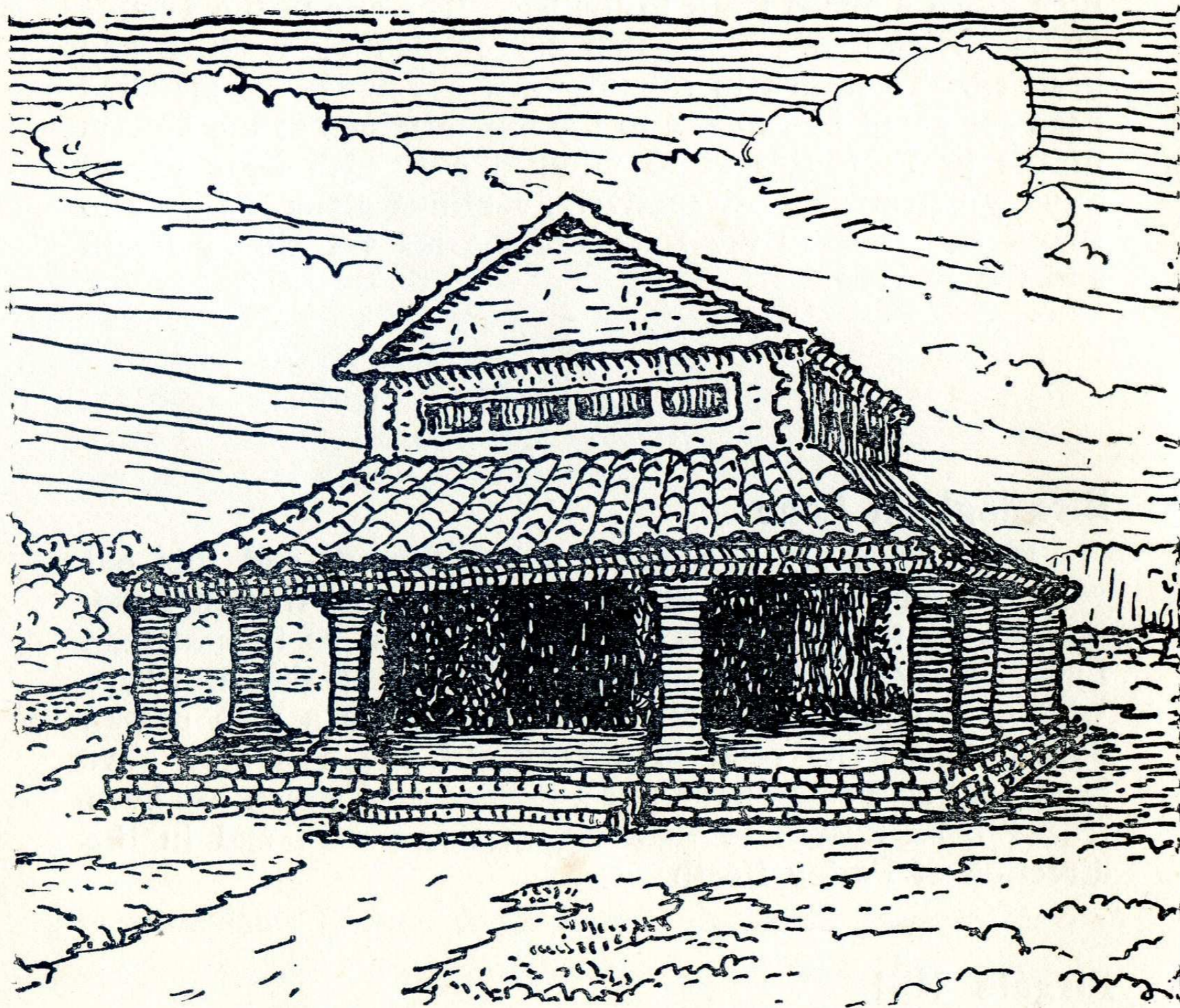
Old names are constantly being altered, and this old road, which should be called Blackheath or Weston Lane, has during the last century become known as Birmingham Lane, having adopted, apparently, the name of the farm here which, two hundred years ago, belonged to a man named Burningham. The road is a very old one and may have been used as a continuation of a Roman road which has been traced from Sussex to Ewhurst in this parish and in the direction of Farley Heath.

### Birgate Hill

This used to be called Bircroft, or Beercroft, Hill, and the lane leading to it was called Bircroft Lane. Since the railway was built the continuation of this lane seems to be lost.

### Blackheath

This heath is not only ancient in name but must also have been a place of ancient occupation, for Bronze Age and Iron Age burials have been found here as well as quantities of worked flints. No Saxon remains have been found so far, yet it seems that there must have been a settlement of some importance on or near the heath in pre-Conquest days, for it has given its name to the Hundred of this district, of which Albury is one of the eleven parishes. It is called Blackheathfeld in Domesday Book (1086).



Probable appearance of the Romano-British Temple on Farley Heath.

### Roman Temple

Part of Blackheath is now called Farley Heath, and it is here that the remains of a Roman Temple have been found. So much damage has been done in the past that all that can now be seen is the exact ground-plan of the building, which has been laid out with some of the original stone. As late as a hundred and fifty years ago, however, some of the walls could still be seen above ground as well as traces of the surrounding wall. The Temple probably had its origin in early British times and was rebuilt by the Romans. What

heathen god or gods were worshipped here is not certain, but from the mysterious figures and symbols on a priest's sceptre found on the site, and now in the British Museum, it appears that more than one god is represented. Of these, Jupiter and Vulcan seem the most important. Roman temples such as this were usually found on hill-tops or in open spaces and not in town or village settlements. The Roman road in this direction no doubt brought travellers to the site and people would come from far and near to make offerings and supplicate the god's protection. Excavations have been carried out on this site more than once, and in 1939 the site itself and the surrounding heath were completely excavated by the Surrey Archæological Society.

### WALK 4

Waterloo Pond, The Hangers, The Pilgrims' Way.  
Approximately 4 miles.

Turn right at the Drummond Arms and follow the main road for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to Waterloo Pond just beyond Vale End. Take the narrow road between the pond and the stream and after passing the road-block turn right and then left into the Hangers. Follow the path along the side of the Hangers and then, bearing right, uphill. Avoid a path on the right after this. At the edge of a field the path turns sharp right and zig-zags up to a sandy track at the top, which leads to St. Martha's Church on the left. Cross this track and follow the path downhill to the metalled road and enter a gate almost opposite. Follow an ill-defined field track (marked Pilgrims' Way on the maps), through two more gates, along the edge of a wood, and across a lane to a field gate almost opposite. From this gate the path (now overgrown) crosses the field diagonally to the top of the field, where there is a small gate leading into a wood. Follow the narrow path just inside the wood downhill to Water Lane. Crossing the lane, take the track to the left of the cottages and follow it along the north side of Weston Wood. Shortly after passing Woodbarn Cottage do

not enter the Brickyard, but take the narrow path on the right just inside the wood and keep straight on across a wider path and through two small gates into a field. The path here follows the fence on the left and, crossing the stream at the bottom of the field, leads into the main Albury-Shere road. Turn right for Albury village, about a mile distant.

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### The Ponds and Mills

Nothing probably could be more different than the aspect of the Chilworth and Albury Ponds today compared to what it was three hundred years ago and later, when there were nine powder mills here and many more further down the stream. It was the sight of these mills that so shocked Cobbett on one of his rural rides, making him say that, though nothing could be more beautiful than this valley as God had made it, man had now polluted it with two of the worst inventions of the devil, namely, gunpowder and bank-notes. A curious story is told by a Mr. Charles Ball, whose grandfather of the same name had a small bank-note paper mill in Albury. On a spring day in 1794 a stranger presented himself at Mr. Ball's mill and, showing a bank-note with certain water marks, enquired if some exactly similar paper could be made. This was agreed, but the stranger would not leave any address, saying he would return again at the time agreed, and leaving a heavy deposit. In due course he returned, had the paper put into his post chaise and departed, leaving another order. This happened several times, but Mr. Ball had to make constant changes in the form. Some time after the last order had been executed, Mr. Ball learnt that the mysterious stranger was no other person than the Count of Artois, afterwards Charles X, King of France, and that the note-paper was for the purpose of being converted into false assignats. When the officers of the French Republic discovered the forgeries, they altered the form, which was the reason for the constant changes.

The narrow road which leads to the Hangers, and on past the Mill, was the only road between Albury and Chilworth until 1876, when the cut from Vale End to Postford was made.

### The Hangers

The old name for the Hangers, or at least for a part of it, is Le Lythie, but for long it has been called Colyers Hanger from the family of that name, who lived in Albury in the 17th century. There is an ancient spring in the wood called Lidwell, which probably supplied the special water needed for bank-note paper making.

### The Pilgrims' Way

Although the name "Pilgrims' Way," which was given to this path in the last century seems likely to remain, it is now generally agreed that pilgrims and other travellers five hundred years ago would probably not have found their way here, and that a much more likely route for them would have been the older way on the chalk at the foot of the Downs, where the ancient road is still shown by the long line of yew trees. There was yet another and still older road which was on the ridge of the Downs and which Hilaire Belloc traces from Dover to Stonehenge. This very ancient road is supposed to have been the road by which the very first invaders of this country travelled; in later times the Drove Road followed in much the same direction.

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## WALK 5

### Paddlecombs, Albury Heath, Sandy Lane, Ford Farm. Approximately 3 miles.

Start up Birmingham Lane, as in Walk 3, and just over the top of the first hill turn left through a gate into a part of the Warren called the Paddlecombs. Keep straight along the path through the wood till it joins Warren Lane near the seat there, and so on to Warren Gates. Outside the gates turn right, past Albury School, down into a hollow and then up again to Albury cricket ground. Turn right and take the left fork of a track which passes at the back of the cricket pavilion to a sand pit, and down Sandy Lane, under the railway arch, to the watercress beds. Do not cross the

bridge, but turn right towards Ford Farm and through a gate, to another opposite, and into a lane bearing to the right leading to the railway line. After crossing the railway lines follow a farm track across two fields to the edge of the wood. When the farm track bears to the left enter the wood by a narrow path on the right and follow in the same direction as before till it crosses the Paddlecomb walk and continues down a still narrower path into Warren Lane near the Beech Tree. Turn left at the bottom of Warren Lane and take the next turning on the right down some shallow steps into Tupper's Alley and the main road to Albury village.

### The Paddlecombs

This name is now given to the walk through the wood between Birmingham Lane and the Warren Lane. Years ago it seems to have been limited to one of the fields adjoining Birmingham Lane. The wood itself, which was divided into two, was called Woodcrofts and Huntsland, and has made some history. In 1705 Olave Duncumbe left two hundred pounds for putting out and apprenticing poor children of Albury parish, and the trustees of the charity invested the money in the purchase of Woodcrofts and Huntsland. For about a hundred and fifty years the land was let at a small annual rent, and then the Duke of Northumberland made an application to buy it. The land was worth very little for cultivation, but the then trustees had it valued for building purposes and the estimate given was for seven thousand pounds. This was not at first accepted by the Duke, but in 1885, when his lease of the land was due to run out, he did accept it and the land became his. It can hardly be said that he gained much by the transaction, but the poor of Albury certainly greatly benefited.

Olave Duncumbe was the second child of Henry and Olive Duncumbe, of Albury, a young couple who were married at the early ages of 17 and 16. Both her parents died young, and from the Parish Register it is seen that Olave was baptised on the day her mother was buried. She herself died at the age of 21.

### Albury Heath

This heath has, it seems, always belonged to Albury Manor and little, if any, of it belonged to the manor of Weston. Yet, in 1279, Thomas Weston, of Weston, brought an action against Sir John D'Abernon, of Albury, because, he said, Sir John had wrongfully turned Thomas's cattle off Albury Heath, whereas he had a perfect right to feed any of his animals there at any time of the year. This claim was denied by Sir John D'Abernon and he said that he had not dispossessed Thomas Weston of any grazing rights on Albury Heath because Thomas had never possessed any. Thomas Weston's claim, however, does not seem to have been that Weston Manor possessed rights, but was founded on the fact that he possessed a house in Albury which had grazing rights. At the Surrey Assizes Sir John was proved to be in the wrong, but he would not rest there and actually accused the twelve knights of the jury of making a false oath. A fresh trial then took place to enquire whether Sir John's accusation was true, and a special jury of twenty-four knights was summoned, who said the accusation was not true and that the first jury had not perjured themselves. Whereupon Thomas and the twelve knights were acquitted and Sir John was committed to gaol. It has been said that the verdict could not have injured him much, for he was at liberty soon afterwards and busy in the public service. He has been described as an extremely able man of business and served the country for many years.



SIR JOHN D'ABERNON,  
Lord of the manor of Albury in  
1236, and father of Sir John,  
who quarrelled with Thomas  
Weston.