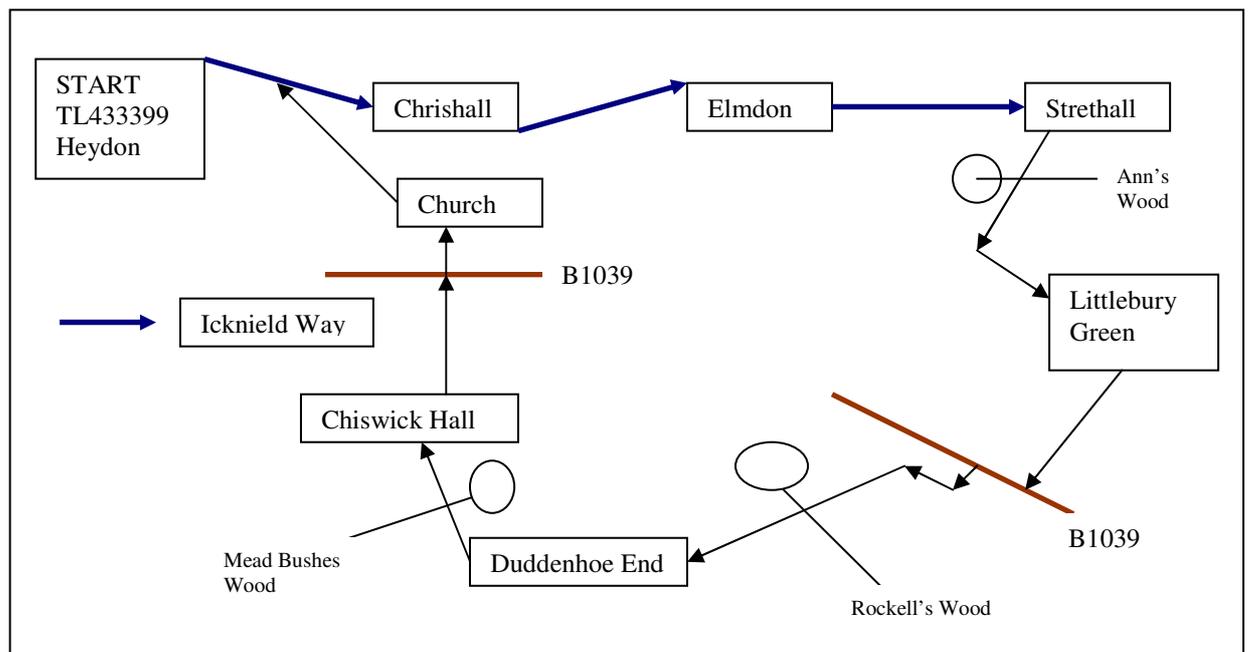


The Icknield Way. Part 13 from Heydon to Strethall. 10 July 2010

Map OS Explorer 194. This circular route through (some of) the backwaters of Essex deserves a 5-Star rating. Though, be warned, it did take a total of 7 hours, which fortunately included reminiscences of Lancaster bombers and other aviation history at the Elmdon Dial. This section heads E from Heydon and passes Chrishall, Elmdon and Strethall before leaving the Way and looping S via Littlebury Green, Duddenhoe End, Chiswick Hall and Chrishall church back to Heydon. 14 km.



This leg started at Heydon church – just visible at the top edge of the map (at TL 433399). Heydon village itself can be seen on OS Explorer 209 (at TL 432401). The Way takes the road past the village green and on to the village pond with white water lilies (*Nymphaea alba*) and patrolling emperor dragonfly (*Anax imperator*).



It then wends through arable land and emerges at Broad Green. We passed by the black water pump here (one of three seen during the day) but,

unfortunately, the camera later decided that this picture (among others) was not to be seen again. Thistles do well here and this one seems to be a welshed one (*Carduus acanthoides*). Other Compositae providing nourishment for the bumble bees include the greater knapweed (*Centaurea scabiosa*) flowering now ahead of its relative, black knapweed (*C. nigra*). The ravages of the recent dry weather were clear to see by the large cracks opening up in the (montmorillonite) clay.



The path now leads on through Chrishall, and Cane's Walks wood to Elmdon where the Dial is now open for business and serving Adnams. Mine host regaled us with stories of mock cold war conflict as

we reminisced about the heady days of the home-grown aircraft industry. He also recommended the return (circular) route to Heydon. But first we had to continue on the Way and so we left Elmdon to reach Freewood

Lane and then to skirt Free Wood itself before reaching the southern edge of Strethall. From here the return route turns S, past Ann's Wood where a silver-washed fritillary came barrelling out at high speed. Similar in colour to the abundant commas, the fritillary seemed to fly twice as fast and be twice as big. The track continues to Littlebury Green and then swings W of S to reach Rockell's Wood and Duddenhoe End. Now heading NW the path skirts Mead Bushes Wood and Chiswick Hall. Skippers (*Thymelicus* spp.) abound in this region in every patch of sunlit, flower rich meadow. Perhaps some were the Essex skipper (*T. lineola*) as opposed to the small skipper (*T. sylvestris*) but they were too fast to (for me) catch the subtleties of the differences.

The Chiswick Hall driveway proved to be a haven for burnet moths (*Zygaena filipendulae*). They were, it seemed, frantic to make sure that there would be a further generation next year. The driveway exits on the B1039 at TL451382 and the route continues N to pass the isolated Chrishall Church before entering Chrishall and regaining the Way to return to Heydon.



One mystery remained to be solved: an orange-shaped and coloured fungus was parasitizing an ash tree in Strethall Wood. After some investigation the best bet seems to be *Ionatus* spp. (and probably *hispidus* or *radiatus* rather than *dryadeus*) at a young stage as it can be seen to be weeping large drops of exudate. But I'm far from sure.

Six-spot burnets on field scabious



Confirmed as *I. hispidus* by friends at Wild about Britain (www.wildaboutbritain.co.uk)