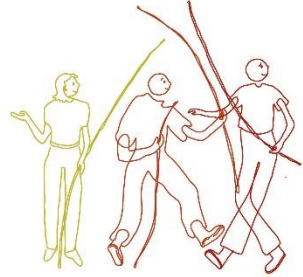


Bank Holiday Monday
6th May 2024
2:00pm



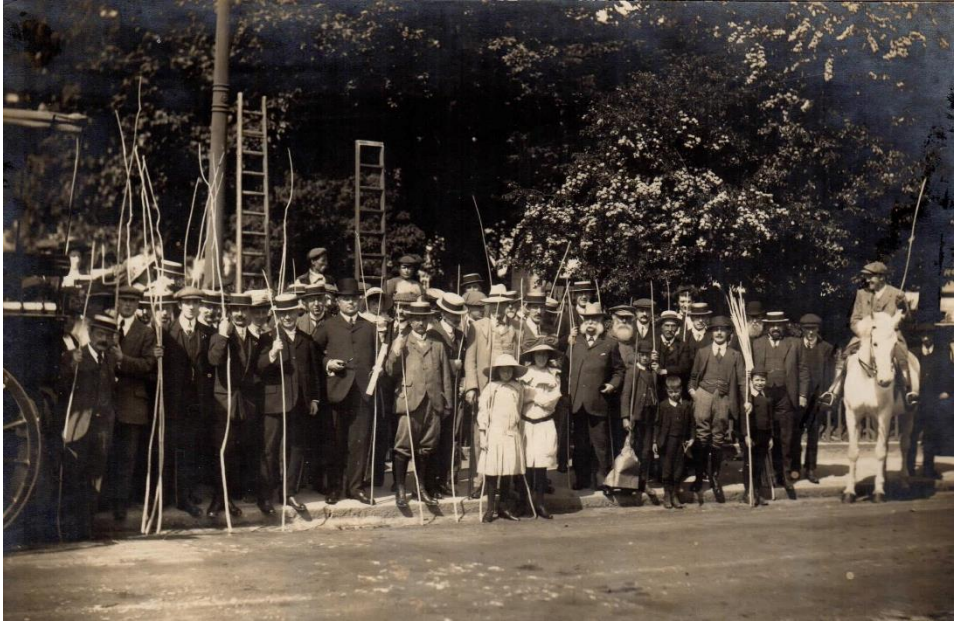
BEATING THE BOUNDS BARNET

'Beating the bounds' is a custom dating back to the 9th century which consists of walking round parish boundaries and checking boundary posts with willow wands.



Join us for the historical ceremony this spring.

For enquiries, please email beatingthebounds@barnetmuseum.co.uk



1911



1920



1964

Photographs from Barnet Museum Archives.

Beating the Bounds is an historic ceremony, in which new generations are taught about what parish boundaries are and where they lie.

The Chipping Barnet parish boundaries have changed over time. For Beating the Bounds 2024, we will be celebrating some of the historic parish boundaries, and some more modern ones too.

The total walk is about 8 KM (5 miles) and walkers are welcome to partake in as much or as little as they like.

Note: the last section of the route is more challenging for people with lesser mobility.

The historic parish of Chipping Barnet in Hertfordshire was originally served by St John the Baptist Church (right). In 1896, an additional chapel-of-ease, St. Stephen's Church, was consecrated on Bells Hill to serve the same parish. St. Stephen's Church was later itself raised to parish church status, when Chipping Barnet parish was split in two.



📍#1 Stop 1: Barnet Church Garden [What3Words address: [///evenly.bunny.potato](#)]

We begin our walk in the gardens surrounding St John the Baptist Church (also known as Barnet Church). The medieval building was enlarged in 1875, with the oldest remaining portion of the church still visible to the northeast of the site. Leaving the churchyard, walk in a northerly direction through Barnet High Street to reach stop 1.1.



○#1.1 Stop 1.1: Post Office, Barnet High Street

Barnet High Street's post office straddles the old parish boundary. A more modern marker, likely added in anticipation of the 1935 'Beating the Bounds', is inset into the building's front wall and hints at the plot's former role as the physical manifestation of ecclesiastically and administratively significant partitions.

Previous 'Beating the Bounds' events have involved passage through the post office, over its back wall and into the former convent's garden, however we shall follow a slightly more conventional route, travelling through Union Street towards Ravenscroft Park.

Union street was formerly designated 'Hart's Horn Lane' after the 'Hart's Horn' pub on the corner of Barnet High Street. The contemporary title of 'Union Street' was gradually adopted in the mid to late 1800s, after the passage became popularised as a direct route to Barnet Union Workhouse, built in 1837, from Barnet High Street.



A locally listed boundary stone on Union Street remains largely invisible under a hedge.

Emerge from Union Street at the roundabout in front of 'The Black Horse' and veer right onto The Avenue, travelling on until the road name changes to Ravenscroft Park.

○#2 Stop 2: Old Marker Stone at Ravenscroft Park

[What3Words address: [///tiger.planet.bunny](https://www.what3words.com/?w3w=///tiger.planet.bunny)]

The old marker stone at Ravenscroft Park formally signposted part of the toll roads for the Great North Road. Later moved to its current position, the stone now forms part of the old Hertfordshire boundary following the ridge of Barnet Hill.



Continue your route through Ravenscroft park (Hertfordshire boundary dissects the recreation ground) until you reach Blenheim Road. At this point, turn left onto Blenheim road then immediately right onto Wood Street (A411). Continue travelling West on Wood Street until the road begins to veer left.

○#3 Stop 3: 'The Arkley' Sign

When you reach 'The Arkley' (top right), formerly 'The Three Elms', pause to beat the 'Arkley' road sign.

Arkley Village Sign (right) depicts a windmill. Believed to have been in use by 1806 for processing corn, Arkley Windmill ceased to be a functioning mill during World War One. The mill was restored in 1930, but not as a working mill.

Walk past 'The Arkley' and follow the road as it curves southward and merges into Barnet Road. Turn left onto Elmbank Avenue and continue on until the road becomes Trinder Road.



○#4 Stop 4: Barnet's Physic Well

When you reach the crossroads between Trinder Road, Pepys Crescent and Well Approach, turn right onto Well Approach. Here, you can pause to discover a bit more about Barnet's 'Physic Well', a Tudor-style building housing a 17th Century underground well chamber.

A mineral water spring thought to have therapeutic qualities, Barnet's Physic Well was popular in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Return to Trinder Road and continue Southeastward as your path becomes Chesterfield Road. At the junction between Chesterfield Road and Mays Lane, turn right then left onto Connaught Road.





Chipping Barnet High Street

Ravenscroft Park

Wood Street

Union Street

Barnet Road

Blenheim Road

The Avenue

Elmbank Avenue

Trinder Road

Well Approach

Chesterfield Road

Connaught Road

'London Loop' Route



Hyde Close

East View

South Close

King George's
Fields

Burnside Close

Meadway

Barnet Hill

Grasvenor Avenue

Dollis Valley Greenwalk

'London Loop' Route

Key:



Walk Stopping Point



More accessible
shortcut!

○#5 Stop 5: Joining the ‘London Loop’

As Connaught road reaches its Southernmost termination, turn left and join the ‘London Loop’ route, parallel to Dollis Brook.

Dollis Brook, to the right, marks the ancient boundary between Chipping Barnet and Totteridge.

Follow the London Loop path across Barnet Lane and right then left onto the Dollis Valley Greenwalk, walking for a short stint on a small road between The Football Pad and Barnet Table Tennis Centre.



Turning onto the Dollis Brook Walk from Connaught Road



Barnet Lane Crossing

As you approach the table tennis centre, please be aware of a slightly awkward slope with railings before the road crossing. For people who find this challenging for their mobility, there is an alternative crossing with traffic lights a bit further north (shown dashed in green on our map).

○#6 Stop 6: Dollis Valley Greenwalk and London Loop Intersection

Follow the London Loop left, in parallel with Grasvenor Avenue, then take a right onto the avenue itself as it becomes Fairfield Way.

○#7 Stop 7: Barnet Hill / Underhill

Turn left onto Barnet Hill and see if you can spot two boundary markers associated with the ward of Underhill (below).



Boundary post at Underhill, dating from 1897. BUDC stands for Barnet Urban District Council.



A second boundary post at Underhill.

Continue following Barnet Hill (A1000) in a northwesterly direction until you reach High Barnet Underground Station. At this point, turn right in front of Queen Elizabeth Girl's School onto Meadway. Follow Meadway down the hill and see if you can spot a classic Georgian 'pillar' post box (right) on the corner between Meadway and Burnside Close.

Turn left through Burnside Close and then take another left into King George's Fields. Ramble and wander in a northwesterly direction through King Georges Fields and exit via South Close.



This segment of the walk is unfortunately much less accessible: with a kissing gate; a rough forest path; steps and a steep incline. The alternative route (shown dashed in green on the route map) is to continue on the A1000, up to Moxon Street, and cut through to South Close from there.



The path through King Georges Fields towards South Close may be indistinct at times but be undeterred boundary walker!



Forest Trail through King George's Fields

Continue following the London Loop and, after the path turns left, turn north into some lovely countryside. Traversing a couple of clearings, turn left into the woods. There are many indistinct paths here which may be difficult to follow but aim for the steps at the end of South Close. Smartphone navigation may help here.

Turn right from South Close onto East View, then turn left onto Hyde Close, following the road into a half-moon of houses.



A stepped path as you emerge from King George's fields and onto South Close. This exit is somewhat challenging to find. It's What 3 words address is 'slug.neon.bunny'.

For today's route only, we are privileged to have private access through the back garden of 18 Hyde Close to reach the High Street via a small private path. We ask that all walkers treat the garden with respect.

Emerging onto Barnet High Street from a private path between Boots (Boundary House) and Gail's Bakery, walk down the road, past the Spires and towards the final stop; Barnet Church.



For Beating the Bounds 2024, we are fortunate to have been granted private access through the garden of 18 Hyde Close to Barnet High Street, via a small unnamed path.



Boundary House (approx. 1930)

Walkers are welcome to gather at the Black Horse Pub at the end of the excursion so people may chat and reflect on this historic ceremony. The pub has a garden, accessible toilets and baby change facilities.

We start the walk at Barnet Church at 2:00pm.

The approximate timings for reaching each stop on the walk are listed below:

Stop 1] 14:00-14:10

Stop 1.1] 14:15

Stop 2] 14:35

Stop 3] 15:00

Stop 4] 15:15-15:35

Stop 5] 15:50

Stop 6] 16:05

Stop 7] 16:15

We welcome walkers to join the walk at any stop and for any stretch of the bounds!

Today, we are neck-deep in the information age; we are spoilt for knowledge and can access data at the swipe of our fingertips. A hiker, walker or wanderer can easily discover where they are in the world using GPS or other apps, alongside information about the history of the land they stand on and who regulates it. But what would we do if this all disappeared and how did people find out about where they lived before the introduction of the printing press, let alone the internet?

In the past few months, Barnet Museum have been researching and exploring the historical practice known as 'Beating the Bounds'. The tradition, dating back to the ninth century, involved coordinating a community around a collective walk of their parish boundaries. The purpose of such an endeavour was two-fold: participants learned about their local area by familiarising themselves with the boundaries; and boundary posts could be checked in the process, with the correct authorities being notified if the posts needed repair or replacement.

The ceremony was traditionally held on or near Rogation Sunday, the fifth Sunday after Easter, and was combined with the blessing of crops. As with many historical customs, aspects of the walk might appear strange to a modern audience. Given the timing of the walk, in early spring, parishioners were encouraged to take 'willow wands' with them. These were thin and flexible branches of the willow tree that fall to the ground at that time of year. The wands were used to beat boundary posts in order to 'assist the parishioner's memories' and young boys (usually choir boys) were also 'bumped' against the posts for a similar reason.

In Chipping Barnet, the first recorded Beating the Bounds was in 1658. In the early to mid -1800s, the parish boundaries had civil as well as ecclesiastical significance. Parish councils had to collect rates from the people living within the boundaries, for distribution to the poor, and poor people were only entitled to relief from the parishes in which they were 'settled'.

'Beating the Bounds Barnet 2024' will be a collective walk through High Barnet, Underhill and Barnet Vale, lasting approximately three hours. In 2024, the event remains important as an historical ceremony (last held in this parish in 1995 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of The Barnet Society) and as a way to bring people together to learn about Barnet's rich history.