

Roads, tracks and footpaths

Chapter 12 of Robert Parr's *The Hampshire Broughton* gives a good account of the layout of village paths and their origins. It is best read with a large-scale map to hand. Here is a short version...

Ancient tracks developed as trade and social contact required. Before even the Roman conquest, there was trade across to the West Country for tin and lead. Locally, small settlements needed access to larger ones, like Danebury, and there were major gatherings in the Stonehenge area. After the conquest, Romans laid down fast roads between their forts and key centres. The A30 is the main one of these, but this 18th century map, made in 1790, gives greater prominence to the old Roman Road towards Norman Court.

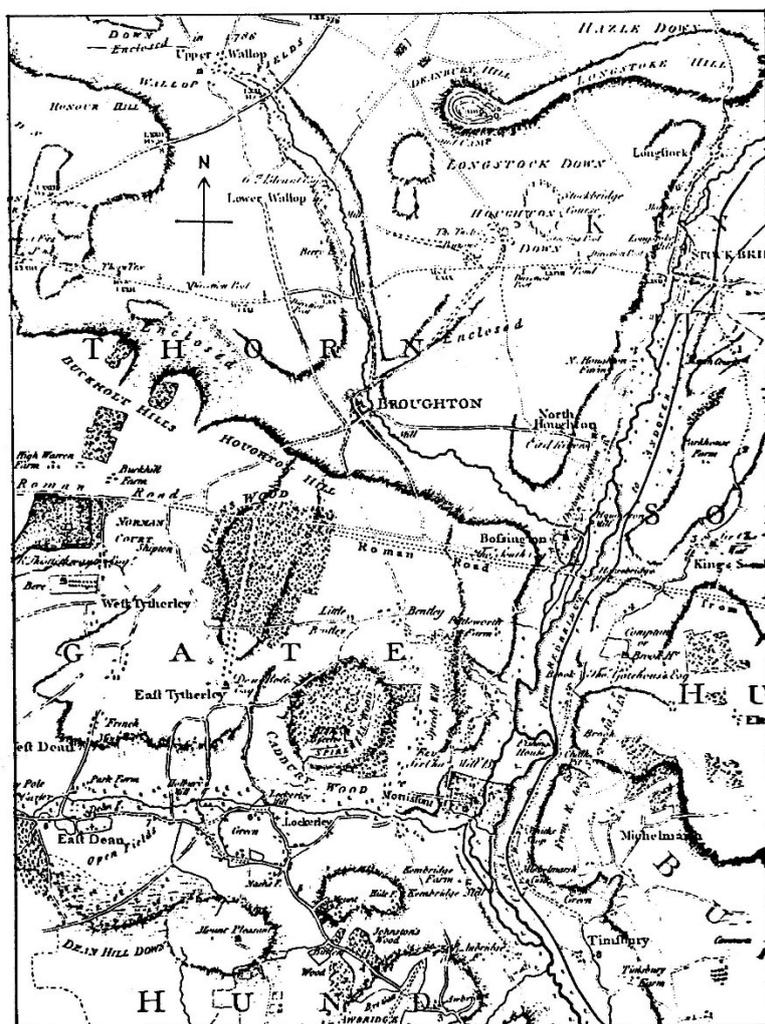


Fig 4 Part of Milne's Map of Hampshire surveyed in 1788. 1789 and 1790

From Milne's map of Hampshire, surveyed in 1788, 1789, and 1790.

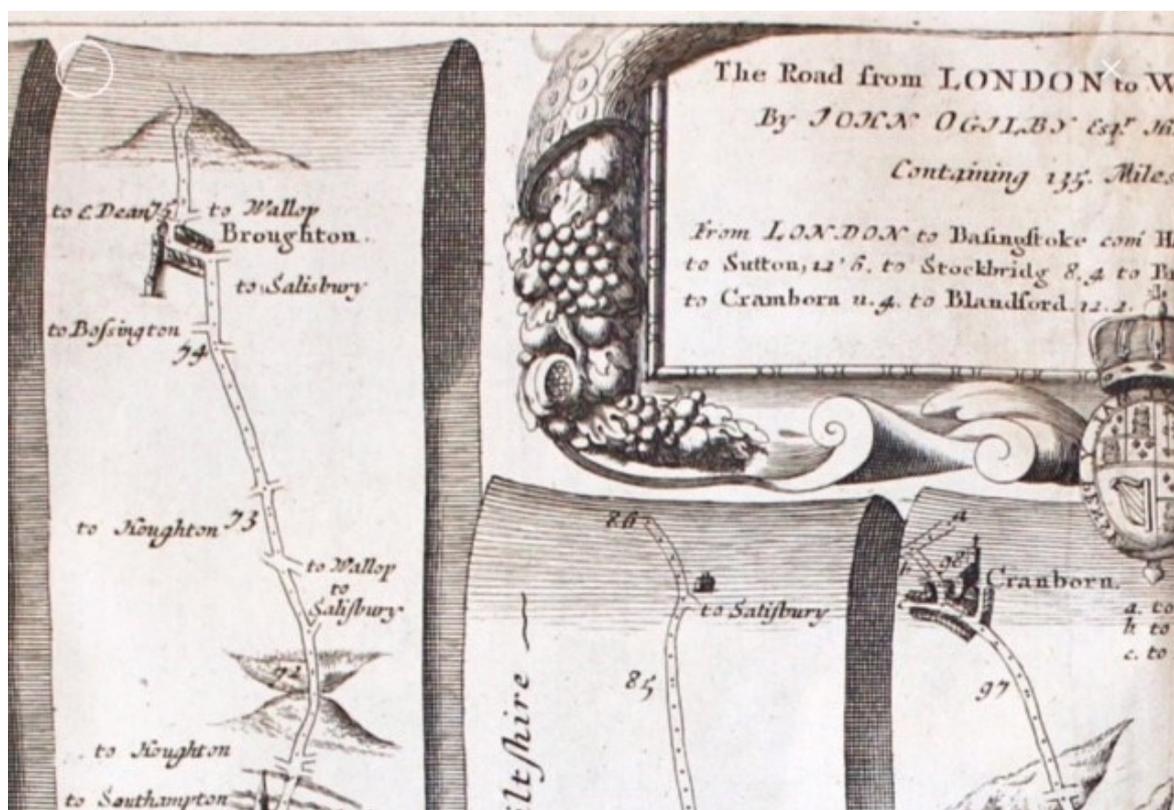
"Two Hundred Years of Map Making in the County of Hampshire" pub. 1976

Within the modern village, the major footpaths follow the edges of the original enclosed Saxon settlement. They form what Parr refers to as the "peripherique", although they have little in common with the bottleneck that surrounds Paris, or even the M25. They describe a rough circular route, probably originally a fence or sheltering hedge, which expanded as the village grew. Within the circle, paths to neighbours or places of work, especially the enclosed fields, developed with use, and the larger tracks grew up as routes to move herds and flocks to market. The

route down the Hollow, across the deep ford, and straight on past the bottom of Rookery Lane, is one such Drove.

Later, there was more sophisticated traffic, and **a coach road** ran through Broughton, on a route which carried passengers and goods from London, via Winchester, to Weymouth. In the seventeenth century, surveyors employed by John Ogilby traced major traffic routes across the country. He published them as strip maps with written directions. Improbably, the route through Broughton came down Broughton Road, over the shallow ford (as the bridge came some 200 years later), up Dixons Lane as the main route into the village, up Queenwood Road then Buckholt Road and away over the Downs towards Tytherley. Pity the poor horses. In *The Lost Roads of Wessex* (pub Augustus Kelley, New York, 1969. In the archive collection) Cochrane says that Ogilby's surveyor seems to have become a bit confused, and the turnings are not well marked at the top of Broughton Down. We can only guess why this route was preferable to the good road from Winchester to Salisbury and then on to the coast, but robbery might have been more common on the bigger roads. Here is a small extract from Ogilby's map, published in 1675.

(see <https://www.antiquemaps.com/roadmaps/ogilbyroutes/>)



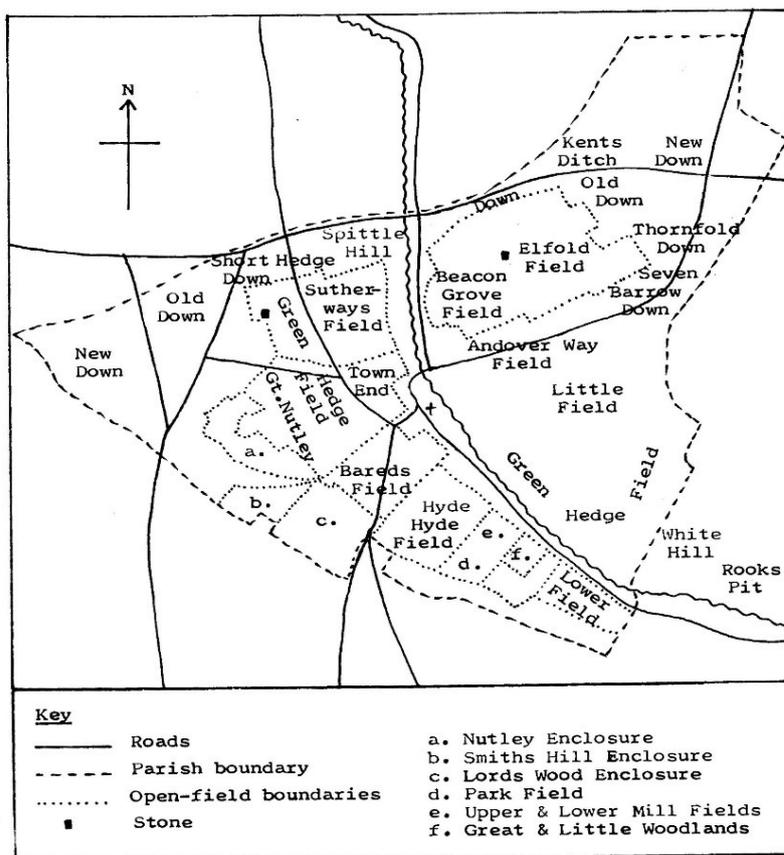
Enclosures.

Although Broughton appears in the Domesday Book survey, this had little interest in roads, but the Enclosures surveys of the late 18th century had plenty to say. Groups of landowners could petition parliament via their MP, requesting the power to enclose land, through a final Act of Enclosure. Commissioners were appointed to survey the relevant areas, assess the quality of the land, classify the routes and tracks, and determine the need for new farmhouses and barns.

Broughton Community Archive has a copy of a Dissertation by Eleanor Kingston, who submitted it in 1987 for the Diploma in English Local History at Portsmouth Polytechnic (file 17, cat 1300 and 1433). This is a very thorough study of the way in

which changes in agriculture caused the end of open field systems of farming and led to the enclosure of areas of land by private Acts of Parliament. The farmers of the Hampshire downlands were among those who did this. Broughton's open fields were enclosed in 1790, and awards of leases made to 51 proprietors. This seems to have been done co-operatively, with very little dissent, or at least no formal counter-petition, and for over 20 years there was stability of land tenure. Hedges around the new enclosures, and the legal determination of "Public Carriage Roads, Foot Roads, and Private Ways" set out the now familiar landscape. Some land could be allocated for use by those without their own, but there was greater demand for support from the Parish for those without land. Poor harvests in the 1790s, rising inflation, and the Napoleonic wars may also have increased this demand.

The Enclosure awards gave first attention to the roads, paths and bridleways. A public road was to be 40 feet wide; foot roads either 4 or 6 feet wide, and private carriage roads 20-30 feet wide. In the Broughton Act, most of these followed existing turnpikes and main roads to Romsey, Andover, the Wallops and Norman Court. Bridle paths were also settled on or near to existing routes, and a six foot "back lane" is described as encircling the village, previously giving access to the open fields. Many of the private carriage roads were new to the parish and gave access to the new allotments specified in the Award. Stiles and bridges became the responsibility of those on whose land they were situated. The routes determined would be enshrined in law, and all previous common rights eradicated.



This sketch map by Kingston shows the new enclosures, and the tracks through the village. There are copies in the village archive of the full enclosure maps made at the time.

Figure 7. Sketch map of the area enclosed in Broughton showing old field names, ancient enclosures and the downs, under cultivation by 1789

Sources: HRO 137M71/P22, HRO Photocopy 72, HRO 15M69/4, HRO Broughton Tythe Map 1837, O.S. 1897 6" Sheet XXXIX N.W.

Eleanor Kingston's study was preceded by the work of a Broughton resident, Robert Aitken, who in the 1930s had done a detailed survey of the maps and old documents

stored in the church and elsewhere. A file which details the enclosures and transcribes some of the documents about ownership is in the archive. (File 19).

Footpaths

In 1934, Robert Aitken also completed a survey of the footpaths in the village by walking every path with a notebook, and then writing a detailed set of notes on their condition. He presented this to the Parish Council.(cat BrC 1934). He included recommendations about which landowners should be making repairs and improvements. The Local Government Act then in force gave the Parish Council the responsibility for producing a definitive map, and powers to compel landowners to make repairs and remove obstructions. Robert Aitken was particularly keen to have footpaths accessible by mothers with prams, and ladies who might have found it hard to climb stiles. A press report of the Parish Council meeting (cat 1097) says “They had fallen in line with the Government Act in regard to the footpaths, entailing more work”, and acknowledged Mr Aitken’s contribution. The owner of a stile which had been the site of an accident was to be instructed to erect it “suitable for a woman or child to get over”.

We are now familiar with the work of the **Ordnance Survey**. Indeed, there are employees and ex-employees of the OS living in the village now. The work of OS has completely changed since GPS and digital mapping developed, but its origins date from the mid-18th century.

The Defence Ministry of the 18th Century was called the Board of Ordnance (weapons, broadly speaking). The mid century was marked by the Highland uprisings, where military action led to a demand for accurate mapping, commissioned first in 1745. The alarm caused first by the French Revolution, then the Napoleonic wars, led to further mapping exercises, and the development of better measuring instruments. The mapping exercises concentrated first on coastal areas, and the first time the words “Ordnance Survey” were printed on a map was in 1801, and the map was of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. A copy of this map is in the village archive collection.

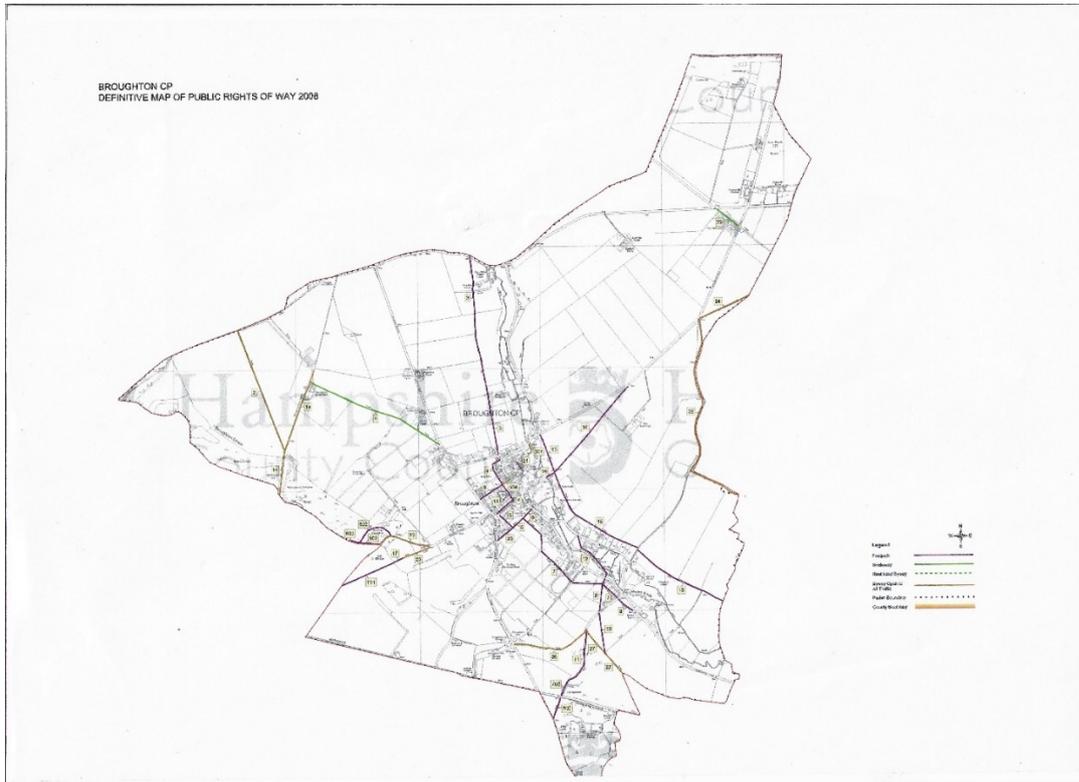
For more on OS, see <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/about/history>.

The OS maps are the basis of our national definitive maps, which now form the official record of local footpaths and rights of way, most of them going back to the enclosure acts of 1790. Some have been changed, diverted, or blocked, and Hampshire County Council has the responsibility to oversee the use of rights of way.

For more about HCC’s activities in this respect, see <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/rightsofway/usingrightsofway>

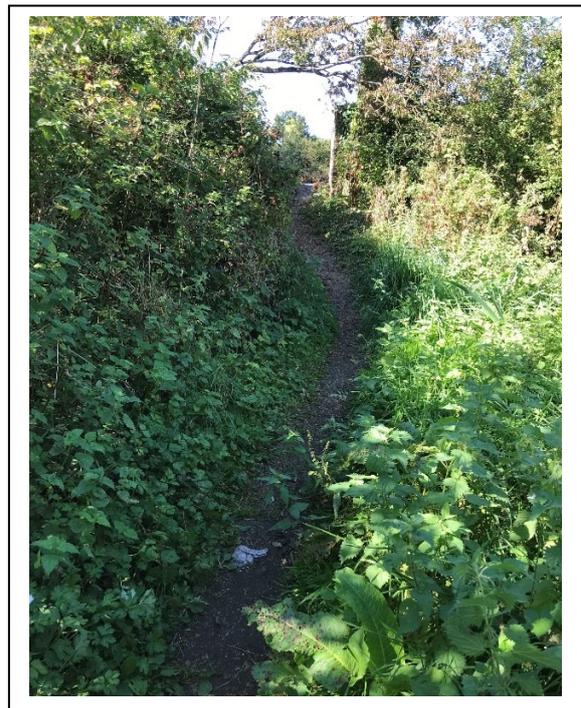
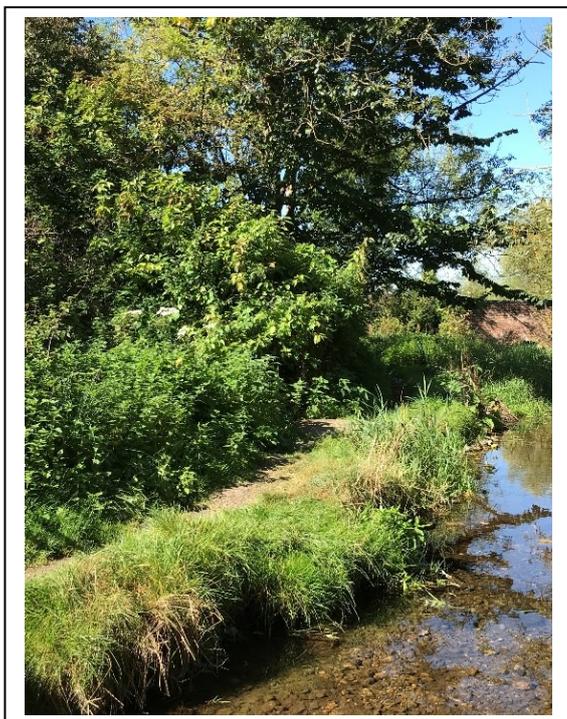
Once a right of way has been established, it is a criminal offence to prevent public access to it. As we saw recently with the little footpath at the Shallow Ford, by the North End Bridge, the right of way can be confirmed by maps, and challenged by evidence of historic use.

Below is a copy of the latest version (2008) of the definitive map of paths in Broughton Parish. You will have to click on it to enlarge it.



Our footpaths are a valuable asset. During the Covid lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, the limited permitted exercise period imposed by the Government meant that the paths were very well used, and became even more valuable. George Gammer took a series of photographs of some of the paths, available as high quality prints, featuring our limited horizons, but still entitled “Aren’t we lucky?” This became a common greeting between neighbours briefly meeting on their walks. See George’s photographs at <https://www.georgegammer.com/section874817.html>

Julie Joyce has also been a regular chronicler of village places, and she has provided these photographs of the Shallow Ford path, to assist the process of establishing the right of way there.



What can we do? Use them or lose them!

The Parish Council has a designated member to keep an eye on the Parish paths. Footpaths and rights of way can easily be lost if we don't use them, or stay vigilant about changes. The Ramblers Association has launched a campaign to record and protect ancient rights of way against incursions and neglect. There was originally a deadline to do this by 2026, but the Government is recently reported to have lifted the deadline. Problems with access can be reported to the Parish Council, or to the compliance staff at Hampshire County Council (reference above).

See <https://dontloseyourway.ramblers.org.uk/>