

MONKS ELEIGH VILLAGE.

LOST AND VANISHING BYWAYS.

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1. OBJECTS OF THE STUDY:

- a. PROMOTE LOCAL INTEREST IN THE VILLAGE FOOTPATHS AND BYWAYS.
- b. IDENTIFY THOSE BYWAYS AND PATHS WHICH ARE NO LONGER VISIBLE OR SIGNPOSTED.
- c. ENCOURAGE MORE FREQUENT USE OF THOSE WE STILL HAVE.
- d. SUPPORT ANY EFFORTS TO REOPEN THOSE THAT HAVE GONE..

2. INTRODUCTION.

This survey is based on the 6" O.S. Maps for 1906. This period was chosen because it was a time when most people lived and worked within six miles of their village and when most people walked to work.

The majority of the people walked to their place of work taking the shortest distant available.

The byways and footpaths at that time would have been well used by both the villagers and their animals.

Although the nearest railway station was at Lavenham it was a period when animals were still driven to market in large numbers via green lanes which did not have hard surfaces.

Some of these were very wide e.g. 20 metres.

Many of our roads today would have been narrower and many of todays paths were lanes or byways which fell into disuse with the development of vehicular traffic. A large number have been ploughed up and are no longer identifiable.

It should also be remembered that many of the well used paths would not necessarily have been marked on the maps as footpaths. and that many of the routes would not have been signposted.

There would have been short cuts and well accepted paths through farm yards which remained private. This explains why some of the paths do not always join up with others and appear to disappear into nowhere.

This review mainly highlights those byways and paths which were marked as footpaths or lanes on the 1906 maps.

3. PARISH BOUNDARIES.

It is worthwhile ignoring the Parish boundary when reviewing footpaths. All of the surrounding villages had and still have communication routes via Monks Eleigh. Milden in particular has lost many of its paths and lanes which would have been very busy. I have tended to include only those that are of interest to this survey and apologise if I have omitted any that some readers think should have been included.

4. SOME COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS.

The best way to keep footpaths open is to use them.

The countryside code should always be followed.

Use the modern 6" O.S. Map, but note the existence of a path on the map does not guarantee a right of way.

There are not many signposts in existence today, please observe the law of trespass.

Please let me know if you spot any errors in the text.

5. GUIDE TO USING THIS STUDY.

N.B. The text is bound on the left hand side of the folder and the maps are bound on the right hand side.

The village has been divided into three sections to enable the routes to be more easily examined.

The Northern Sector covers the area north of the Church.

The Middle section describes an area from The Church south roughly to the Stackwood Green Road.

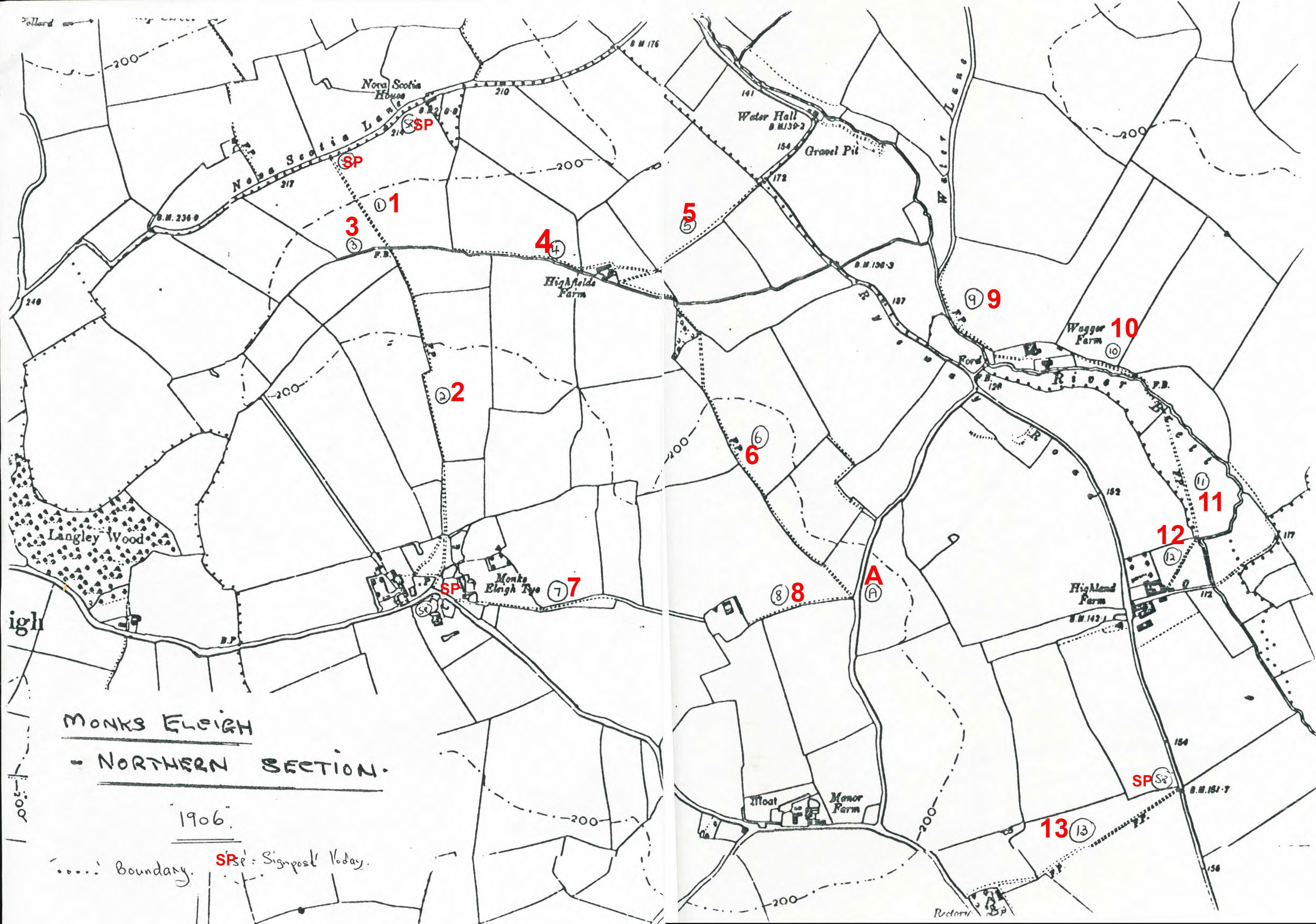
The Southern Sector completes the review and highlights the area south of Slough Farm to the southern boundary which runs to the south of the Bulls Wood to Lindsey Road.

The main footpaths and lanes which connect up to the village from surrounding areas have also been included.

The main roads and lanes that are well known and used today have not been highlighted but on the large map footpaths have been colour coded to show those that can no longer be identified and those that are still marked as paths on the modern O.S. Maps.

NOTE ABOUT 80% OF THE FOOTPATHS SHOWN ON THE 1906 MAP NO LONGER EXIST AND A LARGE NUMBER OF THE GREEN LANES HAVE EITHER BEEN PLOUGHED UP OR CONVERTED TO NARROW PATHS WHICH ARE NOT ALWAYS MARKED AS SUCH.

AT LEAST ONE MAJOR FARM HAS DISAPPEARED.



MONKS ELIGH
- NORTHERN SECTION -

1906

..... Boundary. SP = Signpost Today.

4.

The Three Sector Maps.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF BYWAYS.

NOTE 1. THOSE WRITTEN IN CAPITAL LETTERS NO LONGER EXIST ON THE
O.S MAP 19 —

2. Each byway is numbered to identify it on the maps.
Principal roads still in use are not referenced.

NORTHERN SECTION OF MONKS ELEIGH.

Map Ref.

- 1/2. This footpath runs from Monks Eleigh Tye north to
Nova Scotia lane, which is the northern border of the
Village.

It is the only footpath which is marked with a sign
post at each end and 1. is joined to 2. at a well
maintained footbridge over a tributary of the River
Brett which runs east to join the Brett just north of
Wagger Farm.

- 3 /4. THIS FOOTPATH FORMED PART OF A NUMBER OF TRACKS AND
PATHS WHICH SERVED HIGHFIELDS FARM WHICH IS NOW
DEMOLISHED. THE ONLY VISIBLE SIGN OF ITS EXISTENCE
ARE THE REMAINS OF A BRIDGE AT GROUND LEVEL WHICH
CROSSES THE TRIBUTARY REFERRED TO IN 1/2.

THE PATH APPEARED TO BEGIN JUST WEST OF THE POINT
WHERE 1. JOINED 2. AND RUNS EASTERLY PAST THE SITE OF
HIGHFIELDS FARM, WHERE IT JOINED 5.

5. THE PATH STARTED TO THE EAST OF HIGHFIELDS FARM WHERE
IT CONTINUED N.E., CROSSED RYEWAY ROAD AND LINKED UP
TO WATER HALL.

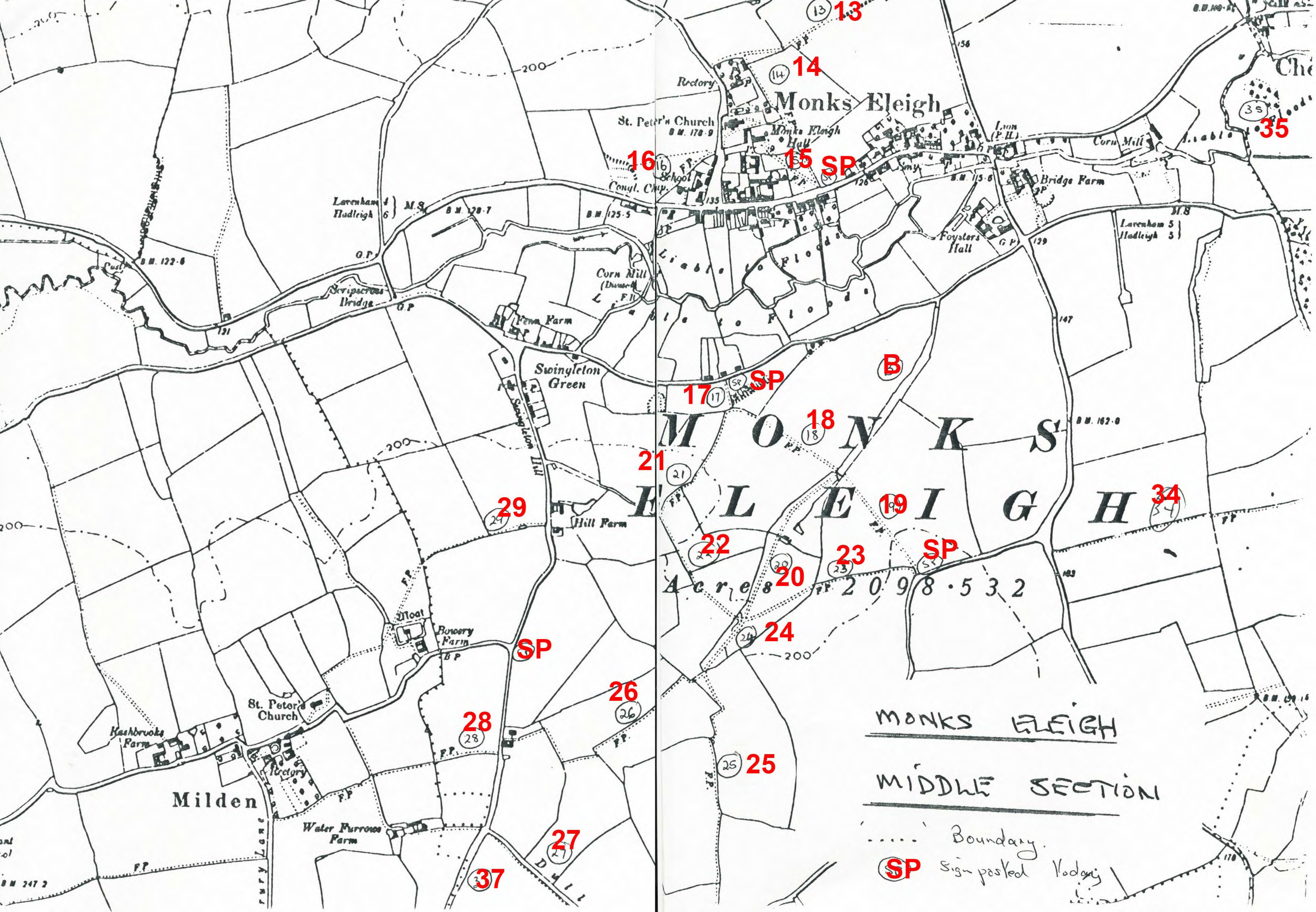
6. THIS PATH CONNECTED HIGHFIELDS FARM TO THE LANE A.
WHICH RAN DOWN TO WAGGER FARM FROM MANOR FARM.

- 6A. A TRACK WHICH WAS NOT MARKED AS A FOOT PATH WAS
THE MAIN TRACK TO } F? F MYE WAYS

- 7/8. FROM A POINT WHERE 6. MEETS A. THIS PATH RAN
WESTWARDS TO JOIN 2. AT MONKS ELEIGH TYE.

PART OF ITS ROUTE WAS NOT MARKED AS A FOOT PATH, BUT
IS CLEARLY SHOWN AS A TRACK.

9. IS OUTSIDE OF THE MONKS ELEIGH BOUNDARY BUT IS AN
IMPORTANT LINK TO Water Lane which is a green lane
that leads to Kettlebaston.



10 & 11. THE RIVER BRETT MARKS THE BOUNDARY TO THE EAST OF MONKS ELEIGH AND ON THE CHELSWORTH SIDE OF THE RIVER A PATH NO 10/11 RAN BEHIND WAGGER FARM TO HIGHLANDS FARM. CLOSE TO MID POINT THERE WAS **A** BRIDGE WHICH CROSSED THE RIVER AND AT THIS BRIDGE PATH 12. RAN ACROSS THE FIELD TO THE REAR OF HIGHLAND FARM.

13. This path runs from Ryeway Road just south of Highland Farm, where it is marked with a sign post across the fields to the rear of the Rectory. It completes the review of the Northern section of this survey

MIDDLE SECTION.

The three footpaths that are located in and around the Church and Church Hill are:-

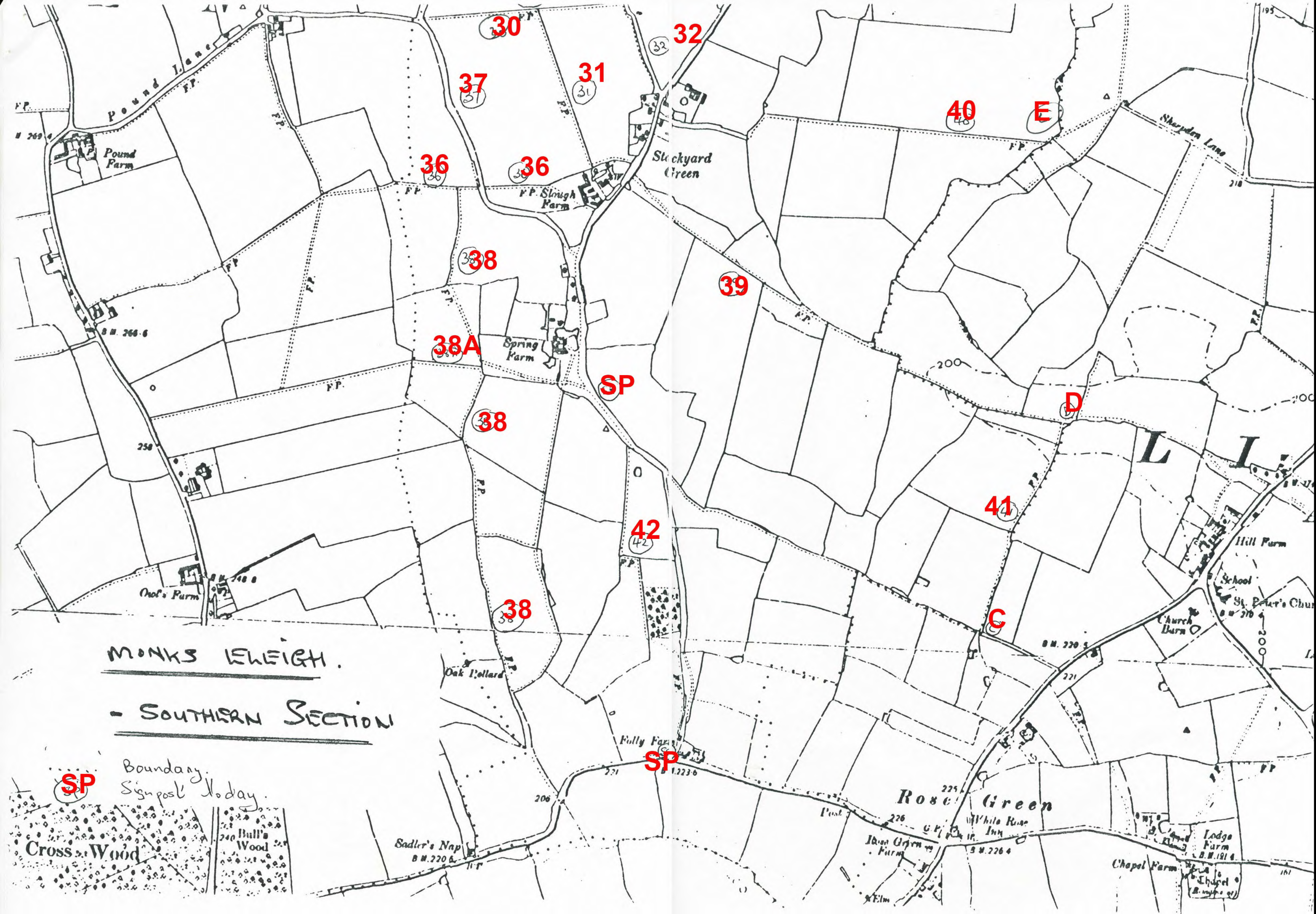
14. Which runs down to the east of the Church to the Main Street, where it is marked by a signpost.
15. WHICH RAN DIAGONALLY ACROSS THE FIELD TO MONKS ELEIGH HALL, BUT ON THE 1960 MAP IS REALIGNED AND RUNS ACROSS THE NORTHERN HEDGE. WHEN BARN CLOSE WAS BUILT TWO GATES WERE CONSTRUCTED BEHIND SILWOOD HOUSE TO GIVE ACCESS TO THIS FIELD and are still there, but they are not signposted as footpaths.
16. Which runs behind the Chapel and the cottages on the west side of Church Hill.

Apart from Path no. 35. which joins Clay Hill through Chelsworth Estate, crosses the river just west of Chelsworth Hall and is in the village of Chelsworth. There are no other paths to the east of the village. in this Sector.

The next complex of byways dominates the area of land to the south of Back Lane. They begin with a green lane which runs south-west from Back Lane near Foysters Hall. This lane marked B on the map, broadens out into a large area of rough ground, shaped like a flattened arrow head.

20 AND 24. APPEARED TO RUN STRAIGHT THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF THIS ROUGH GROUND AND CONTINUED ACROSS TO HAYES FARM TO THE SWINGLETON HILL ROAD VIA 26.

IT ALSO CONNECTED TO ANOTHER PATH THAT RAN SOUTH TO THE STACKYARD GREEN SOUTH VIA 25.



MONKS LEIGH.

- SOUTHERN SECTION

Boundary
Signpost today.

SP

Cross Wood

Bull's Wood

Sadler's Np
B.M. 220 6

Rose Green

Lodge Farm
B.M. 191 4

17. Joins Back Lane to the complex and continues via 18. and 19. to the Swingleton Hill Road where it is signposted. At the points where this road cross into the rough ground there are two modern stiles, but no signposts, BUT NOTE 18. CROSSED PLOUGHED FIELDS AND IS NO LONGER WITH US.

At the s.w. end close to where 25 joins 26 there is a plank across the ditch.

20/23. CANNOT BE TRACED.

- 27 & 32. **WAS A** GREEN LANE CALLED DULLS LANE and is now a very narrow path running along the edge of a field. It is of historical interest because about mid way along its route was located the village "Pest House" or Lazzoretto.

This was an isolation cottage or cottages where members of the village with infecious deceases i.e Smallpox were sent to avoid the spread of the decease to the rest of the population.

30. WHICH RAN WESTWARDS TO MILDEN AND ON TO POUND LANE IS NO MORE, AS IS 31 AND 33.

THE REMAINING FOOTPATHS IN THIS SECTOR WHICH LINKED MILDEN WITH MONKS ELEIGH HAVE ALSO DISAPPEARED. THESE ARE NO 28. AND 29.

34. WHICH JOINED THE BOYTON HALL ROAD TO CLAYHILL AND PATH 40. TO THE EAST OF STACKYARD GREEN HAS ALSO GONE.

THE SOUTHERN SECTION.

The main route southwards from Fenn Farm up Swingleton hill to Hayes Farm, which is signposted at the junction with the road that runs up to Milden, where it is signposted, continued as a green lane to Slough Farm and then joined the Stockyard Green road to Spring Farm where it has become a footpath.

37. THE SECTION FROM DULLS LANE TO THE POINT WHERE IT JOINS THE STACKYARD GREEN ROAD CAN BE TRACED IN PLACES AS A VERY WIDE SECTION OF DITCHES AND ROUGH GROUND WHICH HAS BEEN PLOUGHED UP FOR ITS LAST TWENTY FEET

IMMEDIATELY TO THE WEST OF THE POINT WHERE IT IS CROSSED BY 36 PATH 38 ONCE CONTINUED SOUTH TO THE LANE THAT RUNS FROM BULLS WOOD TO LINDSEY JUST TO THE EAST OF SADDLERS NAP.

38a. RAN FROM 38 WEST TO MILDEN.

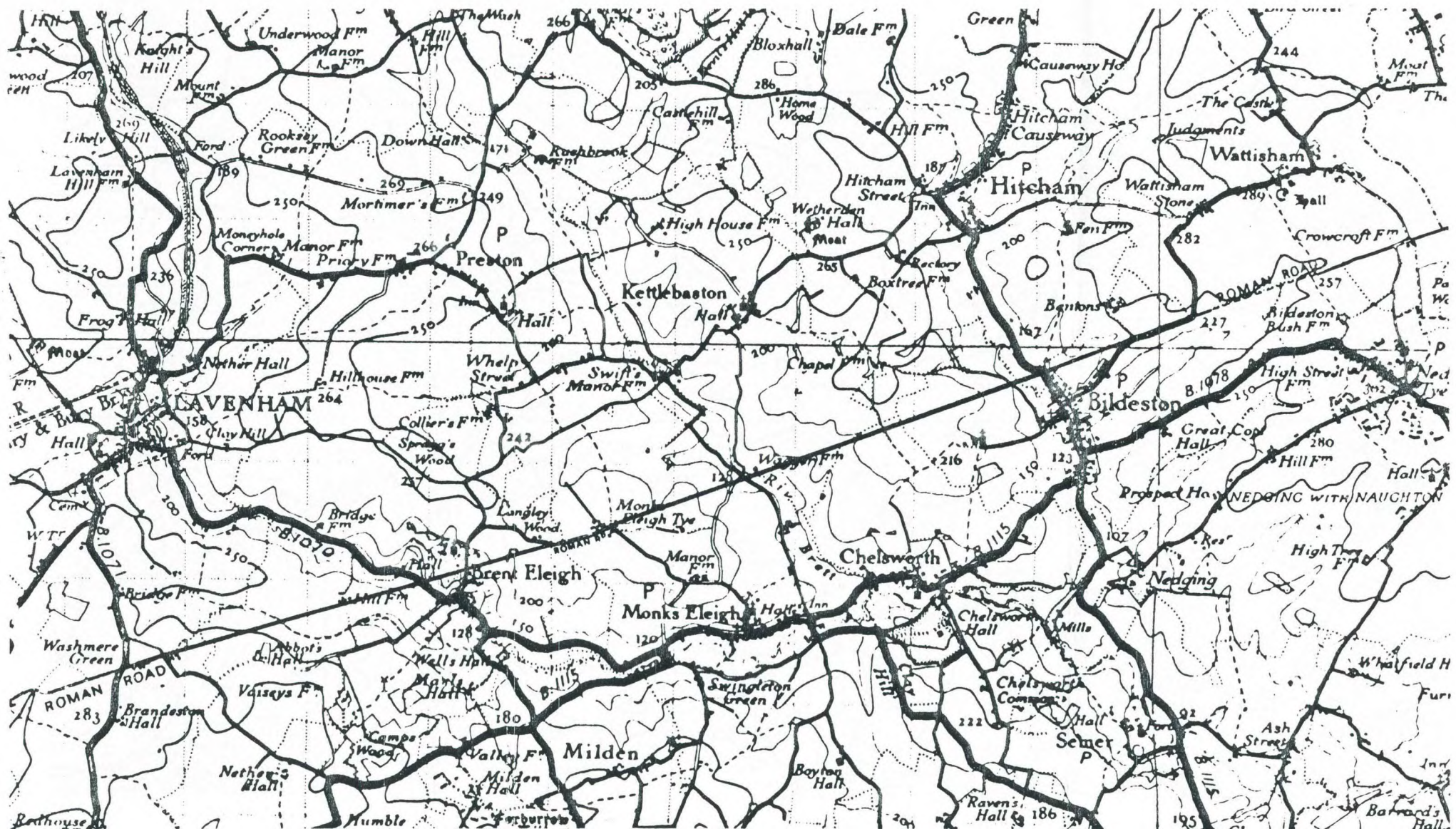
If you retrace your steps back to Spring Farm where there is a complex of paths which are not marked on the 1906 O.S. map as footpaths, Stackyard Green Road becomes a footpath and the path NO. 42 which runs south to the Linsey Road and is signposted at the junction is largely untracable except on the map.

39. JOINS STACKYARD GREEN TO AN UNMARKED PATH WHICH LINKS 41 AT D.

40. ANOTHER PATH EAST OF STACKYARD GREEN LEADS TO A SERIES OF UNMARKED PATHS AND LINKED UP WITH SHEEPDEN LANE E.

41. A FOOTPATH THAT JOINS TWO UNMARKED PATHS C AND D TO THE S.E. OF THE VILLAGE FORMS PART OF THE BOUNDARY WITH LINSEY.

ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP - NI49 - ENLARGED - Showing three sections joined up and passing across the Ford at Waggers Farm.



6. THE ROMAN ROAD.

The oldest and probably the least known road that runs through Monks Eleigh is a short piece of Roman Road that runs from Brett Eleigh up towards Monks Eleigh Tye. It is clearly marked on all of the maps and appears to start from no'o where in particular and disappears behind the farms at Monks Eleigh Tye.

If you look at the smaller scale map and follow the line of the road S.W. towards Long Melford there is another short section just east of Long Melford at Washmere Green and if you follow the route N.E. of Monks Eleigh, the Road reappears at Bildeston and disappears again underneath Wattisham's R.A.F. Station.

This road was an important route running from Bayiham which was on the Pye Road, a Roman Road connecting Colchester to the Iceni main centre at Caistor St Edmund in Norfolk.

In the other direction the road ran S.. to Wixoe on the Cambridge to Colchester Road.

Although the three sections are not joined on the Ordinance Survey map, it should be reasonable to assume that if you join the three straight sections on the map that the Monks Eleigh Bildeston route can be traced across the field to the N.E of Monks Eleigh Tye.

This line passes across the River Brett at Wagger Farm Ford, and if this is the route it dates the site of the ford as a very old crossing point of the River Brett which in Roman times would probably have been wider and deeper than it is today.

It is worth pointing out that the river at this crossing is at the junction of the following lanes and paths:

1. The lane that runs from the old Lion on the Street north-westward to the Preston/Kettlebaston Road which is called Ryeway Road on the 1906 O.S. map.
2. The narrow lane that runs north from Manor Farm to the ford.
3. Water Lane, a little used lane that runs south from Kettlebaston to the ford. It disappears into the river just N.W of the ford but is clearly marked as a Lane on the 1906 map.
4. A footpath that joins Wagger Farm to a series of footpaths to the N.W. of Chelsworth. This path also crosses the village boundary behind Highlands Farm and is no longer marked.
5. The Roman Road.

9.

7. AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF GOOD NEWS.

Whilst walking the fields in search of signposts I discovered a public announcement well hidden in the hedge down by Folly farm on the Rose Green road to the south of the village.

It details proposed lanes and paths to be reinstated.

The Ramblers Association have made the application to the Local Authority who are carrying out the normal procedures to see if there are any objections to the proposals. This will be followed by a public inquiry which is unlikely to take place before the end of next year.

A copy of the map which details the paths and lanes together with the detailed descriptions is attached.

If the application is successful a major route from the south to Swingleton Green and westwards to Milden will be reinstated.

A Word of Warning: The width of many of these byways is described as, as wide as 20 metres. The notes indicate that these byways will be open to all vehicular traffic and whilst no physical work is proposed I presume that road may come later

8. CONCLUSION.

Monks Eleigh has a rich heritage of byways and footpaths which have largely fallen into disuse through changes in the life-style of the village. Many of these paths have also disappeared under the plough and will never be reopened.

We need to use them as often as possible to keep them open and we need to support efforts to preserve them.

We should also support all efforts to have byways and footpaths reinstated and the proposed Public Inquiry represents an opportunity for an number of important routes to be reopened.

Note: I am indebted to the following people and organisations that have given their help and guidance in most cases without payment.

1. The West Suffolk County Record Office at Bury St. Edmunds.
2. The Chief Executive's Department, County Secretary and Solicitors Office in Ipswich - Mr. K. W. Stevens.
3. The Ordinance Survey Department.
4. The publishers of "Roman Roads in Britain." by Ivan D. Margary, J. Baker - London.