



Shotley Peninsula Cycling Campaign
Newsletter No. 22, November 2018

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Dear members and supporters,

This is a somewhat different newsletter to our usual ones, as this is largely about one topic, **Lost Paths**, that we need your help with.

It is believed, by many people and organisations, that there are a significant number of historic paths, and even roads, which existed prior to 1949, but which were subsequently never included on the definitive maps of public rights of way.

A few years back, the Government decreed that any such road or path that has been omitted will not be added to the definitive map after a cut-off date of 1st January 2026, and will therefore be lost for ever.

The Ramblers have publicised this to their members in the hope that some of them will be inspired to investigate whether any ancient rights of way have been omitted. The British Horse Society has also publicised this.

We are extremely poorly served by bridleways, where of course cyclists can legally cycle, on the Shotley Peninsula. I have been told that this is often the case where there used to be large private estates (in this case the Berners Estate). The few bits of bridleway and restricted byway we do have on the peninsula are largely fragmented and do not provide a usable network to get from place to place. There are any number of dead-ends, and anomalies: see some of these listed at end of newsletter.

If you are interested in looking into possible omissions, such as where a Lane is identified on an old OS map or Tithe map, but is now classified as a footpath. (eg Taylors Lane, Erwarton, which appears on the 1881 25" OS map, running from Church Farm up to Crouch House), or anomalies (eg where a bridleway suddenly turns into a footpath, as at Harkstead, and Stutton – see end of newsletter), here are a few suggestions to get you started:

Try Googling “Lost Paths”, then click on “Don’t lose your way -2026 – Ramblers”. This will take you to the Ramblers website devoted to this topic, with lots of good advice about sources of evidence etc.

The British Horse Society also has a lot of information and advice too. Go to their “Access and Bridleways Campaigns, and click on 2026. Here you will find their 2026 Toolkit, which you can download. They also recommend a book “Rights of Way – Restoring the Record”, (2nd Edition) by Sarah Bucks and Phil Wadey. Unfortunately it costs £32.

I, personally, have done a bit of research at the County Record Office. The Tithe maps have some interesting information, particularly regarding roads: some roads that seemed to exist then as public roads are now private tracks, while other roads now in existence, eg Erwarton Walk, and Glebe Lane, Woolverstone, are not shown on their respective tithe maps!

The National Libraries of Scotland, strangely, also have pretty complete collections of our old local OS maps, which you can view online.

If any of you are inspired to start digging, it would be helpful if you would keep in touch with us, so that work does not get duplicated. (Email us at: admin@spcc.info)

On a completely different subject: many of you will know that a young cyclist was knocked off his bike on Freston Hill recently. This will have been recorded as an RTA by the police. What does not get recorded, though, is any near misses and aggressive driving experienced by cyclists. Fortunately, these incidents are getting less frequent, (or at least they are in my experience), but nevertheless, if you have been subjected to bad/dangerous driving behaviour recently, we would like to hear about it so we can start to keep records of such incidents.

If any of you have any suggestions to make about the above topics, or any queries, do get in touch via the email address given above.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas, and a peaceful 2019,
Cathy Crouch

Additional notes on the peninsula bridleway and RUPP system

A quick look at my 1:25,000 OS map shows that:-

Erwarton has no bridleways.

Nor has Woolverstone though it does have two Restricted Byways, one of which turns into a footpath; the other, Berners Lane, however, links up with the bridleway going on to Chelmondiston.

Harkstead has one short section of bridleway, approximately 300m long, which comes through from Baylham Farm. Beyond this short length, though, it turns into a footpath so that is as far as you can legally get by bike or on horseback! (I have not checked this on the definitive footpath map, I must confess). This is clearly a nonsensical situation, and would probably be considered "an anomaly".

Chelmondiston has a few useful bridleways, although there is no complete off-road circuit. There are also a couple of dead-ends: a bridleway which crosses Lings Lane, and turns into a footpath in both directions, and another going north from Bylam Farm which very quickly turns into a footpath.

Shotley has a short length of bridleway at Shotley Common and another between the Marina and the bottom of Bristol Hill (ie along the road to the marina), plus a few Restricted Byways (which were previously known as Ruppas or roads used as public paths).

Stutton and Tattingstone have a few more bridleways, but even here there are dead ends where a bridleway turns into a footpath, such as at Stutton Mill.

Wherstead has a few sections of bridleway mainly west of the A137, but more importantly it has a crucial bridleway linking Vicarage Lane to Cutlers Wood, Freston.

Freston, is probably best provided with bridleways with a good network forming useful links through to Holbrook, to Tattingstone and the Reservoir, and to Wherstead.

This is not an exhaustive list!

Please see previous newsletter (available on our website) for details of the committee