

Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum – 19 July 2016

Lost Ways – Report by Colin Smith

Over the last year Miriam, myself and our Chairman, Chris P have travelled to Oakham as members of the South Lincs and Rutland LAF 'Lost Ways' Sub-Committee chaired by John Law. South Lincs seems to be well under way with finding possible Lost Ways and recording them on a data base. However, we have far more parishes in Lincolnshire to cover (700 in old Lincolnshire) and seemingly fewer volunteers wanting to get involved in the task.

Miriam and I have been concentrating our efforts on trying to make a little progress on the various tasks involved.

1. Training courses for people wishing to do archival work on historical lost ways.

John Law has tried hard to set up a training course/workshop done by BHS but these courses seem to be fully booked up until later in the year at the earliest. The courses are being given by Sarah Bucks and Phil Wadey, BHS RoW experts who wrote the book "Rights of Way-restoring the Record". However, we have still not yet found enough volunteers wanting to get involved in researching lost ways. We do need help in this task. We hope to contact Phil Wadey in the near future via the Open Spaces Society to get some advice.

2. Finding possibilities from the "missing Links" data base for Lincolnshire provided to us by Chris Miller.

At first this seemed to be a quick way of finding obvious gaps in the current rights of way network by checking current OS maps. We asked a few Ramblers members and others to look at some of the missing link grid refs on their current maps to see if the reported missing links were there. Most did not spot any problems on the maps.

However, we have not asked anyone to look at Kesteven, particularly in the Sleaford area where there are likely to be more problems.

3. Historic lost ways. Here we have made some progress.

We felt that we needed to get some "hands-on" experience in researching lost ways by looking at old documents in the Lincolnshire Archives Office.

Barry Smith, Ramblers Footpath Officer for the Skegness area provided me with a list of possible lost ways in 39 parishes in his territory. Barry looked at Cassini Historical maps based on old OS maps 1902 to 1922. He listed 56 possibles on his spread sheet, of which 22 were ORPAs. Each path he prioritised Low, Medium or High for investigation. We set aside the ORPAs and chose three parishes with High Priority paths for investigation at Archives office. By looking at Enclosure Awards

and other documents we found 3 paths on Barry's list. However, we don't know if these paths which are on the old OS maps have since been legally extinguished, in which case they can never be reclaimed! To check on the ORPAs listed we need to consult the 'List of Streets'

We now know some of the problems of researching old documents for Lost Ways so we can better tell potential volunteers what is involved - but clearly we need more volunteers to make much headway.

Colin Smith