

## History of the footpaths within the Parish of Shrawley

### Summary

The Parish of Shrawley has 31,537m of paths designated as public rights of way. Of these, 31,239m (99%) were mapped as footpaths in 1883 by the Ordnance Survey (OS) and almost certainly many of our paths are far older than that. Paths that have become sunken lanes (hollow ways) are most probably many centuries old (e.g. SY-575 near East Grove Farm or SY-549/550 near the Village Hall). Although there are many maps of the area before 1883, none has mapped footpaths, nor are any of sufficient accuracy to be helpful in this study.

Following the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949, the footpaths were described in a set of “definitive statements” and recorded on a “definitive map” based on OS maps surveyed in 1926, establishing the right of the public (and his dog) to walk these paths without let or hindrance at any time of day or night. The definition of Shrawley’s paths was signed off as a draft on 16 June 1953 and completed as the definitive version on 23 December 1967.

Before 1949, the course of paths will have been determined by convenience, running along tracks, across pasture or along the headland of any ploughed field. Since the 1949 Act, their course has been fixed but land management has changed, with the re-routing of farm tracks, loss of hedgerow and ploughing of pasture for crops. Comparing the land use recorded on the Tithe Allocation map of 1839 with the footpaths on the OS map surveyed in 1883, it seems probable that footpaths did not cross ploughed land but in 2017, 4366m of Shrawley’s paths (14%) cross land cultivated for crops and while land owners have a legal obligation to reinstate the footpath if they have ploughed it, this obligation has frequently been ignored, in many cases leading to a diversion round the field headland.

Even in 1949, access to some of the paths to be made public rights of way was obstructed; since then, fences, hedges or other structures have enforced diversions from the course of paths on the Definitive Map. [Two?] of these in Shrawley have been through due legal process and been approved. In general, divergence from the definitive path of unapproved diversions is only a matter of a few metres; such diversions are considered of “low priority” and therefore unlikely to be challenged.

In conclusion, many of the ancient paths through our parish have been preserved and virtually all of those designated as public rights of way in 1953—1968 are still open for public use.

## Shrawley footpaths

### Maps before 1884

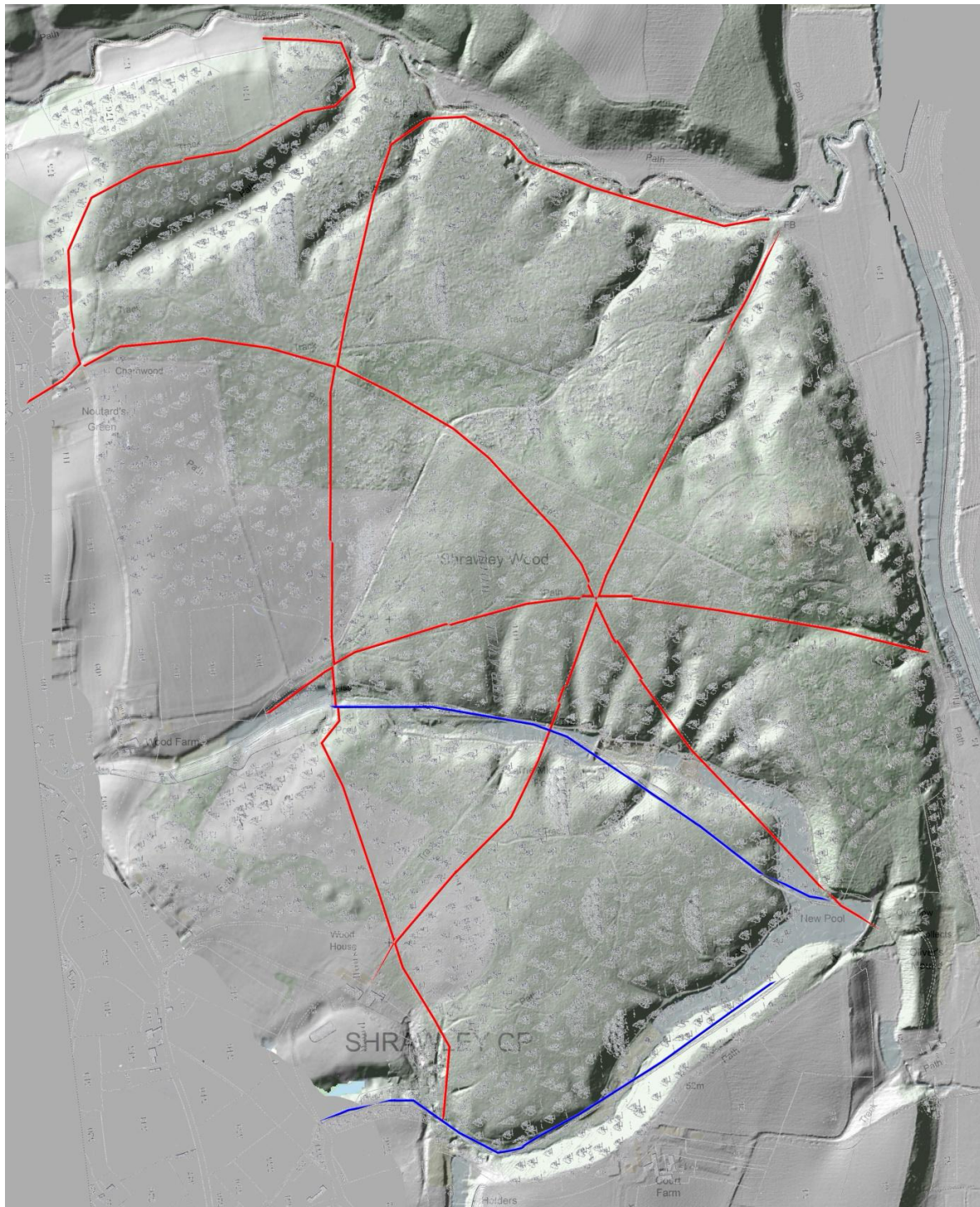
The OS surveyed Shrawley in 1883 and in 1884 published the maps as 1:2500 and 1:10,560 (25.344" and 6.0" to the mile). These were the first maps of Shrawley to show footpaths. Before that the maps were significantly less accurate in every aspect (topography, place names and so on). The most accurate precursor was the tithe award map of 1839 but this made no record of footpaths other than in Shrawley Wood, and here the paths are clearly drawn like the London Underground map, showing connectivity but not accurate location. Other than this reservation, this map when scaled and rotated -96.4° fits almost exactly with the rivers, roads and field boundaries seen on satellite view maps of the parish.



The most useful aspect of this map is the indication of land use in 1839. The footpaths seen in 1883 run across pasture, through orchards or along field margins indicated here.

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The purpose of the tithe map was to enable the correct tithe awards: it maps the boundaries of these with great accuracy. Within the boundaries of Shrawley Wood, the course of paths and waterways can be seen to be inaccurate when the tithe map is overlaid on the LiDAR map of the same area (paths on the tithe map highlighted in red, waterways in blue). The true course of the paths and waterways can be seen clearly on the LiDAR where constant use has caused a depression in the surface





## Shrawley footpaths

The 1812 map of Robert Dawson (British Library, Map Library) gives an indication of field margins and tracks but not footpaths. There is some vague correspondence between field margins on this map and on the 1839 tithe map, but in many places the differences suggest this map must be grossly inaccurate.



The road shown here from New Inn lane through to Dodoak must surely be a track that can be traced reaching the Hillhampton Road at Green Farm, not Dodoak, but this track passes to the East of Rector's Coppice (rendered as Parson's Coppice on this map). A track running northward from the Hillhampton Road 265m east of Dodoak does go to the west of Rector's Coppice but then (in 1883) ran up the east side of Coombegrove Coppice, ending 125m short of the southwest end of a track out of Hilltop Farm. There is no trace on the 1883 OS map of any buildings labelled here as Nutnell. It seems unlikely therefore that this map will give us any reliable information to help establish the history of our paths.



## Shrawley footpaths

The next oldest map is by John Dougharty mapped in 1731-2, published in a book of 1733 documenting the estates of Bowater Vernon Esq. Although this map is distorted, worst in the northeast quadrant, this shows paths in Shrawley Wood which are somewhat closer to their correct route than the otherwise much more accurate tithe map of 1839.





## Shrawley footpaths

Other maps mentioning Shrawley have been examined: An accurate map of the County of Worcester, 1756 Bowen *et al.*, University Library, Berne; A map of Worcester Shire, 1742, Muzeum Brněnska; sheet 32, Cary's England, Wales and Scotland 1794, David Rumsey Map Collection; Wigorniensis Comitatus, Sheet 21, 1579, Christopher Saxton, British Library, Map Library; Wigorniensis comitatus et comitatus Warwicensis; nec non Coventrae libertas. 1646, Joan Blaeu, University Library Berne; Map of Worcestershire 1595, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, British Library, Map Library; a new travelling map of the country round London, 1: 1776, Publ. J Andrews & A Drury]. None was found helpful to this study.

## Shrawley footpaths in 1883



The first OS map of Shrawley was surveyed in 1883 and published 1884. It seems that this map is highly accurate in every aspect. The OS took great care to establish the correct names for all

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topographical features, compiling a compendium of names by polling the locals for their opinions. The maps came with the caution that the mapping of a path or road does not indicate a right of way but when the 1929 OS map was used as the basis for the establishment of public rights of way, only the paths in Wood Farm (owned by Cyril Powick) were rejected by the Parish Council (chaired by Cyril Powick).

### **Definition of the footpaths as public rights of way**

[how were the paths defined? Walked using the 1929 OS 1:10,000? Dates walked recorded on the back of each sheet. Who walked them?]

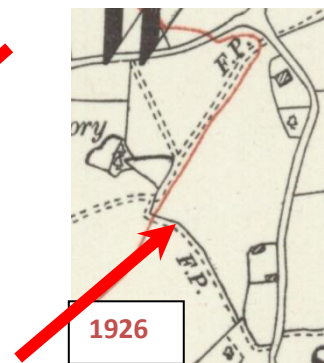
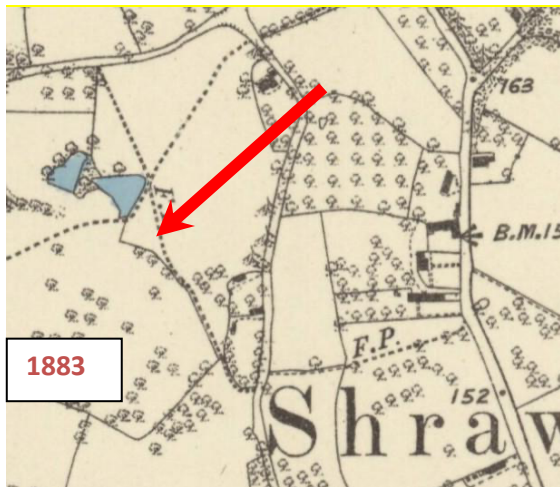
Path



# Shrawley footpaths

## Changes between 1883 and 1926

Minor changes can be found on the OS maps, such as:



Or

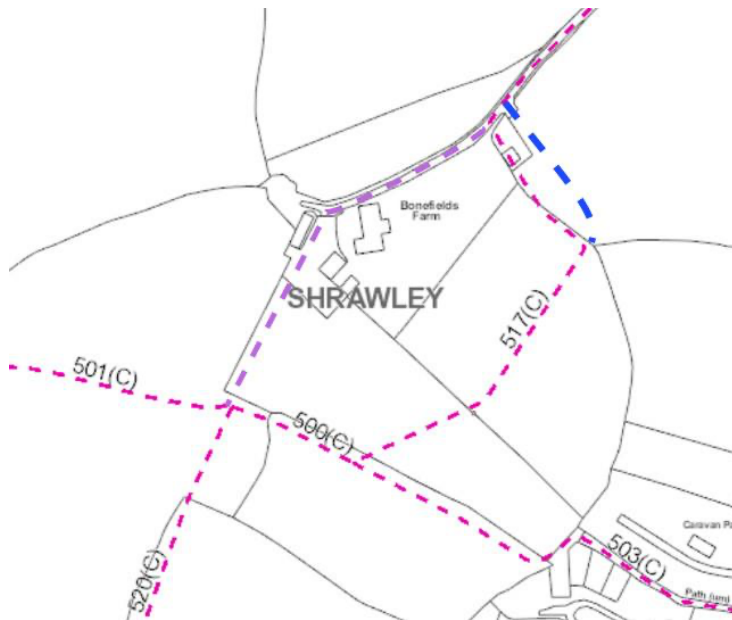


## Shrawley footpaths

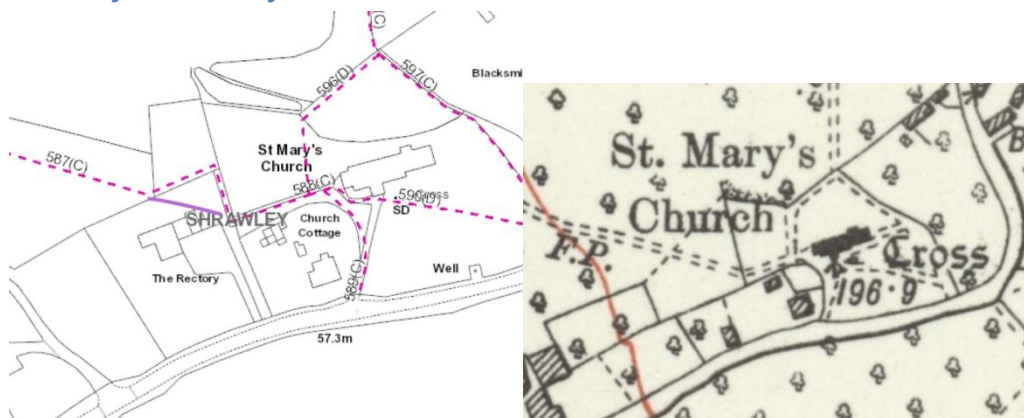
### Diversions since 1968: approved diversions

#### Bonefields Farm

The original definitive footpath 5 ran through Bonefields Farm as indicated by the purple dashed line. An approved diversion now avoids the buildings as SY-500 & 517. Additionally the blue dashed line indicates a later (unapproved?) diversion, consequent on the building of a pumping station on the line of the path.



#### St Mary's Rectory



The 1968 version of the definitive map is indicated by the purple line: the changed route was approved 13/09/07 and became operative 13/3/08

## Shrawley footpaths

### Doubtful routes

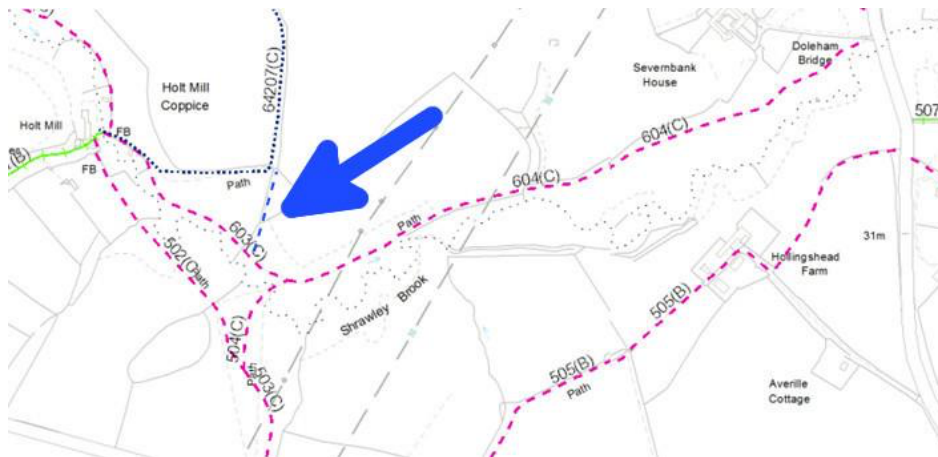
#### Footpath 17 / SY-561

The blue dotted line is the currently used (waymarked) route: the “definitive” path (red) is recorded here as blocked by barbed wire and so not in use in 1953.



#### Footpath 29 / SY-603

A path (useful short cut) from the UCR to SY603 is included in the definitive statement but became lost in the system between then and the current version of the mapping. This path is still walkable.



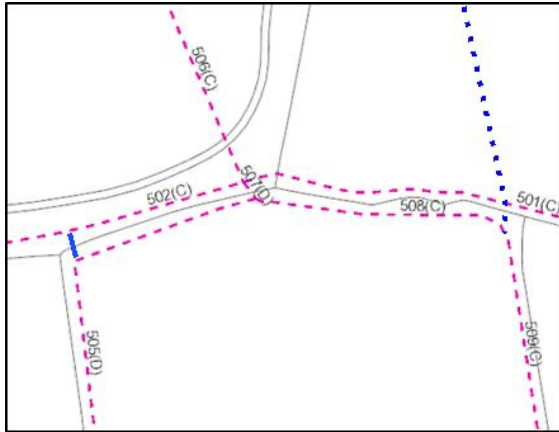


## Shrawley footpaths

### Diversions since 1968: unapproved diversions

#### Footpath 1 – SY-502, 505, 507

SY507 descends approximately 5m in 8m on sandy soil, is blocked by vegetation and a fence and seems unlikely to be restored. Two alternative paths are available.



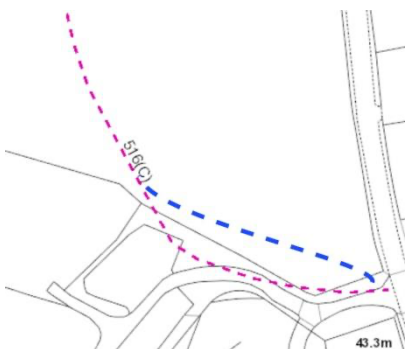
#### Footpath 2 / SY-504

Farm track constructed mostly along course of path but diverted east by 20m for 150m. Definitive path blocked by fences and hedges.



#### Footpath 5 / SY-516

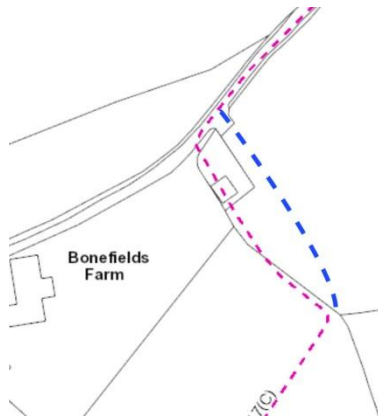
House built by the path with a garden hedge and fence across the path: longstanding diversion through the adjacent field



## Shrawley footpaths

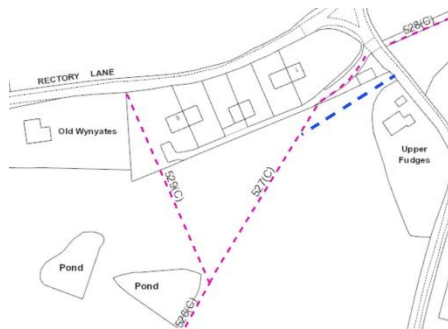
### Footpath 5 / SY-517

Diversion round pumping station: presumably unapproved as the definitive map shows the path going through the pump building.



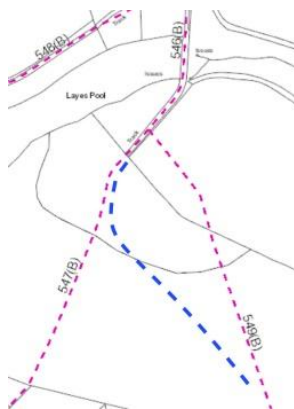
### Footpath 6 / SY-527

Was diverted (from 1950?) until May 2017: now restored to its definitive route.



### Footpath 14 / SY-549

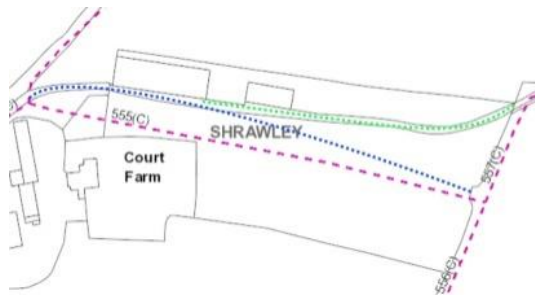
Path blocked by 8ft high chain link fence installed by Wood House.



## Shrawley footpaths

### Footpath 15 / SY-555

Original path blocked by garden fence of Court Farm and to the east by field fence: diversion through farm gate 12m north of path. Most people then take the green route rather than the blue.



### Footpath 20 / SY-569

The definitive path runs through a poplar plantation and drainage channels have been dug across the path. There may at one time have been plank crossings but no longer: the east end becomes blocked by dense nettles and brambles. The definitive route has been abandoned and the blue dotted alternative is used.

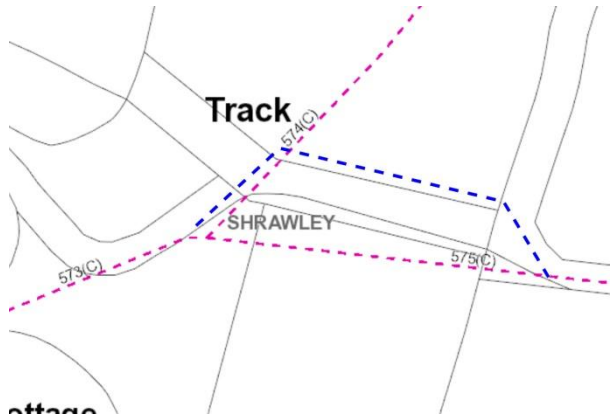




## Shrawley footpaths

### Footpath 21 / SY-565

The definitive path is blocked but the gate is still visible in the hedge. The diversion takes it over a difficult stile and through a paddock to join SY574 rather than SY573.



### Footpath 22 / SY-576

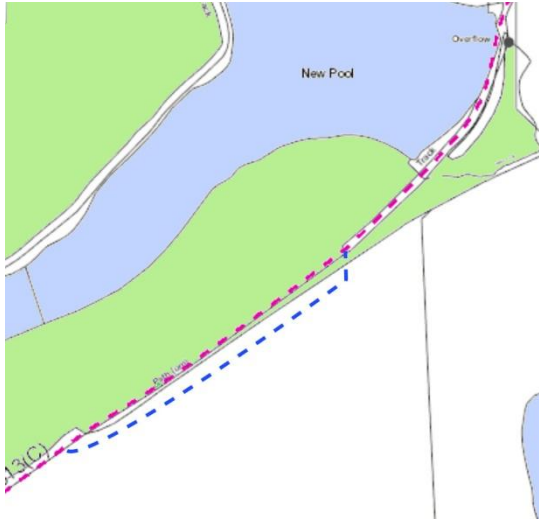
The path is diverted round the corner of Cooks House garden. There is a gate in the hedge on the west but not on the south. Because the field below Cook's House is cultivated and stickily muddy in most seasons, most walkers keep to the blue-green dashed route around the field headland. To the north of Cooks House the path is diverted along a metalled road instead of going through a ploughed field.



## Shrawley footpaths

### Footpath 32 / SY-613

Path blocked by high fence installed by Wood House



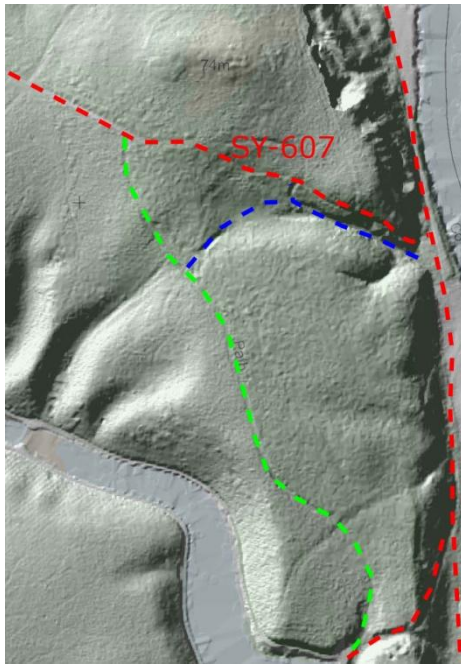
### Old paths that didn't make it as definitive legal rights of way

LiDAR imaging shows up many old tracks and paths that didn't get recognised as footpaths. There are several of these within the Forestry Commission sections of Shrawley Woods. Some of these seem better paths than those in use now.

## Shrawley footpaths

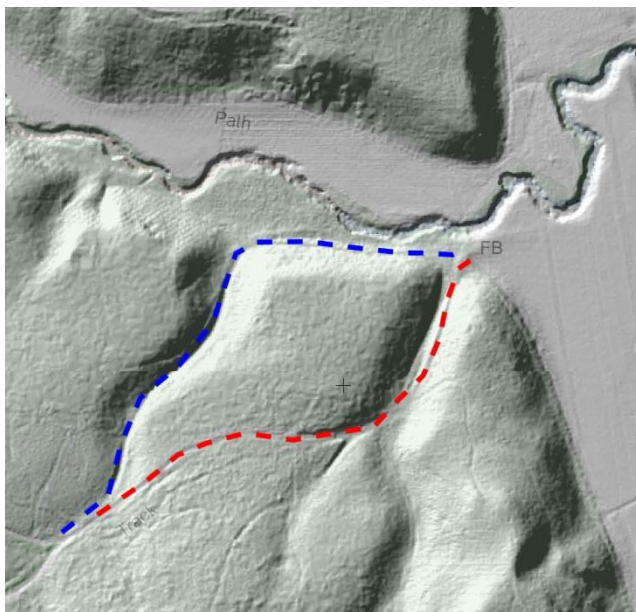
### Alternative to the east end of SY-607

At the east end of SY-607 there is a waymark directing the walker up steps over a sandstone outcrop. If this direction is ignored the walker can proceed up an old track carved out of the sandstone that presumably was the main access to the Weir Inn that stood at the east end of SY-607. This well-engineered path is kinder to the walker than the definitive route, and joins it a little further up the hill. The other branch that turns south west is full of brambles making progress difficult. The green path is in current use as a public path although it is not one of the definitive paths.



### Alternative to the east end of SY-612

The path indicated on the Dougharty map of 1733 may be down this old track; it is currently blocked by trees fallen across the hollow way but is passable with care.





Shrawley footpaths

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Appendix: see "Analysis of the definitive statement for Shrawley" filed separately