Proposed Diversion of Public footpath 163a (part) Within Ratcliffe on the Wreake

We Discussed this proposal at Ratcliffe on the Wreake Parish council meeting on 16th March 2023. We carried a motion to send this letter representing the views of those present at the meeting. During discussion we and the villagers present could not see any good need for this diversion.

Attached Maps and pictures.

The following points were raised in no particular order:-

Notes taken from the Village Conservation report 2013. Which we think are pertinent to this application.

- " There is a good network of footpaths which crisscross the conservation area and link to the wider landscape."
- "The Conservation area has a distinct "grain" or pattern of built form and spaces which are part of it's historic development. This gives the area individuality, characterised by the pattern of historic buildings, ancient footpaths and highways and clearly defined Boundaries". **This "Grain" is an important part of the character of the conservation area and will be protected."**

Our points are :-

A) This is a well walked path that has been used with little alteration for at least 200 years so why should it be moved now?. (Older Villages recall that when the Mill was in operation the miller walked it from his house in Church Lane to the Mill 4 times a day.

B) Both 28/30 Church Lane and Priory House are grade 2 listed buildings especially identified within the Village Conservation area report in 2013. So it seems wrong that an important ancient footpath that connects these buildings should be altered at the whim of a householder.

C) The kissing gate at "C" was installed by the Parish Council in about 1930 and should be retained and used .

D) The paddock by Priory House has been owned by the residents of Priory House since about 1996 and the field to the north of the paddock has recently been bought by the owners of Priory House.

E) The owners of Priory House do not own the field in which the footpath runs between points "A" to "H" to "J". But we now understand they have written permission from the other land owner.

F) The section from "H" to "J" runs diagonally across a fairly steep slope. It is not an easy piece of land to walk across and could become treacherous in wet weather because the many deep tractor tracks along it compounded by cattle churning up the ground making it dangerous.

Slope "H" to "J" showing tractor tracks and churned up ground, difficult to climb in wet weather.

G) The ditch between “J” and “K” locally known as the “dove cote”, was originally Cottleborough Lane as shown on 1770 map attached where it connects Main Street to Martins Lane, this is also part of the character of the village as detailed in Conservation report 2013. and is one of the Boundaries that it mentions.
The new embankment has destroyed part of this feature and perhaps should be removed.

H) The embankment between “J” and “K” is less than 3mts wide (4mts specified) and has steep sides into a ditch. See photo bellow.

I) The recently built embankment between “J” and “K” is made of compacted soil and runs across a ditch “the dove cote” without any obvious drainage to prevent water building up, which could soften the soil and cause it to collapse the structure. Cattle graze these two fields normally without a barrier and they could also make the embankment treacherous.

Embankment “J” to “K” rutted from cattle movements. Photo of Causeway showing churned up surface 2022.

J) The current path is already outside the perimeter of the property Priory House and its gardens as it passes through a paddock area, that is agricultural land.

K) The proposed Route from “K” to “G” is in a grass field by a fence and from “G” to “D” by a hedge beside Broome Lane.

L) This new route increases the length of the path.

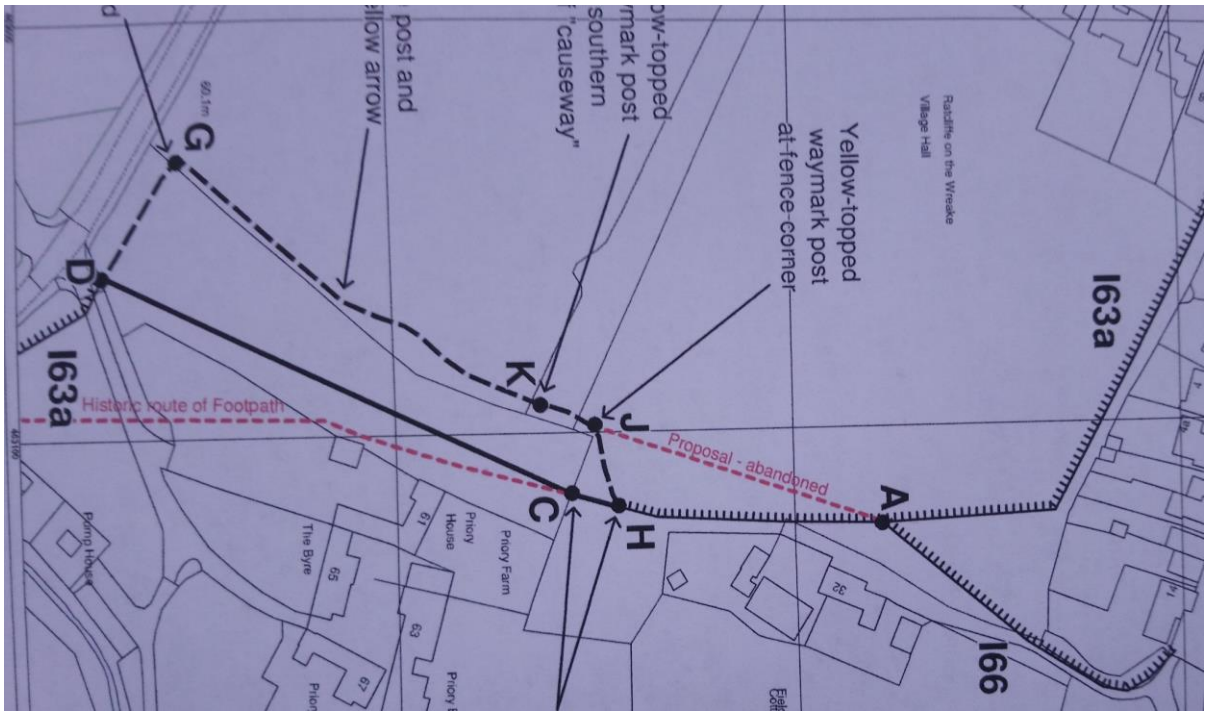
M) We are concerned that with Yellow topped waymark posts at ”A”, “H”, “J” walkers leaving “A” will see the posts “H” and “J” and may take the direct route to “J” and not visit “H”.
The same could happen from “J” where they will see the posts “A” and “H” and again take the direct route to “A” and not visit “H”.
(**This was the original proposed route “A” to “J” that has been abandoned.)**
This could result in them walking over the Historical house bases (mentioned in the 2013 conservation report).
If taken this route would overlook the gardens of 28-30 Church Lane and would be unacceptable due to the loss of privacy.

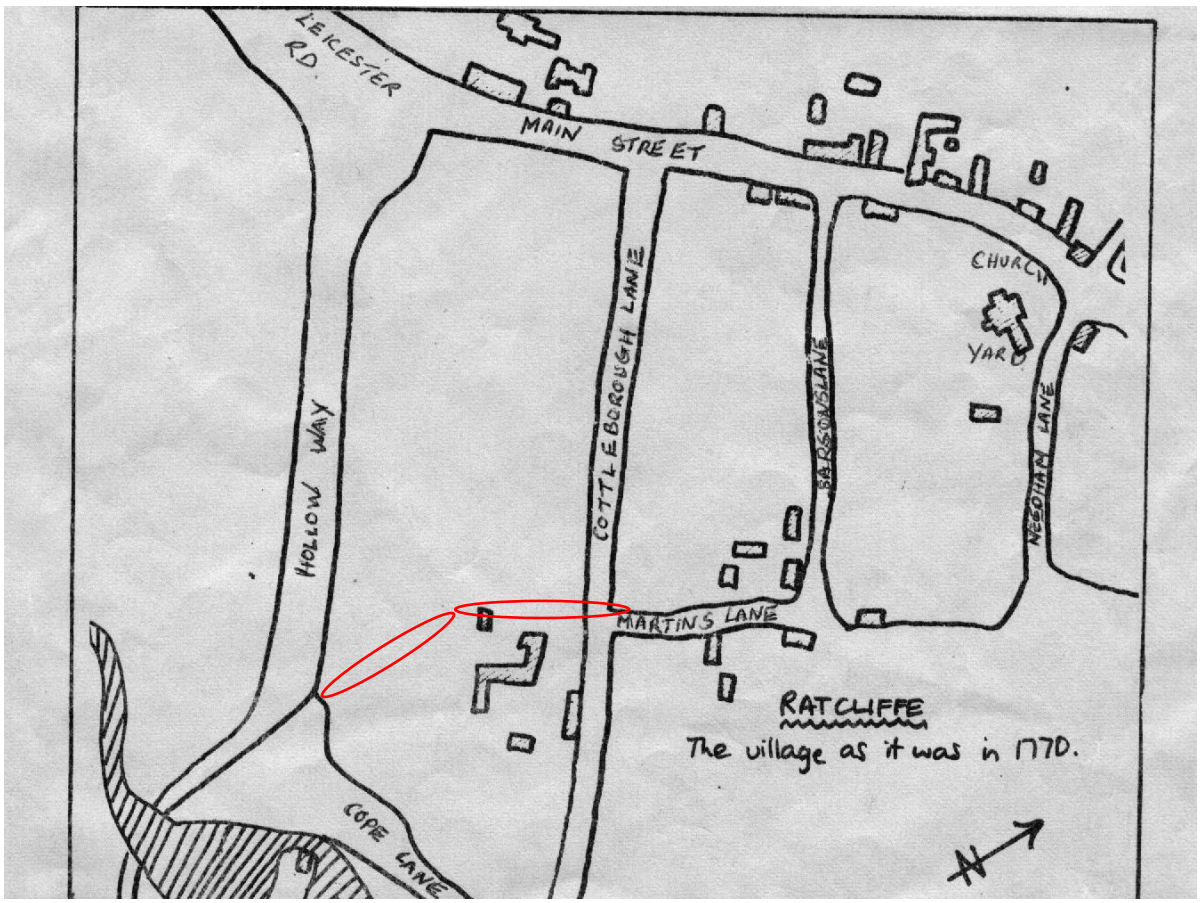
N) The path was there when the current owners of Priory House bought the property and it has not been a problem as far as we know to any previous owners, so why change it now?

O) The householder has planted a number of trees in the paddock near their boundary to improve their privacy, the boundary already has a good hedge so If they need extra privacy they could plant a second hedge and more trees.

In Conclusion This path diversion is not required and would change the character of the village and goes against the spirit of the Conservation report 2013 as is will prevent people from using this ancient right of way in the future.

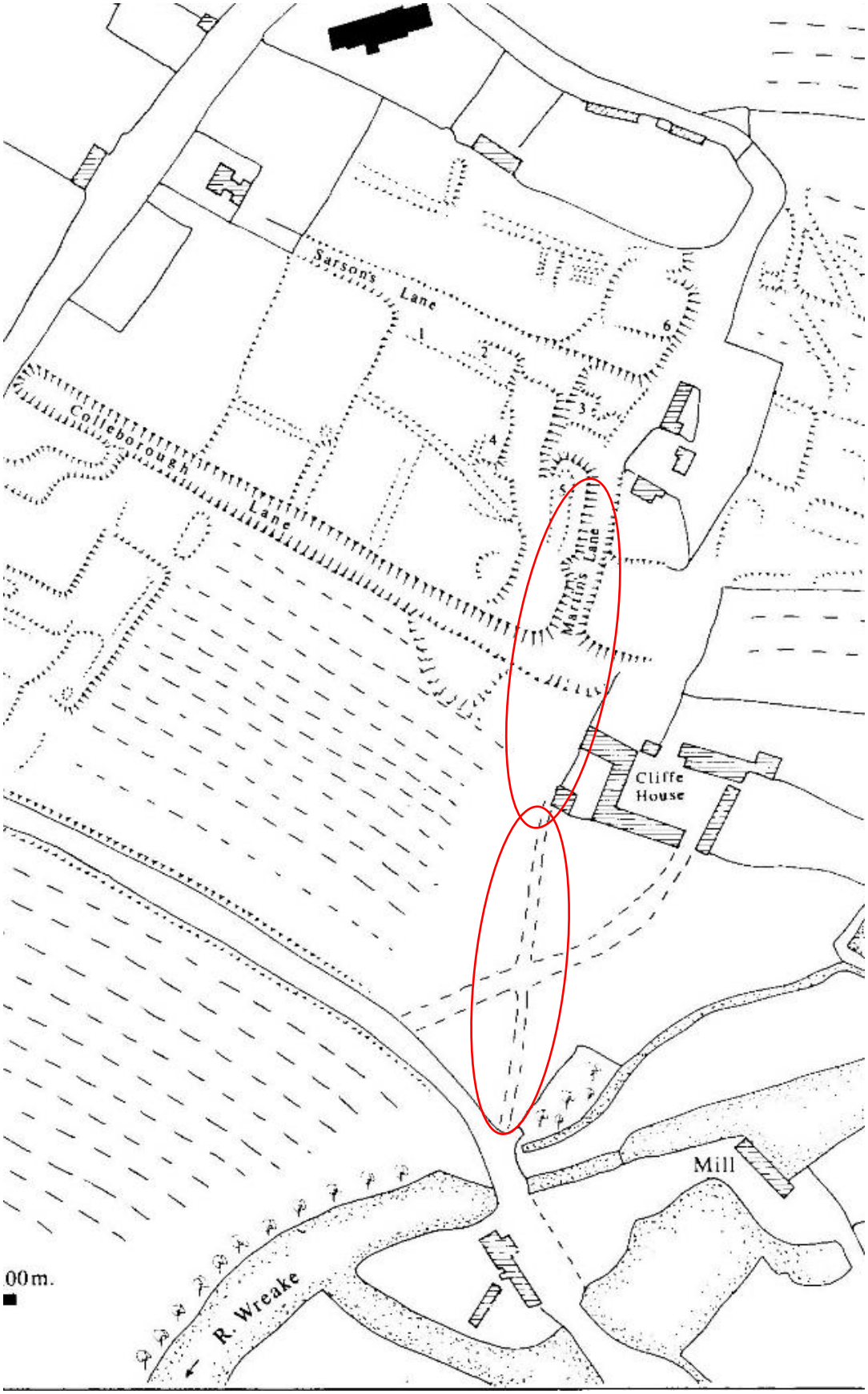
Map of latest route A,H,J,K,G,D and Present route A,C,D



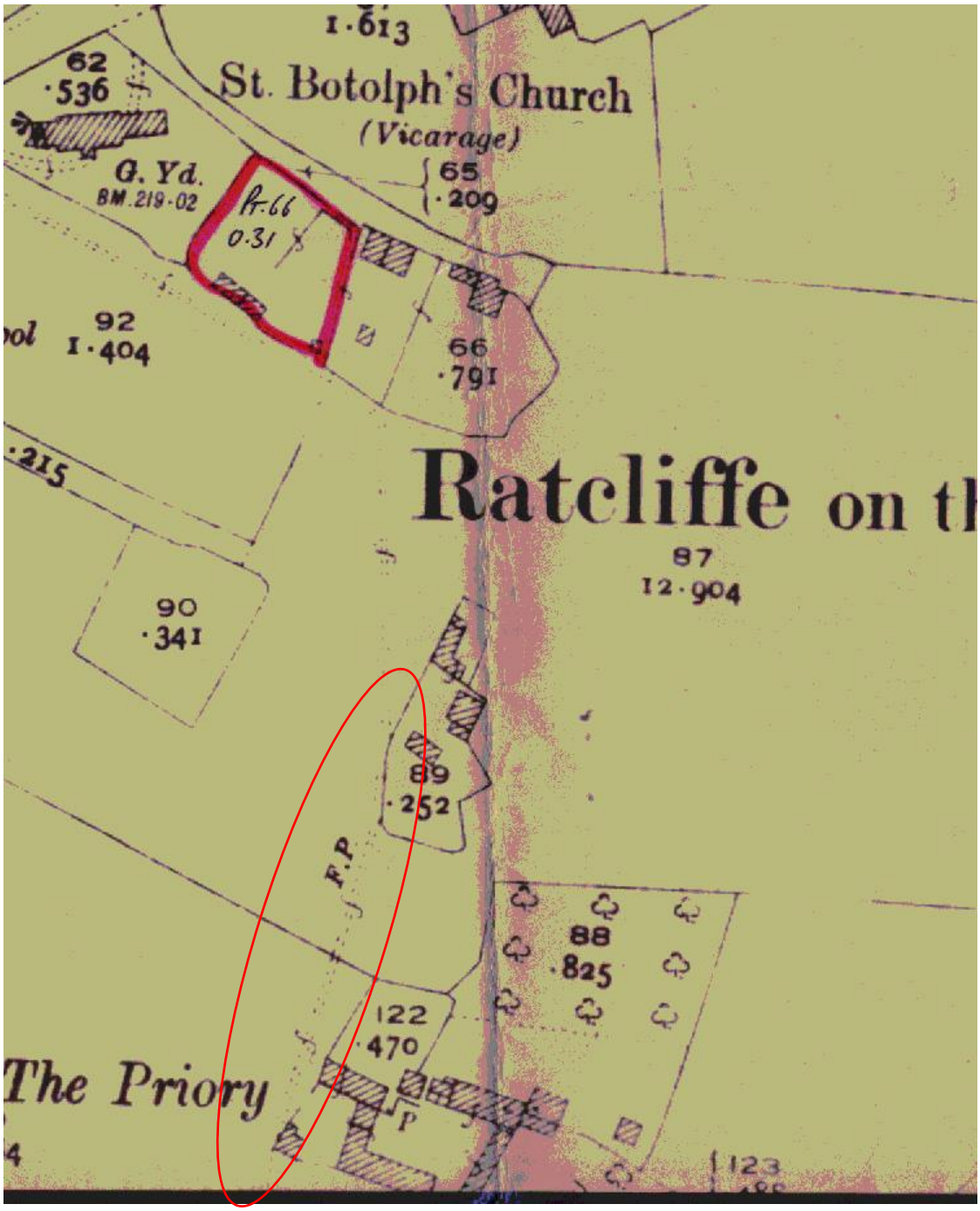


1770 Map

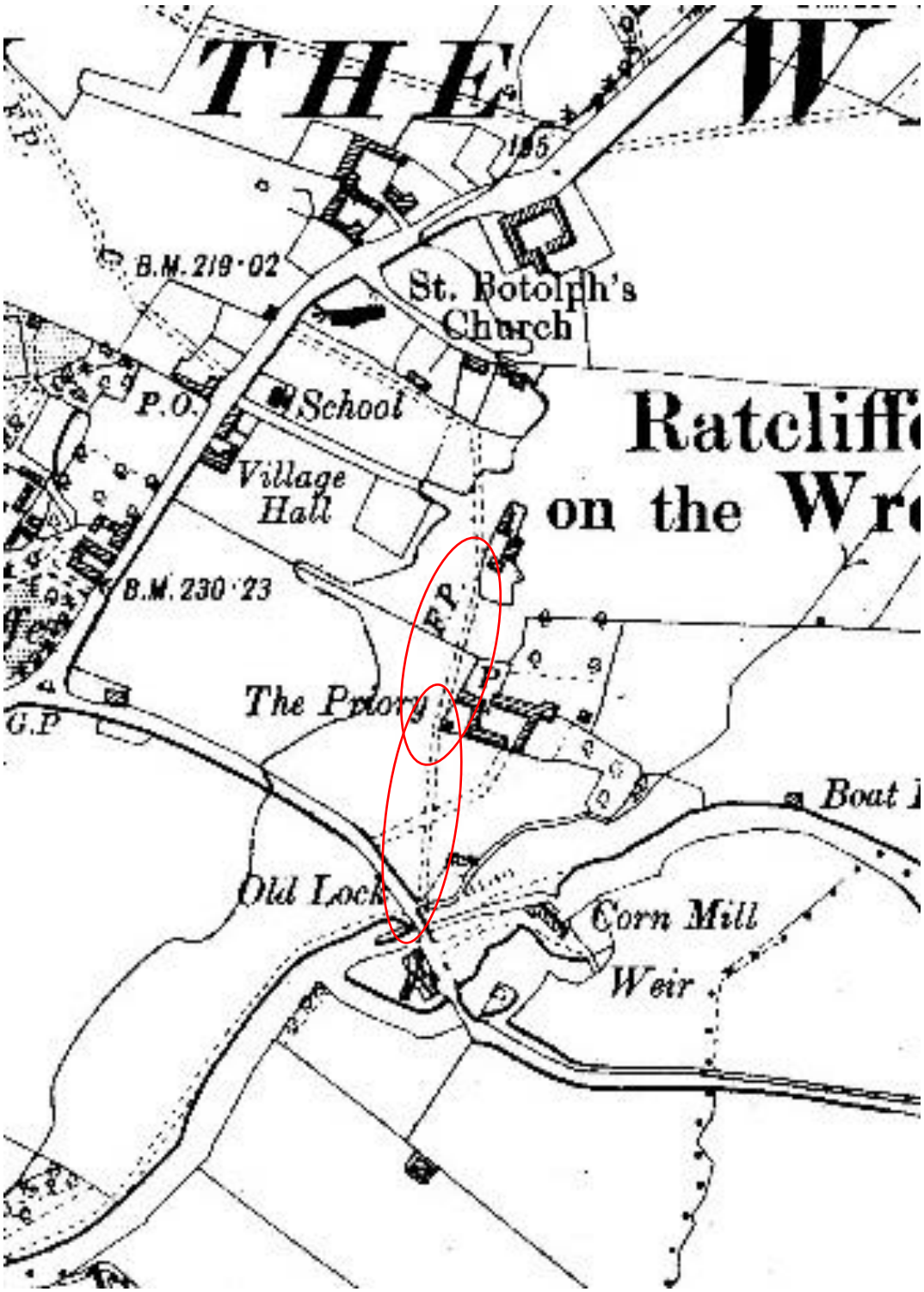
Maps showing the present footpath by Priory farm (Cliffe House)



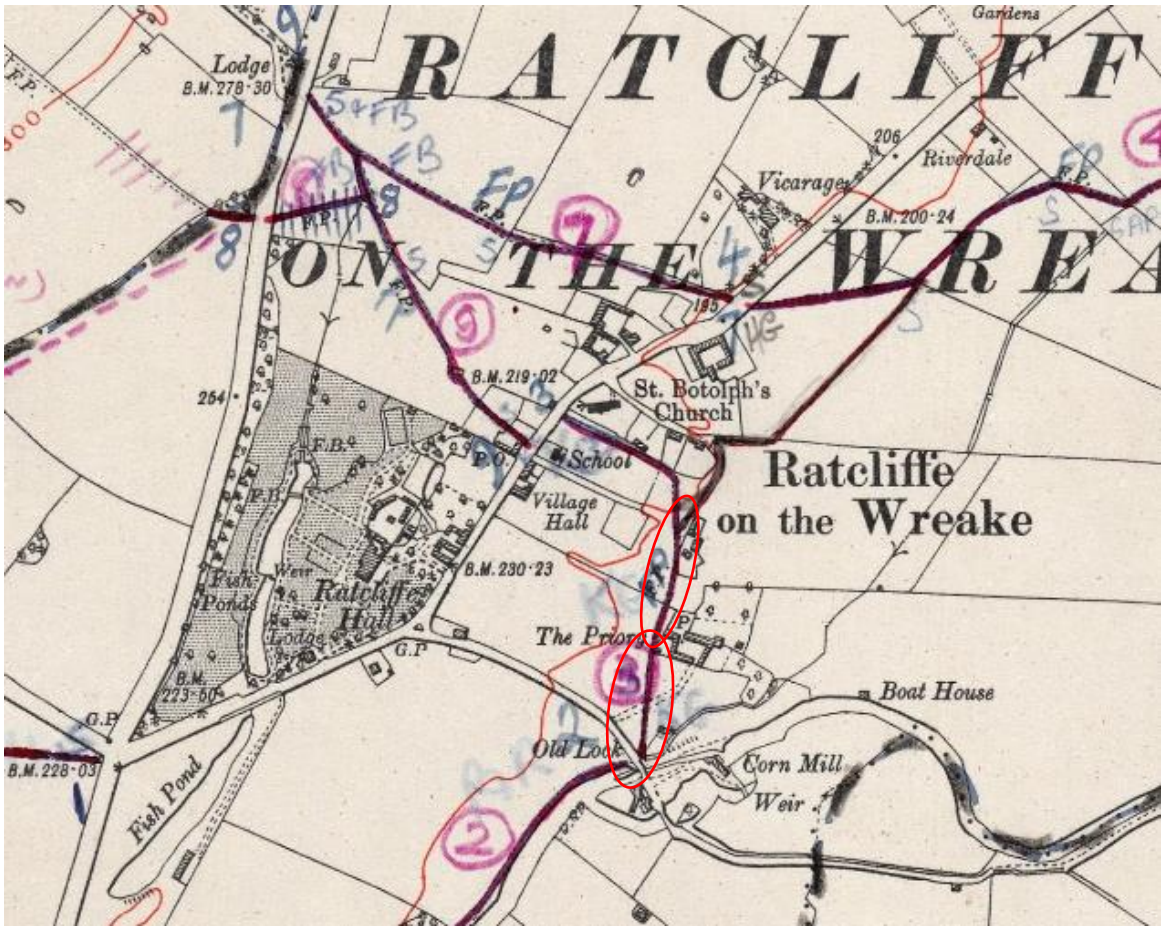
Map of Village 1830 Red Ovals cover route of present footpath.



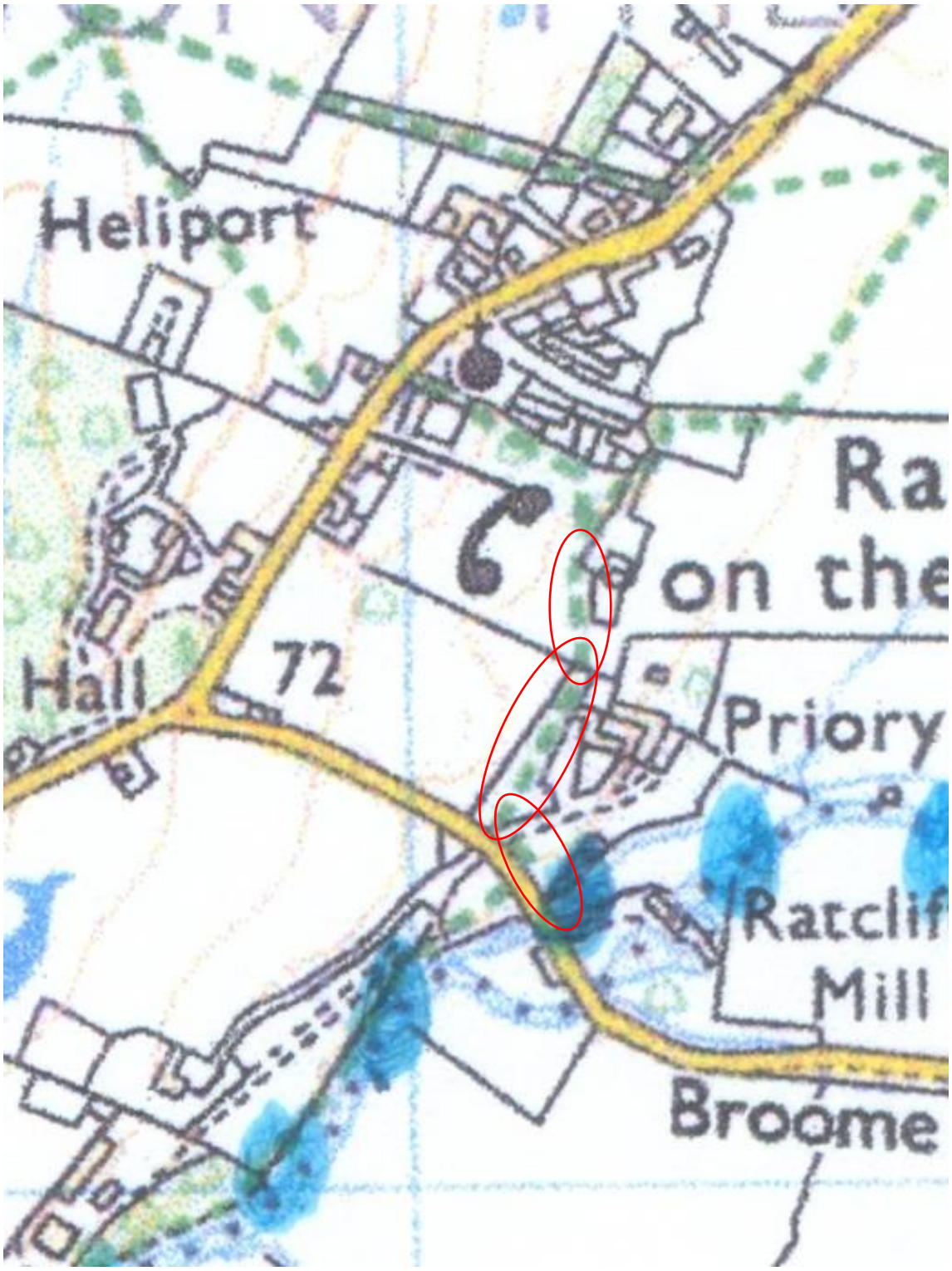
Map 1900 showing footpath between Field cottages and Priory Farm (Cliffe House)



OS Map dated 1930 showing footpaths by Priory Farm



Definitive OS map about 1980 signed off by Parish.



OS Map after 1996 showing current route of footpath