



The Battlefields Trail
Edgcote-Cropredy Bridge-Edgehill

**A Report on the condition of the
trail**

Prepared for

**The Battlefields Trust
Mercia Region**

By

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Also to Mr David Archer for accompanying me and helping with certain tasks whilst walking the route.



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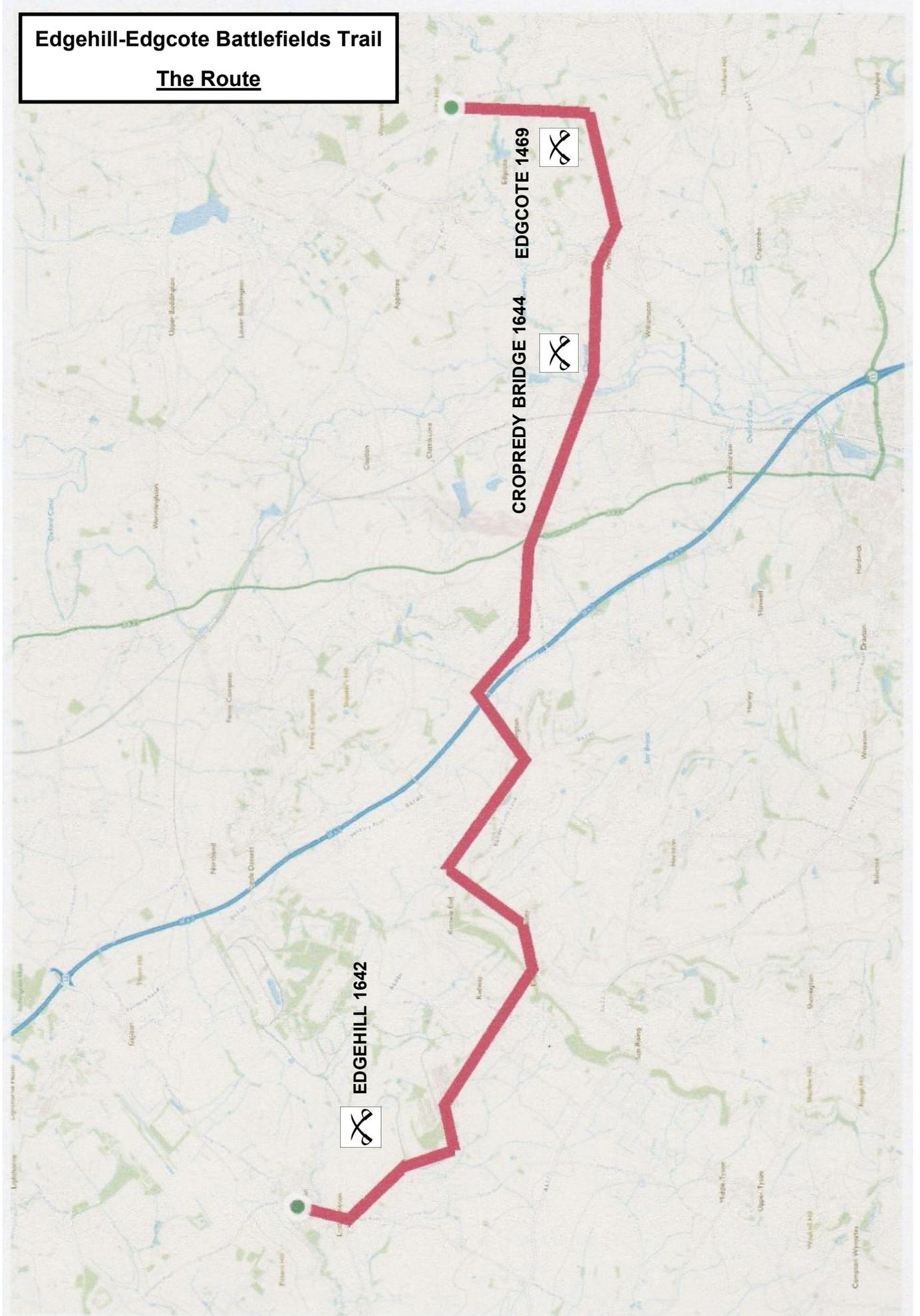


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Edgehill-Edgcote Battlefields Trail
The Route



Introduction

In late 2014 the committee of the Mercia Region (formally Mid-Anglia) of The Battlefields Trust commissioned an informal report and survey of the battlefield trail that runs between Edgcote and Edgehill. The Battlefields trail is a 20 mile long walking trail which spans three counties and encompasses the three English Battlefields of Edgcote (1649), Cropredy Bridge (1644) and Edgehill (1642). Edgcote is a Wars of the Roses (1455-1487) battlefield whilst Edgehill and Cropredy Bridge are both from the First Civil War (1642-1647). The trail was designed and completed by the then Mid-Anglia Branch of the Battlefields Trust. The trail was officially opened on Saturday 24th June 2006 by the late Professor Richard Homes along with members of the branch.

The report was commissioned as an informal report to be carried out by one of the committee members (the author) and was designed to give a general condition of the route as it currently stands. A professional body was not hired to carry out the report due to both cost constraints and the desire to get a general picture of the condition before professional bodies were contacted, where deemed necessary, to carry out further works or such works as may be needed.

This report therefore is not a professional report or survey carried out by qualified persons but is a more informal report desired by the committee. As such the report commissioned for 2014 has had several delays due to a number of factors not least such time constraints due to the authors personal situation and other matters. The route was finally walked in September 2017 by the author accompanied by his father and this report prepared forthwith for distribution to the committee.



Fig.1 The Trail at Edgcote Information Board (Jan 2017)

The Report—The objectives

To the authors knowledge there has not been a full report on all aspects of the trail since its opening in 2006. The object is to walk the trail in its entirety whilst monitoring and recording such things as the condition of the route, signage, information panels and that the information regarding the directions is up to date. The information about the battles themselves will be handled at Branch/national level.

The purpose of the report is to highlight areas where paths may have gone or diversions and/or obstructions are in place in order that remedial action can be taken. Signage will also be looked at both in terms of need and condition of the signage at present. There are currently 30 spare way markers for the trail which will be used during the walk to replace those that are broken or add further ones where signage is missing or unclear.

The information panels along the route will also be investigated to report on their current condition. As with the battlefield accounts in the leaflet and changes to the boards will be done at Regional/National level. It is hoped that when finished this report will provide an accurate and up-to-date assessment of the current condition of the trail and all aspects pertaining to it in order for future management plans and remedial action to be put in place.

For the purpose of this report it will be assumed that the walker will start at Chipping Warden and end at Kineton. The walk may also be completed by starting at Kineton and walking to Chipping Warden in the reverse direction.



The Trail – An Overview

The trail itself is a continuous 20 mile walk along public footpaths, bridleways and roads (See fig.1). The trail begins in the village of Chipping Warden (Northamptonshire) and ends in the village of Kineton (Warwickshire). The start and end of the trail are marked by information panels and there are three further information panels en-route about each of the battlefields which the trail goes through. The information panels are near Trafford Bridge (Edgcote), on Cropredy Bridge (Cropredy Bridge) and at the Castle Inn at the village of Edgehill (Edgehill).

Although designed as one continuous route the trail can be broken down into three (or more) sections of varying lengths. As well as the information boards the trail has been provided with a leaflet produced by the Battlefields Trust which gives a description of the walk route with maps, brief directions along the walk and information and battlefield maps of the battlefields themselves. A larger map on the trail leaflet also provides routes for the trail to be completed by either bicycle or car. The leaflet is further enhanced by photographs of sites along the route and re-enactors from the medieval and Civil War periods in period costume. The leaflet has been reprinted in a hard copy by the trust and is also available to download from the battlefields Trust website.

Way markers

As well as the Trail leaflet and the Ordnance Survey Maps the trail is marked along its length by a series of way markers commissioned by the trust in order to mark out the route in 2006 (fig.2). To the authors knowledge none of the way markers have been replaced since the original installation and part of the report will be to assess the current situation of the way markers and also if remedial action should be taken in cases where some are broken or missing or add new ones on a priority basis. 30 way markers were provided for replacement along the entire route.



Fig.2 The original way markers commissioned for the trail in 2006

Maps

The trail is marked on the OS Explorer Maps 1:25,000 (numbers 191, 206 and 207) as a recreational route using the standard green diamonds along the whole of the trail. The trail however is not marked on the OS Landranger 1:50,000 (numbers 151 and 152) although the route can easily be followed in conjunction with either the trail leaflet or the Explorer maps. The OS explorer maps are reproduced in the Trail leaflet and the route is marked in a Burgundy dotted line. The maps are reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Explorer series under Licence (Number 100039996) from the Ordnance Survey. At present the author is unaware of any other literature at present which provides any other map for the trail.



Terrain

The walk begins at an elevation of 460ft within the village of Chipping Warden (see fig.3 for elevation). The terrain is mostly over field paths and minor roads. There is a steep climb on the first section of the walk to Cropredy when one must climb to Edgcote Hill (569ft). This first section of the walk has few stiles and only a small number of kissing gates. Two main roads have to be crossed, the A361 after Upper Wardington and the A423 before Mollington. The trail crosses straight over both roads with no need to walk on them for any distance. The Terrain is mostly flat however there is a steep climb in the Edgcote-Cropredy Bridge section to the top of Edgcote Hill (569ft) before the route dips down the climbs again to the village of Mollington (580ft). Again the route dips then climbs to a spike (with minor dips) to the top of Edgehill (700ft) with a sharp descent to Radway village and then descending to the terminus of the walk at Kineton (230ft). If starting from Kineton however there is a first steep ascent to the top of Edgehill of almost 500 feet! The route has a maximum ascent of 1450ft (442m) across the entire route and attains a maximum height of 705ft (215m). The walk is probably of a moderate level and is not exceptionally challenging if broken into sections but is perhaps slightly more challenging if done in a single day.

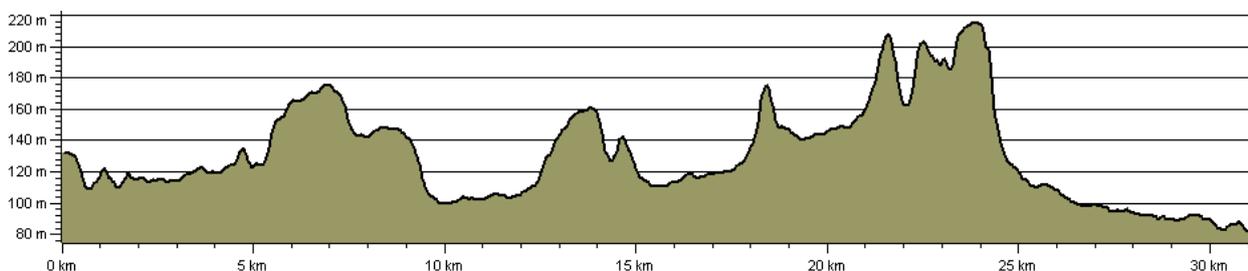


Fig.3 Route Profile of the Battlefields trail from Edgcote– Kineton

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Amenities

There are a number of shops and pubs directly along the route at Upper Wardington, Cropredy, Warmington, Ratley, Edgehill and Kineton. There are also pubs off the route and Wardington and Mollington. The one known shop is at Cropredy by the Canal Bridge. It is hoped to include in this report and updated information as to the status of any amenities along the route and to bring information back up-to-date.



The Battlefields

As designed the route passes through three important English battlefields. Two, Edgehill (1642) and Cropredy Bridge (1644) are nationally important battlefields from the First Civil War (1642-47) whilst Edgcote (1469) is a War of the Roses (1455-87) battlefield that is one of the more recent additions to Historic England's register of battlefields. It is hoped – within the confines of what can be seen from the trail – to include a brief report of the condition of the three battlefields that are passed along the trail

Battle of Edgcote, 26 July 1469

This was a Wars of the Roses battlefield fought on (date) 1469. The battle was part of the campaign which began as an uprising in the north against the rule of King Edward IV. The Rebels were led by Robin of Redesdale (possibly a northern knight Sir John/William Conyers) who marched south to join with Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick. The Earl, formally a staunch Yorkist, was plotting against Edward due to his exasperation over his policies and the rise of the Woodville family at court. The King summoned help from Wales in the form of an army commanded by William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. Another army from the south commanded by Humphrey Stafford, Earl of Devon was ordered to rendezvous with Pembroke in the midlands. The two earls met at Banbury but quarrelled over their billets. Stafford led his men to Deddington and camped within the castle leaving Pembroke to advance to Edgcote Hill where his men camped for the night and joined battle with the rebel army the next day.

There are two alternative sites for the battle. The first has the rebels encamping around Trafford Bridge and advancing against the Royal army on Edgcote Hill with the battle being fought in the fields between the hill and the bridge (source: Haigh). The second theory has the rebels advancing from the Thorpe Mandeville area and engaging the Herbert's army on Danes Moor on the south-eastern slopes of the hill. Having advanced against Pembroke the rebel archers fired into the royal ranks on Edgcote Hill. Having few (if any) archers of his own Pembroke was forced to move off the top of the hill and engage the rebel army in the valley below. Although Pembroke's men appeared to have the upper hand in the fierce hand-to-hand fighting, Warwick had sent some reinforcements from Northampton commanded by Sir John Clapham. When these appeared the Yorkists believed them to be the vanguard of Warwick's entire army and the royal forces immediately broke. In the ensuing pursuit and aftermath 168 Welsh nobles lost their lives. Pembroke and his brother were captured and executed as was King Edward himself later on. Although Warwick had control of the Kingdom he was defeated and killed at Barnet two years later leading the undisputed rule of Edward (1471-1483).

The battlefields trail passes by and also through both of the alternative sites of the battle. It is hoped that a good general view of the condition of the Edgcote Hill/Trafford theory and a detailed view of the Danes Moor theory can be observed for the report.



Battle of Cropredy Bridge, 29 June 1644

Cropredy Bridge is a battle that took place during the First Civil War (1642-47) which was one of the wars that is part of the period called The Wars of the Three Kingdoms (1638-60). The First Civil War began when Charles I raised his standard at Nottingham on 22 August 1642 and continued till the surrender of Harlech Castle in March 1647. Although not the first war of this period it was the first of three that pitted the monarchy under Charles I (and later Charles II) against Parliament. The period ended with the restitution of the monarchy in 1660 under King Charles II.

The battle formed part of the Oxford Campaign of 1644. Two parliamentary armies under the Earl of Essex and Sir William Waller almost encircled Oxford, capturing Abingdon and a number of smaller places from the royalists. King Charles escaped from Oxford with a force of cavalry and foot towards Gloucestershire with the parliamentary armies in pursuit. Essex and Waller, however, separated at Stow-on-the-Wold. Essex moved towards the West Country leaving Waller to face the King. Charles returned to Oxford and collected reinforcements before moving north to Banbury. The two armies confronted each other at Banbury on the of 28 June before the King withdrew and headed north towards Chipping Warden on the morning of 29 June. As it neared Cropredy the royalist army became dangerously strung out on its line of march. Waller who had been following on a parallel course on the opposite side of the river saw an opportunity to defeat the royalists in detail and crossed the river.

The parliamentary cavalry crossed at the bridge at Cropredy and moved north to engage the Kings forces. The royalists barricaded Hays bridge and fought off the parliamentarians until they retired, then followed them towards the bridge at Cropredy. In the centre general John Middleton's men crossed over the Cherwell and attacked the royalist centre under the Earl of Cleveland. Cleveland charged the parliamentary force and, helped by the royalists coming down from Hays bridge, drove the parliamentarians back across the bridge and captured their artillery as well as Sir James Wemyss their general of the ordnance. The royalist were only prevented from capturing the bridge by the stout resistance of two of the London foot regiments. In the south, Waller himself had crossed the river at the ford by slat mill and advanced towards the royalists. Their rear-guard, under the Earl of Northampton, charged Waller and drove him back over the ford. The battle ended in stalemate with the two armies facing each other across the River Cherwell. The King later moved back to Oxford and set off for the West Country in pursuit of Essex whilst Waller's army mutinied thus ending the campaign.

Due to the battlefield encompassing a wide area it is impossible to visit the entire battlefield from the trail itself. The trail goes through the centre of the battlefield where the fighting between Middleton and Cleveland took place and to the bridge where the London regiments made their stand. The report of the condition of the battlefield will therefore be limited to the central area and any other areas that can be viewed from the trail footpath. Slat Mill and Hays bridge will therefore be omitted from this report at the present time.



Battle of Edgehill, 23 October 1642

Edgehill was the first major field battle between the royalist army under King Charles I and the parliamentarian army led by the Earl of Essex. Once he had raised the Royal Standard at Nottingham Charles moved his forces towards Wales. Training and recruiting as he marched the King reached Shrewsbury on 20 September where additional regiments from Wales and the Marches joined him.

From Shrewsbury the King marched south through the Midlands and had encamped his army in the villages around Edgcote on 22 October. Meanwhile the Earl of Essex, whose army had scattered in garrisons around the Midlands gradually came together and was encamped at Kington by the night of the 22nd. Having discovered the presence of the parliamentarian army the royalists called a council of war and decided to give battle. The next day the royalists marched down Edgehill and deployed in the fields around Radway as the parliamentarians moved out of Kington and deployed in the fields opposite.

The battle started with a charge of the royalist cavalry. The royalist wings commanded by Prince Rupert and Henry Wilmot respectively routed their opponents and drove them beyond Kington in a pursuit that drew most of the royalist cavalry from the field. In the centre the fight was much more even between the foot until some of the Parliamentarian horse that had not been engaged under Sir William Balfour and Sir Phillip Stapleton charged the centre of the royalist position. Having broken through they made for the royalist cannon where being unable to pull the guns of the field they cut the tracers and killed the gunners.

Whilst this was happening a life and death struggle was taking place around the royalist standard. The Earl of Lindsey was mortally wounded leading his own regiment whilst the standard bearer Sir Edmund Verney was killed trying to defend the standard itself. This was taken by the parliamentarians although subsequently recaptured by Captain John Smith who was knighted by the King the following day. The battle eventually petered out into a stalemate with the royalists withdrawing a short distance and the Earl of Essex returning to Kington. Although a draw the royalists would claim a victory due to remaining on the battlefield and the fact that the road to London was open to them.

Following the battle the King was able to advance on London taking Banbury on the 26 October and moving through Oxford and Reading. Essex meanwhile had rushed his army through the Chilterns and was able to enter London ahead of the King. Although the royalists were able to defeat the parliamentarians at Brentford a large parliamentarian army was able to assemble at Turnham Green on 13 November. Declining battle the royalists retired to winter quarters around Oxford.

Although the site of the battle is not disputed there is some dispute as to the actual axis of the deployment. The battlefields trail cuts through the centre of the traditional deployment and observations about this part of the site will be included in the report. Depending on the weather most of the entire battlefield can be viewed from Edgehill itself and any alterations will be noted in the report. A note on the battlefield hub will also be made should time afford a visit during the walk.



Edgcote-Edgehill Battlefields Trail

The Report

Whilst the trail itself can be walked in a single day or split into three convenient sections, for the purpose of this report the trail is split into nine different sections.

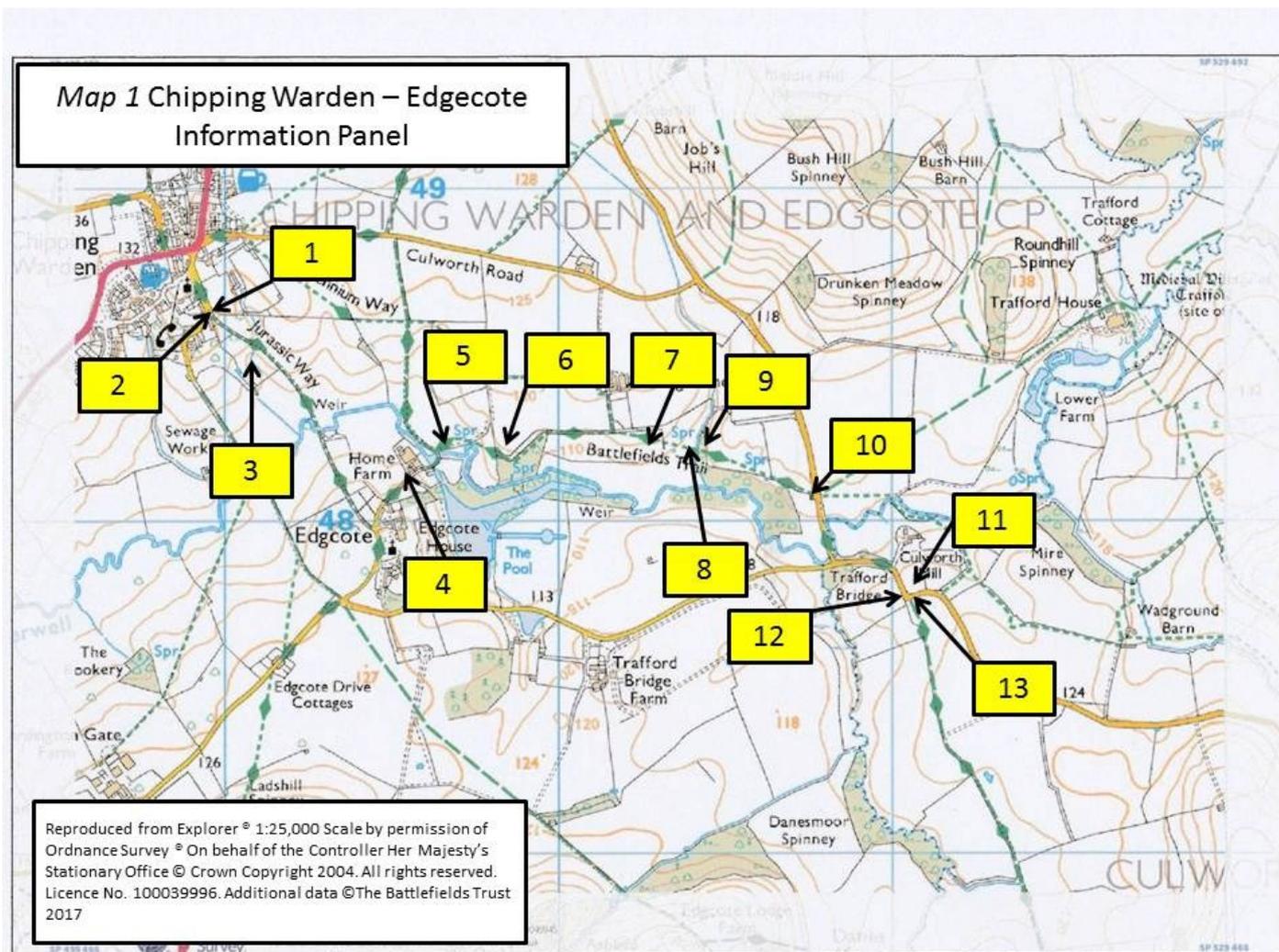
Each section is accompanied by a map at the beginning. The yellow boxes indicate where a change has occurred or remedial action needs to take place. These are numbered concurrently from 1 through to 80 at the end of the trail

Each number is accompanied by a description of the problem in normal text. *Text in italics denotes a remedial action that has been taken or remedial action that needs to be taken.* Where appropriate each entry is accompanied by a photograph of the problem and also of any action taken during the survey walk.

As well as the nine maps there are also two maps where a diversion of the route is needed. These are listed under the numbers in the section where this applies



Section 1: Chipping Warden to Edgcote Information Panel



1. Trail interpretation panel at the start point at Chipping Warden is weathered and dirty. It has also warped in the centre. (Fig.).

This trail panel should be replaced sometime towards the end of spring 2018 in time for the next walking season.



Fig.4 Trail Board at Chipping Warden

2. The county council steel signage is dirty and weathered. (Fig.)

This could do with a wash at the same time as the panel is replaced



Fig.5 Council signage by trail board



3. Waymarked just after the bridge is broken. (fig.6)
This way marker has been replaced during the survey



Fig.6 Broken marker before replacement

4. The county council steel sign is dirty and weathered (Fig.7)
This will require a wash and a step ladder to reach it



Fig.7 Dirty council sign

5. Both of the way markers on a post by the bridge is broken but the trail can easily be followed (fig.8 & 9)
They will need to be replaced



Fig.8 Broken marker



Fig.9 2nd broken marker on post

6. The way marker on the stile is broken. The undergrowth at the stile has slightly overgrown it (fig.10).
The way marker will need replacing and the undergrowth cropping back to give clearer access over the stile



Fig.10 Broken way marker and overgrown stile

7. The path has been slightly diverted and follows the hedge for a 50 more yards before cutting over towards the wood.
No remedial attention necessary as this does not affect the route

8. This area can be very boggy especially in winter
A couple of rail sleepers here would act to bridge the boggy area however this issue may not manifest itself during the summer months

9. The stile here is a bit wonky and may need fixing. After crossing over the bridge a way marker was completely broken (fig.11)
The stile can be fixed by nailing the stepping plank into place. The way marker pointing to Edgcote was replaced



Fig.11 Broken Waymarker

10. The county council footpath signs were partially covered by branches (Fig.12)
Branches will need cutting back to reveal the sign



Fig.12 Council Sign

11. The information board is in good condition (Fig.13).



Fig.13 Information Board at Edgcote

12. The county council steel signs are dirty (Fig.14).
These will need washing and will require a step ladder



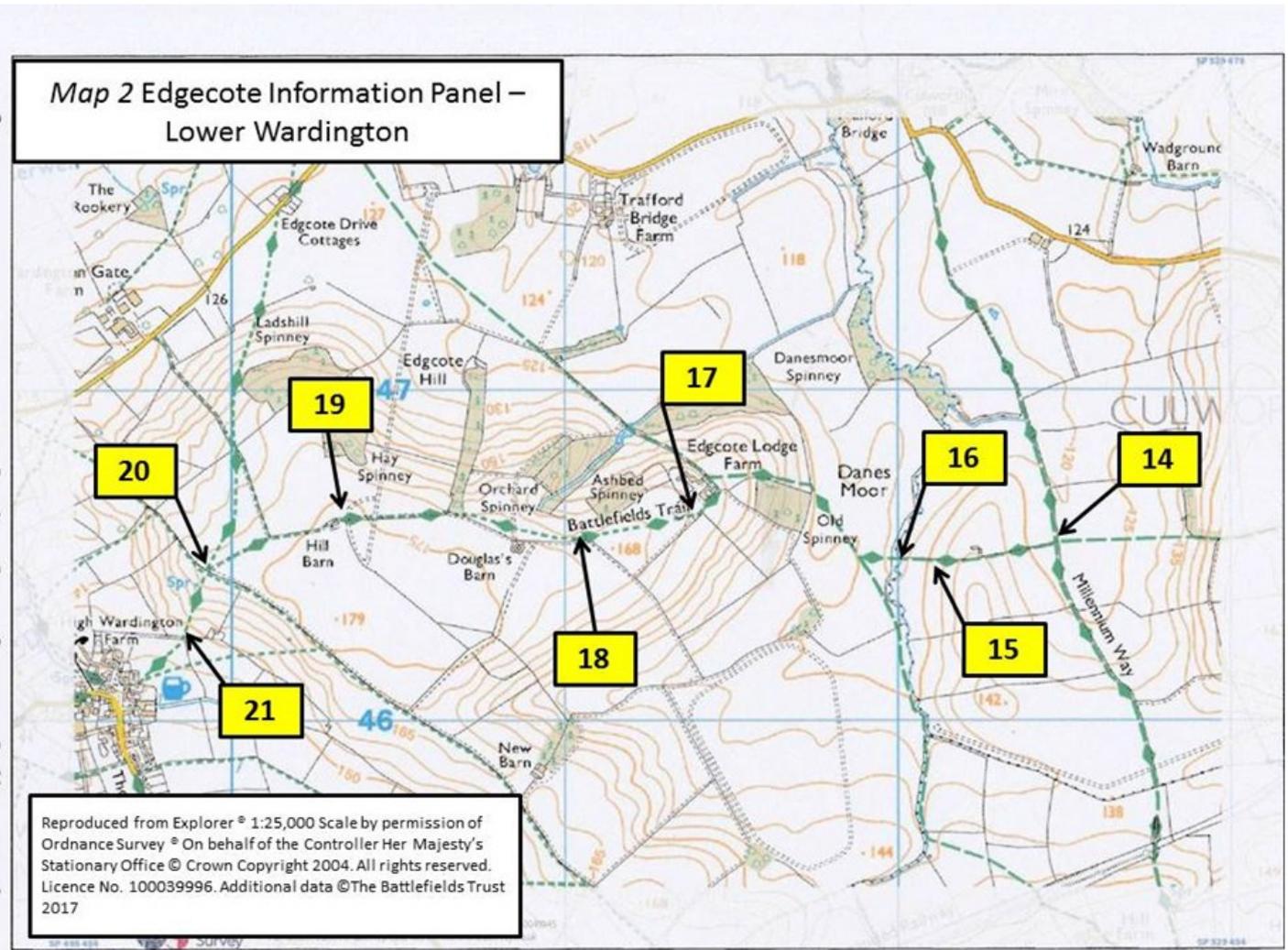
Fig.14 Council sign by info board

13. Both plastic way markers are broken on the sign post (Fig.15)
It was decided not to replace due to the presence of the steel sign



Fig.15 Broken waymarker

Section 2: Edgcote Information Panel – Lower Wardington



14. Sign is faded at Junction of paths at Danesmoor but are intact (Fig.16 & 17).
No action necessary



Fig.16 Faded waymarker



Fig.17 Faded waymarker

15. Signs at bottom of Edgcote hill intact but faded.
No action necessary

16. Sign on fence pointing to Edgcote hill broken (Fig.18 & 19)
This sign has been replaced



Fig.18 Broken waymarker



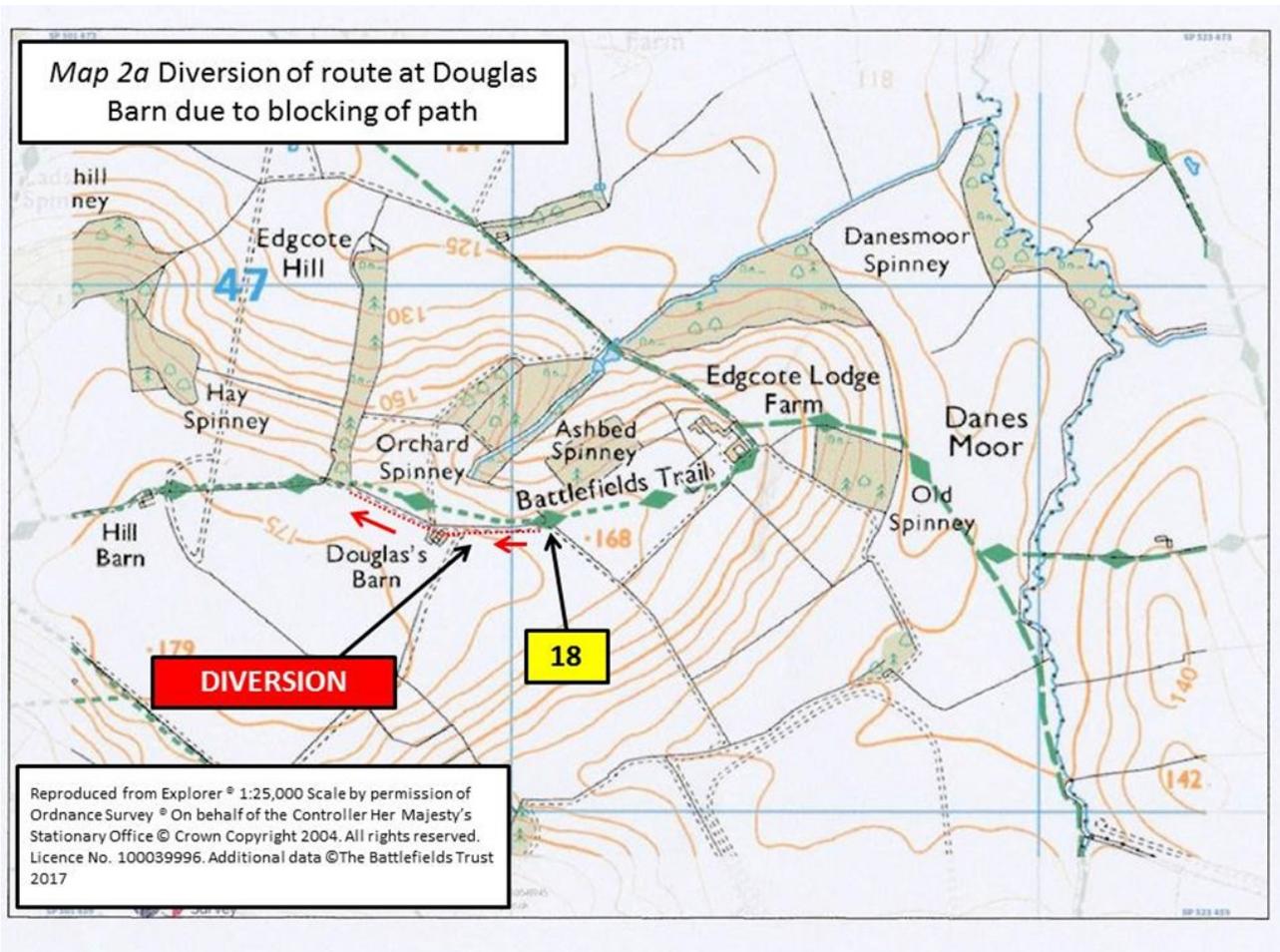
Fig.19 Replaced waymarker

17. Sign on post intact but faded. (Fig.20)
Replace when new markers become available



Fig.20 Faded waymarker

18. The path through the gate by Douglas's barn has been obliterated by a planted maize crop and a slow burning fire (Map.).
Suggested diversion for all walkers it to go past the right of Douglas Barn for a short stretch



19. There is a lack of signage between points 17 and 20.

The path is distinct except for the section at point 18 so no further signage was deemed necessary

20. Sign at stile was completely broken (Fig.21, 22 & 23)

This sign has been replaced pointing to Lower Wardington and a new sign added on the stile pointing to Edgcote



Fig.21 Broken waymarker



Fig.22 Replaced waymarker



Fig.23 Added waymarker

21. Added a new sign on the stile for confirmation of route for walkers coming through Lower Wardington (Fig. 24 & 25)

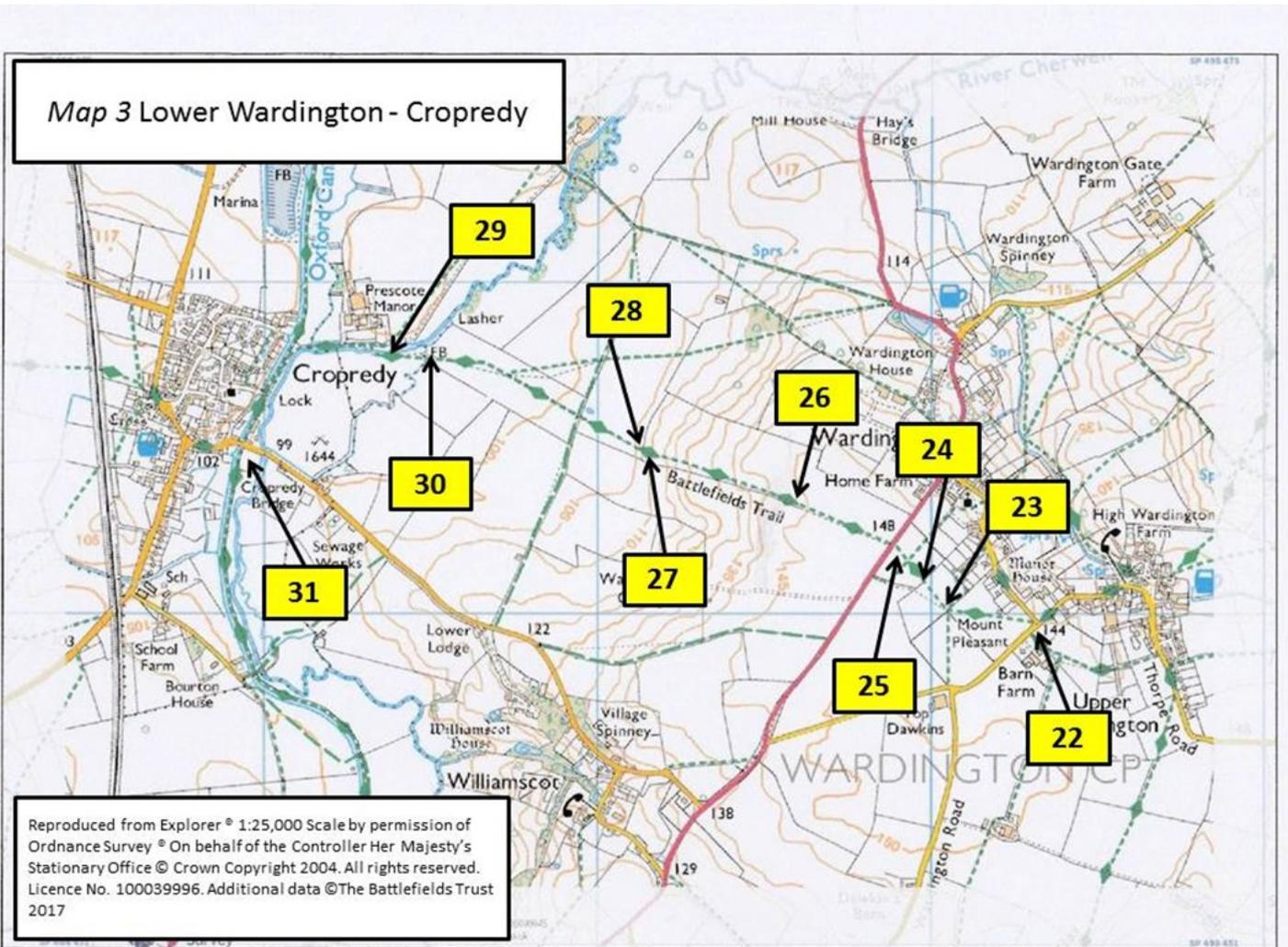


Fig.24 Intact waymarker



Fig.25 Added waymarker

Section 3: Lower Wardington to Cropredy



22. Where the path turns off the road the way marker on the fence is broken. The fence also lacks a stile to assist the older/more infirm walkers to mount it. The path is very overgrown for a short section before meeting the sports field. (Fig.26)

The way marker will need replacing and if possible a plank stile putting in to assist walkers over the fence and the weeds cutting back on the path. The trail leaflet does however suggest a diversion up the road to enter the



Fig.26 Overgrown Fence

23. Signage is lacking through the sports field although the Kissing gate in the corner is visible and the path distinct

24. New sign added to gate post where two paths diverge to point walkers to the road

25. The stile is broken where the path meets the A361 (Fig.27)
Stile main plank is loose and broken and will need to be repaired



Fig.27 Broken Stile

26. When the field is ploughed the path is completely indistinct. Half of the hedge has been removed.
Walkers will need to aim for the hedge in the middle of the field. New way marker added to the post where the hedge ends (Fig.28)



Fig.28 Added waymarker

27. The post leading through a small spinney is broken but upright (Fig.29)
Post will need to be re-set in concrete



Fig.29 Broken Post

28. Way marker at other side of spinney is faded but intact



29. Way marker on bridge is broken (Fig.30)
This will need to be replaced



Fig.30 Broken Waymarker

30. An addition of another way marker on the bridge here pointing to Cropredy may be beneficial. Fig.31 shows an original way marker in good condition pointing to Lower Wardington



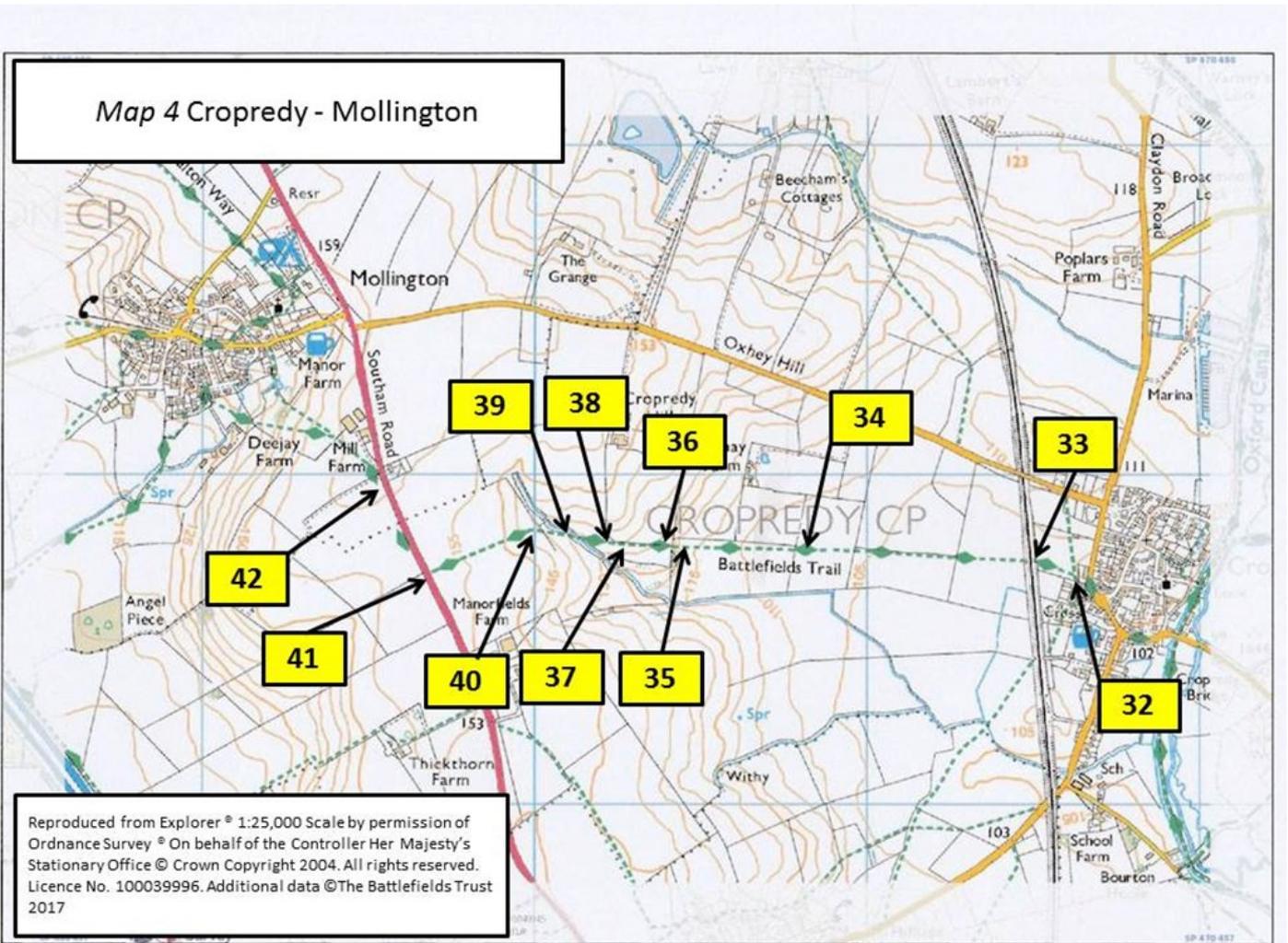
Fig.31 original Intact waymarker

31. The information board on Cropredy bridge looks to be intact but dirty (Fig.32)
The board will need a clean.



Fig.32 Info board on Cropredy Bridge

Section 4: Cropredy to Mollington



32. A small way marker on Cup & Saucer Lane is weathered but intact. The way marker on a stile leading off the lane is broken. (Fig.33, 24 & 35)

The broken way marker was replaced and a new way marker added on the opposite side pointing to Cropredy (Fig. &)



Fig.33 Broken Waymarker



Fig.34 Replaced Waymarker



Fig.35 Added waymarker

33. One of the way markers under the railway arch is broken. (Fig.36)
No action taken as there are others under the arch that are intact



Fig.36 Intact waymarker

34. Way marker on bridge in 4th field weathered but intact (Fig.37)



Fig.37 Faded waymarker

35. Way marker on stile before spinney broken on both sides but the arrow is intact (Fig.38 & 39) *These will need to be replaced*



Fig.38 Broken waymarker



Fig.39 Broken waymarker

36. Two of the sleepers making up the bridge in the spinney are completely broken leaving only one for walkers to walk on. (Fig.40)
The bridge will need to be fixed and the planks replaced



Fig.40 Broken footbridge

37. The hedge through the field that the path follows has been removed
No action necessary

38. Way marker on stile is broken (Fig.41).
This will need to be replaced



Fig.41 Broken waymarker

39. A brand new bridge over the brook has recently been added to the footpath (Fig.42)



Fig.42 New bridge over stream

40. A new footpath post has been added to mark the path.
A new way marker was added to the post to aid in route marking for the trail (Fig.43)



Fig.43 Added waymarker

41. The way marker at the gate leading to the field is broken (Fig.44).
The way marker has been replaced (Fig.45)



Fig.44 Broken waymarker



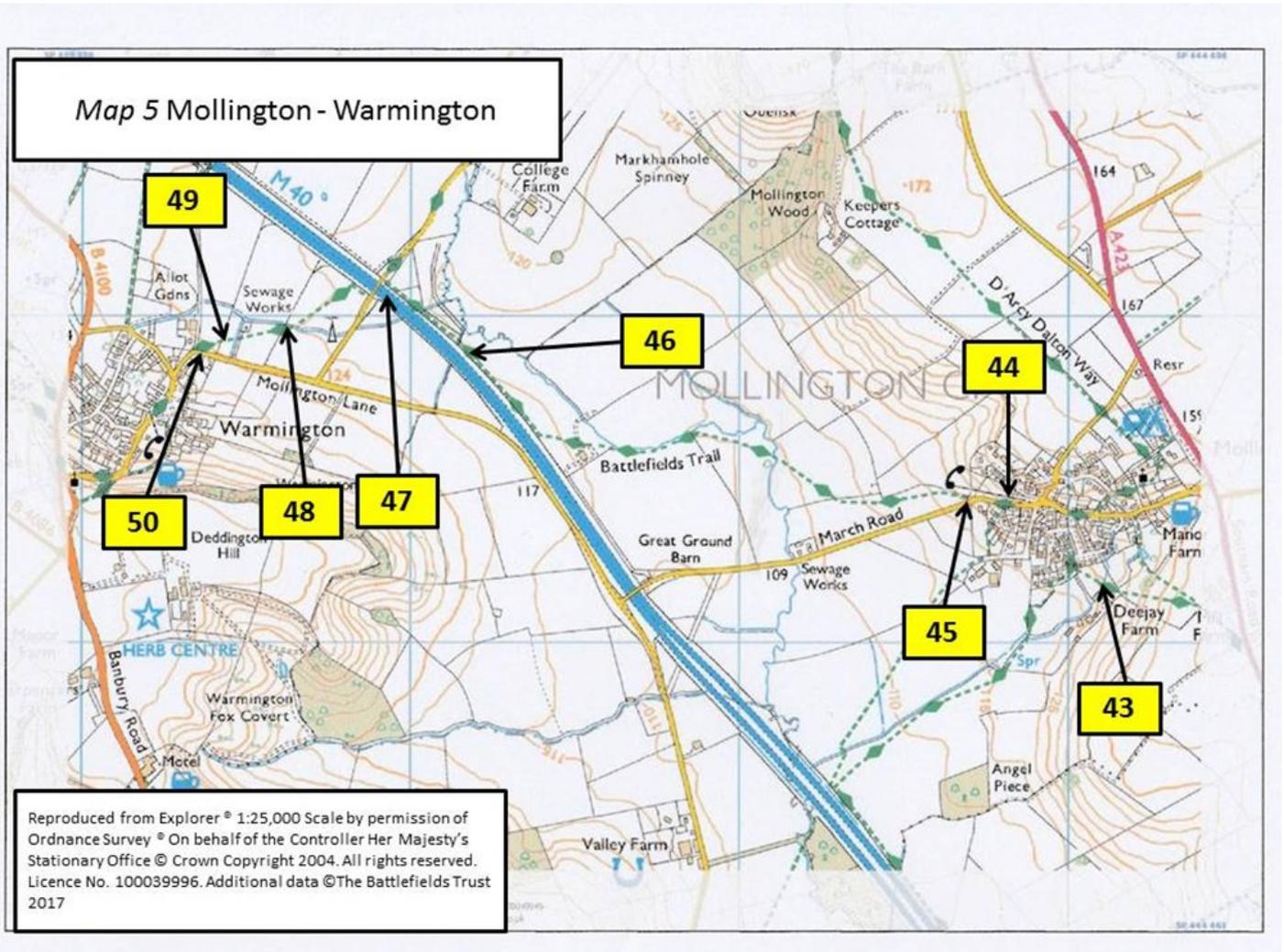
Fig.45 Replaced waymarker

42. Way markers are slightly broken and faded at stile leading off from the main road. (Fig.46)
No action necessary



Fig.46 Intact waymarkers

Section 5: Mollington to Warmington



43. Way marker in field before Mollington dirty (Fig.47)
Way marker has been washed



Fig.47 Dirty waymarker

44. A small local path created above the road “Thacker Way” runs for 50 yards avoiding the road but running parallel to it which is a useful diversion to avoid the road which can be busy



45. Gates at path entrance are in bad condition. No signage.
New way marker added to one of the gate posts (Fig.48)



Fig.48 Added waymarker

46. Cracked way marker but otherwise intact (Fig.49)
No action necessary



Fig.49 Cracked waymarker

47. Dirty way marker before motorway bridge.
Way marker has been washed

48. *New sign added to gatepost due to confusion of paths in Warmington area (Fig.50)*



Fig.50 Added waymarker

49. Kissing gate and path completely blocked and overgrown. Gate looks to have been blocked with tree cuttings which have been put there deliberately. Overgrowth around gate looks to have been deliberately left in order to hide it (Figs.51 & 52).

Removed all the tree cuttings in front of the gate and managed to just get through it into next field. Have reported the blockage on the rambler's website and have emailed the McMillian Way



Fig.51 Intentionally blocked footpath



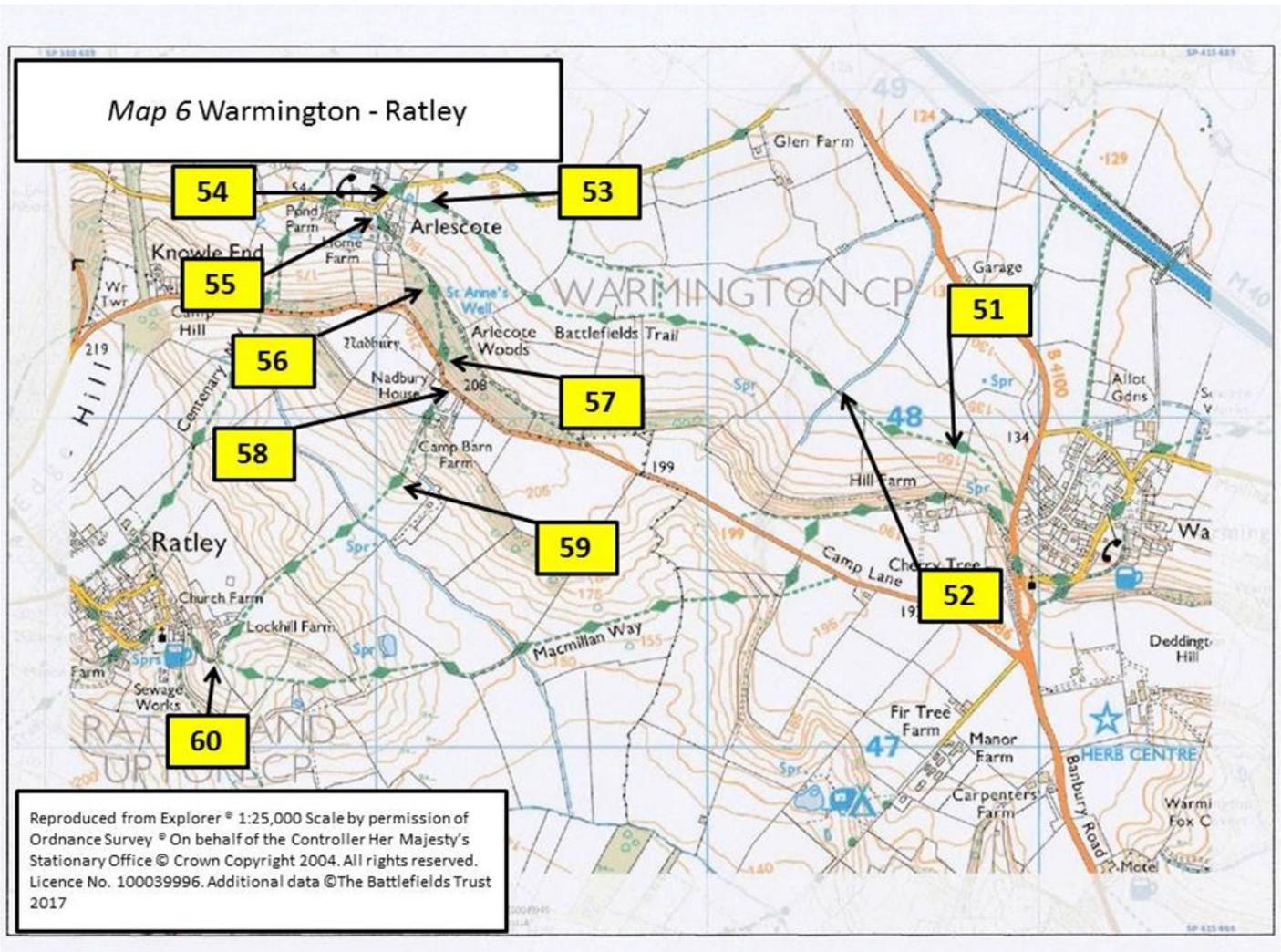
Fig.52 Overgrown kissing gate

50. Added new sign on telegraph pole pointing into field (Fig.53)



Fig.53 Added waymarker

Section 6: Warmington to Ratley



51. Path across field is very indistinct once ploughed.
A use of a map is necessary here

52. Broken way marker on sign in undergrowth (Fig.54).
*Way marker will need to be replaced.
 Added a new way marker on post to aid in route navigation (Fig.55)*



Fig.54 Broken waymarker



Fig.55 Added waymarker

53. *Washed way marker on gate*

54. *Washed way marker on post (Fig.57)*



Fig.56 Washed waymarker

55. *Added a way marker on post for route pointing to Ratley (Fig.57)*



Fig.57 Added waymarker

56. *Broken way marker on post at path Junction (Fig.58).
Way marker ok for now but will need to be replaced*



Fig.58 Broken waymarker

57. *Added a new way marker on Kissing gate for path leading to Arlescote (Fig.59)*



Fig.59 Added waymarker

58. Washed way marker on gate on Camp lane (Fig.60)



Fig.60 Washed waymark-

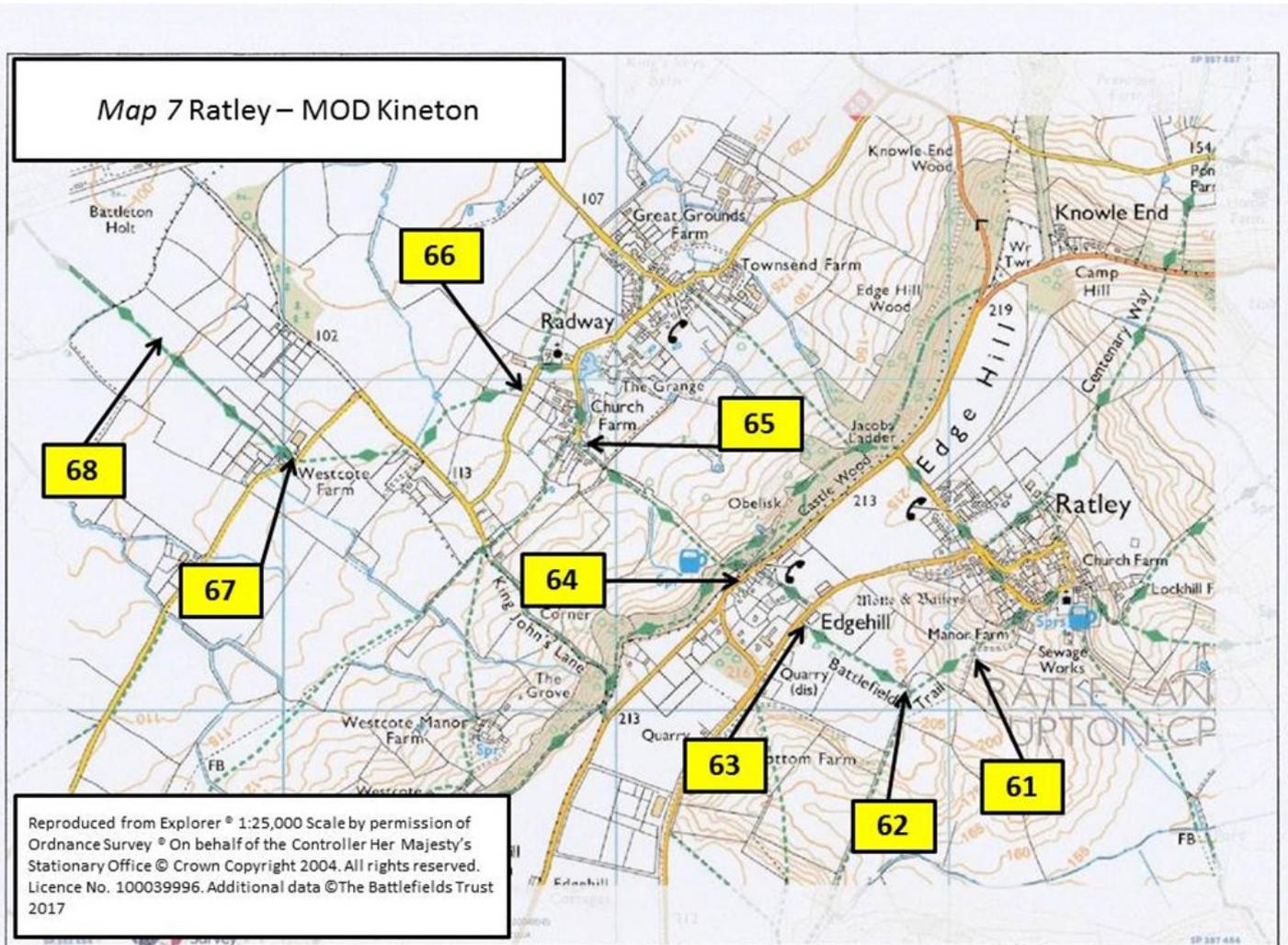
59. Washed way marker on stile leading to Ratley

60. Added new way marker on path leading from Ratley to avoid confusion with McMillian Way on Map (Fig.61)



Fig.61 Added waymarker

Section 7: Ratley to MOD Kineton



61. Added a new way marker on post leading into Ratley as path not distinct (muddy tire tracks and sheep paths) and stile at Manor farm cannot be viewed (Fig.62)



Fig.62 Added waymarker

62. Sign on stile is broken (Fig.63). Path at point 62 follows the curving fence-line to the corner of the field rather than going straight over the fence.
Way marker needs to be replaced. Path diversion should be obvious.



Fig.63 Broken waymarker

63. *Way marker washed at Junction of path and B-road leading into Ratley*

64. The Battle of Edgehill information panel is looking dirty and weathered but is still readable. Sign about the exhibition in Radway Church is clean and intact (Fig.64).
Info board requires a wash



Fig.64 Edgehill Information Board

65. *Added a new way marker on post after pond pointing to Edgehill (Fig.65)*



Fig.65 Added waymarker

66. *Added a new way marker on gatepost leading into field after Radway Church (Fig.)*

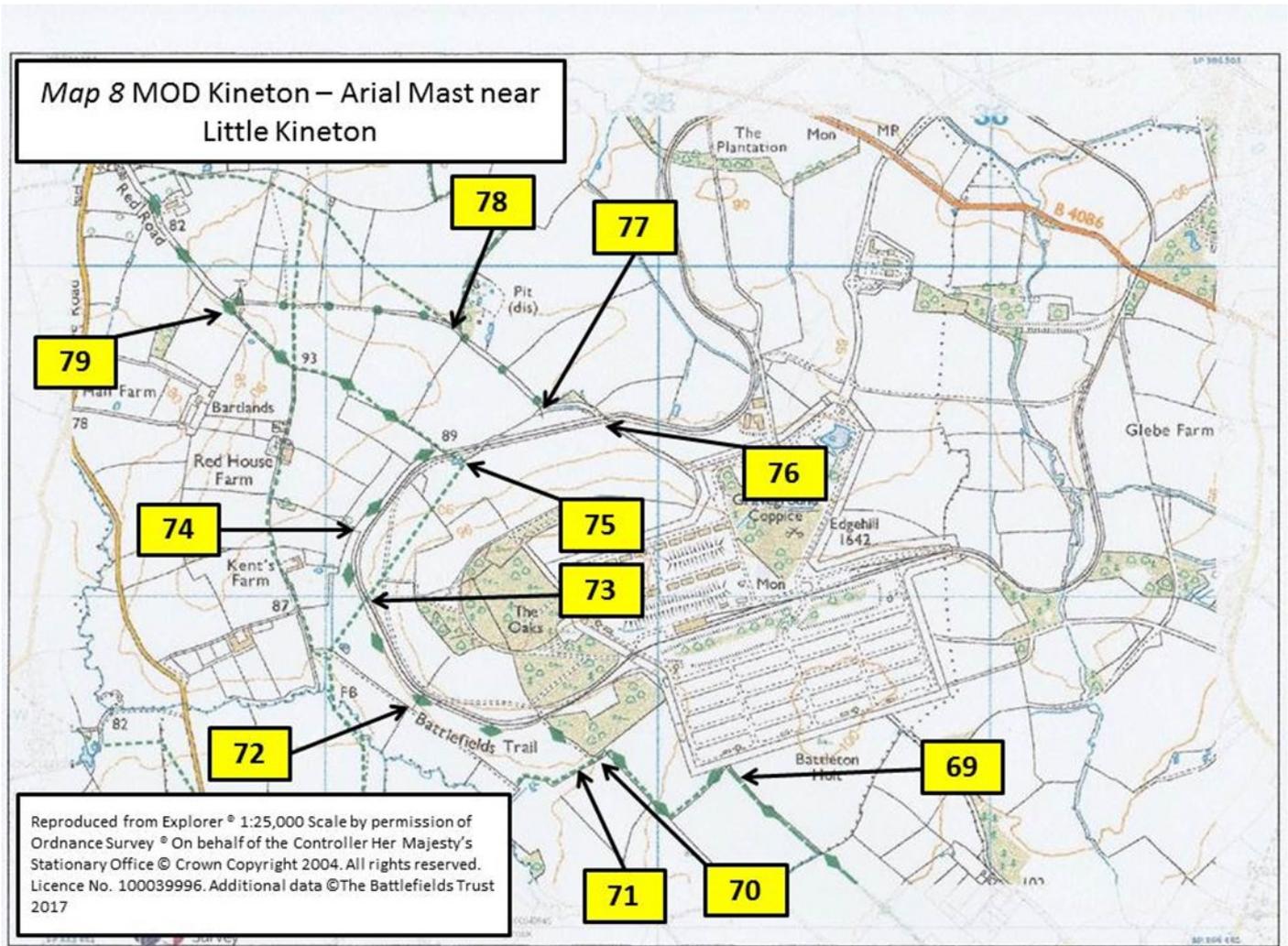


Fig.66 Added waymarker

67. There are many footpath signs on the stile after before Westcote farm but no Battlefield way markers.
The addition of a way marker was not considered necessary here if the map is read correctly. A new way marker should be added if spares become available.

68. There is a lack of signage on this section of path leading to MOD Kineton.
As the route does not deviate from the only path here it was not considered necessary to add more with the limited amount available

Section 5: MOD Kineton to Arial Mast near Little Kineton



69. Added new way marker at post just after MOD base (if coming from Kineton) to provide reassurance in route finding (Fig.67)



Fig.67 Added Waymarker

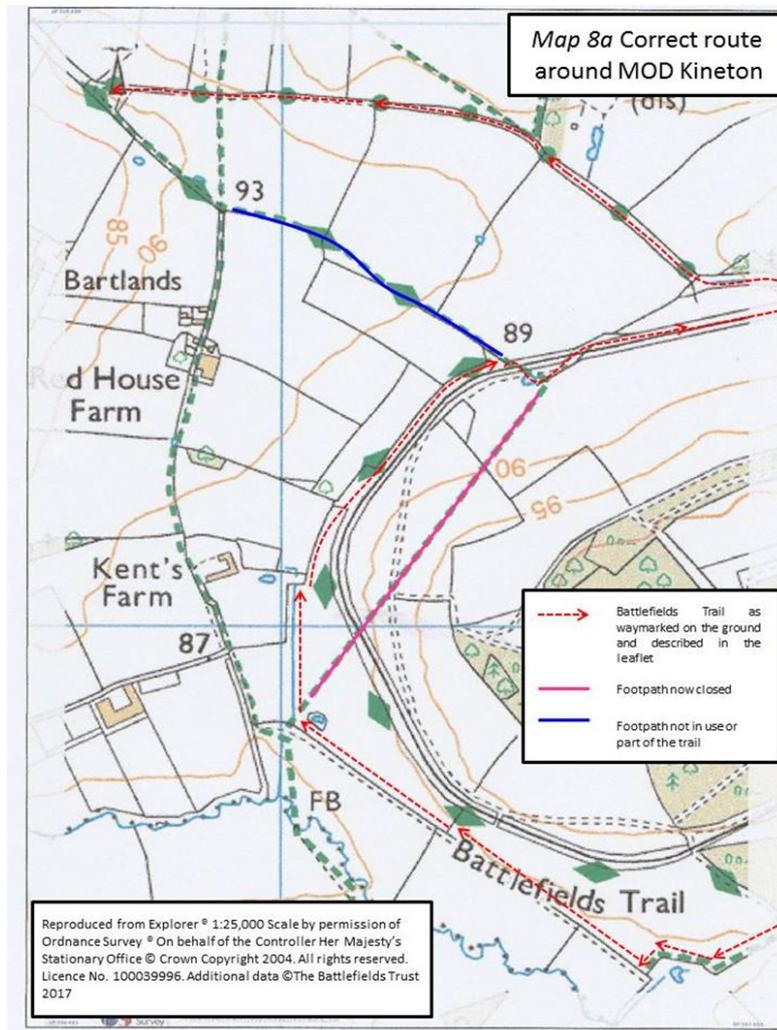
70. Sign on post at side of path slightly broken (Fig.68). Will need replacing in line with route mapping of this section



Fig.68 Broken waymarker

71. Beginning of issues with the route of coming from Radway. At this point the map says to skirt to the right of the wood before following the line of the railway. The way marking at this point states that the route goes straight on around the field.

Having walked the route it is clear that the correct right of way follows the field hedge around the field rather than the railway line which is NOT A RIGHT OF WAY. Indications of the correct right of way are a bridle gate (point 72) and Warwickshire County Council signage at point 74. It is clear that the route as marked on the ground and described in the trail leaflet is correct but the mapping both on the OS Map and trail leaflet is incorrect. The correct right of way is shown on the map below. (Map.). The correct route is incidentally also shown on the Trail Boards at Kineton and Chipping Warden.



72. Added a new way marker at bridle gate to confirm route of path to walkers coming from Kineton (Fig.69)



Fig.69 Added waymarker

73. Footpath (not part of trail) is closed permanently. No access due to fence.
No action necessary

74. County Council and Battlefields Trail way markers appear on the gate here (Fig.70).
No action necessary



Fig.70 Waymarker in situ

75. Battlefields way markers and county council footpath way markers and steel bridleway signs appear after crossing the railway (Fig.71).
No action necessary



Fig.71 Council and trail signage

76. Way markers here are faded but present pointing in both route direction (Fig.72)



Fig.72 Trail marker post

77. Post was broken and resting on MOD sign. (Fig.73).
Post as been placed upright lodged between gate wire (Fig.74)



Fig.73 Broken post



Fig.74 Post placed upright

78. Added new way marker on gate post on lane (Fig.75)



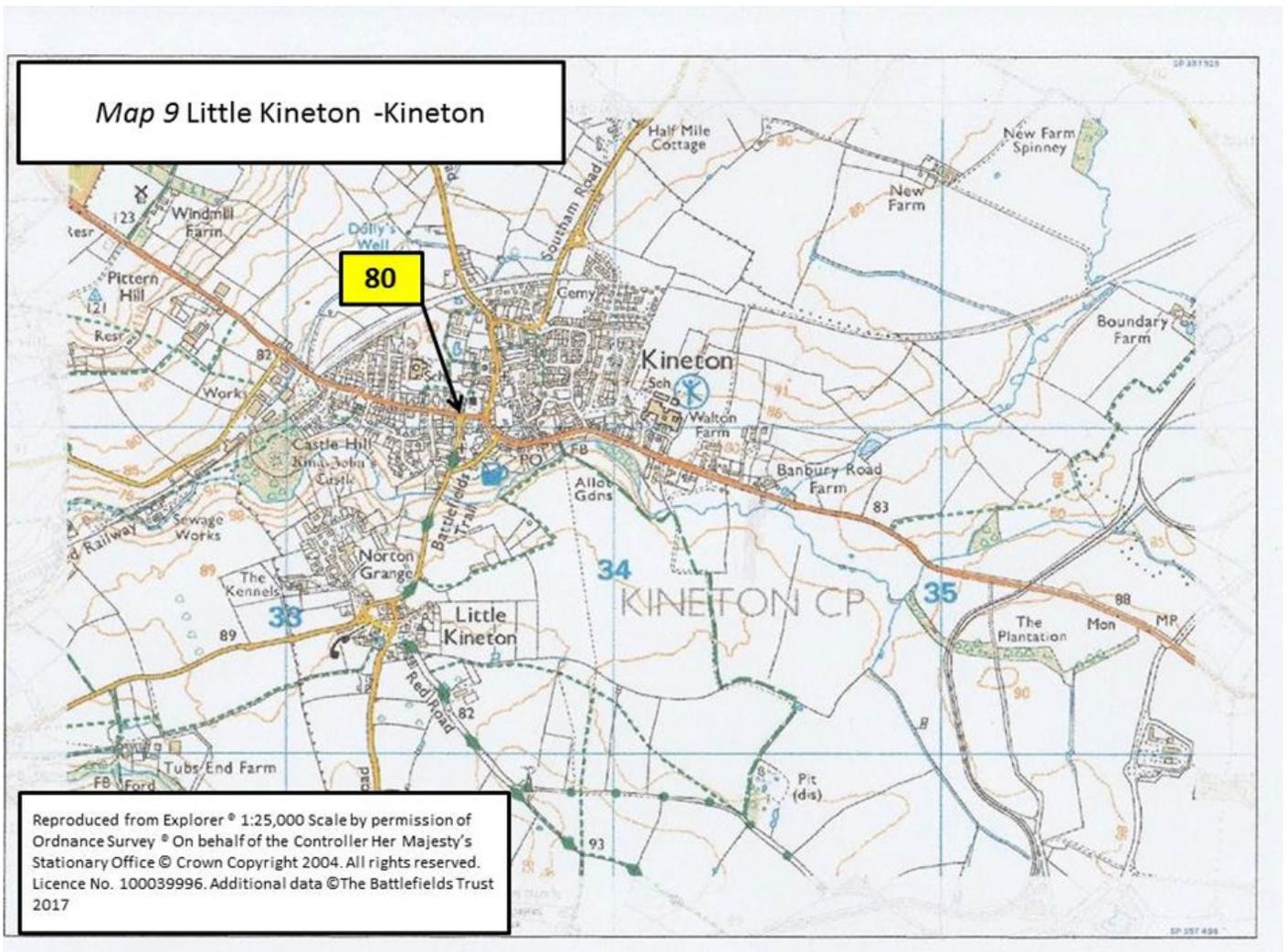
Fig.75 Added Waymarker

79. *Added new way marker at Junction of paths to confirm correct route rather than going straight on down overgrown path as marked on map. (Fig.76)*



Fig.76 Added waymarker

Section 8: Arial Mast near Little Kineton to Kineton



80. Trail start information panel at Kineton church is dirty and weathered. (Fig.77).
This may need to be replaced for the new walking season in the spring.



Fig.77 Trail board in Kineton

The Report—condition of the route

Paths

For the most part the trail is well defined using a combination of public footpaths, bridleways and roads. These are mostly in good condition. Having walked the route in September there were sections that were boggy after wet conditions and one small section of the route (8, Grid Ref: SP 51414 48210) the path was waterlogged due to the small stream having over-spilled in the surrounding field. Whilst posing a minor problem in winter conditions this should not affect the path overall during the summer walking season.

There were few places where the path appears to be overgrown. This is at Lower Wardington (22, Grid Ref: SP 49309 45967), just before Warmington village (49, Grid Ref: 41426 47917) and the first section after Little Kineton (74, Grid Ref: SP 34344 49442 see below under obstructions). Most of the paths appear to be used regularly by other walkers and the bridleways were clear and well defined. Therefore there appears to be little remedial action that needs to be taken in regards to the path themselves although at point 8 the placing of a few railways sleepers at this point may help the walker cross the aforementioned boggy section when walking the trail in the winter months.

Obstructions and diversions

Obstructions and unauthorised diversions are of a much more serious nature and will need to be dealt with in order for walkers to enjoy the trail as was originally intended. A number of obstructions and diversions were encountered along the route and these will be looked at in order when starting the walk from Edgcote.

The two issues are both minor and easily deal with. The first is an overgrown tree which has obstructed the a stile (6). This is not a major problem as currently walkers can just go through the gate that is next to the stile as it was unlocked at the time of walking the route in September. Slightly cutting back some of the undergrowth should immediately remedy this and allow walkers to use the stile. Another minor diversion occurs in the next field (7). On the OS maps the walk turns for a 45 degree angle and heads for the stile into the woods. The paddock has recently been divided for horses using rope and stakes and at this point the rope prevents the walker taking the turn. Instead walkers must continue along the hedge for another 50 yards before making the turn to the stile which is visible. No remedial action is necessary here as this small diversion does not provide and inconvenience or a confusion as to the route of the path at this point.

The first major obstruction occurs after Edgcote Lodge Farm on the top of Edgcote Hill (Map 2a (18)). The path turns right into a field just before Douglas Barn. According to the map the public Footpath should run just parallel to the hedge on the left of the field before swinging in to re-join the track at the left hand corner. Unfortunately at the time of writing the path had been blocked by fencing around what appeared to be a new maize crop planted in the field. At the top left hand corner of the field where the path comes out there was also a large slow burning fire which would present a dangerous hazard to any walkers. Whilst this obstruction needs to be dealt with there is probably little to be gained at this moment from what could be a long process of having the farmer remove both the fence and his crop. A more simple remedy would be to continue to follow the farm track then turn right and go direct past Douglas Barn on your left and then join back up



with the route. It is suspected that this is probably the route taken by many local walkers going to Lower Wardington and this may have been done for sometime. In part because of this this may have encouraged the local farmer to plant his crop knowing that walkers simply used the track round Douglas Barn. The solution would be to stress the diversion without admitting it is a right of way. Should the farmer seek to contest this then the problem of the path obstruction could be contested with the local council.

Just after exiting the village of Mollington there is a small local footpath called 'Thacker Way' (44). This is a 100 yard stretch of path which appears to be a local initiative to by-pass the road at this point which had a few cars driving on it when we walked the route in September. This diversion does not alter the route or have any effect on the map but may be useful in further publications of the route as an alternative to walking on the road. No action has been deemed necessary at this point.

A more serious obstruction to the path appears just before the village of Warmington (49, Grid Ref: 41426 47917). The problem at the kissing gate appears to be twofold. The kissing gate itself is highly overgrown with brambles making it impassable whilst to this has been added at the time of the walk a man made obstruction in the form of large branches and leaves which appeared to have been deliberately placed in order to block the path. During the walk the large branches were removed in order to gain access to the gate. Since the walk the author was contacted by a local resident via the Battlefields Trust report form to say that the brambles at the kissing gate had been completely removed and that in conjunction with the County council there was ongoing contact with the landowner to prevent further obstacles and allow for better signage for this part of the path. This is ongoing at present.

The final diversion presents a much greater challenge to solve and will involve the region, local council, the Ministry of Defence as well as the Ordnance Survey. The catalyst for the report was an email sent by a trust member who had been confused by the directions and path around the aerial mast after Little Kington (74, Grid Ref: SP 34344 49442). It appeared that the path was very overgrown and lead to a dead end according to the Ordnance Survey maps.

Following investigations of the route on this section it was ascertained that in fact the route printed on the Ordnance Survey 1:250000 Landranger maps was incorrect and that the actual right of way and battlefield trail in fact followed a different route that crossed the railway line before joining a public road that lead off the railway tracks towards the mast at Little Kington (Map 8a). Further corroborative evidence for this was also found on both the information boards at the beginning and end of the battlefield trail as well as the trail leaflet itself. These show the correct route of the trail between points 71 and 79. To emphasise this we found that this was also the route that has been surveyed and then waymarked in 2005/6 during the establishment of the trail by the then Mid-Anglia branch. The definitive conclusion therefore is that whilst the trail route is accurate on the leaflet, leaflet description, information boards and as waymarked on the ground, the route as depicted on the OS Maps is inaccurate and needs to be remedied via contact with the Ordnance Survey.



Waymarkers and signage

One of the principle aims of the walk was to assess and replace if necessary the waymarkers for the trail. As explained above (pg.9) only 30 waymarkers were available to replace with one being kept back as a sample for further ordering. It was decided therefore to apply a reasonable strict criteria for replacing and adding the markers and was as follows:

- Any marker that retained 75% of the wording around the edge and an intact arrow would not be replaced
- Waymarkers that were cracked but intact would not be replaced
- Waymarkers that were broken but that were installed in conjunction with the green council metal signs (Northamptonshire only) would not be replaced if the metal sign was intact
- Waymarkers would not be added to parts of the route where the path was obvious and there was other footpath signage to give direction
- Waymarkers would only be added where there was a need to guide the walker as to the correct route especially where there was a junction of different paths
- Waymarkers that were dirty but displayed the above criteria would be washed
- Retention of the original colouring or lack of would not be a factor determining replacement

It would be too long at this juncture to detail all of the markers broken and replaced and this is more detailed in the photographic section of the report (pgs.15-43) to which we ask the reader to refer. In summary 19 new waymarkers were added to the walking route where it was determined to either provide clarity or further direction to the walking route and 10 broken waymarkers that met the criteria above were replaced.

Whilst not counted individually a rough estimate and summary of all the way markers will be made below. It is estimated that:

- Less than 10% of the waymarkers installed in 2006 are intact and in their original red and yellow colouring
- Only around 30% of the waymarkers in total retained any form of colour. In general the Yellow at the top survived the weathering process better than the red at the bottom which in most cases had completely faded
- Over 80% of the waymarkers had some form of damage consisting of chips, cracks and complete breakages although at least 70% of these retained enough of the wording and arrow to help with direction.

In terms of specific county council signage for the battlefields trail only Northamptonshire county council has erected signposts along the battlefields trail. This encompasses three two direction metal green signs (Figs. 7, 12 & 14) and one single direction signpost at the beginning of the trail at Chipping Warden (fig.2) which has been attached to the already established Jurassic way signpost. All of this signage is intact and in good condition although all will require a wash and clean prior to the new walking season. The sign before Trafford bridge (fig.12) is partially obscured by the tree foliage which may need partially cutting back.



Stiles, Kissing gates and gates

When walking the trail numerous means of access are provided at different points to enter fields and cross fences, streams and other obstructions en-route. Besides the above named access methods the other most common is a simple gap in the hedge, fence. Whilst all methods of access are used through the entirety of the route some general observations can be made about certain styles occupied at different points along the route.

The trail passes through parts of three different counties—Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. Stiles are more common in the counties of Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. Over the past 10 years Warwickshire County council has replaced many of its stiles with kissing gates probably as part as a general improvement to access in the countryside for those who are older or suffer some disability and for whom mounting a stile would cause some particular difficulty. Kissing gates are less common in the other two counties. It is noted that along the first part of the route only two stiles are encountered before Trafford Bridge and there are kissing gates before Lower Wardington and one at the sports field after you exit the village. Stiles are more common in Oxfordshire and one is encountered before Cropredy and several in the fields between Cropredy and Mollington. Once we leave Mollington and enter Warwickshire most of the access points are either Kissing gates for public footpaths or single gates along bridleways for the use of horses.

Except for the issues explained at this point it is implied from the report that all other points of access are intact and in good condition. Only three issues were encountered with stiles. The first was the obstruction of a stile with undergrowth (6, see above pg.44). This can be easily remedied by cutting back the undergrowth to reveal the stile. The second problem encountered is at the sports field where the path leaves the road after the village of Lower Wardington (22). Here the problem is a lack of a stile on a tall fence which was sufficiently difficult to mount even by someone who is fit and healthy. An addition of a stile at this point would be of great benefit to the trail. It should also be pointed out here that the trail leaflet does give an alternative entrance to the sports field via a different route which uses a metal gate. The final issue is a stile on the ridge above Cropredy which opens out onto the A361 (25). One plank of this stile is broken meaning that the walker is unable to use both wooden steps to mount the fence. This also provides an additional hazard of injury to anyone who attempts to use both wooden planks to gain access over the stile. This will need to be repaired.

Bridges

For this report the definition of a bridge is any means used to span a ditch or watercourse with so set depth as the criteria. Road and stone bridges over major waterways/roadways are not included. There are several bridges over the course of the route and these range from several small planks or railway sleepers to purpose built bridges over water courses. Only one issue was encountered over the entirety of the route. A sleeper bridge over a small dried up ditch (36, Grid Ref: SP 45409 467766) in a spinney halfway between Cropredy and Mollington has had two of its three sleepers broken. Whilst this does not impair the walker from crossing the small ditch there is the danger of injury should the obstacle not be navigated successfully. This will need to be repaired. Two fields further on where the route crosses a large stream a brand new bridge has been erected by the local council (39, Grid Ref: SP 45119 46806). This has been included in the report as an example of continuing maintenance of local public footpaths by relevant councils



Amenities

The battlefields trail leaflet itself does not describe the amenities that are available along the route of the walk although most of these are of course detailed on the modern OS maps. For the purpose of the report it is intended here to give a brief general description of those encountered. No remedial action will need to be taken as the detailing of these on OS Maps is down to the Ordnance Survey and as no reference is made on the trail leaflet then no corrections need to be made.

Pubs

- Chipping Warden — 2 Pubs. The Griffin Inn is a still open Gastro pub however the Rose and Crown Pub at the start of the route has is now (as of 2017) closed
- Lower Wardington — 1 Pub. The Hare and Hounds Inn. This pub is still open. Prior to 2017 a second pub (The plough) was marked on OS Maps but this is now closed and the pub symbol removed from the map.
- Cropredy — 2 Pubs. Although there is only one Pub symbol for the village of Cropredy there are in fact two pubs still open; The Breasnose Arms and the Red Lion.
- Mollington – 1 Pub. The Green Man is a Gastro Pub located in the village
- Warmington — 1 Pub. The Plough Inn is a traditional village pub that is still open
- Ratley — 1 Pub. The Rose and Crown is a traditional village pub on the route of the trail
- Edgehill — 1 Pub. The famous Castle Inn is situated at the top of Edgehill in the village. A gastro pub that gives spectacular views over Warwickshire and Edgehill Battlefield
- Kineton — 1 Pub, The Carpenters Arms and 1 Hotel, The Swan. Both are still open as of 2017. There is also a brasserie serving late night food and a fish and chip shop also in the village.

Shops

- Cropredy — Traditional canal side shop selling local groceries and canal products
- Kineton — A range of traditional butchers and a more modern local shop selling the usual range of items

Public Toilets

- None were encountered along the route



The Battlefields

Information boards

The Mid Anglia (now Mercia) Region of the Battlefields Trust installed 5 information Boards along the route. Replacement boards are available and are held by the Mercia Region. For the report a brief examination of the boards was made to determine their current condition and whether they would need to be replaced. The boards are located at

- Chipping Warden — Trail Information board at the start of the route detailing the trail and showing a map of the trail(1). This board is currently dirty and weathered and is also beginning to warp in the centre. This should probably be replaced around March at the beginning of the main walking season
- Trafford Bridge — Battle of Edgcote Information Board (11) . Located 200 yards past Trafford Bridge where the trail turns off the road. This board is in good condition and may need a clean after the winter season but will not need to be replaced.
- Cropredy Bridge — Battle of Cropredy Bridge Information Board (31). Located on the actual bridge this board appeared to be in good condition although it is starting to look a little tired but will need a good clean prior to the summer months
- Castle Inn, Edgehill — Battle of Edgehill Information Board and Edgehill Battlefield Hub sign (64). The board is looking dirty and weathered but is still readable. This will probably last another season with a good clean. The hub sign is in excellent condition as of September 2017.
- Kineton Church — Trail Information Board (80). This is the same as Chipping Warden. The board is very weathered, dirty and hard to read and should be replaced prior to the new walking season.

The Battlefields

As noted above (pgs.11-13) a general view of the condition of each of the battlefields was to be taken within the accepted parameters of those parts that could be viewed whilst walking the trail. Observations were made and the following can be reported:

Edgcote (1469) - The trail goes past and through both of the alternative deployments. From the trail we were unable to see any alterations to the battlefield or any areas of concern (as of September 2017) to report about the battle. There was a large mound of gravel on Danesmoor although its use could not be determined at the time. There also appeared to be large mounds of fertiliser covered with white sheeting and whilst this looked ugly it is doubted if this is a permanent fixture to the site.

Cropredy Bridge (1644).— The trail passes through the centre of the battlefield and the clear day allowed for a view of the entirety of the battlefield that could be seen from the Wardington Ash. There are no concerns or threats to report at this time. Hays Bridge and Slat Mill have been omitted due to being unable to see those parts of the battlefield.



Edgehill (1642) - The trail runs from the top of Edgehill where a good view of most of the battlefield can be attained and then runs down the hill through the centre of the traditional deployment. Due to the clear day we could see most of the battlefield from the stone seat below the Castle Inn. No threats or concerns are able to be reported at this time. We also drove past the monument on the way to Kineton which appears to be intact and undamaged.

Edgehill Battlefield Hub

A brief visit was made to the Edgehill Battle Hub to view the exhibits. There does not appear to be any problems with the exhibition at the time. Ongoing maintenance is the responsibility of a local volunteer group. After the report was commissioned the Mercia Region has made £250 to help the group continue to maintain the exhibition.

de a grant



Conclusion

Having been opened in 2006, by 2017 the Edgcote-Edgehill Battlefields Trail had been established over 11 years. The trail has held up remarkably well for the last 11 years. Most of the waymarking is still in situ albeit many of the markers are broken and faded. The route along almost the whole of the trail is still well defined and except for the three cases highlighted in the report is remarkably free from obstructions. At least two of the problems highlighted are currently being taken in hand by local villagers, the council or the Mercia region and the diversion on top of Edgcote Hill should present little problems

Whilst the trail itself is looking a little tired there are areas where the local council have refreshed parts of it with new posts, stiles and at least one new bridge although it is understood that these have been for the benefit of general walkers and not trail specific. Whilst most of the waymarkers are faded or damaged they are sufficiently intact to guide the walker whilst walking the trail. Although it would be desirable to refresh ALL the markers along the trail this is likely to require a larger amount of volunteers or a more protracted period of time as the route would have to be broken down into at least 12-15 stages in order to replace all the markers. More markers should nevertheless be purchased by the region.

The region should possibly look at refreshing the trail leaflet to remove one omission regarding Wormleighton house and add some information about the hub at Edgehill. The information boards are still fit for purpose and the condition has been noted and actions stated whilst no current threats to the battlefields have been seen as of September 2017.

In short the trail has survived remarkably well after 11 years and it is hoped that with the 2017 marker refresh and the other issues that are currently being resolved then the trail as it stands will certainly be fit for purpose for those walking it in 2018. In the long term a full refresh of the trail would certainly be desirable but for the present the author can see little more that needs to be done.

Gregg Archer

September 2017



Battlefields Trail

Edgcote
Cropredy
Bridge
Edgehill

A 20-mile walk over
three English
battlefields



The Battlefields Trail is a long distance footpath running 20 miles through beautiful countryside in the heart of England. The trail starts in Chipping Warden, Northamptonshire and ends in Kineton, Warwickshire. The trail links three of Britain's most important battlefields:

- Edgcote (1469) in Northamptonshire
- Cropredy Bridge (1644) in Oxfordshire
- Edgehill (1642) in Warwickshire

You can tackle the trail in three parts, or all in one go. As you visit these battlefields, you will be following the general route taken by King Charles and his entourage as they rode towards Edgehill on the morning of the battle.

Use the walk directions in conjunction with OS Landranger 151 or OS Explorer 206. The Edgcote walk is the easiest, and is fairly friendly to dogs and children (although it does include one steep climb and some stiles). The Cropredy Bridge and Edgehill routes contain many stiles and the Edgehill route in particular includes steep climbs and descents.

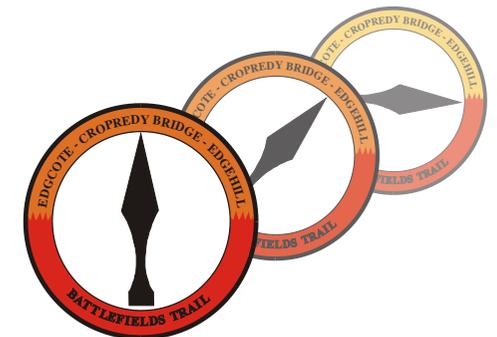
The trail is waymarked throughout, and there are information boards on the route.

This leaflet also includes details of a car route and a cycle route around the battlefields; these take in several places of interest and offer some spectacular views.

The Battlefields Trust exists to:

- save battlefields from destruction by motorways, housing developments etc.
- provide a range of battlefield-related activities and information, including the quarterly journal 'Battlefield', battlefield walks and conferences
- liaise with local and national organisations to preserve battlefields for posterity
- improve the interpretation and presentation of battlefields

For more details, and to find out how you can help, visit:
www.battlefieldstrust.com



The Battle of Edgcote (or Danesmoor) was fought during the Wars of the Roses in July 1469. An army commanded by the Earl of Pembroke was marching to join King Edward IV at Nottingham. Edward was threatened by a rebellion in the North led by a mysterious 'Robin of Redesdale'. Unknown to Pembroke, the rebels were marching south to join forces with the Earl of Warwick, 'the Kingmaker', a former ally of King Edward who was now plotting against him.

Pembroke encountered the rebel army at Edgcote on the 26th of July. Pembroke's army had been dangerously weakened because, supposedly after an argument the night before, the Earl of Devon had withdrawn his troops. This left Pembroke's mainly Welsh army both outnumbered and seriously short of archers.

The initial position of the rebel army is uncertain, the battlefield map overleaf shows the two most likely deployments: one the rebels advancing from Trafford Bridge, and the other the rebels advancing from Thorpe Mandeville.

Pembroke's army had occupied a strong defensive position on Edgcote Hill. Attacked by the rebel archers the Welsh were forced to move down onto Danesmoor, where they engaged the rebel army in fierce hand-to-hand fighting. When rebel reinforcements unexpectedly appeared from the direction of Culworth they were mistaken for the vanguard of Warwick's army and Pembroke's army broke and fled.

The Battle of Edgcote was a black day for Wales, 168 Welsh noblemen were killed as well as many hundreds of common soldiers. The Earl of Pembroke was captured and executed. After the battle the King himself was captured and Warwick had effective control of the Kingdom. However, just two years later Warwick was defeated and killed and Edward IV was able to re-establish his authority.

Edgcote

Chipping Warden - Upper Wardington
5 miles (8 km)

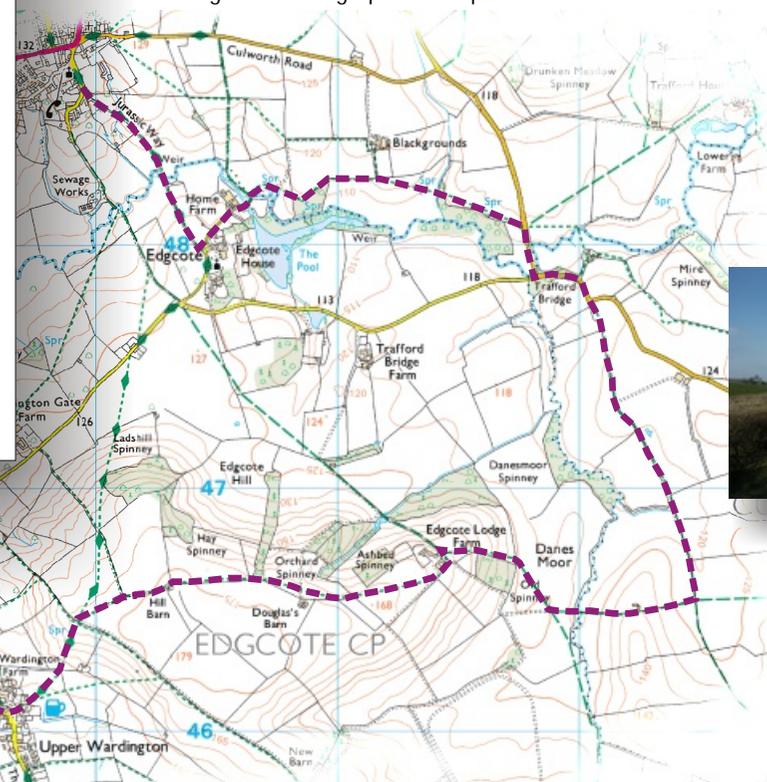
This leg of the walk starts in Mill Lane, Chipping Warden. Through the stone gateposts, follow the track to Edgcote House. Turn left along lane in front of house. Cross stone bridge and turn right onto track. Shortly afterwards follow footpath through gate on right. Cross field to next gate and follow track at wood edge. Through double gates and ahead to stile. Cross field keeping hedge to left. Cross stile and onto next stile, over footbridge. Ahead over field bearing slightly right through gateway. Through gate on right then look for stile on left onto road. Turn right. Follow lane to Trafford Bridge. Follow road round to left and after a few yards, turn right onto bridleway.

Where field boundary turns left carry straight on, crossing the stream. Cross open field diagonally, heading for bottom right hand corner of covert on opposite hillside. Pick up track to right of this covert and follow up steep hill to Edgcote Lodge Farm.

At top of hill, turn left just in front of farm buildings. Turn right to pick up footpath, keeping silos immediately to your right. Follow footpath along field boundary. When you reach barn, take track to the right (keeping barn on your left).

Follow bridleway for approximately half a mile. Look out for ruined barn on hillside on your right. Take grass track to left of hedgerow leading up the hill past this barn.

Follow track to stile, overlooking Upper Wardington. Over stile, head down hill, bearing slightly left, to gateway. At gateway cross next field diagonally, heading to metal gate to left of cottage. A narrow footpath takes you into the village.



Edgcote



Welsh Road



Start of walk





The battle was fought during the First English Civil War in June 1644. The Royalist Army was commanded by King Charles I and Parliament's by Sir William Waller.

There were approximately 9,000 men per side. Each army comprised infantry (pikemen and musketeers), dragoons (mounted infantry), cavalry and a number of cannon.

The King had lured the two Parliamentarian armies of Waller and the Earl of Essex away from besieging the Royalist capital at Oxford. On the morning of the 29th of June, having been followed by Waller to Banbury, the King marched along the line of the modern A361.

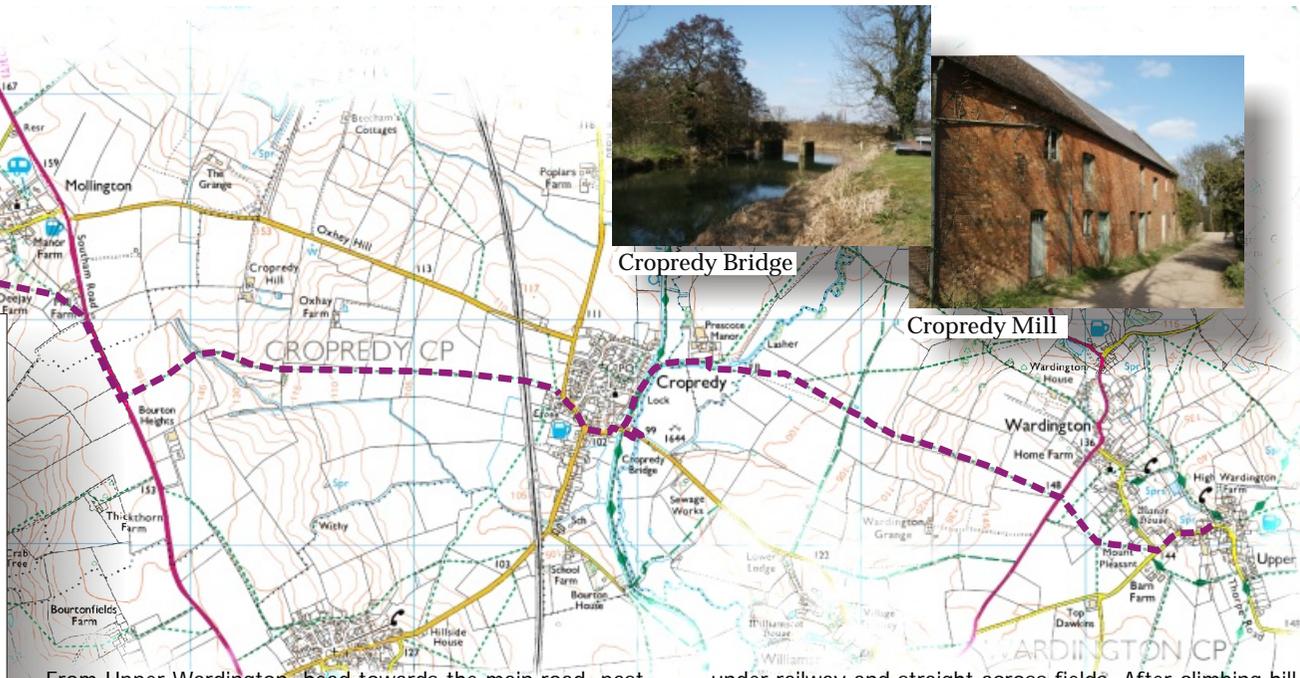
Waller marched in parallel along the line of the A423, and from across the River Cherwell saw the Royalist army becoming strung out over some 1½ miles. The Parliamentarians attacked across the river using Cropredy Bridge, Slat Mill Ford and other crossings, intending to split and annihilate the separated parts of the Royalist army.

The Earl of Northampton's brigade of Royalist cavalry threw back the 1000 Roundhead horse which had crossed at Slat Mill. Another Royalist cavalry brigade, under the Earl of Cleveland, fiercely attacked the Parliamentarian force which had crossed at Cropredy Bridge. Cleveland's troopers drove them back towards the bridge and captured a significant number of their cannon.

The King's men were stopped from crossing Cropredy Bridge by the prompt action of two Parliamentarian infantry regiments. The battle ended in a stalemate, with both armies facing each other across the Cherwell for the remainder of the day.

However, in the weeks that followed, a significant part of Waller's army mutinied and over half his men deserted as a result of their setback at Cropredy. This left the King free to pursue and defeat the Earl of Essex.

In the longer term, the defeat at Cropredy Bridge contributed to the formation by Parliament of a 'regular' force lead by professional officers. This 'New Model Army' would decide the war in Parliament's favour the following year.



Cropredy Bridge

Cropredy Mill

From Upper Wardington, head towards the main road, past the pub. Where side road joins on right take footpath opposite bus shelter into playing field (there is also a gate twenty yards to the right). Cross field diagonally, go through gap in hedge and straight on towards main road. Cross road with care to footpath opposite. Follow footpath, keeping to right of hedge when you reach it. Proceed down hill and, towards bottom of field, bear slightly right through gap in hedge and on towards copse.

Go through copse, then over field towards Cropredy (keeping church in view slightly to your left). Just after you pass Prestcote Manor, cross over the bridge on your right. Turn left and follow concrete track into the village. After crossing the canal, turn left onto lane. At T- junction turn left along main road to visit Cropredy Bridge and see the interpretation panel.

Double back and follow main road through village. Where road bends sharp left, bear right past pub. Turn left into road called 'Cup and Saucer', bear right through gate into parking area then take footpath on right immediately before entrance to recreation ground. Follow footpath

under railway and straight across fields. After climbing hill through paddock, footpath turns diagonally left across arable field to bridge. Cross bridge and turn right then follow track where it bears left across field and takes you to the road.

Turn right along road then take footpath through hedge on left, after the layby. Cross field diagonally right to gap in hedge, then carry line on to bottom left corner of next field. At bottom of hill, left across bridge then cross next field diagonally into Mollington. After stile turn right, follow road round then turn left up hill to main road.

Just after end of village take footpath on right. Follow footpath through fields and across stream. Eventually takes you up a hill to the M40. Turn right along path running next to motorway. Stay on this until you reach steps up to road bridge. Cross bridge and take footpath immediately on right. Cross field diagonally to metal bridge next to cattle pens. Over next metal bridge and cross drive leading to substation. Over next two small fields then join road leading to Warrington, turn right and follow road through village past the duckpond.

Cropredy Bridge

Upper Wardington - Warrington
6.4 miles (10.3 km)



Edgehill

Warmington - Kineton
8.6 miles (13.8 km)

Follow road up the hill out of Warmington, turn right along main road (pavement). Look for footpath opposite side of road leading right from house drive. Follow path up hill, looking for other footpath branching off to right around foot of hill to stile. Cross next field to bridge across stream. Follow path over next four fields to Arlescote. On entering village turn right down drive then left along road. Shortly look for footpath leading left to houses, taking left fork. Through gate into meadow then take upper path to climb the hill. Turn left along fence line at the top and look for a stile leading out onto road.

Cross road with care and take footpath through metal gate to the right of the entrance to shooting range. Eventually join shooting range drive, turning right and following it until it bears left, where you carry on straight to metal gate. Follow path downhill through middle of field, then up hill to top right corner of next field. Cross stile and follow footpath into Ratley. Past church, turn left down track towards Manor Farm and take stone stile onto footpath. Follow footpath over first hill then climb the next hill towards barn. At barn cross stile and turn right along track. At end of track turn right and follow road a short way before taking footpath on left. Cross road in Edgehill and take footpath opposite next to Castle Inn down the hill to Radway. In Radway turn left past church then take second footpath on right (just after 'derestricted' sign). Follow the line of metal gates across fields. Cross road to footpath opposite, turn right through trees then follow line of metal gates to next road.

Take bridleway on opposite side of road and follow this around the perimeter of the MOD base. After crossing the railway turn left along metalled road and recross railway. When road turns right back across railway, turn left and follow bridleway along grass track. Keep to track until it eventually emerges by radio masts. Turn right along Red Road, right at end, then right again and follow road to Kineton

The Battle of Edgehill was the first major encounter of the English Civil War. The Royalist army was commanded by King Charles I and Parliament's by the Earl of Essex. There were approximately 12,000 men per side. Each army comprised infantry (pikemen and musketeers), dragoons (mounted infantry), cavalry and a number of cannon.

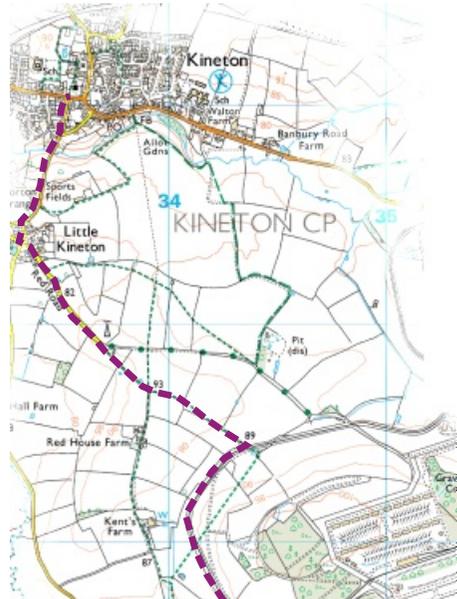
Continuing disagreements between King and Parliament led to a declaration of war. The Royalist army marched on London, and having out manoeuvred Essex, the King deployed on the Edgehill ridge on the morning of October 23rd 1642. The Parliamentarians occupied the ground south east of Kineton. The Royalists descended the ridge and positioned themselves in Radway fields.

After an initial artillery exchange, the Royalist cavalry wings under Prince Rupert and Lord Wilmot charged the Parliamentary horsemen opposite and drove them back. In Kineton, they attacked Essex's baggage train, but would play no further significant part in the battle.

The infantry of both armies now fought a fierce battle in the centre. Parliament's troops were pushed back initially and then held the Royalist's foot soldiers. Sir William Balfour's cavalry, supported by infantry, broke part of the Royalist left and centre and charged their artillery. The King's men were driven back towards Edgehill.

Both armies were exhausted and short of ammunition and the fighting ended as night fell. In total about 1,500 men may have been killed, with more wounded on both sides.

While some claimed that Parliament had won a tactical advantage on the field, others suggested that the battle was a strategic Royalist gain; for the next day the Earl of Essex withdrew to Warwick, leaving the Royalists free to march on London.



The Battlefield



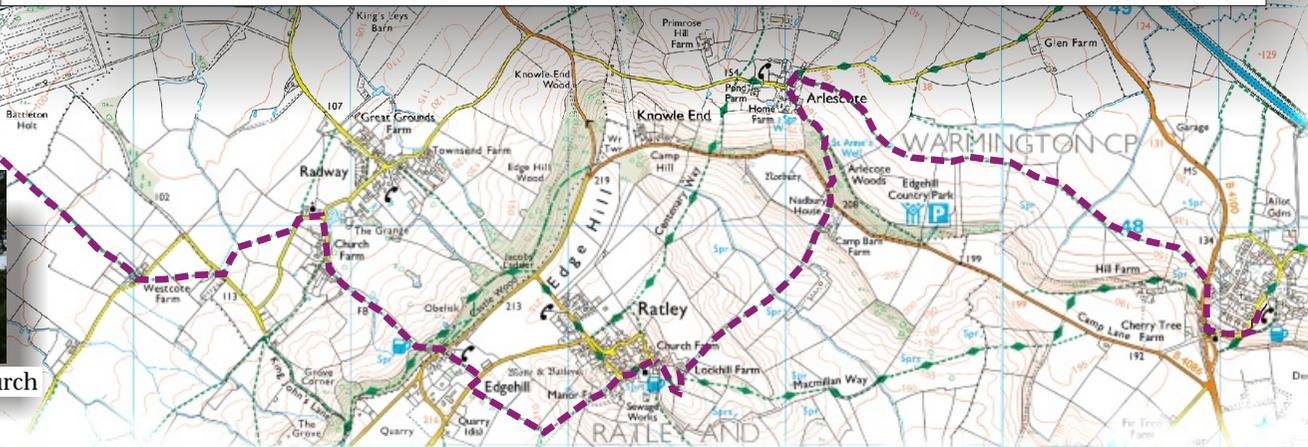
Arlescote

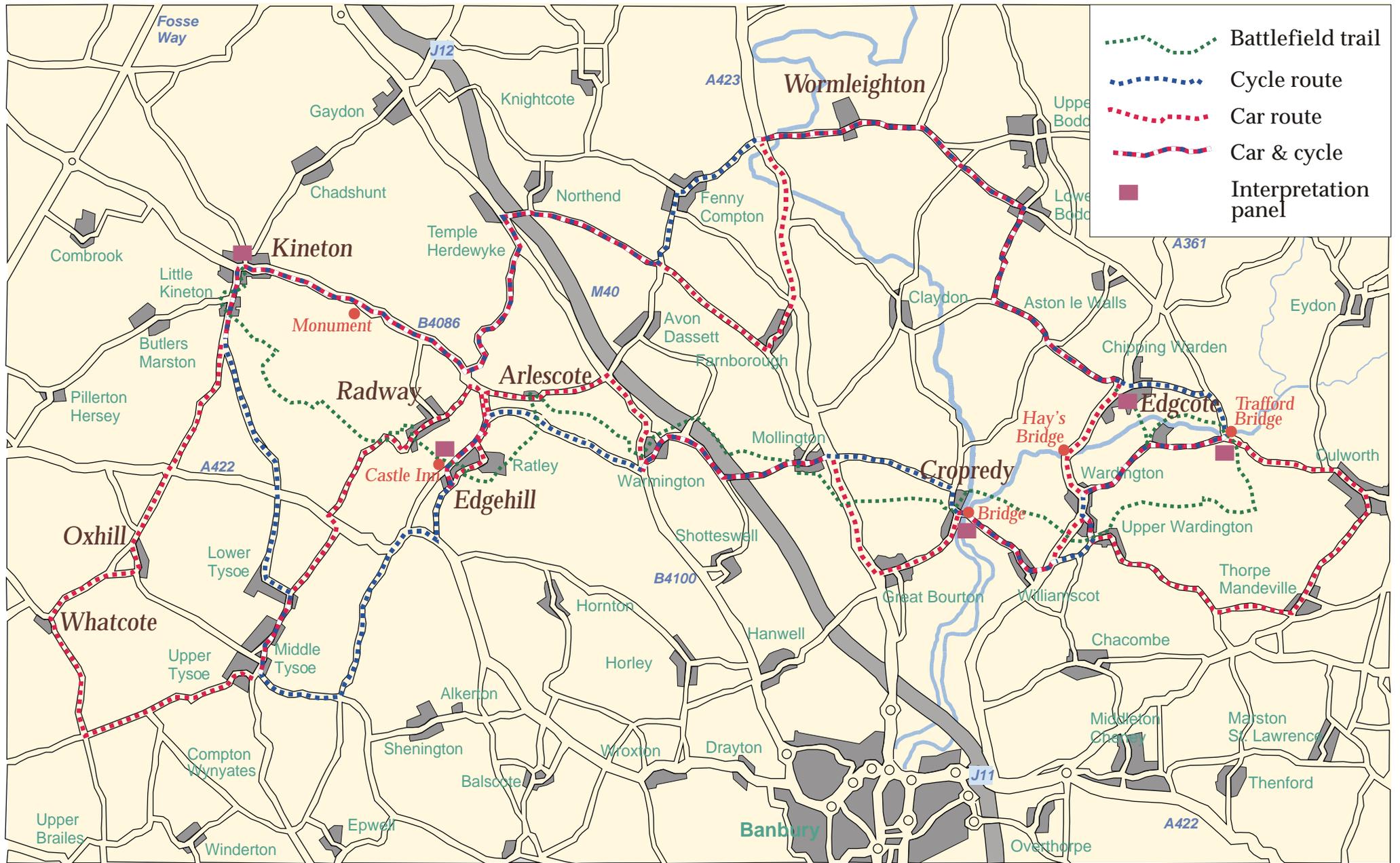


Edge Hill



Radway Church



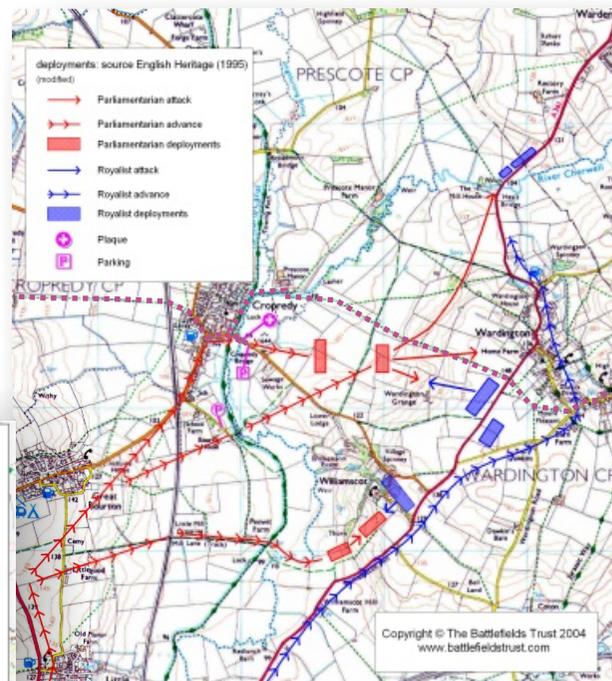
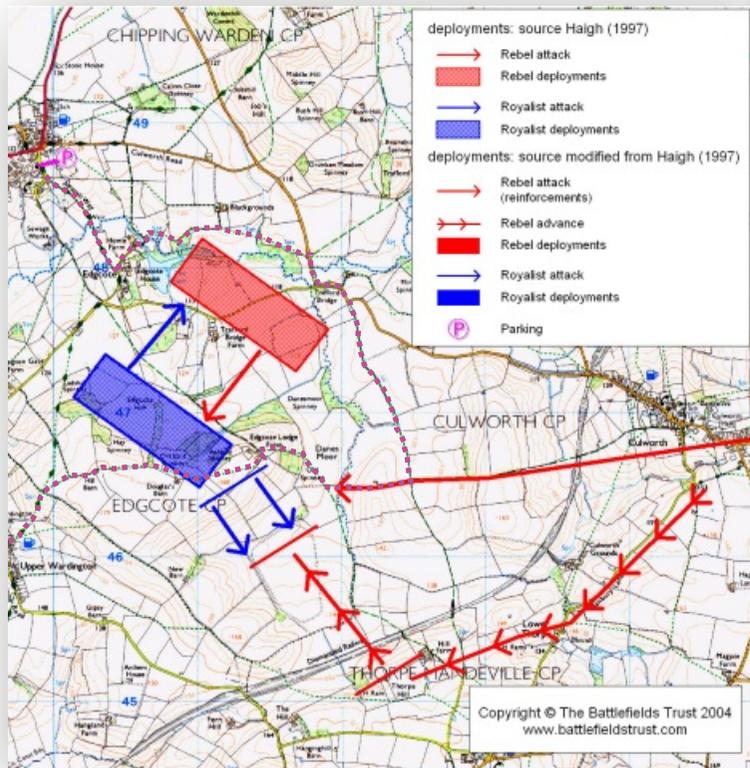


Battle Deployments

How do we know exactly where battles took place and how forces were deployed? We rely on records of the battle written by contemporaries and the ability to relate their descriptions to the landscape as it is now. This leaves some room for interpretation and, as you will see from these battle plans, there are often competing versions of the action.

While there is general agreement on what happened at the Battle of Edgcote, there are at least two interpretations of where it happened. Surviving accounts have the action ranged around three hills, but the question is which three hills? Different answers swing the battle lines around by 90 degrees, but the Battlefields Trail takes you through the deployments for both suggested sites.

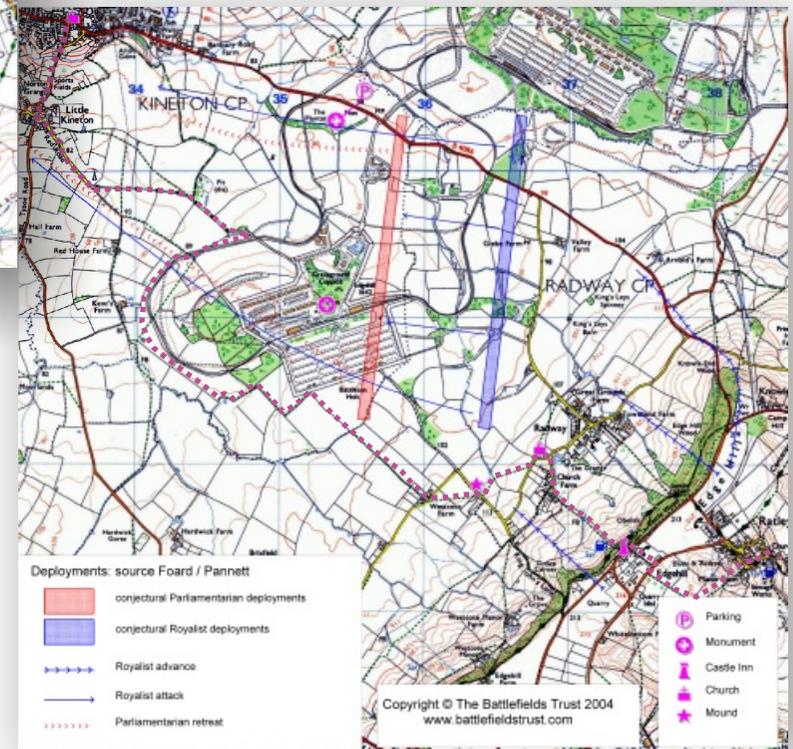
Much of the site of the Battle of Edgehill is now occupied by a Ministry of Defence base. They have recently given the Battlefields Trust access to their land to let the research team see if they can shed more light on the exact locations of the action. The detritus of war - bullets, buckles and other equipment - can help to identify where the action



Cropredy Bridge is a good example of how topographic features help to fix the site of a battle. We know that the two armies marched along two opposing ridges, and the points where the parliamentarians crossed the river; we know that King Charles got as far as Hay's Bridge before turning round to help his strung-out forces. Many of these features can be securely located in today's landscape.

 Battlefields trail

1 km
1 mile



Places to visit

Arlescote - the princes supposedly stayed here on the eve of Edgehill.



Cropredy Bridge - Waller's dragoons crossed here and the parliamentary canons were deployed alongside. An interpretation panel on the east side explains the battle



Kineton Church - Essex was here when he heard of the approach of the Royalist forces.



Hays Bridge - King Charles reached this point before turning back to help his troops fighting at Cropredy Bridge.



Trafford Bridge - according to one interpretation this was the river crossing fought over at the Battle of Edgcote.

Wormleighton - Prince Rupert made the manor house one of his battle headquarters, and rode from here to do battle at Edgehill. Parliamentarians burnt the house in 1646 and all that remains now is the gatehouse.

Whatcote - Parliamentarian soldiers reputedly stayed at the Royal Oak and knocked out a bread oven to give them a clear shot out.



Edgehill Monument - the site on the B4086 overlooks the battlefield. A further monument on the battlefield itself is on MOD land and not accessible to the public, although there is an annual wreath laying there.



Radway Church - contains the Kingsmill Effigy. Erected by a grief-stricken mother in memory of her Royalist son killed at Edgehill, the effigy was originally in the old church. It can now be found at the base of the tower of the 'new' church.

Oxhill Church - has a civil war soldier's grave in the aisle.

Castle Inn - this distinctive pub is actually an eighteenth-century folly, but it provides a superb view of Edgehill battlefield and is also the location of the Edgehill interpretation panel.



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