

Lympsham Guide to Public Footpaths



*Published by Lympsham Parish Council with assistance
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Note:

This guide was first published in A5 format.

To make the maps more legible, this PDF version is formatted as A4 and this accounts for the “white space” on some pages.

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Disclaimer

All persons using the information in this guide do so at their own risk and discretion.

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the routes shown as public rights of way, they may change and may not be clearly defined on the ground. The public rights of way shown on this map are only intended as an indication of the general route. To determine the exact route of a public right of way, the definitive map held by Somerset County Council should be consulted. The publisher cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions arising from this publication.

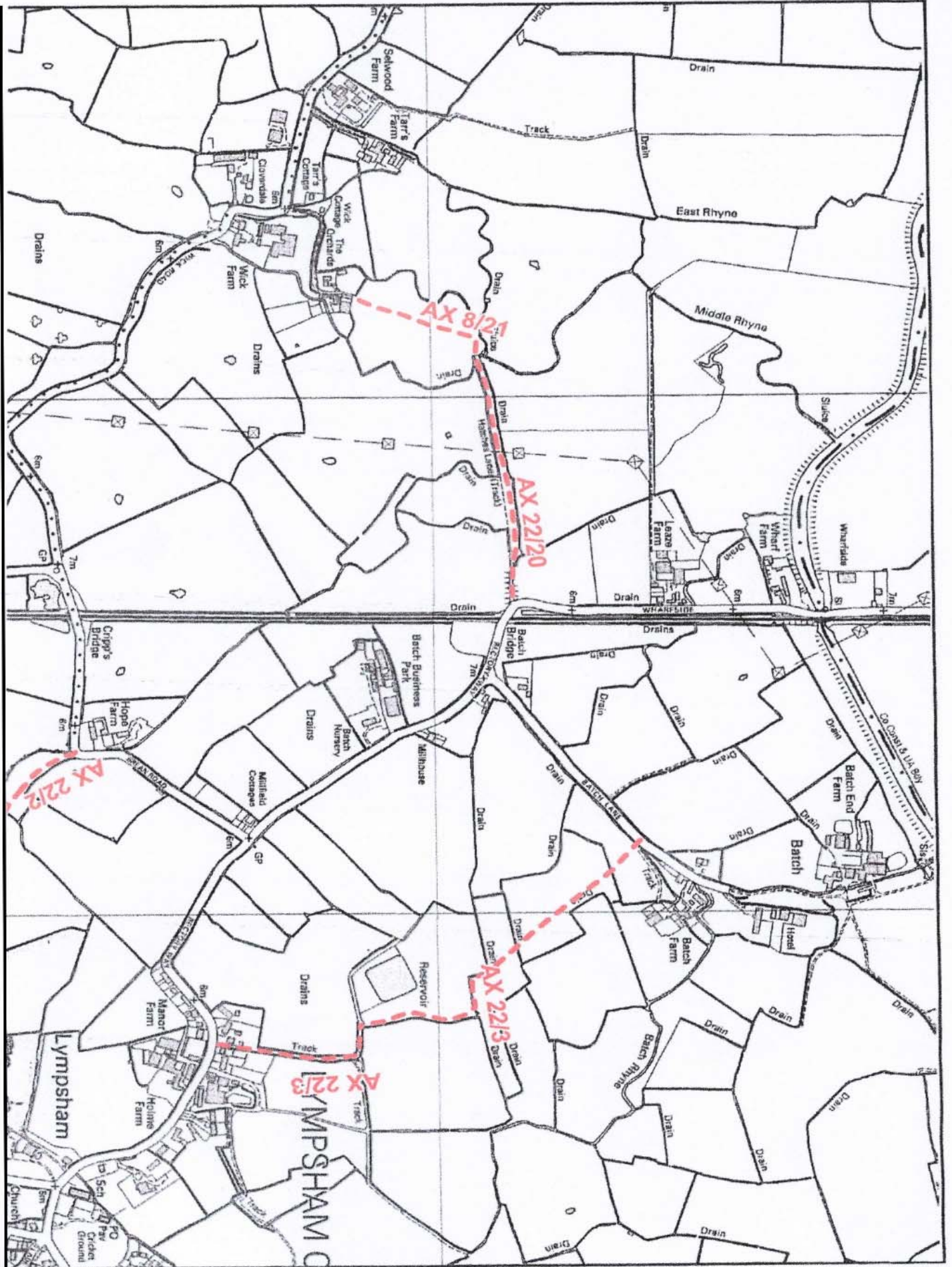
Lympsham has a long, recorded history going back to 690AD when it was acquired by the Abbot of Glastonbury from the West Saxon King Ine and it was certainly mentioned in the Domesday Book. It is a Conservation Village with a very particular Victorian architectural legacy from the Rev. J Stephenson; but it also has another reminder of past times: a network of seven miles of public footpaths. Historically these were routes used by farm labourers walking from one farm to another, but are now a great resource for our village. They are maintained by the Parish Council with help from Somerset County Council.

The Parish Council has produced this walking guide especially with children in mind, hoping to encourage families to go out and enjoy “off-roading” in a real sense and enjoy the wildlife we don’t see in our gardens but is so close at hand.

The surfaces of Lympsham and Eastertown footpaths mostly pass over flat open fields with rhyne bridge crossings, mostly stiled and hand-railed. In autumn, winter and spring these fields are muddy and often waterlogged. Generally, the fields are meadow and pasture and often contain sheep, herds of dairy cows, heifers or bullocks, with the occasional bull. Unfortunately, none of the footpaths is suitable for pushchairs or wheelchairs.

The historical information in this booklet is courtesy of our late village historian, Peter Hopkins and most of the text has kindly been provided by Dick Evans and Steve Isaac. Footpath suggestions or problems may be brought to the notice of the Parish Clerk who will inform the councillor currently responsible for the footpaths.

Rectory Way



RECTORY WAY FOOTPATHS

Start at the Manor Hall.

The Manor Hall and school were built by Thomas Cox for the Rev. Stephenson between 1873 and 1875 at the latter's expense. Stephenson was a great benefactor to the village. He provided a hall for the village and modern schoolrooms, to replace the original school, (built by Stephenson's father in 1820), which had become too small. The new hall was considered very grandiose. A visiting clergyman compared it to Westminster Hall in London! As you start your walk, look up at the carved words above the door on the front of the building and *see if you can spot the spelling mistake!!*

Continue along Rectory Way. On your left is the Old Schoolhouse originally called the Schoolmaster's House. This was built in 1888 and is adorned with a steeple. The first schoolmaster who lived here had a daughter who lived to 103 and died quite recently at Burnham on-Sea. She used to come to the village fete and recall her memories of the school and the Rev. Stephenson himself- "an august figure".

Continue along Rectory Way. Old Rectory Farm was converted by Thomas Cox in 1866. An old farmhouse with an associated barn goes back to the 18th century and probably longer. A *date on the stone* on the barn (now called Rectory Farm) shows the initials W.R. The R most probably refers to the Rogers family who owned the property in the 18th century. Captain Woodes Rogers, a buccaneer, sailed around the world (1709-1711) and rescued en -route, Robinson Crusoe (alias Alexander Selkirk) from his Pacific desert island. The Captain is reputed to be buried in Lympsham churchyard and is likely to have been connected to the Rogers of Rectory Farm. Further on the left is Holm Farm, Thomas Cox's house and his first neo-gothic conversion. The initial C is seen on the front wall. Continue to the Public Footpath sign on your right:

1.AX22/3 Rectory Way to Batch Lane. (1/2 mile) (passing briefly alongside the garden of Tudor Lodge)

The reservoir in the first field often has swans or ducks, and deer may be seen in these fields on early morning or evening walks. At the end of this footpath, there is a farm gate always openable but protected by electric fence handles to allow disconnection while you pass.

At the northern end, there is a hamlet of three farms, Batch, Batch Hotel Farm and Batch End. They were all shown on the 1758 map. It was probably a very early settlement as they were close to the River Axe.

Alternatively, continue on Rectory Way to Batch Bridge

2.AX22/20 Batch Bridge to Tratts Farm. (1/2 mile) There is a parking space at the start of this footpath. Care is needed as there are many badger setts.

There is a gate at the start, next to the farm gate - it looks like part of the fence.

SOUTH ROAD FOOTPATHS

As you approach South Road from the church, you will pass the Forge and then the old post office, now called Lympsham House.

On your left opposite the church is Lympsham Manor, (not visible from the road). The manor built in its present strawberry gothic style dates from about 1812. There will have been an older house here, probably going back to the days of the Abbot of Glastonbury's Lordship. The Forge is a very old house, probably also going back to the days when the Abbot of Glastonbury was Lord of the Manor. It was a working forge into the 1970s. Fred Owen was the last blacksmith; he came from Brent Knoll. Next to the Forge, the old post office was originally a carpenter's shop bought by Josias Cox, the village carpenter, in 1795. Three generations of the Cox family there, all builders and carpenters. They extended the shop and built the terraced houses (turning into South Road) attached between 1823 and 1847. All were sold to the Rev. Joseph Stephenson in 1874. Tom Cox, third generation, became Stephenson's builder and bailiff, responsible for the conversion of several cottages into the gothic style, all dated, at the Rev. Stephenson's expense. The village shop and post office remained in service for almost two hundred years, finally closing in 1994.

Continue on South Road to Bluecoat Farm and the AX22/9

1. AX22/9 Bluecoat Farm to A370 at Dulhorn Kennels (1/2 mile)

Bluecoat's Farm belonged to the Bluecoats Charitable Order and dates back to the 17th century. It was twice rebuilt. John Wesley is reputed to have passed this way and been carried through a flood here by the owner, Thomas Huckman in 1767.

2. AX 22/11 South Road to Mendip View Farm (200 yards) (2 pole fences to be climbed).

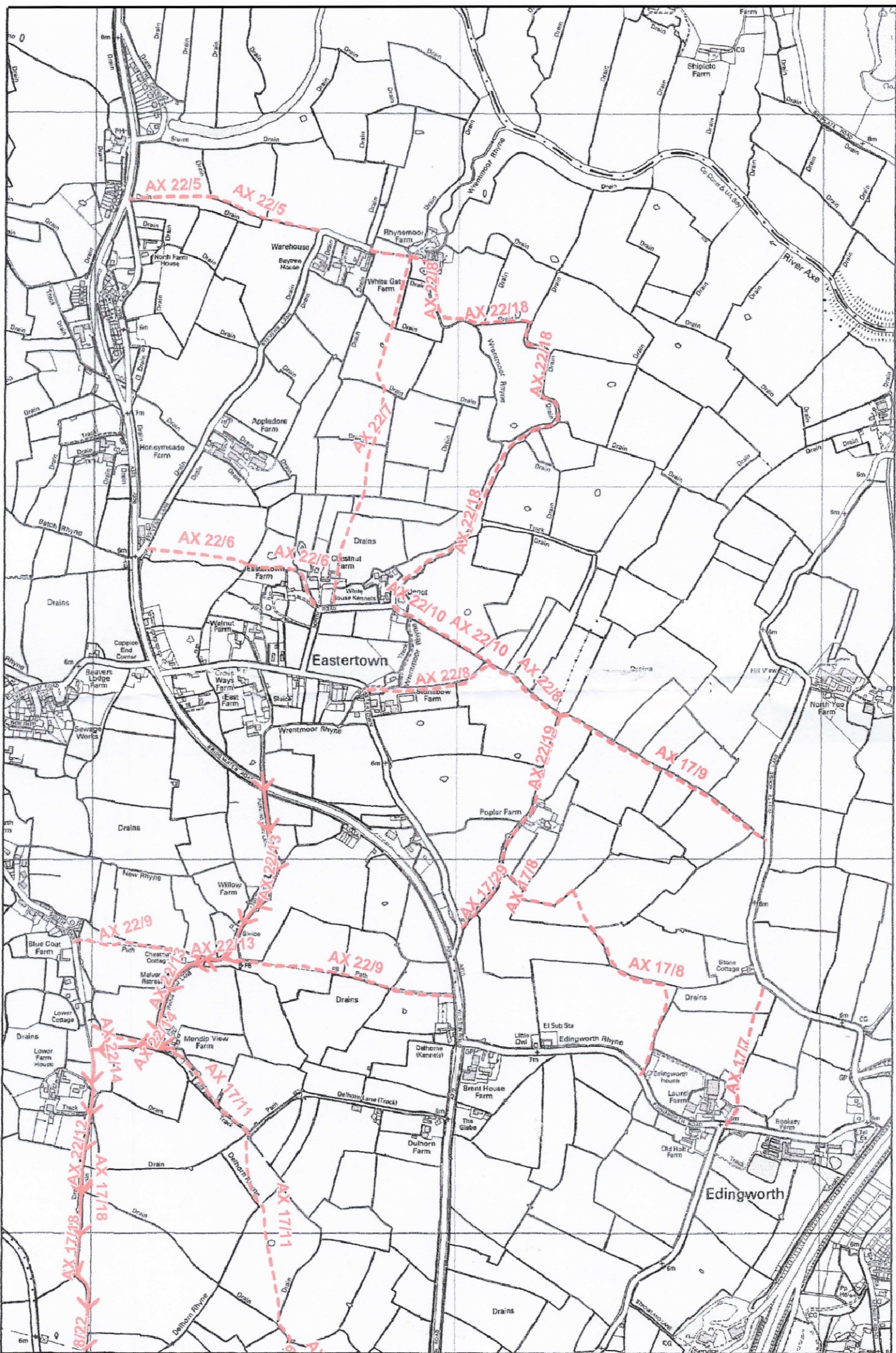
3. AX22/13 Mendip View Farm to A370 (Purving Row) (1/2 mile) and

4. AX22/14, South Road to Mendip View Farm (200 yards) Both of these are stone-surfaced tracks open to vehicles.

Purving Row is the old route from Eastertown to East Brent. Purving means "the rough ground where the periwinkle grows" In the past there were as many as eleven agricultural labourers' cottages along Purving Row.

5. AX 22/12 From Lower Farm to East Brent's AX17/18 (200 yards) Lower Farm is shown on the earliest known map of Lympsham dated 1758.

6. AX 17/18 AX22/12 (becoming AX8/22 track from the end of South Road to the Red House on West Rd. (1/4 mile) This track is sometimes almost impassable on foot in winter because of deep mud.



EASTERTOWN FOOTPATHS

The starting point for these footpaths is either North Road or Stevens Lane. Eastertown will offer the best opportunities for a longer circular walk when awaited clearances have been completed by Somerset County Council.

1. **AX22/6 Eastertown Farm to Stevens Lane at Meadgate** (Passing briefly through the garden of Eastertown Farm). (1/2 mile) Eastertown Farm dates back to the 17th century and was associated with the Tincknell family. At the other end, there used to be a shop at Meadgate.

2. **AX22/7 North Road to Rhynemoor Farm (west side)** (1/2 mile) Rhynemoor Farm is shown on the 1758 map. With Whitegates Farm next door, it belonged to the Stevens family in the 19th century, hence Stevens Lane.

3. **AX22/5 Rhynemoor Farm to A370 at Hobb's Boat Inn.** (1/2 mile)
The Hobb's Boat Inn has a fascinating history; it used to provide a horse-drawn ferry across the River Axe until the river was diverted to Bleadon Bridge in 1810.

4. **AX22/18 Rhynemoor Farm (east side) to Whitehouse Kennels** (3/4 mile) (*awaiting clearance May 2006*)

5. **AX22/8 Selway to the centre of AX22/10** (1/4 mile)
Selway is the site of an earlier parish (council) house. A Mrs Collings lived to be 100 years old there. Awaiting bridge clearance in May 2006.

6. **AX22/10 Whitehouse Kennels to Whitehouse Lane** (1/2 mile)

Starting at Janes' Yard -the way is marked clearly; pass on to a good bridge and stile, and then through good gate. At this point the designated footpath should cross ditch to the other side but in fact stays to the left of the ditch. In reality this does not matter as the way forward is clear.

AX22/10 has the following turn-offs:

a. **AX 22/8 next to Stonebow Farm** (1/4 mile)
(*awaiting clearance May 2006*)

b. **AX22/19 to Poplar Farm becoming AX 17/29**
(1/2 mile)

WEST ROAD FOOTPATH

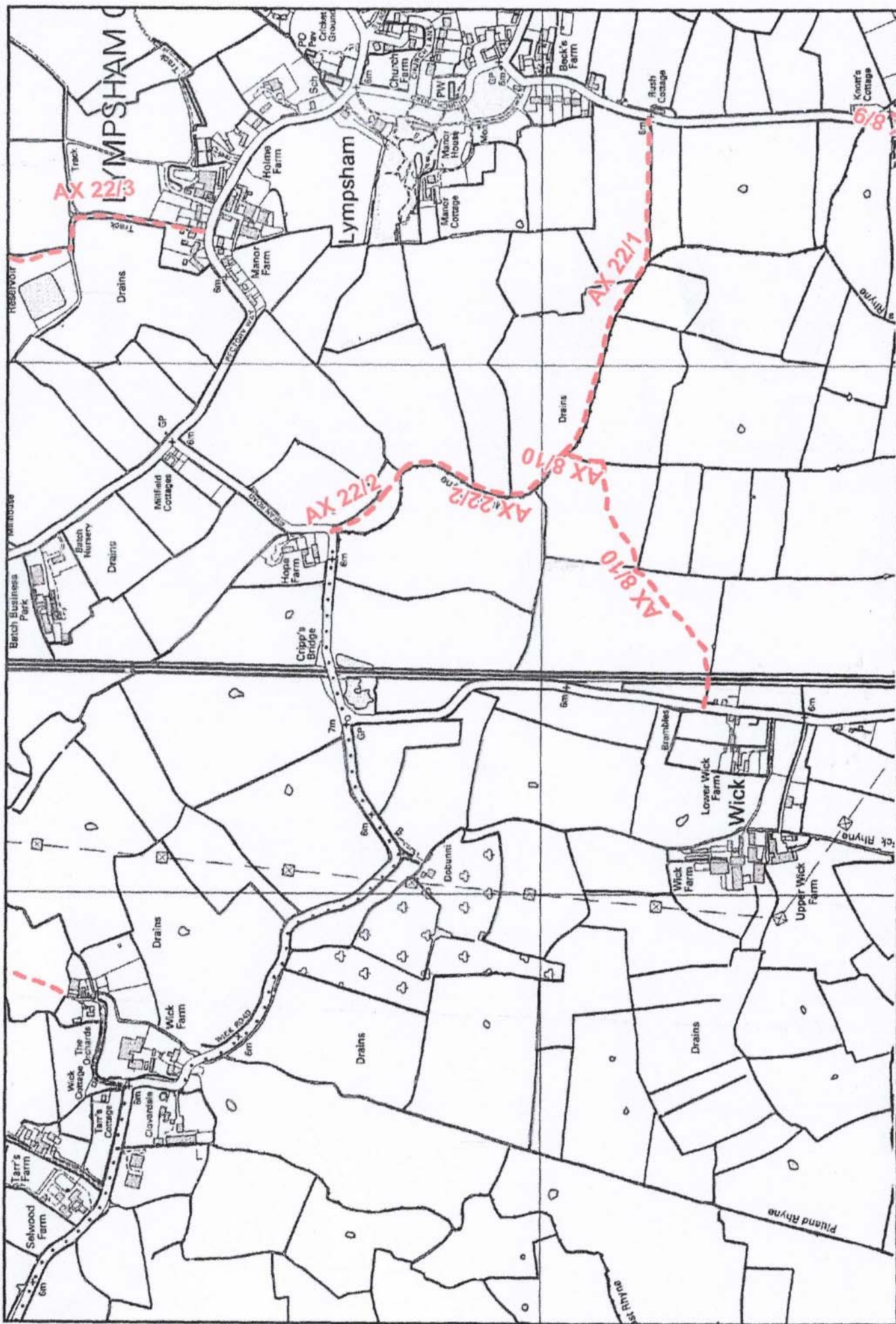
AX22/1&2 (3/4 mile)

Deer may be seen in these fields on early morning walks. At the east end, Rush House used to be the village abattoir and butcher's shop, run by the Sperring family in the 19th century. It has since been rebuilt.

A gate to a left spur (**AX8/10**) takes the walker into East Brent land and on to Wick. Stiles on this footpath are not big dog-friendly.

At the end of the Lympsham footpath, special care is needed as the path passes through a smallholding: please keep dogs on a leash (Please note there is no dog-friendly exit to this path, so it is only suitable for dogs that can be lifted over the stile.)

At the west end of this footpath, Hope Farm was rebuilt in the neogothic style by the Rev. Stephenson in 1868 and was for many years the home of the Spratt family.



CHILDREN'S WILDLIFE CHECKLIST

When you go out on the footpaths, fill in the date and add up your points at the end.

	Points	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date
Name:						
Birds						
Herons	10					
Egrets *	15					
Moorhens	5					
Pigeons	5					
Lapwings	10					
Fieldfare	10					
Snipe	15					
Linnets	10					
Skylarks	15					
Kingfishers **	15					
Mallard ducks	5					
Buzzards	15					
Swans	10					
Sparrowhawks	15					
Pheasant	5					
Gulls (various)	5					
Crows	5					
Rooks	5					
Jackdaws	10					
Jays**	15					
Animals						
Foxes	10					
Hares**	15					
Rabbits	10					
Weasels ***	20					
Deer	15					
Badger sett	10					
In the rhynes						
Eels	10					

* white heron

** occasional

*** crossing the road only

BULLS, COWS, BULLOCKS AND HEIFERS

In general terms, it is an offence to keep a bull in a field or enclosure crossed by a right of way. There are, however, important exceptions. They are:

1. A bull under the age of ten months old.
2. Bulls that are not one of the recognised dairy breeds (e.g. Jersey, Alderney etc) provided that they are accompanied by cows or heifers.

Bulls and cows with heifers can be tricky and are best avoided. If you see a bull in a field, it is probably imprudent to check his date of birth or specific breed! Just give the field a miss, particularly if you have a dog with you. Herds of bullocks and heifers can be alarming, too, as they tend to run up to you thinking that you are bringing food for them. A good shout and a waved stick should keep them at bay.

Please Follow the Country Code

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Leave gates as you find them
- Keep dogs under close control
- Use gates and stiles to cross hedges, fences and walls
- Leave crops, livestock and machinery alone
- Take your litter home
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees
- Help to keep water clean
- Make no unnecessary noise
- Take special care on country roads
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Respect people's gardens and privacy