

THE STONES OF
**THE
MONKS
WAY**

IN STRELLEY, COSSALL
AND ILKESTON



*Strelley Church viewed
from Main Street*

BROXTOWE BOROUGH COUNCIL
TECHNICAL AND WORKS SERVICES

Ancient Routeways

As long as man has needed to trade there have been transport routes from the place of production to the point of sale. Many roads and paths originate from medieval times or even earlier when packhorses or mules were often the main method of transport for goods. These early tracks often linked to rivers where goods could be transported in bulk.

Canals and railways were a further development requiring new or adapted transport links to feed the barges or trains. Man's activities, including mining and road construction, have obliterated many ancient tracks, but it is still possible to discover the signs of old pathways if you know where to look!



Artist's impression of Strelley Hall before the major addition in 1780-1800. Courtesy of Ivan Henshell.

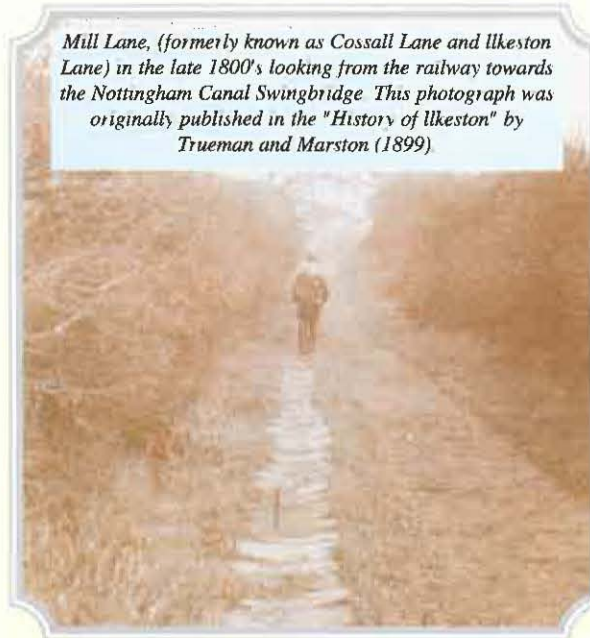
The Legendary "Monks Way"

Monks Way, Monks Path, Monks Steps and Pilgrims Path are all terms used locally to describe the traces of stone paving or causeway which can be found in Cossall, Strelley, Ilkeston and beyond.

The term 'Monks Way' is a general term frequently used to describe the network of ancient tracks which often linked monasteries and settlements to facilitate trade and communication.

The monastic connection for the paths around Cossall, Strelley and Ilkeston is not clear but it

is known that the monks of Dale Abbey, Newstead Priory, Lenton Abbey, Felley Priory and Beauvale Priory had land and mining interests in the areas around the Erewash Valley as early as the 14th century. It is therefore possible that the stones are all that is left of routeways that perhaps linked the monasteries and provided access to Nottingham and the River Trent.



Mill Lane, (formerly known as Cossall Lane and Ilkeston Lane) in the late 1800's looking from the railway towards the Nottingham Canal Swingbridge. This photograph was originally published in the "History of Ilkeston" by Trueman and Marston (1899).

Who laid the stones?

Legend has it that the stones were laid by monks who brought a slab on the back of a mule each time they used the path. This may be true but equally there are theories that the stones are more recent having been laid for the transport of coal by packhorses during the 18th century.

No-one knows for sure the origins of the Monks Way although the stone paths almost certainly pre-date the canal era (the Nottingham Canal was built in 1796) and may well be laid over an ancient route.

Where can the stones be seen?

The plan overleaf shows where the stones can be found. They are most obvious at Main Street, Strelley where they are incorporated into the footpath from the Broad Oak Public House up to the church. Traces can be found on the paths and bridleways linking with Cossall village and several sections have been uncovered on Mill Lane at Cossall between the Nottingham Canal and the railway (see photograph).

It is known that stones were removed from Park Road at Ilkeston when the road was constructed. A number of stones

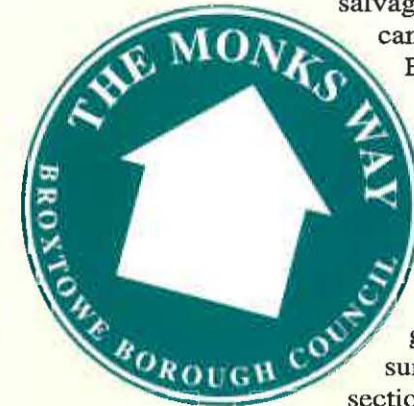
salvaged from this area can be found at the Erewash Museum, High Street, Ilkeston.

There is little doubt that other stones remain intact - buried under grass or road surfaces, however sections were also

borrowed to find new purpose as barn floors or walling in nearby farms and cottages.

Small areas of sandstone paving exist away from the route shown on the plan, one example being the path which links the Nottingham Canal with Nottingham Road near to Furnace Road on the Ilkeston/Trowell border. This seems to be an isolated path and is believed to be a remnant of the original Nottingham to Ilkeston Turnpike which was realigned in 1874.

The Route of The Monks Way has been marked on the ground with way-mark signs as shown above.



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6 Nottingham Canal Local Nature Reserve

The canal was constructed in 1796 to supply Nottingham with coal in competition with the Erewash Canal which was opened in 1779. The Nottingham Canal was a profitable enterprise for many years but was eventually abandoned in 1937. Broxtowe Borough Council acquired most of the canal in 1977 and the site was declared a Local Nature Reserve in 1993. An information pack containing details of circular walks and the Nottingham Canal Trail can be obtained from the Council Offices.

7 Mill Lane and Ilkeston Corn Mill,

The stones are clearly visible on the upper end of Mill Lane by the canal. Local legend has it that a special stone exists by the Nottingham Canal crossing which was once a swing bridge. It is said that this stone became very hot in certain conditions to such an extent that an egg could be fried upon it! Short sections of paving at the lower end of Mill Lane near the railway have been exposed by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

After crossing the railway, the bridleway crosses the River Erewash over an old bridge, which may have been constructed for packhorses. The river at this point was once used to drive Ilkeston's Corn Mill which would no doubt have been well served by the adjacent Monks Way.

8 Monks Close and Park Road Ilkeston and beyond

After leaving the River Erewash and Erewash Canal the route passes along Monks Close and Park Road. Ilkeston Library holds a photograph of Park Road before modern construction, clearly showing the stone pathway. A section of this path was salvaged and can be seen in the garden of the Erewash Museum Ilkeston. From Park Road it is thought that the Monks Way continued to Dale Abbey, probably via routes which still exist today.

9 Erewash Museum, High Street, Ilkeston (Tel 0115 9072244)

The Museum is situated near to Ilkeston Market Place off East Street, and offers a fascinating insight into the history of Ilkeston, and the surrounding district. From the Museum Gardens there are fine views across the Erewash Valley into Nottinghamshire. On a clear day the routes of both Mill Lane and the Nottingham Canal and the villages of Cossall and Strelley can all be seen. Admission to the Museum is free.

1 The Broad Oak Public House makes a good starting, and finishing point for your walk. The pub offers parking and a wide variety of food and drink in pleasant surroundings.

2 Strelley Village Conservation Area

The stones are easily seen here as they are incorporated into the footpath between the Broad Oak public house and All Saints Church. The churchyard provides a good view of Strelley Hall which was originally constructed on the site of a mansion house by Sir Sampson de Strelley in 1356. The illustration overleaf shows an artist's impression of the site in about 1780.

The Edge family and particularly Thomas Webb Edge carried out major improvements to both the Hall and village in the late 1700's. Extensive farm buildings were constructed at the corner where the Monks Way leaves Main Street. Although these buildings were demolished in 1969, a stone stile remains close to the path and on the reverse of this the following words appear:

"T.W. Edge Armiger MDCCCIII completed this cow-hovel farm yard and pump with sough from the quarry to supply the same and sough to carry all the overplus and moisture of farm yard into Smiths wheat-mill and Minnow New River Pond and in the same year 1803 planted this and the two plantations round those buildings,"

A sough is a drain and an Armiger is a person entitled to Heraldic Arms.

Strelley Hall is now the headquarters of Pafec Ltd, Computer Software Specialists.

3 Holly Copse

The bridleway at this point passes alongside Holly Copse - a delightful mixed broadleaved woodland owned and managed by the Woodland Trust. Access is permitted and a path runs parallel to the bridleway providing walkers with an interesting detour.

4 Manor Farm

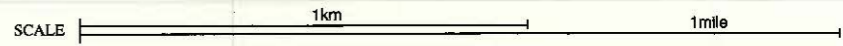
Manor Farm lies on the junction of Robinettes Lane and Dead Lane and is the site of a medieval manor house. Originally the manor house and associated buildings were set in a walled rectangular enclosure with an external moat.

5 Cossall Village

A short excursion away from the Monks Way to explore Cossall is worthwhile as most of the village lies in a conservation area. Cossall has ancient origins, with parts of the church dating back to the 13th century. The village also has many links with the works of author D H Lawrence. His book "The Rainbow" features "Cossethay", which is easily identifiable as Cossall. The Willoughby Almshouses located near the church are said to have once been a chapel, the loft of which was supposedly used to accommodate weary travellers.



KEY	
●	Denotes point of interest
---	"Monks Way" Track
---	"Monks Way" Footpath
 	Locations where traces of stones can be seen
●●●●	Suggested return route
●	Car Parking Areas
C	Albion Leisure Centre
B	Cossall Road, Trowell
A	Broad Oak Pub, Strelley



Circular Walking Routes

The plan overleaf suggests a possible return route making the circular walk about 7 miles. Many other routes are available and for full details of paths in the area please refer to Ordnance Survey Path Finder Sheet 812.

Path surfaces generally are in good condition and have gentle gradients. Walkers need waterproof footwear and should expect to share sections of the route with cyclists and horse riders. The route is not suitable for wheelchair users.

Details of Public Transport links to the area can be obtained by calling the Nottingham Hotline on 0115 924 0000 or the Derby Bus Line on 01332 292200.

The Future

The Monks Way lies within the Greenwood Community Forest and much of the tree planting and improvements to rights of way in the area are in some way due to the forest initiative. More information on the Greenwood is available on 01623 758231.

The Monks Way stones remain as an interesting link with the past, and it is hoped that raising awareness of their significance will help to secure their future.



Cossall Church

The vigilance of local residents has prevented the destruction of the stones in the past and it is hoped that this will continue.

Good records of the location and history of the stones will help to preserve their future so please contact Broxtowe Borough Council at the address overleaf if you have any information.

Further Information/Useful Contacts

For information on Strelley and Cossall Conservation Areas, circular walks, cycling and the Nottingham Canal Local Nature Reserve please telephone Broxtowe Borough Council on (0115) 9177777.

For similar information relating to Ilkeston and the Borough of Erewash please telephone Erewash Borough Council on (0115) 9072244.

The Broxtowe Borough Council wishes to express its thanks to the following for their help in providing information, or funding the production of this leaflet:

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Nottinghamshire County Council



Erewash Borough Council



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