

VILLAGE ECHOES

Our Pannier Way

In 1994 a founder member and later Chairman of the History Society, Len Pierce, wrote a short paragraph in the Parish Magazine. He had been reading an article in the Countryman journal about 'a pannier way' on the Yorkshire moors. This was described as a 'pathway of large stone slabs' and 'such tracks kept men and beasts dry-shod often associated with the activities of the great monastic houses.' It explained that they developed mostly from the late 16th century onwards, constructed wherever the ground might be soft, to ensure safe passage for strings of packhorses. This reminded Len of something similar in Goudhurst that he, together with Ken Bronwin and John Quiddington had unearthed in about 1974. It started from the church steps in Back Lane, went across the field and down the side of Maypole Lane towards Whites.

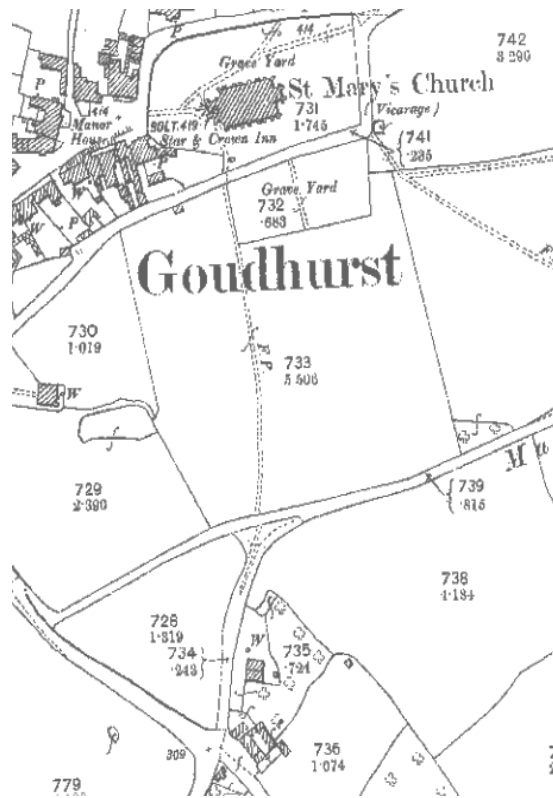


a stone pannier way



pannier way Goudhurst 2025

He said that it was apparently reputed to have been the track to Combwell Priory which supplied the early priests for the church. Unfortunately, there was no photograph taken of their discoveries in 1974 and by the time he wrote the article it had disappeared under grass again. Today (top right) the path is clearly marked with a finger post and stone sign, and continually used but the stones are gone. An Ordnance Survey map of about 1897 (see below) shows the route as he described, which would presumably have continued down the Bedgebury Road to the Priory using plenty of tracks cross country where necessary. Luckily, it hasn't been lost completely as the beginning of the route still exists as a legitimate footpath.



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