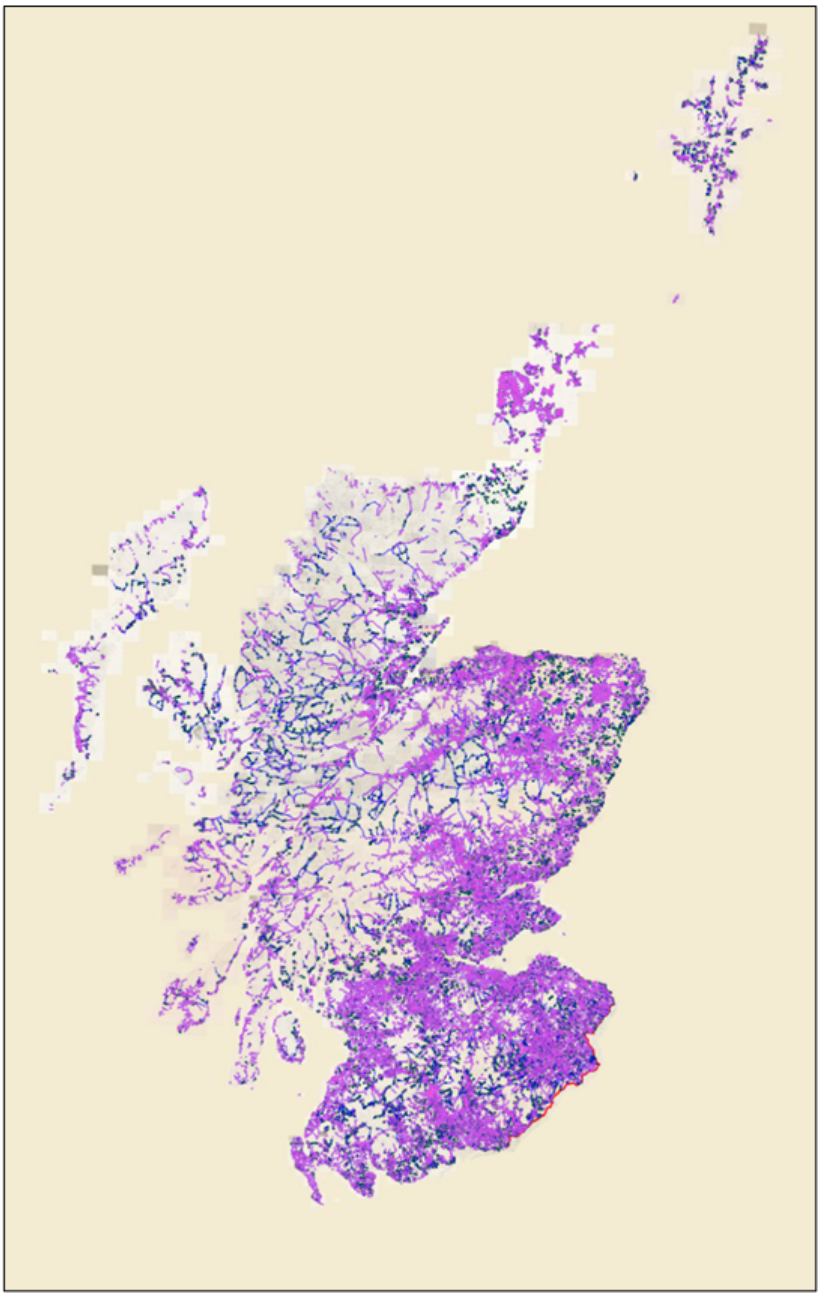
Historic Footpaths

Heritage Paths · https://scotways.com/ken/historic-footpaths/



Introducing the Project

In 2022 ScotWays collaborated with the National Library of Scotland to trace all the paths shown on 1900 Ordnance Survey maps which were highlighted with the term FP or BR. This page is a shorter copy of the National Library of Scotland webpage about the project. Visit the page to

access the dataset and learn a bit more about the project.

This dataset contains records for 120,000 footpaths gathered from Ordnance Survey Six-Inch to the mile maps of Scotland (1888-1913). The footpaths are categorised into those which were labelled Footpath (F.P.) or Bridle Road (B.R.) and those which were not. The paths were traced through a crowdsourcing map transcription project between April and December 2022.

This was a collaborative project between Scotways and the National Library of Scotland.

About the OS Six-Inch mapping

The Ordnance Survey Six-Inch to the Mile (or 1:10,560) County Series is the most comprehensive, topographic mapping covering all of Scotland from the 1890s to the 1940s. The maps show most man-made and natural features in the landscape. Every road, railway, field, fence, wall, stream and building are shown, and smaller features such as letter boxes, bollards on quaysides, mileposts, and flag-staffs are also included too. Uncultivated land is distinguished by different symbols for marsh, bog, and rough grassland, types of woodland are distinguished (e.g., birch, fir, mixed, furze, osier, brushwood), as well as parks, ornamental grounds and orchards. All public boundaries and administrative boundaries (including civil parish, burgh, and county boundaries) are also clearly shown, apart from certain boundaries within towns. Spot heights in feet above mean sea level at Liverpool are shown along roads, railways, etc., and the six-inch maps are the most detailed scale at which contours are shown.

The more detailed 25 inches to the mile (or 1:2,500) maps which cover towns and other inhabited areas allow specific features to be seen more clearly, as well as greater detail for buildings and railways. However, most topographic features on the 25-inch to the mile maps are in fact also shown on the Six-Inch to the mile maps too. We used the 2nd edition of the Six-Inch to the Mile maps in this project, which were revised between 1888-1913. The georeferenced layer of these maps is made up of 7,486 paper map sheets, including 1,136 full sheets and 6,332 quarter sheets.

Project Purpose

The primary aim of the project was to record paths and tracks shown on Ordnance Survey Six-Inch to the Mile maps of around 1900, to help facilitate Scotways' work in researching the backgrounds of footpaths today and safeguarding them as rights of way. The initial focus of the project was therefore on recording paths and tracks which were specifically labelled as 'Footpath' (F.P.) or 'Bridle Road' (B.R.). However, as Ordnance Survey did not assign these abbreviations to many

paths and tracks that were clearly footpaths, the scope of the project was widened to include and trace paths or tracks which did not have F.P. or B.R. abbreviations too. Sometimes more detailed Ordnance Survey 25-inch to the mile maps had these F.P. or B.R. abbreviations which were not generalised into the OS Six-inch maps which we were tracing. In addition, for various practical and legal reasons, Ordnance Survey was reticent in applying F.P. or B.R. abbreviations to many pedestrian or walkable routes which were shown on their maps.

However, the aim was not to trace all tracks or paths. Following the guiding purpose of assisting Scotways, we generally tried to exclude paths or tracks which were not intended for walking (such as firebreaks in woodland, tracks to quarries or refuse heaps, and private tracks leading to or around particular buildings). In general, too, we tried to exclude routeways which were intended for motorised traffic. These were often described as being ‘metalled’, referring to the crushed small pieces of stone that formed part of the system of creating a levelled, sealed and waterproof road surface, as pioneered by John McAdam (1756-1836). Paths and tracks, by way of contrast, were usually on bare soil and described as ‘unmetalled’.

You find out more and download the dataset on the National Library of Scotland website or view it on their online maps viewer.