

WALKING THE CHADDESSEN FOOTPATHS

Just like several other villages around the periphery of Derby, Chaddesden lost its parish council on 1 April 1968 when the greater part of its territory was seized by Derby County Borough Council under the provisions of the Ministry of Housing & Local Government's *Derby Order 1968* (Statutory Instrument 44/1968).¹ The remaining portion, a smaller area of land lying on Chaddesden Common, was transferred at the same time to the adjacent parish of Morley. Our story begins a little under two years previously, on 5 October 1966, when Chaddesden Parish Council decided that one of the jobs it ought to put in order before the fast-approaching date of its dissolution was to check that all the parish footpaths were adequately signposted before their transfer. The Parish Council minute book now in the Derbyshire Record Office (DRO D568/1/9) notes that at a meeting held on this day members of the council decided to seek the guidance of someone who knew the various twists and turns of these ancient routes, and agreed to ask my father, Frank Cholerton, to accompany them on their tour of the paths.



Dad (pictured here) was a good choice to act as their guide for he had been a keen walker who knew the paths of Chaddesden like the proverbial 'back of his hand'. It was agreed to do the survey the next summer, hopefully on a suitably dry summer's day and so, on Saturday 4 June 1967, various members of the Parish Council, Dad, and two youngsters – myself and Mike Moore, set off on our epic walk. The initial chatter died down somewhat after the first half-hour or so as the walkers realised they were going to be in for quite some strenuous exercise. Rather than simply checking for missing or damaged signposts, the Council wanted to do a thorough inspection of the footpaths and so the councillors came equipped with copies of the Definitive Footpath Map and the Definitive Footpath Statement, which meant that numerous halts were called as footpath descriptions were checked against the actual conditions on the ground, noting in particular any broken stiles or footbridges, and paths blocked by overgrown vegetation or barbed wire, etc.

More than half a century later I can still recall that on one particular path we were faced with a large field full of growing corn, and when the councillors checked with Dad and their map they realised the correct course of the path lay right through the middle of the crop. A couple of the councillors suggested that the path could be considered as duly walked and inspected if everyone walked around the edge of the field, but Dad insisted that the farmer should have marked the correct course of the path after sowing his crop, and that the only way to walk it properly was to follow the correct, legal route across the field. So anyone watching us that day would have seen a group of people walking (or perhaps wading might be a more apt description) with considerable difficulty through a waist-high crop until they reached the far side of the field.

The Definitive Footpath Map and Definitive Footpath Statement that I mentioned above were two important features introduced by the *National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949*. This piece of legislation imposed on County Councils the task of accurately surveying and mapping all the public paths in their jurisdiction, and they in turn naturally sought the assistance of district councils and parish councils for more detailed local knowledge. The final stage of their work was the production of the Definitive Footpath Map and the Definitive Footpath Statement – which gave conclusive proof that at the date of their preparation the paths shown or listed on them were indeed public rights of way. Whilst the map is primarily a visual record, the accompanying statement is an interesting document for it gives an insight into the age and importance of these public rights of way. Many were originally created centuries ago to enable folk to reach other parts of the parish or neighbouring villages, and when Chaddesden's remaining open fields and common were enclosed in 1791–93 some of the old paths were closed and new ones established in their stead.

Although good progress was made on that day in 1966, we soon realised that the survey was going to take longer than first thought, so the councillors and Dad agreed to reconvene the very next Saturday to finish the

¹ Other parish councils which ceased to exist at this time included Allestree, Mickleover, Spondon, Chellaston, Littleover and Darley Abbey.

job. No doubt the Parish Council was then kept busy for a few months afterwards as it attempted to rectify those problems highlighted by the survey. All too soon April 1968 arrived and the care of the greater part of the Chaddesden footpath network was transferred to Derby County Borough Council, while responsibility for those remaining paths which had been assigned to Morley Parish Council stayed as before with South-East Derbyshire Rural District Council (later renamed Erewash Borough Council) and Derbyshire County Council.

Once Derby County Borough Council had acquired most of the land previously represented by Chaddesden Parish Council, it lost no time in planning the suburban development of what had hitherto been largely productive agricultural land, and within a few years the public would be reading about the new ‘Oakwood’ project, said to be the largest private housing scheme in Europe ... the rest as they say is history!

Today's Chaddesden is an altogether different place from the Chaddesden of 1966 and whilst the Parish Council is no more, I imagine the same can be said of all or most of its former councillors as *anno domini* has taken its toll, so perhaps Mike Moore and myself are the only ones left from those two summer days when Chaddesden's footpaths were formally walked and surveyed for the very last time! Further details about the Chaddesden Definitive Footpath Map and Statement are given below:

THE DEFINITIVE FOOTPATH MAP & STATEMENT

Some fifty years ago I visited the offices of the South-East Derbyshire R.D.C., which were then in St. Mary's Gate, Derby, and got a copy of the Definitive Footpath Statement, which is summarised below. For each of the parish's twenty footpaths the statement gives a brief description of where it ran from / to as well as providing OS grid references, the nature of its surface, its length, and finally, general remarks. Under this last heading the comment ‘Parish Map 1883’ I take to refer to the First Edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map, whilst ‘Awarded 1793’ alludes to the Chaddesden Enclosure Award of 1793. A couple of points should be borne in mind: (1) The Statement gives the status and position of these Chaddesden footpaths as at a precise moment in time – 1 January 1953; subsequent housing developments have built over significant parts of the footpath network and other paths may have been diverted from their original routes; (2) By the time the Definitive Statement and Map were prepared, Chaddesden had already lost around 17% of its original area to Derby as the result of boundary changes and so some footpaths that were once located in Chaddesden are not listed here.

SOUTH-EAST DERBYSHIRE (FORMERLY SHARDLOW) RURAL DISTRICT PARISH OF CHADDESSEN ~ RELEVANT DATE 1st JANUARY, 1953

No:	Description	Surface	Length	Remarks
1	Footpath from bridge over the Derby Canal at south end of Highfield Lane (373360) in a westerly direction parallel to railway to parish and borough boundary east of Chequers Lane (369361)	Grass	0.29 miles	2 Stiles 1 Footbridge Parish Map 1883
2	Footpath from parish and borough boundary near Nottingham Road Cemetery (371362) along towing path on south side of Derby Canal in an easterly direction to parish and borough boundary (384356)	Grass	1.05 miles	Canal Towing Path Parish Map 1883
3	Footpath from east end of Church Lane (382369) in an easterly direction to Maine Drive at bridge over Chaddesden Brook at north corner of Mosey Yard Plantation (384370)	Grass	0.15 miles	1 Wicket Gate 1 Stile Awarded 1793
4	Footpath from west end of Rupert Road (380374) in a north-westerly direction to junction of Max Road and Buxton Road (379375)	Metalled	0.06 miles	Awarded 1793

5	Footpath from north end of Buxton Road (378380) in a northerly direction to parish boundary at south end of Porters Lane, Breadsall Mount (376387)	Grass	0.04 miles [0.43 miles]	1 Stile Awarded 1793
6	Footpath from east end of Chapel Lane (384371) in a south-easterly direction to north-west corner of Tennessee Road	Metalled Grass	0.06 miles	1 Footbridge Awarded 1793
7	Footpath from Trenton Green (387368) in a south-easterly direction to north corner of Newhaven Road, south of Half Moon Plantation	Metalled	0.02 miles	Awarded 1793
8	Footpath from Morley Road 130 yards north-east of the Wilmot Arms P.H. in a westerly direction to Wood Road (383372)	Ashed	0.05 miles	1 Stile Parish Map 1883
9	Footpath from Morley Road 150 yards north-east of Brookfield Avenue (388376) in a north-easterly direction to Bridle Road 10 (389378)	Grass	0.13	3 Stiles Awarded 1793
10	Bridle Road from Morley Road 300 yards north-east of Brookfield Avenue (388377) in an easterly direction to parish boundary near Lodge (397379)	Grass	0.57	6 Stiles 2 Field Gates Awarded 1793 Width 21 feet
11	Footpath from Morley Road, 200 yards south of Moor Farm [<i>sic</i>] (389380) in an easterly then southerly direction to parish boundary at Lees Brook (394373)	Grass	0.82 [0.65 miles]	6 Stiles 2 Field Gates Awarded 1793
12	Footpath from Morley Road 100 yards south of Moor Farm [<i>sic</i>] ((389381) in a north-westerly direction over old tramway to parish boundary near Priory Flatte (380389)	Grass	0.06 miles [0.8 miles]	5 Stiles 1 Fieldgate 1 Footbridge Awarded 1793
13	Footpath from Locko Road near entrance to Birchwood House (400387) in a northerly direction to the Breadsall–Stanley Road near Lodge (402393)	Grass	0.66 miles [0.41 miles]	4 Stiles 1 Foldgate [?Fieldgate] Parish Map 1883 Diversion Order of 1826
14	Footpath from the Breadsall–Stanley Road near Lodge (402394) in a northerly direction to parish boundary near Kings Corner (402395)	Grass	0.08 miles	2 Stiles Parish Map 1883
15	Footpath along private occupation road from Morley Road at Chaddesden Common (395391) in a northerly direction to Lime Lane (394394)	Grass Ashes	0.19 miles	Awarded 1793
16	Footpath from north end of Wood Road near Stoneyflats (382381) in a northerly direction to junction of footpath No. 12 near parish boundary at Priory Flatte (381389)	Grass Ploughed	0.49 miles	1 Stile 1 Field gate 1 Bridlegate Parish Map 1883

17	Footpath from parish boundary at north end of Canterbury Street (374382) in a north-easterly direction crossing footpath No. 5 to junction of footpath No. 16 (381387)	Grass	0.57 miles	2 Stiles Awarded 1793
18	Footpath from Nottingham Road opposite Lyndhurst Grove (384361) in a southerly direction along Stanley Road (P.S.) to Albert Road	Ashes Metalled	0.08 miles	Posts at north end
19	Footpath from Nottingham Road south of Sunny Grove junction (382362) in a south-westerly direction to Hillside Avenue	Ashes	0.03 miles	
20	Footpath from Nottingham Road, east of Highfield Lane junction (378366) in a northerly direction to Ravenscroft Drive	Ashes	0.08 miles	

As the Definitive Footpath Statement was drawn up nearly seventy years ago some of the names it mentions might be unfamiliar to modern readers, so the following notes may be of assistance:

Path:	Subject:	Details:
1 & 2	<i>Derby Canal</i>	Now filled in. The modern road from the Pentagon to Raynesway largely follows its course.
3	<i>Mosey Yard Plantation</i>	The wooded area immediately to the south of Maine Drive and east of Chaddesden Brook
5	<i>Breadsall Mount</i>	Formerly the Bishop of Derby's residence on Porter's Lane, Breadsall. Demolished c.1970.
7	<i>Half Moon Plantation</i>	The wooded area now bounded by Chesapeake Road
10	<i>Lodge</i>	The westernmost of the two lodge cottages near the Spondon end of the Bridle Path
11 & 12	<i>Moor Farm</i>	Demolished to make way for the Football Academy on Morley Road. Note, however, that the statement actually meant Grove Farm on the opposite side of the road, nearer the village.
12	<i>Old tramway</i>	A colliery tramway which once ran from what is now Hillcrest Road to Stanley Footrill Colliery
12	<i>Priory Flatte</i>	A large mansion, formerly the Crossley family's residence just off Porter's Lane, Breadsall
13	<i>Lodge</i>	North Lodge on the road to Stanley
14	<i>King's Corner</i>	Not the modern public house, but an old house situated down a long drive off the road to Stanley. Also the name of this particular area of Chaddesden.
15	<i>Chaddesden Common</i>	The northern end of Chaddesden. That part of the Common to the west of Morley Road is now covered by the houses of Oakwood.
16	<i>Stoneyflats</i>	Stoney Flatts Farm (also known as Wood Farm) was situated approximately where the Oakwood District Centre is today

By 1953 housing development already meant that some of the footpaths listed in the Definitive Statement given above were just shorter sections of older and longer paths. For example, in 1793 the Chaddesden Enclosure Award had defined the course of *Breadsall Footway* as follows:²

One other public Footway from a Stile at the North Westwardly end of an ancient Inclosure belonging to the said Sir Robert Mead Wilmot called Cholerton Close into and in a North Westwardly direction over an Allotment in the said Breadsall field Number 42 in the said plan herein after set out to the said John Rowland Lichford to and into another Allotment in the same field Number 35 in the said plan herein after set out to the said Henry Cavendish and in the same direction over the said last mentioned Allotment to and into an ancient Inclosure lately belonging to the said Sir Robert Mead Wilmot and herein after by him given up in exchange to the said Henry Cavendish called Top Breadsall Close and from thence in its usual course to and into the Liberty of Breadsall aforesaid Which said last described Footway is hereby called Breadsall Footway

For modern readers perhaps the best way of visualising the approximate course of the eighteenth century *Breadsall Footway* is to think in terms of today's Wilsthorpe Road – Curzon Road – Buxton Road – Porter's Lane, but of course as the new paved streets were laid out in the 1930s and 1940s various sections of the original footpath were rendered obsolete and so, by the time the Definitive Footpath Map and Statement were prepared in 1953 all that remained were two portions: Footpath 4, the gitty between Rupert Road and Max Road, and Footpath 5, from the end of Buxton Road to Porters Lane, Breadsall.

For the most part the Definitive Statement is reasonably accurate as regards Ordnance Survey grid references and path lengths (which it gives in miles) and minor variations have not been commented upon, however, there are four significant errors as follows; Footpath 5 – correct length was 0.43 miles (not 0.04 miles); Footpath 11 – actually began 200 yards south of Grove Farm, Morley Road (not Moor Farm as stated) and was 0.65 miles long (not 0.82 miles); similarly, Footpath 12 began 150 yards to south of Grove Farm, Morley Road, and was 0.8 miles long (not 0.06 miles); and Footpath 13 was 0.41 miles long (not 0.66 miles).

Perhaps the first footpath to be lost after the creation of the Definitive Map and Statement was Footpath 9, which was closed in the 1950s to facilitate the building of the County Secondary Modern School, better known as Olive Eden School and later as Lees Brook School. By the 1980s footpaths 5, 12, 16 and 17 had all disappeared under a welter of concrete and tarmac as the Oakwood development gathered pace. Over on the east side of Morley Road those Chaddesden footpaths transferred to the enlarged Morley parish were redesignated as follows:

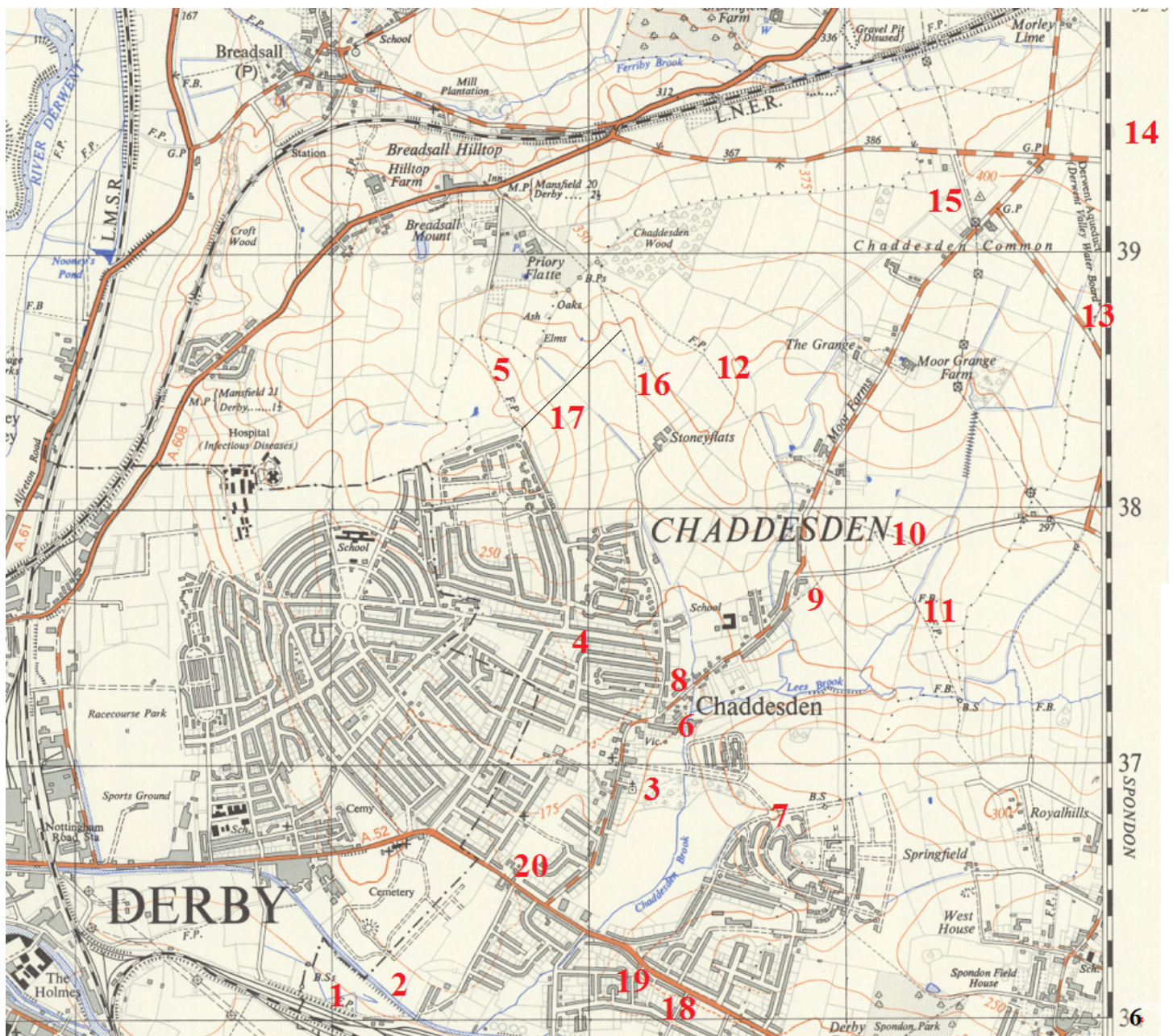
The greater part of the former Bridle Road 10 – became Morley Bridleway 29 and Morley Bridleway 30
Former Footpath 11 – became Morley Footpath 31 and Morley Footpath 32
Former Footpath 13 – became Dale Abbey Footpath 59 and Morley Footpath 33
Former Footpath 14 – became Morley Footpath 34



Sadly the unprecedented development of Chaddesden has meant that the majority of our paths are no more, however, the old Bridle Road 10 and Footpath 11 continue to remain popular today, and this picture taken in March 2011 shows the intersection of the two rights of way.

The original Definitive Footpath Map for Chaddesden was marked out on a 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map, i.e. at a scale of two and a half inches to one mile, or for those who now think in purely metric terms, a scale of 4cm to 1km. I have therefore used a map of the same scale and period in the illustration on the following page to mark the whereabouts of the individual paths as they were in 1953.

² Chaddesden Enclosure Award, 1793, page 29 ... Public Footways to be set out.



**Chaddesden footpaths as at 1 January 1953, as shown on the Definitive Footpath Map.
Base map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland
(<http://maps.nls.uk/index.html>)**

It should be noted that Footpaths 13 and 14 were situated just outside the top right-hand edge of the map, so their positions are only shown approximately.

Many people will of course have their own particular memories of the Chaddesden footpaths, but for those who do not, perhaps the following account of a walk along two of the paths that have now vanished almost without trace may be of interest:

In the late 1960s and early 1970s one of my favourite walks was to take my dog up Wood Road as far as the long drive leading to Wood Farm (Stoney Flatts Farm).³ Just a few yards up the drive, past the end of the old peoples' bungalows, Footpath 16 set out diagonally across a large 28-acre field, the surface of which was usually heavy wet clay in winter and covered with crops in the summer.

³ The farm drive survives in part as Broadstone Close.



© Peter Cholerton, 2020

The drive leading up to Wood Farm c.1974. The stile providing access to Footpath 16 can be seen at the far end of the hedge on the left-hand side.

After walking up a slight gradient for about 400 yards we reached a small spinney with a pond where I often paused for a while to look back towards the houses of Wood Road and Matlock Road (see picture on the next page).⁴ The path then continued on its way for another quarter of a mile or so over two further fields, all the time making towards Priory Flatte – the big house in the distance located just off Porter’s Lane, Breadsall. When I took this photograph of it in 1978 it had been renamed Millis House and was used as the water industry’s training centre. It was demolished a few years later and the houses of Priory Gardens, Oakwood, now occupy its site.



Priory Flatte, Breadsall in 1978. © Peter Cholerton

⁴ My father told me that his grandfather, George Mountney, had once been involved in laying pipe-drains in the vicinity of this pond, the work probably being undertaken in the 1920s or thereabouts.



View from Footpath 16 looking southwards over Chaddesden photographed in 1978



When we got to the former Chaddesden–Breadsall parish boundary I would occasionally try to find one of the three old Victorian cast-iron boundary markers hidden in the undergrowth of the hedge bottom and speculate as to the exact meaning of the somewhat cryptic inscription at the top of each one. Then, if the weather was not particularly wet we would retrace our steps for about 100 yards in order to join Footpath 12, which ran a short distance to the south of the dark and brooding outline of Chaddesden Wood – then very much a private and secluded place where visitors were not welcome. A stile on the far side of a rather muddy and steep ditch frequently proved a little difficult to climb,

but the dog invariably found a place to squeeze through and a few minutes later the panoramic view over the green fields of Chaddesden Common made the effort worthwhile as may be seen in the next photograph.



Taken from Footpath 12 and looking northwards, this photograph of c.1978 shows a very rural Chaddesden Common very different to the Oakwood estate of today!

The path now gradually descended until we reached the land belonging to Valley Farm, where farmer Jack Clarke had helpfully placed a large white-tipped post so that walkers could easily follow the correct line of the footpath. About 100 yards to the southwest of the farmhouse the footpath crossed a small footbridge over an unnamed brook and my dog, Jason, would sometimes exchange a fusillade of barks with Sally, the Clarkes' dog, though this was perhaps to be expected since the two dogs were mother and son! From there it was only a minute's walk to a stile in the hedge and we were on Morley Road and on our way home.



Valley Farm, Morley Road, photographed c.1974. Footpath 12 descended the sloping field visible in the distance over on the left-hand side of the picture.

For anyone interested in walking the remaining footpaths today, copies of the very latest maps can be seen on the following local authority websites:⁵

[Derby City Council – Chaddesden Footpaths \(Northern Section\)](#)

[Derby City Council – Chaddesden Footpaths \(Southern Section\)](#)

[Morley Parish Council](#) Navigate to approximate location, enlarge the map, click on the “layers” button in top right-hand corner and select “Public Rights of Way

Copyright © Peter Cholerton, 2021

⁵ Links correct as of January 2021.