



PEAK & NORTHERN  
FOOTPATHS SOCIETY

# A CENTURY of FOOTPATH PRESERVATION

*The Centenary of the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society*



## COVER MAPS

The 6" to one mile Ordnance Survey maps reproduced on the cover are based on the original 1877-78 survey.

This inside cover is the Second Edition with 1896 revisions and published in 1899.

The Hayfield to Snake Inn path is not shown on this.

The outside cover is the Third Edition with 1919 revisions and published in 1923. It shows clearly the Hayfield to Snake Inn footpath which is named *Snake Path*.



# A CENTURY of FOOTPATH PRESERVATION

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# FOREWORD

*by Sir John Johnson, Chairman of the Countryside Commission*

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When I heard that 1994 was to be the centenary year for the 'Peak and Northern' – as I have always known it – I was eager to offer my heartiest congratulations.

Since my countryside apprenticeship was in the North-West I can say from my own knowledge that the Society has exerted a major influence and campaigned effectively on footpath issues throughout the area that I walked in my youth.

I was delighted when, within weeks of my becoming Chairman of the Countryside Commission, I was invited to be the guest speaker at the Society's 1992 AGM in Manchester; an invitation which I readily accepted and an event which I greatly enjoyed.

Even when I served abroad, walking, particularly in Northern England, was what I looked forward to on my leaves. I was therefore especially pleased upon joining the Commission to find that a target had been set to have the rights of way network properly maintained and waymarked by the Year 2000.

The support and voluntary effort from members of the Peak and Northern and other such groups throughout the country is crucial to the achievement of this target and it is therefore in all our interests that the Society remains in good heart.

However the countryside today is a very different place from what it was in 1894 or even in 1826 when the Society's parent organisation, the Manchester Association for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths was established. The Year 2000 target is not an easy one and will only be achieved if we all pull together, with the need for compromise featuring more frequently than it would have done a century ago.

The Society's record is one of which it can be justifiably proud and on behalf of the Countryside Commission and of footpath users everywhere I offer our thanks and best wishes for the next one hundred years and I look forward to a further celebration at the next 'milestone': the Year 2000!



# 100 – NOT OUT!

*by Leslie Meadowcroft, the Society's Chairman since 1971*

It is not just 100 years of eternal vigilance by the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society that is being celebrated in 1994. The founding fathers began their work in 1826 when the actions of a Flixton landowning magistrate, in attempting to deny public rights, brought about the formation of the Manchester Association for the Preservation of Ancients Footpaths in 1826. The efforts of that organisation continued for many years and, in 1896, it handed over its funds to the newly formed Peak District & Northern Counties Footpaths Preservation Society, to support its fight for the Hayfield to Snake Inn footpath.

The Society remains a vigorous and energetic defender of the public rights. The Society is organised by volunteers who give generously of their time and money to further the cause of maintaining rights-of-way throughout town and countryside.

With the introduction of the Wildlife and Countryside Act in 1981, the Society was given the remit to monitor proposed changes to the rights-of-way network in the counties of Cheshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, South and West Yorkshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside. It is almost unique in that, with the exception of the smaller Chiltern Society, it is the only regional organisation to have government recognition under the Wildlife Act; this also resulted in enlarging considerably the operational area of the Society.

The Society maintains a large library of documents, correspondence and other information in its archives including a complete set of official Definitive Maps for the whole of its territory with the notable exception of Lancashire. We welcome the news that the County Council may now be willing to remedy this discrepancy.

In remote districts, far from the beaten track, the Society's signposts indicate the routes of the most inconspicuous footpaths. Virtually all have been erected by members, who also supply and transport the tools for digging and erection by their own muscle, often carrying posts, signs, picks, crowbars and spades over miles of open country and rough moorland to sites inaccessible to vehicles. There are now over 250 signs throughout the Society's area.

Many complaints of obstructions of footpaths and unauthorised diversions by landowners and others are brought to the notice of the Society which makes every effort to resolve such problems by negotiation. The many issues relating to footpaths, diversions, closures or creations proposed by local authorities or other interested bodies, are now dealt with by a team of assessors who meet weekly. Maps are constantly brought up-to-date, correspondence sent to various interested parties with proposals, recommendations and suggestions made when alterations to the network are under discussion. The Society never baulks at taking a problem to a public inquiry or the magistrates court, and often does, to preserve a right-of-way for the benefit of the many who wish to walk that way.

The work is never ending and continues because of the selfless efforts of those who recognise and appreciate the value of the countryside, continuing a tradition set by the founder members and the many persons who have given such service to the Society during its long history. We hope our successors will continue to provide the necessary effort, finance and other support to protect a priceless resource, namely the footpath network allowing literally millions to enjoy this green and pleasant land.

# A CENTURY OF DRAMATIC CHANGE

It is difficult to realise just how different the world was in 1894 and the unprecedented scale of changes during the last 100 years. In 1894 –

- Queen Victoria had been on the throne for 57 years
- Gladstone, now in his eighties, was serving his last term as prime minister
- the Manchester Ship Canal was officially opened by Queen Victoria
- the Peak Forest Canal celebrated its centenary
- Blackpool Tower was completed
- Robert Louis Stevenson died at the age of 44
- Tower Bridge in London was completed

In 1894 the the railways dominated inland transport with a network covering most of the country, many lines being operated by small independent companies. Most of the network was completed but 1894 saw the opening of the 'Dore & Chinley Railway', or what we now refer to as the Hope Valley Line –

*"Next to the further opening up of the Highlands of Scotland by the 'West Highland Railway' to Fort William and Banavie, the most important event of 1894, as it affects the British tourist, is the completion of the Dore and Chinley connection by the Midland Company. The line is little more than 20 miles in length, but it has involved such engineering difficulties as even the Midland have seldom encountered. The Railway was started by an independent company in 1884 but failed to receive adequate support. The Midland Company then took it up and have made as fine a line as is to be seen in the country. Of the 20 miles, 5½ are through tunnel...."*

1894 also saw the opening of line from Buxton to Parsley Hay –

*"This extension of the Manchester and Buxton branch is mainly interesting to tourists as saving half of the somewhat monotonous ride or walk over the limestone uplands between Buxton and Dovedale. Parsley Hay, promoted to the dignity of a passenger station, is the latest development of railway enterprise. The route may be described as the antithesis of the 'Dore and Chinley' – all along the tops instead of the bottoms ... Just beyond Hindlow it joins the course of the High Peak Mineral Line from Whaley Bridge...."*

For travellers from Manchester to Buxton there was a choice of the L&NWR with fares of 3s 9d (1st class), 2s 11d (2nd class) and 1s 11½d (3rd class) or the Midland Railway whose fares were identical but offering only 1st and 3rd classes.

The petrol engine had been developed by Daimler in the mid 1880's but the few cars that existed resembled large prams and few people had actually one. The Red Flag Act discouraged car ownership and was not repealed until 1896.

Most road transport involved one, two or four horsepower. A four-horse coach ran three times weekly between Sheffield and Castleton with a fare of 2s 6d single or 5s return. In Matlock a two horse carriage could be hired for 5s an hour and a one horse carriage for 3s. *'Waggonettes carrying more than five persons are contracted for.'* In Buxton, a two horse carriage cost 1s 6d a mile and a one horse carriage 1s a mile – *'mules and donkey carriages are cheaper'*.

The Society had been in existence for several years before man's first powered flight yet so dramatic were subsequent developments that the Society's 75th anniversary year in 1969 saw man's first landing on the moon. It is interesting to conjecture whether that event or this Society's fight for the freedom to roam in our countryside, and to protect that countryside, have had the biggest impact on the lives of those living and walking in this area.

# THE OUTDOOR MOVEMENT

One of the most important movements of the last two centuries has been the change in attitudes to our natural surroundings. Large urban populations were more able to escape from the smoke, grime and overcrowding of the industrial towns. The north west was at the forefront of this development and of rambling and rambling clubs in particular.

The industrial revolution created considerable changes in the country scene especially on the borders of the heavily populated manufacturing towns including new methods of transport – first the canals, then railways, then ‘improved’ motor roads carving through the countryside.

Some of the earliest individuals and groups to explore the country were those concerned with natural history, often combined with the pleasures of rambling. The *Manchester Field Naturalists’ & Archeologists’ Society* was founded in 1860 – ‘for ladies and gentlemen who are specially interested in natural history ... and also those who ... delight to ramble in the country ....’

The *Stockport Society of Field Naturalists* was founded in 1884 and renamed the *Stockport Field Club* in 1896, it organised six rambles a year to Bollington, Rainow, etc, normally travelling by train. Both clubs had affiliated to this Society by 1909 and are still affiliated to us.

Gradually others began to visit the country for exercise and to enjoy the scenery although the lack of both leisure time and money initially made this difficult for most people. However, by the turn of the century, the more enlightened employers began to recognise the value of a healthier work force through longer weekend and regular annual holidays.

From their earliest days, the railway companies organised excursions which, with their cheap fares, encouraged more and more town dwellers to explore the countryside. By the 1890s they were producing guides to the areas accessible by their services. For example, in 1907 the L&NWR published a list of caterers, fares and places of interest within easy reach of Manchester. A memorable tea or supper was often an important part of any trip to the country with a huge variety of cafés, farmhouses and cottages offering refreshments.

The churches and Sunday schools were focal points of many communities and were at the forefront of organising and supporting these excursions into the countryside. Some of our earliest affiliated organisations included (in 1911 for example) the *Openshaw Brotherhood*, the *Dukinfield Old Chapel & Sunday School Rambling Club*, the *Trinity Wesleyan Sunday School Rambling Club* and the *Union Chapel Rambling Club*.

The 1880’s saw the first organised rambling clubs. The *Co-operative Holidays Association* was founded in 1891 and was one of the first organisations to affiliate to this Society as was the *Ashton CHA Rambling Club*. The *Manchester Pedestrian Club* was founded in 1903 and soon affiliated to this Society as did the *Sheffield Clarion Ramblers*. The *Rucksack Club* was founded in 1907 and affiliated to this Society in 1913. Nearly 90 years later these clubs are still affiliated to this Society which says a great deal about them and us!

By the 1920s the number of rambling clubs and other organisations such as Sunday schools and adult education groups was so great that, in 1922, a Manchester Federation was organised. Its purpose was to foster a love of nature and the outdoor life, preserve ramblers rights and privileges, lobby for better transport facilities and co-operate with other organisations such as the Peak & Northern. JC Walters was the first chairman and Harold Wild its first secretary. In 1932 a National Council of Ramblers Federations was formed and this changed its name to the Ramblers’ Association. However, the Manchester Federation maintained its independence until 1939 when it finally decided to amalgamate with the RA.

# FORMATION OF THE SOCIETY

Ours was not the first footpaths preservation society in Manchester. The *Manchester Association for the Preservation of Ancient Public Footpaths* was established in 1826 to oppose the actions of Mr Ralph Wright, a Flixton landowner and magistrate. It was active for nearly 40 years particularly under Samuel Cottam's secretaryship when meetings were held monthly in the old Manchester Town Hall in King Street. As explained later, its funds were kept in safe keeping until September 1896 when handed over to the newly formed Peak & Northern Society; Samuel Cottam had died just four days earlier at the age of 68.

1876 saw the formation of the '*Hayfield and Kinderscout Ancient Footpaths Association*'. During the Hayfield Association's brief life it had three achievements to its credit. It saved for public use the Carr Meadow – Kinder – Stonyford bridle road, it produced a splendid little guide book with map and illustrations describing the public paths in the Hayfield area and it made the first move in the struggle for the Hayfield Mill Hill – Snake Inn right of way. The Peak & Northern then took up, in 1894, the work which this local association had commenced in so determined a fashion eighteen years previously.

## How then did our Society start?

In the 1890's the question of the right of public access to Kinder Scout was a hardy annual which cropped up every summer in the Manchester papers. On the 29th July 1894, an anonymous letter appeared in the '*Manchester Guardian*' pointing out that Kinder was only part of a larger problem. The public was being excluded from more and more stretches of moor-land, and there was no authority whose special business it was to see that old-established rights of way were respected.

A meeting was held in the Piccadilly Restaurant, Manchester, on the 3rd August and the first minute book of the Society records -

*'At a meeting held at the above restaurant on this date convened by Mr. W.H. Chadwick of Church Lane, Gorton, to consider the best means of securing the public rights of way over Kinderscout from Hayfield to the Snake Inn, it was resolved - "That Mr C.T. Tallent Bateman take the chair.'*

*After discussing the best method of securing the public right, it was resolved - "That a society be formed to preserve public rights of way within 50 miles of Manchester and such society be called 'The Manchester and District Footpaths Preservation Society'.*

*It was moved by Mr. Abel Heywood and seconded by Mr. J.B. Cooper - "That the Society first deal with the public right of way over Kinderscout from Hayfield to the Snake Inn.'*

*Resolved - "That Mr. L. Caradoc Evans of Didsbury be appointed secretary pro tem.'*

A meeting was held the following day (4th August) at Hayfield when some gentlemen from Derby and elsewhere attended and it was resolved to send to the proposed Society a recommendation that it be called *The Peak District Footpaths Preservation Society* and 'those present pledged themselves to join it'.

## The Inaugural Meeting

The Society was formed officially at a meeting held at 7pm on Thursday 16th August 1894 in the Young Men's Christian Association Hall, Peter Street, Manchester. The rules adopted included the following -



1.— *The Society shall be called THE PEAK DISTRICT AND NORTHERN COUNTIES FOOTPATHS PRESERVATION SOCIETY."*

2.— *The objects of the Society shall be:—*

*(a) The preservation, maintenance and defence of the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of public highways, footpaths, bridlepaths, byeways and other ways, vacant spaces, waste lands, and roadside slips, and to right of recreation over commons in the Northern and Midland Counties, particularly in the Peak District.*

*(b) The prevention of the abuse of such rights, especially trespass and damage to crops and property, and disturbance of game by trespassers.*

*(c) The support by influence, petition or otherwise, of Bills in Parliament promoting the aforesaid objects, or any of them, or others of a like or kindred nature.*

*(d) The purchase, or promoting the purchase of rights of way and rights over open spaces to be dedicated to, the use of the public for ever.*

3.— *An annual subscription of 2s. 6d. or upwards, payable in advance on the first day of October in each year, shall constitute membership.*

4.— *The business of the Society not transacted in General Meeting shall be in the hands of a Managing Committee, elected annually, and consisting of the President, Vice-Presidents, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Solicitor, Honorary Secretary, and not less than twelve other members of the Society, with power to add to their number.*

The members of the first Managing Committee elected at the meeting were – Robert Burn (Wilmslow), Jas. B. Cooper (Whaley Bridge), HT Crook C.E. (Manchester), Dr G H Dawes (Sheffield), JB Elverston (Heaton Chapel), Luke Garside (Hayfield), Abel Heywood (Manchester), Edward G Hiller (Chorlton cum Hardy), Wm Ingham (Oldham), A W Massey (Manchester), Thomas Mower (New Mills), RM Pankhurst (Manchester), FW Roe Rycroft (Manchester), WS Smithard (Derby), Harold Spencer (Manchester), CT Tallent Bateman (Manchester), TL Tudor (Derby) and FH Warburton (Manchester).

Seldom can a letter to the 'Guardian' have achieved such immediate and lasting results. The editor hailed the Society as the first tangible result of the Kinder Scout agitation, and hoped it would not disappear until it had effected 'something solid.' Rather optimistically, he hoped that access to Kinder Scout might fairly soon be obtained by a little friendly negotiation! Some 60 years were to pass before much progress was made.

The Society grew and flourished on the annual subscription of 2/6d and by the time the first Annual Report and Balance Sheet was published for the year ending 30th September 1895 it was able to show many illustrious names among its honorary officers. The president was Sir William H Bailey of Sale, Cheshire and one vice president was The Ven Archdeacon Anson, Manchester. Sections were formed in Derby (the Hon Frederick Strutt, JP was their President) and Sheffield whose President was CH Bingham Esq, Ex Master Cutler. Within a year had 600 members in – Derby (89), Hayfield (25), Manchester etc (407) and Sheffield (182).

In 1894, the immediate objective was to establish the existence of a right of way from Hayfield to the Woodlands, Ashopdale – in other words the now familiar Snake footpath. This was achieved in less than three years, but before that hundreds of meetings had been held by the Investigating and Managing committees, and scores of visits paid to Hayfield, Woodlands, Glossop and Sheffield, as well as to Hope, Derby, London, etc. Public and other records were laboriously searched, evidence was taken from old people and so on. A guarantee fund of £1,000 was raised in anticipation of legal action, but the path was finally conceded by the landowners and the total cost was just over £400.

The 'Manchester Guardian' reported (24th September 1896) –

*"The Peak District and Northern Counties Footpaths Preservation Society has happily succeeded in its first enterprise. The favourite route over Kinder Scout, from Hayfield to the Snake Inn, has been secured for ever to the public. All that remains to be done is to form a path, erect signposts, and build a small bridge over the Lady Brook near the Snake Inn. Everyone will then be able to take this delightful walk through some of the finest and wildest scenery in the Peak District without let or hindrance. This peaceful victory over the landowners who threatened for a time to close the path, although within the memory of man the public had always enjoyed the right of way, speaks volumes for the energy and tact displayed by the officials of the Society. The appeal the Society now makes for £500 to pay the legal and other costs incurred in securing the footpath, will gain a ready response). Mr Benjamin Armitage, of Chomlea, has already contributed about £184 which, it is interesting to know, is the balance of a Fund raised by an old Manchester footpaths preservation society, founded in 1826 and existing as late as 1863. The remainder will no doubt be found by private subscribers. The society that has rendered such a great public service should not remain a moment in doubt whether its labours are appreciated for it has much work to do in the future."*

The Society's Annual Report for 1898 provides considerable information about the detailed negotiations and work required to achieve this notable success, such as the following –

*As announced to the Annual Meeting, held in 1897, this right of way has been secured. Certain obligations were thrown on the Society with regard to:-*

- (a) The forming and clearly indicating the entire route from the Jumble to the Snake Inn.*
- (b) The placing of sign posts in various places to indicate that roads crossing or deviating from the admitted route are "private" roads.*
- (c) The making of stiles on walls at present crossing the route on the Hayfield side.*
- (d) The draining of the difficult part of the route near Mill Hill.*
- (e) The building of a foot-bridge over the Lady Clough above the junction of the Lady Clough stream with the Ashop river.*
- (f) The repair for a limited period of a short length of wall.*
- (g) The payment of certain law costs, viz., those of the Duke of Devonshire, Mr Sumner, the Duke's shooting tenants, and certain survey charges of some of the landowners.*

The covenants and conditions in the agreements were duly complied with and the works stipulated all carried out. By the side of the path above Kinder Reservoir, attached to an old tree stump, is the original cast iron plate warning against anything that might cause pollution to the reservoir below; the erection of this sign was one of these conditions.

### **Formal Opening 1897**

The path was formally opened on the 29th May 1897 by the President, Sir WH Bailey, attended by a large body of subscribers and friends. It was a happy coincidence, much commented on at the time, that the celebration of the Society's success should take place within weeks of the commemoration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

A small memento was issued by the Committee on the opening day. This consisted of twelve views with letterpress descriptions, a brief record of the work of the Society in regard to the path, and a one-inch scale map of the district showing the route. Though a considerable number of copies was given to subscribers, the publication resulted in a profit to the Society; the booklet was reprinted and copies sold for 1s.

As mentioned earlier the Society's Chairman, Abel Heywood, received the following letter in September 1896 –

'Chomlea'  
Pendleton  
Manchester  
September 15th, 1896

*Dear Mr Heywood*

Having noticed in the press a while since that you had been successful in the proceedings you have been engaged in for a long time for acquiring freedom of passage over the Kinder Scout country, you will remember I waited on you to make inquiry as to what cost you had incurred, or what obligations you had entered upon, in those efforts, and learnt that in total it amounted to about £500. My reason for doing this was because I have acted for a great many years as deputy to my late father, Sir Elkanah Armitage, who was the last appointed treasurer of a fund raised for local purposes of a like kind. the said society was entitled 'The Manchester Association for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths' and was established in 1826, and the latest official record of its proceedings was on 1863, when Mr Samuel E. Cottam and Mr Samuel Pope, now Q.C., were appointed to offices as secretary and advising counsel. Only one other known subscriber survives, that is Mr Thomas Ashton. These gentlemen all agree that it is a very proper way of disposal of the remnant of the fund, and I shall be happy, therefore, to hand you a cheque for the sum of £184 2s. 10d. when your Association is ready to make use of it. As this is a subject of public interest in Manchester at a former period, I will thank you to give publicity to this statement in any way you think well.

*I remain,*  
*Yours faithfully,*  
BENJAMIN ARMITAGE

The 1898 annual report included a consolidated Income and Expenditure Account covering the period from the Society's formation in August 1894 to the 30th September 1898. Receipts (mostly donations to the Kinder Scout Appeal Fund) were £741 8s 0d. Total expenditure was just over £650, the major item being the cost of the Kinder Scout Footpath campaign at £415.

It is important to emphasise that the apparently modest sums mentioned in this chapter were considerable amounts in the relation to 1894 values.

# A CENTURY OF FOOTPATHS PRESERVATION

*So much for the initial excitement and achievements...*

When it was over the Society settled down to an active programme of footpaths preservation work which continued until the outbreak of war in 1914.

## **New Reservoirs**

In those days many local authorities were building new reservoirs, and the Society had to intervene on a number of occasions to prevent the closure of footpaths on land acquired for water gathering grounds. The Hayfield-Snake path had not been opened long when the attention of the Society was drawn to the Bills in Parliament for converting the Upper Derwent into a valley of reservoirs. Parliamentary action was taken in 1904 and, after protracted negotiation, all the threatened paths were secured or satisfactory substitutes arranged. Subsequently it came to the notice of the Society that pedestrians wishing to use the road from Slippery Stones on the eastern side of the reservoirs had been turned back. The Society took the matter up with the owner and very shortly the public right of passage was admitted, and a 'Private Road' notice was amended to read '*Private Road: except to pedestrians*'.

When the Ashton, Stalybridge and Dukinfield Waterworks Board lodged their bill for making of the Chew Reservoir, the now well-known Greenfield – Crowden footpath, was affected and it was only after Parliamentary action had been taken in 1907 that negotiations with the Bill's promoters resulted in the inclusion of clauses to provide a substitute path. In a more recent case the Society's officers discovered that a legal right of way still existed under the waters of a reservoir which had been in existence for several years. Fortunately, it did not prove necessary to organise a party to assert our right of passage – the water board gave us a new path instead.

## **Doctor's Gate Roman road**

This had been a public way for centuries, but after the new turnpike road was built in the 1820s, the old road was allowed to fall into very bad repair. Grouse shooting became popular and shooting tenants long resisted the determination of Manchester and Sheffield walkers to enjoy their rights along this ancient way. Following negotiations over many years, with Joseph Macauley and GHB Ward of Sheffield playing a prominent part, the Footpaths Society reached an agreement in 1912 with the owner. He agreed to reopen the path and repair some portions of it while, on their part, the Society undertook to use their influence to persuade pedestrians not to use the path during the grouse breeding and shooting seasons. However, that the Society did not admit any limitation of the public's right to use the path at all times, and it was an integral part of the gentleman's agreement that the path should never be physically closed. This arrangement worked for several years, but early in the post-war period the landowner, and his successors in title, took to closing the path during the breeding and shooting seasons. The Society considered the agreement had been violated and advised the public to use it at all times. Eventually, in 1928, the owner gave way and the public right was firmly established. Much credit for this and other early successes was due to Col HT Crook, one of the Society's founders and for many years Honorary Surveyor and President.

Other activities in the early years included the erection of a large number of the footpath signposts which are dotted about the Peak District today. Also a suggestion to the London and North Western Railway Co. that one-inch maps should be displayed at certain railway stations; many such maps were still being shown until the sixties. The Society also interested itself in certain Lake District footpaths, but soon realised it had not the means to be effective at such a distance from Manchester.

## **Between the Wars**

The end of the First World War found the Society in the doldrums, but there was much work to be done and it was not long before new workers came forward. In 1919, the **Manchester Ramblers' Council**, the forerunner of the present Manchester Area of the Ramblers' Association, came into being, and its members played a large part in reviving our Society. Prominent among them was Harold Wild, who had been Secretary of the Ramblers' Council but then served the Society faithfully as Footpaths Inspector for 30 years. From that time there was a close and harmonious relationship between the two organisations.

The old bridleway between **Westend** and **Alport Castles** had been obstructed at intervals over a number of years from 1923 onwards. This proved to be a protracted and difficult case and it was not until 1940 that it was finally settled in favour of the public, for which we are deeply indebted to Harold Wild. In the early twenties the Society played a part in securing the reopening of a number of paths around **Haddon Hall**. The **Bakewell Council** was prevailed upon to remove certain obstructions erected by the landowner and legal proceedings were instigated but the case was settled out of court in favour of the public.

## **The Society's first court case**

It was not until 1929, when the Society had been in existence for 35 years, that we actually fought a case. It says much for the skill and adroitness of the Society's officers that so much was achieved without direct legal action; we were fortunate in having legal people among our officers who appreciated the desirability of keeping out of court as far as possible! The Benfield footpath dispute was like a great many others we have been involved in. It must have been clear to everyone that a public right of way existed, yet the local council refused to take any action to establish the public right. The dispute dragged on from 1924 until 1929 during which time several demonstrations were arranged. On one occasion more than 200 people went over the path but the obstructions were always replaced. Finally, one of our members took out a summons against the farmer and won the case. Years afterwards, Edwin Royce questioned whether it had been worthwhile to go to so much trouble over 'the muddy little Benfield track', but the case showed the Society had teeth and was prepared to use them.

The story of the Society between the wars was largely one of innumerable small footpath disputes similar to the Benfield case. Many of these were dealt with successfully by diplomatic correspondence by Thomas Boulger, the Society's Secretary for 25 years. More important issues included preventing a wholesale closure of footpaths when the **Goyt reservoir** was built and arranging a satisfactory settlement in connection with the proposed **Manifold reservoir** which, fortunately, was never built. We also helped to oppose proposals to blast a new main road through the **Winnats Pass** at **Castleton** and secured new paths on **The Cloud** at **Buglawton** for which Arthur Smith was largely responsible.

## **World War Two**

The Society continued to operate during the war including publishing an annual report each year. However, celebration of the Society's golden jubilee was delayed until 1947.

## **Golden Jubilee**

A 'Kinderscout Footpaths Anniversary Celebration' was held on Saturday 7th June 1947 and further details are given in page 35. **PM Oliver**, who had been Liberal MP for the **Blackley Division** of Manchester in the twenties, was the Society's President from 1945 until his death in 1954. He left various bequests to religious and charitable institutions including the **Peak & Northern**. In 1958, a footbridge in **Cheedale** was built and dedicated to him to replace a bridge washed away in 1954.

## National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949

Interest in National Parks, access to mountains and footpaths now reached its zenith. Years of agitation by the open-air and amenity movement culminated in the passing of the above Act. One consequence was the colossal survey of all footpaths in the country. Our Society organised a voluntary survey in its own district and was fortunate in securing the services of Norman Redford, the right man for the job if ever there was one. Under his leadership the voluntary surveying of paths in our district was carried out with great vigour and thoroughness. This survey involved an enormous amount of work – collecting evidence, lodging objections, appearing at hearings, seeking witnesses, etc. The crucial task of finding witnesses to appear at Quarter Sessions was much to the fore and much of the drive and initiative in these efforts was supplied by the indomitable Arthur Smith.

Another important consequence of the 1949 Act was the gradual freeing of Kinder Scout, Bleaklow and other moorland areas devoted to grouse shooting or water gathering, the whole Access Area now amounting to some 60,000 acres out of a total of some 70,000 in England and Wales. The ancient discontents out of which our Society was born had thus been remedied and we are grateful to all concerned, especially the pre-1949 fighters and propagandists, GHB Ward, Edwin Royce, P A Barnes, Tom Stephenson and to the Access Committee of the Peak Park Planning Board under the chairmanship of our former Secretary, Philip Daley.

### ‘Dispute over Bridge that no longer Spans its Brook’

During the spring of 1952, the Society’s longstanding disagreement with the New Mills UDC, about repairs to the bridge over Rowarth Brook, featured in the *‘Manchester Guardian’* under the above heading. The article continued –

*“Rowarth Brook in fair and dry weather bickers down past Rowarth village and into the river Sett farther down the valley as innocently as any in the country. After any rain, however, it shows its fickle nature’. Several times during heavy rains it had stormed the banks, once giving the finishing blow to a two storey building, and on another occasion flooding a nearby inn to a depth of four feet knocking down stonework and, on the testimony of the landlord left ‘the men’s convenience overhanging the torrent by a thread’.*

*“Rowarth Bridge still stands but in name only. It was the brook’s last whim after heavy rain in 1944 to make a sinuous turn and avoid the bridge entirely. The three planks and handrail now stand in pirate fashion ready to launch the unwary walker into the slowly widening gulf at the side.*

*“A principle was at stake here. The Peak District & Northern Counties Footpaths Preservation Society began correspondence with the New Mills U.D.C. five years ago about the need for a longer bridge but neither side would give way. The Council said it would cost £200 for the appropriate repairs. The Society obtained an estimate to the effect that the repairs could be done for £54. New Mills Council also based its case on a legal principle and not on the matter of costs. It admits liability only for ‘repairing and maintaining the surface of paths and highways in its territory’. But where has the surface of the Rowarth footpath gone? ‘Down the brook, down the Sett, down the Goyt, down the Mersey, and into the sea. No surface, no repairs’.”*

After many years of disagreement between the Council and the Society a compromise was reached. A new bridge was erected in 1982 and dedicated to – Harold Wild, of course!

### Diamond Jubilee

The Society celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1954 with a high tea at Lyme Hall and further details are given in page 38.

**GBH Ward** was a giant among those who love the countryside and a member of many societies concerned with rambling and countryside activities. He wrote many ramblers publications, and for many years published the Sheffield Clarion Handbook. He died in 1957 and a plaque to his memory was erected on Lose Hill in the area known as 'Ward's Piece'. Sadly, the Hallamshire Footpaths Society petered out in 1957 after his death and our Society agreed to continue its work with inspectors provided by the Sheffield Area of the RA.

From the mid 1930s the Society took a prominent part in persuading the Staffordshire County Council to convert the track of the abandoned **Manifold Valley Light Railway** into a footpath and protested when a short stretch, including the Swainsley tunnel, was later made into a motor road. In 1958 the County Council sought to convert a further 1½ miles, but this time the objectors prevailed and no further inroads have occurred.

Interference with footpaths on **Abney Moor** was a source of anxiety for many years and, in 1960, the owner objected to the inclusion of several paths on the draft map of Abney. A change of ownership shortly afterwards enabled our Secretary, H King, to secure the removal of the objections. About this time, with the Liverpool Area of the RA we successfully opposed an attempt by the Potteries Water Board to close two paths in the **Peckforton Hills**. Our inspector, Arthur Nash, played a prominent part including collecting 400 signatures.

We also negotiated a footpath settlement with Stockport in connection with the second **Goyt** reservoir. We were less successful with the longstanding problem of rights of way around **Plattwood Farm**, Lyme Handley, though a party walked the disputed paths in 1961. In the same year the Peak Park Planning Board arranged for the **Pennine Way** to start at the Log Bridge over the Grindsbrook at Edale, and the Society first persuaded the late Mrs Follett to grant a permissive path on to Kinder by this route.

**Thomas Boulger**, who started as an inspector in 1920, was our Secretary from 1921 to 1946 and later served as Vice-Chairman and Chairman. He died in 1963, after 43 years' service and a memorial footbridge was erected in 1965 at Carr Meadow, Little Hayfield.

### **Canal towpaths**

The question of canal towpaths figured in our annual reports many times after 1955 when the British Waterways Board claimed they were not public but merely sufferance paths. Our opposition was not very successful in Lancashire. But in 1967 the Board appealed to Quarter Sessions against the scheduling of the towpath of the Peak Forest Canal as public and we produced enough witnesses to establish the status of all of the towpath, except for 1½ miles between Hyde and Dukinfield. The Board had withdrawn their opposition to 9½ miles of the Macclesfield Canal southwards from Marple and subsequently yielded with other canals.

### **A Rose by any other Name...**

The Society's 1968 AGM agreed to shorten our name to 'Peak and Northern Footpaths Society'.

### **Footpath rationalisation**

In 1966 the Society had submitted a statement of evidence to the official Gosling Footpaths Committee setting out our objections to the suggested planned network of new footpaths which farming and landowning interests hoped would replace the traditional system. The Gosling Committee did not favour this idea and it was not included in the Countryside Act. In 1971 the landowners' and farmers' organisations continued their efforts to reduce considerably the size of the footpath network, but 'rationalisation' – a word associated with the unpopular Beeching rail closures – was dropped in favour of 're-styling' or 're-designing'. We remained of the opinion that no wholesale re-appraisal of all footpaths was necessary or desirable and existing legislation provided ample facilities for changes where landowners really needed them.

## **Greater Manchester Act**

In 1978, the Society mounted a campaign against a clause in the Greater Manchester Bill which would have enabled both county and district councils to apply direct to the Crown Court for footpath closure orders. As a direct result of the pressures applied by members of the Society, well supported by our many affiliated Societies, the offending clause was completely re-drafted to specifically exclude footpaths, bridleways, cartways, RUPPs and 'byways open to all traffic'.

## **COSA Unit**

In 1980 the Society established an Archive and Record Section in premises at Hazel Grove. A large room was furnished and equipped with steel shelves, filing cabinets, large table and seating for up to 12 people. Definitive footpath maps were filed for easy reference and work started on a card index system of the Society's activities, particularly the recording of footpaths in the Society's area, a long term project in view of the number of records involved. It has been invaluable to have such a wealth of information available, particularly when dealing with footpath disputes and public inquiries. The evolving nature of their work needed a more suitable title to describe the range of their duties – COSA is the acronym for the *Consultations, Orders, Signs and Archives Unit*. Team members have shown remarkable diligence in their work and weekly attendance, sometimes including bank holidays, throughout the years. We are all very indebted to them.

## **Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981**

This Act permitted landowners to apply to the local authority for a footpath to be deleted from the definitive map on the grounds that it is not public. The first example in 1984 was Heywood FP95 at Delph House Farm, Birtles which had been saved in the 1970s when, after a public inquiry, the Secretary of State decided the path was useful part of the network of paths around the Ashworth Valley. In 1984, the owner applied to the Greater Manchester CC for the deletion of the path on the grounds that it should not have appeared on the map in the first place. Yet another further public inquiry but this time we lost the case and the path.

In 1984 we were able to appoint, for the first time in many years, **footpath inspectors** in Chorley, Lancashire, and Calderdale, West Yorkshire. It soon became apparent just how bad the footpath networks in these two areas had become.

## **Dr FSH Head PhD, DSc**

The Society's President for 30 years until his death, Frank was always keen to consider the finer points of life as epitomised in his invaluable work for the Society over 47 years. He joined the Society in 1938, was elected President in 1955 and was also the Society's Chairman from 1962 until 1971. He was a very active member of the Manchester Area of the RA and a member of their National Executive Committee for many years. He was a member of the Peak District Voluntary Joint Committee and the Kinder Advisory Committee to the National Trust. Frank died in 1985 and, in his memory, a site was purchased near the summit of South Head and transferred to the National Trust. A memorial was erected in 1987 and dedicated in the presence of many Society members.

## **Marple FP187**

Our success in saving this footpath, celebrated with a victory walk in January 1989, was a triumph of co-operation between the Society and the Ramblers' Association. The path had been obstructed by a two metre high electrified deer fence. We wrote to Stockport MBC in July 1983 asking that the path should be re-opened to the public; the Council replied promptly that any obstructions would be removed but then procrastinated over the issue until October 1987 when they made an order to divert the path on to a non-definitive path; this had existed for a period far in excess of the time needed for 'deemed dedication'. The Society and the RA



took exception to a local authority condoning an illegal act: the RA was successful in prosecuting the landowner who was convicted in the Magistrates Court and ordered to remove the obstruction. An appeal was lodged and the matter dragged on across the summer until it was withdrawn at virtually the last minute. A public inquiry was held at Marple in September into the diversion order at which the two societies and interested individuals set out their strong objections. The inspector's decision, refusing to confirm the order, was announced just before Christmas giving Stockport little choice but to act and two gates were installed in the deer fence by the middle of January.

The long running saga of the **Windmill Woods** path, claimed by this and the Knutsford Civic Society came to a head when the Department of the Environment ordered Cheshire CC to promote a Creation Order. Following an objection by the landowner, a public inquiry was held in Knutsford in 1989. There was strong public support, considerable evidence was produced and the inspector found in our favour.

### **The Race is On**

In 1987 the Countryside Commission launched its 'policies for enjoying the countryside' proposals with a target that 'all rights of way should be legally defined, properly maintained and well publicised by the end of the century'. Six years after the launch date and with six years to the end of the century, members often ask how the policy is working. The Secretary's comments in 1993 suggested most authorities had recognised the need for action and accepted the target is both reasonable and necessary. One problem inhibiting more positive action is the lack of finance; for example one authority, with some 532km of rights of way, has an annual budget of £6,000 – the possibility of their meeting the Commissions' deadline is almost nil.

### **Taking Stock**

In researching the history of the Society we were constantly impressed by the volume and variety of work undertaken by the Society and we are left with an overwhelming impression of the dedicated and often lonely work undertaken by so many of the Society's officers and members throughout its history. Many names appear in this booklet but, sadly, the invaluable contributions of many more are not even acknowledged. To them we offer both our thanks and apologies.

Recent annual reports and minutes of the monthly Council meetings show very clearly that the Society continues to flourish and to increase its workload and commitments. The Society can celebrate its centenary with much satisfaction. Never have its membership, figures, both individuals and affiliated organisations, financial position and number of voluntary workers been more satisfactory. Our Chairman and Secretary can take much of the credit for this

- **Leslie Meadowcroft**, our Chairman since 1971, wears so many hats whilst using his expertise for the benefit of the Society at all levels of its operations including the COSA unit.
- **Derek Taylor** has been the Society's super efficient Secretary for the past 16 years with a workload which constantly leaves Council members in awe; the Society now has an excellent team of over 60 footpath inspectors for which he must take much of the credit.

However, the future of the Society is not without some cause for concern. A constant theme in the Society's annual reports is that our membership represents but a small proportion of the many thousands of people who enjoy walking in the countryside and who benefit from its activities. Furthermore, too many tasks are falling on too few volunteers and there is much work which they are unable to undertake. For example, too often we are unrepresented at public inquiries and Magistrates' Court hearings or unable to respond adequately to plans and reports prepared by local authorities, etc. Remedying these shortfalls is the challenge ahead for us all.

# OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

The following is but a very brief summary of the many members that have held office during the Society's history. It is also possible that more detailed analysis of the Society's records would identify errors or omissions in the information given.

## President

1894-1913	Sir Wm H Bailey
1914-34	Col HT Crook
1935-44	AR Moon LLM
1944-53	PM Oliver
1954-85	Dr FSH Head
1984-	vacant

## Chairman

At times a chairman was appointed by the Managing Committee Council and not by the AGM; in such cases, the post is not shown in the annual report. As shown, at other times the President also acted as chairman.

1894-1906	Abel Heywood
1907-08	?
1909	Col HT Crook
1910	?
1911	Abel Heywood
1912-14	Col HT Crook
1914-34	(the President)
1935-53	PM Oliver
1954-61	T Boulger
1962-70	(the President)
1971-	Leslie Meadowcroft

## Treasurer

1894	Secretary
1895	Wm Bell
1896-1908	JB Elverston
1909-32	FW Wigelsworth
1933-42	AE Bowen
1943-46	JE Broom
1947-74	GS Cooper
1975-80	Rex Walsh
1981-93	Stephen Shaw
1994-	Keith Wykes

## General Secretaries

The Society's secretarial arrangements have varied over the years and the following is necessarily rather simplified. As indicated, between 1920 to 1954 the Society had both an honorary secretary and a secretary.

## Honorary Secretary

*(from 1970 = Honorary General Secretary)*

1894-98	L Caradoc Evans
1899	LCC Evans & TJ Thomson
1902-08	J Ogden Hardicker
1909-15	AR Moon LLM
1915-20	F Willett
1920-21	JRH Cottrill
1922-34	AR Moon LLB
1935-54	AJ Moon MA
1955-56	Arthur Smith
1957-61	H King
1962-74	Eric Newton
1975-77	Mrs M Freeman
1978-	Derek Taylor

## Secretary

1920-45	Thomas Boulger
1946-48	Philip Daley
1949-51	Harold Wild
1952-54	Arthur Smith

# MEMBERSHIP

As noted regularly throughout the Society's history, the number of members has always been but a very small proportion of the number of people who enjoy rambling in the countryside and who benefit directly from the Society's work.

The Society was dramatically successful at the start and, by the end of its first year, had 700 members. Unfortunately, this success was short lived and, after the end of the First World War, we could barely manage 200 individual members. The 1920s saw a gradual increase in individual membership and a significant increase in the number – from 20 to over 60 – of affiliated organisations

The 1930s showed little overall change but after the war and into the fifties there was a slow but gradual increase in numbers. By 1960 we had 500 individual members and 70 affiliated organisations.

The 1960s and 70s again saw little overall growth in either individual membership or affiliation despite the huge increase in the number people visiting the countryside.

However, since 1980, there has been gradual increase in both categories and we now have over 1000 individual members and 100 affiliated organisations. It is to be hoped that we can continue, or better still accelerate, this trend in the years ahead.

The organisations that affiliated to the Society in the years leading up to the First World War are listed in the right hand column. As noted elsewhere, they provide an interesting insight into the organisations that were at the forefront of encouraging rambling in the countryside.

It is also of interest that, of the seven societies affiliated to us in 1909, six are still affiliated to us in our centenary year.

## 1909

Ashton CHA Rambling Club  
Co-operative Holidays Association  
Manchester Field Naturalists' &  
Archeologists' Society  
Manchester Pedestrian Club  
Openshaw Brotherhood  
Sheffield Clarion Ramblers  
Stockport Field Club

## 1910 add –

Commons & Footpaths Preservation Society  
East Derbyshire Field Club

## 1911 add -

Art Museum Field Club  
Dukinfield Old Chapel & Sunday School  
Rambling Club  
Gatley Ratepayers Association  
Glossop Field Naturalists' Society  
Manchester Rambling Club  
Sheffield CHA Rambling Club  
Sheffield Ethical Society Rambling Club  
Trinity Wesleyan Sunday School Rambling  
Club  
Union Chapel Rambling Club

## 1912 add –

Bramhall Ratepayers' Association  
Dukinfield Old Chapel & Sunday School  
Rambling Club  
Northern Ramblers

## 1913 add -

Cheadle Rambling Club  
Rucksack Club

# ANNUAL REPORTS

The Society's first report was published in October 1894 but, as this was prepared weeks after the Society's formation, it was not of course called an annual report. The first Annual Report and Balance Sheet was published in 1895 to cover the period from the Society's formation in August 1894 to the 30th September 1895.

Thereafter the Society published an annual report for most years. A small (four page) report was published in 1910 consolidating the annual reports for the previous four years. During the First World War, simple annual reports were prepared but not published. The Society still possesses most of the published annual reports, the exceptions being 1898 to 1908. However, we also possess minute books of the Managing Committee/Council and this enables us to fill some of the gaps.

The following extracts are mostly direct quotations from the annual reports which means some, often interesting, differences in style, spelling of place names, etc.

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## 1895

This report gives a comprehensive account of the Society's formation and its success with the Hayfield to Snake Inn path. The chapter dealing with the formation of the Society is largely taken from that report.

## 1898

"The competing schemes in the next session of Parliament of the Derby, Leicester and Sheffield Corporations, whereby these Councils seek to obtain statutory powers to impound the waters of the Upper Derwent, the Ashop and the Noe for the purpose of water supply and for that purpose to divert and close footpaths makes it imperative that the Society should, either in concert with or independent of, the local District Councils, take measures to protect the public rights in footpaths. The Derby scheme, for example, includes the making of eight huge reservoirs in the finest valleys of the Peak District, considerably detracting from their beauty. An embankment at the junction of the Lady Clough brook and the Ashop (opposite the Snake Inn) will impound the waters of the Ashop and effectually close the recently acquired footpath over Kinderscout.

## 1902

"The Stockport Corporation promoted a Bill in Parliament in the Session of 1901 to construct waterworks near Hayfield ... the works would interfere with a considerable number of very well known roads and footpaths.

## 1904

Letters were read explaining that a Society known as the **Derby Footpaths Preservation Society** had been formed at Derby and asking what fee this Society would charge for affiliating this Society with the Derby Society.

## 1907

### Proposed Chew Reservoir

"The Ashton under Lyne, Stalybridge & Dukinfield Joint Waterworks Board lodged a Bill in the last session of Parliament seeking powers to obliterate about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of the old Chew Brook path leading from Greenclough to Crowden.

## **1909**

“The apathy shown by local inhabitants who should be most active in preventing the filching of their rights is still a matter of surprise. Most enquiries and complaints which come to the Society are not from residents, but from people who find their chief recreation in wayside rambling. The Society is crippled in dealing with these cases – firstly, because the inhabitants are in many cases indifferent; and, secondly, because District Councils are mostly unmindful of their duties as custodians of public rights of way.

## **1910**

“This year has seen a large increase in the work of the Society and a fairly large access of new members. Perhaps the most satisfactory part about the new members is that the Society is receiving affiliation fees from various pedestrian and other Societies.

### **Doctor’s Gate**

“This long-standing dispute has occupied the attention of the Council continuously during the past year. A formal inspection of the path was made by them in July, and subsequently, at the request of the owner, an interview took place at Glossop Hall. The Council regret, however, to have to report that the owner has declined to recognise the rights of the public to traverse this road. The Council have the matter under their very serious consideration.

### **City of Manchester**

“The Council are glad to report that the Manchester Corporation has prepared for public use a record of all the public footpaths within its boundaries. This is accessible for inspection by anyone at the Town Hall. It is to be hoped that the example set by our own city may be followed by a similar action on the part of all local authorities.

### **Keswick**

“A deputation from the Society inspected shooting obstructions at Derwentwater. They reported to the Society that in their opinion the public rights were interfered with, and the matter is now under consideration. The preservation of game is still thought more important in all parts of the country than public rights, and until the public, more especially local inhabitants, bestir themselves, they will in time be deprived of access to familiar spots.

### **Rights of Way Bill**

“Your Council feel that they must draw the attention of the members to Lord Eversley’s Bill instituted as above. This Bill proposes to clear up conflicting judicial methods of deciding on the public dedication of a footpath by substituting as a test 40 years’ user, and so assimilating the law of public right to the law of private easement. This Bill has three times obtained a second reading in the House of Commons, and on the last occasion passed the Grand Committee, but from lack of time has got no further. It has now been introduced in the House of Lords, and as its chances of becoming law depend on the interest aroused, your Council recommend the members of the Society to do all they can to ensure its becoming law.

### **Lathkill Dale**

“The Council received an intimation that the owner had made a demand for a penny toll on all who passed along this path on Easter Monday. The owner contends that, although the public have never been excluded from the dale, the path has never been dedicated to the public.

Apparently the right to a toll is only claimed on one day in the year.

## 1911

The list of President/Vice Presidents was impressive indeed –

*President:* Sir William H. Bailey, Sale Hall, Cheshire

*Vice Presidents:*

Sir W.P. Byles, M.P., Higher Broughton

Colonel Candlin, Heaton Chapel

T. Skelton Cole, Sheffield

Colonel H. T. Crook, C.E., J.P., Manchester

Sir Harold Elverston, M.P., Wilmslow

Abel Heywood, J.P., Manchester

The Bishop of Lincoln

George Milner, M.A., J.P., Manchester

C.P. Scott, J.P., Manchester

James Watts, Abney Hall, Cheadle

Henry J. Wilson, M.P., Sheffield

Herman Woolley, F.G.S., Manchester

“1911 has, in many respects, been the most important as regards the work of the Society for many years. The affiliation to the Society of the various Rambling and Pedestrian Clubs in the city has been the means of imparting to its work a new enthusiasm. The fact that such a Society as this does exist ought to be esteemed very highly by the community it serves. A striking example of the necessity for such Societies is shewn in the fact that the Lake District possessed no association to deal promptly and efficiently with such a matter as ‘Hydroplanes’ at Bowness.

## 1912

### English Lake District

“The Council have been impressed for some time with the urgent need of some action being taken in the Lake District to reopen or preserve for the public many rights of way which, partly in consequence of the increase of residences in the lower valleys, have been closed or are in danger of being closed, and they feel that it is most essential that all the public rights in this great national and natural playground should be preserved intact.

Consequently, investigation is being made as to the possibility of action being taken either (a) by arousing local interest sufficiently to get the local people to take up the matter themselves, or (b) by this Society itself, backed by the help and support of all those who have at heart the necessity of keeping our Lakeland fells, valleys, and dells, free of access to all.

### Hallamshire Ramblers’ Federation

“The Society has for some time past received help in various ways from friends at Sheffield. They are therefore pleased to note that the Hallamshire Ramblers’ Federation and Footpaths Preservation Society, have organised themselves into a public body, and that one of their principal objects is to act as an auxiliary to the Society. Although only in the first stage of their existence, they already number over 100 members. Sharing, as Sheffield does, the benefit of the work of the Society in the Peak District, it is gratifying to know that they have realised their responsibility, and it is hoped and believed that the Society will be strengthened by an auxiliary body created in such a spontaneous and healthy fashion. Your Secretary attended their inaugural meeting, and gave an address upon the ‘Need for the Preservation of Footpaths’.

## 1913

“The first duty is to record with the deepest regret the loss by death of two of our members, Sir William H. Bailey and Mr. Luke Garside. Sir William H. Bailey has long filled the office of President, and although a busy man he invariably found time to assist the Society when called upon. We gratefully record his services, with especial recollection of the shrewd advice and help he so cordially gave.

The migration of retired business men to the Lake District, and whose association therewith is without sentiment, is likely to prove disastrous to the walker. The result is found in the springing up of a new regime of keepers, and fences and notice boards are replacing the old-time liberty of free rambling. We therefore send a note of warning to all those who are true lovers of the Lake District.

### **Maps at Railway Stations**

“The Council are glad to report that as a result of their suggestions, the L&NWR have agreed to put one-inch Ordnance maps at the following stations for the use of walkers:

Adlington, Prestbury, Macclesfield, Disley, New Mills, Whaley Bridge, Chapel-en-le-Frith, Buxton, Ashbourne, Wilmslow, Alderley and Chelford.

### **1914**

“The Council regrets that the Derbyshire CC were successful in securing the stoppages of a footpath and bridle road (a most meagre diversion) across the New Asylum Estate on the slopes of Win Hill...

### **1919**

“This Society approves of the opposition to the proposed carriage way over the Sty Head Pass and is prepared to assist the opposition by circulating copies of petition for signature and by writing to the Cumberland County Council

### **1920**

“There is no doubt an increasing interest in pedestrianism, but for those dwelling in the neighbourhood of our great industrial centres, the facilities for getting out into the country are not what they were in pre-war days. The Council trust that with the return of more normal social and economic conditions that the Railway Companies may re-issue the half-day circular tour tickets and other advantages of former days.

### **1921**

#### **Cheshire Footpaths**

“Your Council is glad to report that the Alderley Edge, Wilmslow and District Footpaths Preservation Society (which has just become an affiliated member of your Society) has offered to undertake the investigation of any complaints relating to footpaths in and around the Alderley Edge and Wilmslow Districts. Members can rest assured that any complaints will receive the greatest attention, for this Society has shown a wonderful fighting spirit since its inception in 1914, and has done much good work in keeping open many a public footpath in the area of its activities which would otherwise have been lost.

“The members of the Society and the public generally should be careful to bear in mind the importance of exercising their rights over public footpaths strictly, as complaints are often made by landowners that the public do not limit themselves to the public rights of way, but trespass over adjoining lands. The Council desire to acknowledge the kindly spirit in which owners of land have generally treated the Society. Experience has shown that owners recognise that no complaints are made by the Society without foundation, and its representations generally receive gratifying attention.

## 1922

### Doctor's Gate

"It having been reported that, on more than one occasion, members have found the gates at the Mossylee Bridge end of this ancient way securely wired up, contrary to the arrangement come to with Lord Howard of Glossop, the Council have had some correspondence with him on the subject – a correspondence which is not yet concluded.

Meanwhile, it may be well to remind members and the public generally of the terms of the Agreement. The negotiations leading to the agreement were conducted by Colonel Crook, on behalf of the Society, and the late Colonel Hawkins, on behalf of Lord Howard. It was pointed out that the Society could not consent to anything which would, in any way, be in abrogation of the public rights. It was for this reason that it was agreed that there should be no physical obstruction, but that, in return for Lord Howard's proposal to make the path more practicable in places where it had deteriorated, the Society would undertake to inform its members that they would be under honourable obligation not to traverse the path during certain seasons, and also that it would use its best endeavours to induce the public generally to conform to the agreement. In furtherance of this arrangement, the Society agreed to fix notice boards at each end of the way, setting forth, in mutually approved terms, particulars of the arrangement and the periods during which the public was urged to forbear user of the path. The Council trusts that the representations it has made to Lord Howard on this matter will be effective and obviate the necessity for any further steps in defence of the public rights over this ancient way.

### Dovedale

"A suggestion has been made that this beautiful mountain gorge should be acquired on behalf of the public. So far the National Trust has not been approached in the matter, but the Council of the Trust would rejoice to see a scheme for ensuring the preservation of this interesting beauty spot, and would entertain any proposal to make them guardians.

## 1923

### 'Rambler and the Law'

"The supply of this very useful booklet having been exhausted, and having regard to the fact that many requests have been received for copies, your Council has decided to print a second edition, which will be on sale in a few weeks' time at the exception-ally small price of 3d. No member should be without a copy of the booklet, which clearly defines the legal points which are always a source of trouble to pedestrians.

### Westend-Alport Castles Bridle Path

"The Society's attention having been called to the fact that for some time past this bridle path has been obstructed by the Derwent Valley Water Board, your Council has requested the Board to unlock the gate which has been erected, and also communicated with the Duke of Devonshire with regard to the 'No Road' notices erected on his behalf. Your secretary had an interview with His Lordship's agent, at which the matter was discussed thoroughly, and at which it was admitted that the gate had been erected by the Board at the request of the Devonshire Estate on the ground that the path is a private one. On the other hand, your Council has collected considerable evidence that the track is a bridle way and the secretary claimed it as such at the interview. With a view to continuing the happy relations that have always existed between your Society and the Devonshire Estate, it was arranged that the agent should, without prejudice, submit proposals for the use of the path by the public.



## **1924**

### **Bolton Corporation Bill**

“On being consulted with regard to the very wide powers contained in the Parliamentary Notice of this Bill, which powers might confer on the Corporation the right to close many miles of footpaths on the moors of their watershed, your Council advised that every pressure should be brought to bear on the Corporation to delete or considerably amend the draft Bill. No doubt as a result of the agitation, and of the excellent work done by Alderman Cheadle, who opposed the clauses in the Council Chamber on behalf of the public, the objectionable clauses have been withdrawn, and the danger to right of way thereby obviated. Further, an assurance has been given by the Town Clerk that there is no intention on the part of the Corporation to close any footpath

### **Finances**

“Having regard to the amount of useful work achieved during the year it is rather discouraging to find that once again, the expenses of the Society have exceeded the amount received in subscriptions. Your Council is earnestly desirous of continuing the erection of additional signposts, but as each new signpost costs approximately £2 6s., it need hardly be pointed out that the income of the Society must determine the extent of its activities in this direction.

## **1925**

### **Doctor's Gate**

“Since the issue of the Society's last Annual Report the portion of the late Lord Howard's estate traversed by this ancient track has changed hands twice. After the first sale, the purchaser was notified by letter, written on the advice of counsel, that the Society could no longer ask the public to refrain from the exercise of the right to use the track at all seasons of the year. No reply was received to the letter conveying this intimation.

It may be mentioned that on the occasion of the last sale the Shelf and Cold Harbour Moors (about 1,900 acres) including of course Doctor's Gate, were offered to the Society at, roughly, £7,000. Mr. Chubb (the secretary of the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society) got into touch with the solicitors to the owner, and asked whether they could grant an option to the Society so that, if thought advisable, a public appeal could be made for contributions towards the cost of purchase. The grant of an option was declined, and time was too short before the date fixed for the sale to permit of the Council doing anything further in the matter. However, in any case, your Council held the view that the price asked was exorbitant. This would clearly seem to have been so, for it is understood that the price realised by the second sale was only about half the amount at which it was offered to the Society.

### **The Winnats**

“It will doubtless be recollected that amongst the proposals of the Manchester and District Joint Town Planning Scheme there is one for the construction of a modern road through the Winnats Pass. This project has greatly alarmed all lovers of natural scenery. The Council was advised that a road of the type proposed – that is, one suitable for motor traffic – could not be constituted without destroying much of the characteristic beauty of the gorge. Consequently, a resolution was passed urging that the ancient roadway through the Winnats and the Pass itself, should be scheduled as a place of natural beauty and interest for preservation in its present character. Copies of the resolution were forwarded to the Chapel-en-le-Frith Rural District Council, Derbyshire County Council, the Ministry of Transport and the Manchester and District Joint Town Planning Advisory Committee.

"It would seem that the authorities concerned contend that no material damage to the beauty of the Pass would accrue by the construction of the proposed motor road. With this view the Council emphatically disagrees, and at the same time has good grounds for its opinion that the improvement of the existing road can be effected by an alternative diversion which would leave the Winnats untouched. Representations have been made by the authorities concerned that they are prepared to consider an alternative scheme, if it can be shown to be practicable, but are not disposed to undertake the investigation survey necessary to determine the best line for the alternative diversion. Thus it means that the burden of the defence of the beauty of the Winnats Pass is left to voluntary effort.

The Sheffield Association for the Protection of Local Scenery is engaged in the preparation of an alternative scheme, and arranging for technical advisors to view the ground and report.

#### **Encroachment on 'The Cross' Eyam**

"Eyam, ever of historic interest, on account of the terrible visitation of the Plague of 1665-66, would seem to be in danger of gaining further notoriety by reason of the encroachments taking place there. In addition to the encroachment referred to in last year's Report, another encroachment has taken place on the roadside waste known as 'The Cross'. This waste piece of grass covered land is situate in the middle of the village, immediately opposite to Eyam Hall. It is called 'The Cross', from the fact of there having been upon it in pre-Reformation days one of the roadside crosses then common. Upon the plot of land in question there are also the remains of the village stocks. It would appear that this space of ground, or village green, has been from time immemorial freely used by the public.

#### **Upkeep of Field Paths**

"At the request of the Alderley Edge, Wilmslow and District Footpaths Preservation Society, the following resolution was passed by your Council:—

*"That this Council write to the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society as to the necessity of communicating with the Minister of Transport suggesting that a sum of money be allocated for use towards the upkeep of field paths which are adjacent to main roads and more convenient for use and less dangerous, especially those that have no path at the road side."*

In acknowledging the resolution, Mr. Chubb, the secretary, thought his committee would sympathise with the proposal, and he would recommend its adoption. He also suggested that, when arterial roads are made or existing highways improved, the Ministry of Transport, and/or the local authorities concerned, should fingerpost the intersected public footpaths.

#### **Finances**

"Although there has been a small, though very welcome, increase in the number of members, the total of subscriptions is approximately the same as the previous year. The burden of supporting the Society would appear to be undertaken by a very small percentage of Ramblers and those interested in the preservation of footpaths. Although there must be at least 5,000 Ramblers in and around Manchester, the total membership of the Society is only 250.

## **1926**

#### **Doctor's Gate**

"Your Council was rather hopeful that, as the result of the correspondence which took place between the Society and the present owner of the greater portion of the land crossed by Doctor's Gate, the latter would, in deference to the Society's request, give an assurance that he would respect the public right over the track and refrain from closing the same during any period of the year. Your Council offered to give the owner any information he desired in case he had no knowledge of the original negotiations with the late Lord Howard and of the subsequent events.

However, such offer was not accepted and your Council regrets to say that in March last a reply was received from the owner in which he stated that he failed to see that the position was in any way altered by the fact that he had purchased the property and that it was exactly the same as it was during Lord Howard's ownership, and although he did not want to infringe on any person's rights, he must say that he intended to close the gates at the times stated on the notice board that was erected before he knew the property at all.

### **The Winnats**

"In relation to this project and rumours that its execution was impending, the Sheffield Association has received, in answer to its representations, a very reassuring letter from the Director General of the Roads Department, which reads as follows:—

"Although similar rumours have reached this Department since April of 1924, I cannot find that they have any foundation in fact. I have asked our Divisional Engineer, who has the official supervision of the roads in Derbyshire, to make enquiries from time to time and to keep me advised of any such intention, and, as recently as August last, he wrote me stating that he knew of no such proposal, not even for the repair of the existing track.

"The Divisional Engineer knows the feeling of societies like your own, who are anxious that the natural beauties of the district should not be spoiled, and you may be sure that before anything is sanctioned by this Department very great care will be taken to see that people interested are afforded an opportunity of making representations upon any proposals submitted, and that such representations are fully considered."

## **1927**

### **Delamere Forest Footpaths**

"Your Council, having completed its preliminary investigations with regard to the various footpaths within the Forest, sought an interview with the divisional officer in charge of the Forestry Commission's portion of the woods, which was readily granted, and the sub-committee appointed by the Council had an interview with him on February 22 last. The whole position was thoroughly examined and the footpaths and bridle road set out in the Enclosure Award agreed upon, and it was suggested that so far as such paths were concerned the misleading notices that the paths were private should be either taken down or altered.

### **Old Roads from Monks Road to Carr Meadow, Hayfield**

"For some time past the Inspector of Footpaths has been endeavouring to get together evidence in support of the public's right to traverse the old road, but so far he has been unable to achieve much in this respect. In the Great Hamlet Inclosure Award, the road is laid down as a private or occupation road, and, in view of this, dedication will have to be proved since 1830, the date of such award.

### **Longshaw Lodge Estate**

"When it became known in April last that the Duke of Rutland's Longshaw Estate was to be sold, interest was at once aroused amongst ramblers and others concerned in the preservation of the beauties of that part of the country. A conference was called by the Sheffield Council of Social Service and the Sheffield Association for the Protection of Local Scenery, to explore the possibilities of devising some scheme by means of which some part at least of the area could be saved. As is now well known, the Sheffield Corporation decided to buy some 3,400 acres of the property in connection with their water undertaking and agreed to re-sell to the National Trust about 747 acres of the land for the sum of £14,000.

The area which it is proposed to acquire includes Longshaw Lodge itself and extends from the Surprise on the Hathersage Road to the Grouse Inn on the Froggatt Road, and from Fox House and the Wooden Pole down to and including Padley Woods. It embraces tracts of heathered moorland, rugged rocks, open grassland and woodland slopes, and commands extensive views towards the summits of Higger Tor and Carl Wark, and the beautiful slopes of the Derbyshire Hills on the far side of the Derwent Valley. It would indeed be difficult to find in the whole country a more beautiful tract of unspoiled moorland, or one from which more characteristic and extensive views can be obtained.

In exchange for certain water rights on the Longshaw Estate, the Water Committee of the Sheffield Corporation have agreed that any works which they may erect on their portion of the Estate (Burbage, etc), shall in no way damage the natural beauty of the country. Fortunately, too, the view from Longshaw towards Higger Tor will be preserved by an arrangement that nothing shall be built behind the road between the Toad's Mouth and the Surprise. Further, the public will obtain reasonable access to the most beautiful parts of the moor because there will be no serious interference with the Green Drive from the Upper Burbage Brook.

The value of the purchase is thus considerably increased not only by this agreement with the Sheffield Corporation, but by the acquisition of 5,000 to 6,000 acres of moorland (including Froggatt Edge) by the Chesterfield Urban and Rural District Councils and the private purchase of about 100 acres to prevent the country nearby from being spoiled by unsightly buildings.

## **1929**

### **Proposed Reservoirs in the Goyt Valley**

"Immediately it was known that the Stockport Corporation intended to promote a Bill for the construction of two reservoirs in the Goyt Valley, your Council asked the Corporation to receive a joint deputation from the Society and Ramblers' Federation to discuss the provision of footpaths around the reservoir...

## **1930**

### **Footpath on Tegg's Nose, Near Macclesfield**

"The attention of the Council was called to the fact that the quarrying operations on the top of Tegg's Nose had resulted in the obstruction of the path. As a result of correspondence with the quarry owners and the owners of the land, a joint conference was arranged at the locus, and the whole matter fully discussed, when, as the obstructions had been removed and the quarry owners willing to put the path about the Spinney in better condition, it was agreed that nothing further need be done so long as the path remained unobstructed.

## **1931**

### **Footpath through Carr Wood and Ashworth Valley**

"The Council having heard from various sources that a charge of 1d. was being demanded from pedestrians using this path, the farmer was written to, and subsequently interviewed. Your Council is pleased to say that he was very reasonable, and admitted the right of way through his land, and stated that he had never asked anyone to pay for passage along the path. If a charge is made it is from persons diverting from the path into the adjoining pleasure grounds.

### **Footpath from Hope Valley to Lose Hill**

"As a result of the representations made by the Council to Messrs. Earle, the Company has constructed steps down and up the deep cutting (caused by the making of the Company's Railway) which intersected the footpath, and have also erected warning notices to the engine drivers. As will be seen elsewhere in the Report, the Society proposes to erect three direction posts, so that pedestrians will be better able to follow this delightful path in the future.

### **Footpath from Phoside to Ridge Top, Hayfield**

"On receiving a complaint that one of the poles of the Trent Valley & High Peak Electricity Company had been erected on this footpath, thus causing an obstruction, the Company was written to, and a reply is being awaited.

## **1932**

### **Wythenshawe Footpaths**

"On hearing that the Manchester Corporation intended to apply to Quarter Sessions for power to close certain footpaths on the Wythenshawe Estate, and that there were as many as 51 footpaths scheduled by them for ultimate closing, the Wythenshawe Committee of the Corporation were asked to receive a deputation from the Society, and a meeting was arranged. As a result the Council was satisfied that the Corporation would probably get the Order asked for in respect of the six footpaths the subject of the first application. The Committee, however, readily gave the assurance asked for by the Society that these footpaths would not be closed until building operations were commenced, and also agreed to furnish a plan showing the proposed development of the remaining land...

### **Rights of Way Act**

"On the 12th July, 1932, the Royal Assent was given to the Rights of Way Act — 26 years after it was first introduced. The Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society is to be congratulated on the successful conclusion of its persistent efforts in spite of the many rebuffs it received — the Bill having been introduced on no less than 12 occasions.

### **Finances**

"By his will the late Mr. Arnold Wilson devised and bequeathed to the Society the income to arise from his farm and lands at Blackshaw, Hayfield, and Brynn Dinbren, Llangollen, for the general purposes of the Society. It is understood that such properties have now been sold, and the fund to be handed over to the Society will be between £550 and £600 so that the income therefrom will be a very welcome addition to the usual annual income. It is gratifying to the Council to find that by the legacy Mr. Wilson greatly appreciated the work of the Society.

## **1933**

"As was naturally to be expected, the past year (being the year previous to the coming into operation of the Rights of Way Act) has shown an increase in the number of cases of obstruction of public rights of way. As the Act has only recently come into operation it is difficult to say what effect it will have on the many hundred miles of paths within the Society's area — although it is irritating to find that 'Private' or 'Sufferance' Notice Boards, or Notices intimating that there is only a 'permissive use until further notice' are being erected by some owners on paths that are well known to have been used by the public without interference for long periods of years and are, therefore, presumably public ways.

### **Footpaths in Manifold Valley**

“As soon as it was known that the London, Midland & Scottish Railway Company was seeking parliamentary powers to close the narrow gauge portion of the Leek and Manifold Valley Railway the Council asked the company whether it would consider the granting of a right of way over the site of the railway proposed to be discontinued, but the Company replied that the suggestion would involve the continued maintenance of 22 iron girder bridges over the river and other waterways, a short length of tunnel and a number of other works, the expense of which would, of course, be considerable, and in these circumstances it was regretted that the Company was not able to agree to the proposal.

### **Footpath on ‘The Cloud’, Buglawton**

“Much indignation was felt by the inhabitants and the general public alike when it was learned that their right over the Cloud had been questioned by the fencing of a footpath on the eastern side of Cloud End. A meeting of the inhabitants was held at which the Society was represented. A resolution ‘that this meeting respectfully appeals to Lord Egerton to recognise the right of the public to use the footpaths over the Cloud which have been enjoyed from time immemorial and at the same time any obstructions thereon’ was passed and forwarded to the Highway Authorities concerned.

### **Notice Boards on Tatton Estate**

“Your Council has been inundated with complaints as to the erection of notice boards on certain paths on this estate – paths which for many years have been regarded as public – intimating that the paths were for foot passengers only until further notice. The Council immediately sought an interview with the agent to the Estate when the whole question was discussed and it was ascertained that he had received communications from the Highway Authorities concerned as to the notices. It is understood that so far as paths in the parishes of Mere, Millington, Rostherne, Ashley, Mobberley and Over Tabley are concerned the Bucklow Rural District Council has written to the Estate claiming that the paths are public, and asking for the removal of the notices.

## **1934**

“It is with deep regret that your Council has to record the death during January of Col. H. T. Crook, M.Inst.C.E., D.L., J.P., who for so many years has held the offices of President, Honorary Surveyor, and Chairman of the Council. He has been connected with the Society ever since it was founded and it was mainly through his efforts that the public are today enabled to enjoy the walks over the Hayfield–Snake Inn path, the Doctor’s Gate track and the paths around the Derwent Reservoirs. His knowledge of all matters in connection with the purpose for which the Society exists has been instrumental in building up the Society on sound lines to its present position, whilst his devotion to the best interests of the Society and his sympathetic understanding have been a splendid example to us all.

## **1935**

“It is with deep regret the Council has to record the death during the year of Mr. L. Caradoc Evans who has been connected with the Society since its inception in 1894, first as Honorary Secretary and afterwards as Honorary Solicitor. Mr. Evans did a vast amount of invaluable work in the early days of the Society, particularly in the fight for the Hayfield – Snake Inn path.

### **Footpaths in Great Rocks Dale**

“As mentioned in the Report for last year, the Council had occasion to protest to I.C.I. Limited against the obliterating of the path from Cowlow by Great Rocks Back Pastures and Great Rocks

Stud Farm to Tunstead, and the path which commences south-east of Great Rocks Pastures Farm and traverses a general S.E. direction to Meadow Farm, crossing the railway line at three points. At a subsequent interview with the Company the question of the provision of a diverted way was considered, but some time later, on pressing that the matter be dealt with, the Council was informed that the whole matter had been referred to the Railway and Canal Commission. Shortly afterwards it was ascertained that the Company had applied to the Court of the Railway and Canal Commission under the Mines (Working Facilities and Support) Acts for an Order giving the Company the right to destroy the surface of the land and any footpaths thereon.

#### **Proposed New Airport at Ringway**

"In September last, the Town Clerk of Manchester approached the Society for suggestions as to the paths that it was desired to close or divert for the purposes of constructing the Airport. Such proposals were submitted, and a tentative agreement reached with the Town Clerk, which has now been approved, in principle, by the Airport Committee. The proposals provide for the construction of a field path from a point approximately 300 yards below Lane End Cottages along the Westerly and Southerly boundary of the Airport to Moss Farm. In addition, the existing path from Moss Farm to Ringway Hall Farm will, subject to a slight diversion of the Northerly portion of the path, remain until such time as it may be necessary for the Corporation to embark on the final scheme, which event may not be for many years.

#### **New Ladybower Reservoir, Ashopton**

"This Reservoir, which will entail the submerging of Ashopton and Derwent villages is about to be constructed. The work is being done under the provisions of the Waterboards' Act of 1920. It would appear from the plans the Waterboard has furnished to the Society that suitable provision had been made for new paths and roads and the public's interests were carefully safeguarded by the Highway Authorities concerned.

### **1936**

#### **Proposed New Airport at Ringway**

"Complaints having been received that the paths were being interfered with during the levelling operations, the attention of the Manchester Corporation was called thereto, and an assurance asked for that as little interference as possible would be occasioned to the existing paths until the new paths had been opened out for public use.

#### **New Ladybower Reservoir, Ashopton**

"In order to avoid liability to landslides the Derwent Valley Waterboard made a suggestion (which was approved by both the Derbyshire County Council and the Chapel-en-le-Frith Rural District Council) that the Board should make their new road from Ashopton to Derwent on the west side of the valley instead of on the east side as set out in the Act of 1920, the intention being that an occupation road would be constructed on the east side over which the public would have a right of footway. The Society is hoping to secure in addition an assurance from the Board that a bridle way right will be allowed for to the north from the point where the bridle way from Moscar enters the proposed new occupation road.

As the site of the Derwent Pack Bridge will be submerged when the Reservoir is constructed your Council suggested to the Board that the bridge should be rebuilt at Slippery Stones or near Elmin Pits Farm, as referred to in the Report for last year. The Board whilst sympathetic to the proposal that the bridge should be re-erected is reluctant to defray the cost and negotiations are proceeding on this point.

## **Manifold Valley Light Railway**

"When it became known that the L. M. & S. Railway Company had very generously decided to make a gift of the site of this railway to the Staffordshire County Council on behalf of the public your Council urged the acceptance of the offer. Although no conditions were laid down by the Railway Company, the County Council in accepting the offer to the Company indicated its intention of prohibiting the use of the site by vehicular traffic. It would appear, however, that the County Council is now being urged from several sources to open out the way for all manner of traffic. Your Council has asked the County Council for an assurance that its original intention remains unaltered, and has suggested that all that is required is a line of path as natural as possible.

## **1937**

"It has been the general opinion that although highway authorities were responsible for the repair of all roads and footpaths dedicated to the public use prior to March, 1836, they were not so liable in regard to highways dedicated after that date. The Commons Society now takes the view (with which your Officers are in agreement) that the highway authorities are liable to repair all public footpaths and all public bridleways except those which were originally set out as private ways in an Enclosure Award and did not become dedicated to the public before March, 1836, such view being based on what appears to be a correct interpretation of Section 23 of the Highway Act, 1835. While this view of the interpretation and effect of Section 23 is not yet accepted by all highway authorities in general terms it is understood that some are already acting on it in particular cases, and it is hoped that it will eventually prevail through-out your Society's area.

## **New Ladybower Reservoir, Ashopton**

"The Derwent Valley Water Board has presented a further Bill to Parliament in connection with this new reservoir. The Bill and Plans have been carefully examined and there would appear to be no occasion for objection by the Society. The paths and roads for which powers to stop up or divert are being sought are primarily concerned with ways which will be actually covered by the reservoir. The Water Board has incorporated in the Bill the arrangement arrived at between the Society and the Board last year whereby the Moscar-Derwent bridle path is to continue to have an outlet as a bridle path at Derwent.

If the Bill passes through in its present form it will mean that the Derwent Pack Bridge will be submerged and the old pack road to Glossop and the two tracks up to Crook Hill Farm will commence from the new public road proposed on the west side of the River Derwent, also the existing public road on the east side of the river will disappear and in its place at a higher level there will be an occupation road and public footpath.

## **1938**

### **Access to Mountains**

"At the Conference of Footpaths Societies and kindred organisations held at the offices of the Commons Open Spaces & Footpaths Preservation Society in London, on November 4 and 5, at which the Society was represented, one of the many matters considered was that of access to mountains, and a report was received of the discussions that had taken place during the year between the Commons Society and the landowners' organisations. Immediately following the Conference the Commons Society prepared a draft of a new Bill to be called 'Access to Uncultivated Lands Bill'...



### **The Winnats**

"The proposal to make a 60 foot motor road was revived by the Derbyshire County Council early in 1939, when the Society, again in conjunction with the Ramblers Federations for Manchester and Sheffield and the Sheffield and Peak District C.P.R.E. made representations to the Minister of Transport, which resulted in his deciding to hold a Public Inquiry on July 8. Very little time was available in which to prepare for the Inquiry, as less than a fortnight's notice was given that the Inquiry was to be held. At the commencement of the proceedings a statement was made that the road would only be a 22 ft. not 60 ft. road – the remaining 38 feet being intended to be utilised for sterilising the land as regards building. Everything possible was done to establish that the new motor way would destroy the beauty of the Winnats, and be more dangerous than the existing road.

The expense incurred by the Society jointly with the Federation has been fully justified by the satisfactory result obtained, the Minister having decided to disapprove the County Council's application relating to the proposed road through the Winnats, a decision which will be pleasing to all ramblers and lovers of the countryside.

At the Inquiry the County Council applied for approval of plans of a proposed new road at Castleton to be constructed for the purpose of by-passing the village. No objection was made to this, and the Minister has accordingly approved such application.

### **Footpaths over Woodford Aerodrome**

"In September last it was learned that Messrs. A.V. Roe & Co. Limited had purchased further land for the purpose of extending their Aerodrome. The Society ascertained from the Company that the intention was to divert the existing paths, and to provide a new path, and the Alderley Edge, Wilmslow and District Footpaths Preservation Society, who negotiated the Agreement with Messrs. Roe & Co. Limited when the Aerodrome was originally constructed, has since been in communication with the Company with a view to agreeing the substituted paths.

## **1939**

"On the outbreak of war your Council considered as to whether the work of the Society should continue. Having in mind that as a result of virtually 'closing down' during 1914-18 the Society seemed in danger of going out of existence the Council was unanimously of the opinion that if at all possible the work of the Society should be carried on without restriction. One of the reasons that influenced this decision was that it seemed apparent that at an early date many thousands of additional acres of the country would be cultivated, and it would be very necessary to see that the rights of the public were reasonably provided for, and that where paths were stopped up under Government Regulations proper assurances should be obtained that the stopping-up was only temporary, and that the paths in question would be re-opened as public paths at the conclusion of the war, if not earlier. Moreover, by reason of its work over the past years, the Society has steadily enhanced its prestige, which has made it much easier for the Society to obtain results.

### **Bulls in Fields**

"On January 1, 1940, a bye-law adopted by the Cheshire County Council came into operation making it an offence for the occupier of a field or enclosure through which there is a public footpath to permit any bull exceeding the age of twelve months to be at large in such field or enclosure. A similar bye-law has applied to Derbyshire for the past four years, and to Lancashire for two years.

### **Proposed Steel Works at Edale**

“In April last your Council was concerned at the threat to the Peak occasioned by a Sheffield steel firm having applied to the district council for permission to erect a steel works near the Mill at Edale. The industrialisation of the valley, situated as it is under Kinder Scout, and at the head of the Hope Valley, would mean the ruin of the heart of the Peak and thereby of the Peak itself. Accordingly, in conjunction with the Sheffield and Peak District Committee of the C.P.R.E. and other organisations, a strong protest was made to the firm, and also to the authorities responsible for the preservation of the threatened area.

The need for the steel works was appreciated, but the view was taken that there must be many areas within reasonable distance of Sheffield already wholly or partially spoiled where the works could conveniently be erected. That the view taken by your Council and the other organisations was not an unfair one was proved by the strong protest made by members of Parliament, as a result of which the proposal to erect the works at Edale was not proceeded with.

## **1940**

“Various footpaths have been temporarily lost to the public use by reason of the land adjacent being requisitioned for purposes of national defence and security. A register is being compiled of the paths closed by the military authorities, or under defence regulations, with a view to representation being made for the re-opening of those paths immediately on the cessation of hostilities.

### **Direction posts**

“In May, local authorities throughout the country were instructed to remove or obliterate all direction posts, milestones, etc. In consequence all the Society’s direction plates and mile stumps have been removed except in those cases where no place name appears on the plate. In the majority of cases the posts have been left standing after the unbolting of the plates, the posts continuing to indicate the commencement of the public path. The County Surveyors have readily agreed to take care of the Society’s plates until such time as they may be re-erected.

## **1941**

### **Finance**

“The reduction in expenditure is mainly in connection with the erection and maintenance of signposts, the cost of which has shrunk from a pre-war average of approximately £20 to £1 10s. 6d. At the conclusion of the war the Society will be faced with a substantial expenditure on this and other accounts. It is incontrovertible – in view of the number of paths now being closed under Defence and other regulations – that quite considerable and close investigation will be necessary to restore the use of them to the public.

### **Paths at Bowstonegate**

“Mr Wild reported the restrictions being placed by the military authorities upon walking in the neighbourhood of Bowstonegate and Sponds Hill: that it appeared that walkers might still traverse the path from Browside Farm via Bowstonegate to Lyme Park providing they could produce their identity card; that at the beginning of the Bowstonegate road at the point where it leaves the Kettleshulme - Higher Disley Road there was now a ‘Strictly Private’ notice; that he had been told that walking along the ridge road beyond Bowstonegate Farm itself, that is on by Sponds Farm to the Kettleshulme – Pott Shrigley Road was definitely prohibited; Mr Wild said he did not know of any action that the Society could take on these matters except carefully watch developments and to systematically traverse the area after the War.

## 1943

### Ploughing up of footpaths

"During the year many paths have been stopped up and diverted under Regulation 62 of the Defence Regulations, but in most cases copies of the Orders that have been made by the County War Agricultural Executive Committees have been forwarded to the Society, and this will enable your Council to keep a record of the many paths that will have to be re-opened when the regulation comes to an end. Whenever its attention has been called to paths being ploughed up without an Order having been obtained, the Society has asked the appropriate County War Agricultural Executive Committee to make the necessary Order on the farmer. This regularises the position as, although it enables the farmer to divert the path for the purpose of ploughing up the original path, he has to enter into an undertaking to restore all rights in respect of the way as soon as Paragraph 5A of Regulation 62 shall cease to be in force, and in the meantime he has to display copies of the Order at each end of the stopped footpath.

### Finance

"The reappearance of the Society's Direction Posts will be a reminder of the dark days through which we passed and during which the Society continued without respite its work of protecting public rights. But for the Society's decision in 1939 to carry on its work without restriction it will readily be seen from a perusal of the Reports since that date that the public would be enjoying far less of the countryside that it now does. Nevertheless, despite its work the membership of the Society barely exceeds 300 – a reflection on a large majority of the rambling public who continue to accept all that the Society does without any attempt to subscribe to its funds.

### Peak Cavern, Castleton

"The member of Parliament for the area in question sought the co-operation of the Society to prevent persons climbing over the rather rudimentary wooden barricades and damaging the Ropewalks in the Peak Cavern. He suggested the erection of an iron fence with sharp spikes across the path and down into the gully about 30 to 35 yards from the existing wooden barricades.

## 1944

### Continuation of footpath dispute at Peak Cavern, Castleton

"Subsequently the Duchy of Lancaster, who own the land, endeavoured to get your Council to agree to the erection of the barrier and inferred that the District Council and Parish Council were agreeable to such a course. As your Council would not do so the Duchy intimated that after the war it was the intention of the Duchy to remove the present fence and erect an unclimbable barrier lower down the path. To this your Council has objected and reiterated its claim to the whole length of the path up to the entrance to the Cavern being public, and has suggested a way in which the present barrier could be altered on its existing site to prevent the damage complained of. This suggestion apparently, has been ignored by the Duchy, who have erected a Notice at the spot where the proposed new barrier may be constructed which reads: '*Duchy of Lancaster. This footpath is for the use of Visitors to the Peak Cavern only*'.

### Electrified Fences

"Many complaints having been received of this new type of fence erected at Disley and in other parts of the Society's area, representations were made to the Cheshire County Council. That Council having intimated there were not statutory provisions relating to this type of fence the Minister of Health was communicated with and joint consideration was given to the matter by

the various government departments concerned, but the Society was informed that none of the departments had power to make regulations of general application for controlling the installation and maintenance of electrified fences. However, the Minister of Health stated that he was having a standard voltage fixed, and that when this had been done the War Agricultural Executive Committees would notify farmers accordingly and at the same time suggest that electrified fences should not be fixed at the side of public roads or paths.

## **1945**

“As anticipated, the end of the war was quickly followed by a spate of new Government Bills affecting public rights, commons, and open spaces, which were considered necessary in view of the contemplated cessation of the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act, 1939, under which public rights of way had been kept closed during the war. As is now well-known the Act came to an end on February 24, 1946, and had it not been for the new legislation all public rights of way would automatically have been restored to the public on that date.

As a set-off against the continued curtailment of public rights imposed by the new legislation it is pleasing to report that Defence Regulation 62 (5A), under which the ploughing up of footpaths for war-time cultivation was authorised by County War Agricultural Executive Committees, was revoked on September 28 last. The effect of the revocation is to withdraw the protection from prosecution under the Highways Act for interference with public rights. Your Council sought the views of one of the Agricultural Executive Committees as to the position of footpaths which had already been re-seeded at the date when the regulation was revoked, but it is understood that the farmers have been requested to restore the rights formerly exercised by the public over the original footpaths whether reseeded or not and to remove any obstruction. They have also been asked to roll out or level the original line of the path for the use of the public. In view of the food crisis which has arisen since the revocation of the regulation which makes it more than ever essential that agricultural land should be cultivated to produce the greatest possible amount of wheat, etc., it would appear to be only fair and reasonable that where reseeded has already taken place, the public should refrain from insisting on paths being reinstated until after the next harvest, provided, of course, the farmer has continued to leave available a reasonable diversion. With goodwill on the part of the farmers and public alike there would appear to be no reason why intensive agriculture and the very necessary recreation of rambling should not both function satisfactorily. The Society will always be willing to further any efforts to this end.

### **Footpath dispute at Peak Cavern, Castleton**

“It is pleasing to report a very satisfactory ending in the dispute which the Society had with the Duchy of Lancaster regarding the proposed restriction of the right of way to the Cavern. The Council to the Duchy was asked to reconsider its previous decision, and as a result, decided that when the time came to set up a new barrier for the protection of the Cavern and the Ropewalks the Chancellor of the Duchy would be advised to order its erection on the site of the existing ineffectual barrier – as originally suggested by your Council.

### **Direction Posts**

Some eighteen months ago it is understood that a resolution was passed at a meeting of the Cheshire County Council to the effect that ‘consideration should be given to the matter of signposting all public footpaths in Cheshire.’ This matter was passed on to the Council’s Roads and Bridges Committee for consideration. On learning that such Committee proposed to pass a resolution recommending that no further action be taken your Secretary, in urging the County Council to undertake such work, pointed out the necessity for signposting footpaths to guide

the public and prevent claims being made that certain paths were private and that it was unfair that voluntary societies should be saddled with the burden of erecting signposts and the further annual burden of maintaining the posts.

## **1946**

### **Hayfield – Snake Inn Path**

“For some time the condition of this track has given your Council much concern. The path today is in a bad state of repair. It was to some extent upset by the floods in 1931, but was made considerably worse by the storm damage of Whit-Monday 1944, the cloudburst, which caused thousands of pounds’ worth of damage at Glossop and Hayfield. The District County Surveyor from time to time has carried out repairs, but labour shortage has limited the amount of work that could be done. In urging that a considerable improvement in the condition of the path be effected at an early date it has been pointed out to the Surveyor that next May marks the 50th anniversary of the opening of the path - the cause for which the Society was originally formed – and that it would be fitting if such anniversary could be celebrated with the gate in good condition once more.

## **1947**

“The Special Committee Report on Access and Footpaths was published in September. It is interesting to recall that one of the last acts as Secretary of this Society performed by Mr Boulger was his drafting of a Memorandum on Footpath Law, and his recommendations for its revision.

This memorandum he submitted to this Special Committee, and it is gratifying to find that the whole of Mr Boulger’s recommendations were accepted, and are embodied in this report.

### **50th Anniversary**

“Probably the outstanding ‘Domestic’ event was the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the successful struggle to win the right of way from Hayfield to the Snake Inn via Williams Clough and Ashop Head. The opportunity was also taken to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Society, which due to the War had had to be deferred. On June 7th over 100 members and friends including members of the Hayfield Parish Council met in Hayfield to partake of a meal; earlier many of them had enjoyed a ramble over the footpath under the leadership of Mr A. Milner and Mr A. Smith. After the tea the meeting was addressed by our Chairman, and Mr G. H. B. Ward, F.R.G.S., and Mr J. Garside.

Your Council wish to express their sincerest thanks to Mr Wild for organising the celebration, and to Mr Garside for his very fine Exhibition of Maps and Photographs, and to Mr and Mrs. Hague, who so very kindly presented a special Birthday Cake. In connection with the anniversary an exhibition of photographs and maps relating to the History of the Society, and with particular reference to the Hayfield–Snake Inn footpath, was held at the Central Library, Manchester. The Exhibition ran for four weeks, and aroused much public interest.

### **Shooting Range at Thorpe, Dovedale**

“A further threat to the proposed Peak District National Park, and one that aroused the greatest amount of national feeling was the proposal made by the War Office to extend the Shooting Range at Thorpe from the pre-war one of two targets covering an area of 43 acres to one covering some 475 acres. This would have taken many public footpaths including the well known Stepping Stones, and the footpath along the river side near Lion Rock and Tissington Spires. Your Council were gravely concerned, and accordingly letters of protest were sent to the War Department, the Minister of Town & Country Planning and to the national press; as a

result of the many protests being made the Derbyshire County Council called a meeting in the County Council Chambers, Derby, in November. This meeting consisted of representatives from Local Authorities and amenity organisations of which your Society was one. A strong resolution of protest was accepted by the Chairman, Alderman C.F. White, J.P., and a sub-committee was elected to meet, if possible, Mr Shinwell. Your Council are pleased to report that as a result of the very strong nationwide protest this proposal was withdrawn.

“The Chairman stated that he had received a letter from the Secretary explaining his difficulty in getting his correspondence typed and it was agreed that the Secretary should purchase a typewriter.

## **1948**

### **Footpath Taxal Church to Taxal Edge**

“After receiving complaints that the 9 foot high ladder stile on this footway had been made extremely difficult to negotiate by the disappearance of 6 of its rungs, your Council requested the Whaley Bridge Urban District Council to arrange for the repair of the stile. Your Council are pleased to report that arrangements have been made for the repair to be carried out.

### **Obstruction at Hollins Farm, Rowarth**

“Complaints having been received, representations were made to the New Mills U.D.C. calling for the reopening of this footpath, the path having been ploughed up and sown with oats, and obstructed at another point by barbed wire at yet another point of the path a bull was in a field traversed by this right of way, and in view of the close proximity of the ‘Children’s Inn’ your Council felt this was a matter of some urgency. It is pleasing to report that all these matters have been satisfactorily dealt with.

## **1949**

### **National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949**

“With the passage into law of the above Act on December 16, 1949, Parliament has conceded reforms for which the society and other associations of footpath users have contended for many years. Members of the Society are recommended to secure a copy of the Act (price 2s.) from H.M. Stationery Office.

## **1951**

“Despite the more progressive legislation of recent years, experience is proving that the 1947 Planning Act has come as a ‘God-send’ to quarry owners who are now able to close or divert public footpaths with very little trouble since they find that the Ministry of Transport will always rubber-stamp its approval.

The National Parks and Access Act, 1949, has also facilitated the closing or diversion of public paths and in several cases applications to divert are being approved by the highway authority despite protest by footpath users. The ancient safeguard of the power of veto by the Parish Council has been removed. Moreover many farmers are ploughing up public footpaths and neglecting to carry out their obligation to roll out the path after ploughing.

### **Secretaryship**

“As from the date of Annual Meeting, there will be a change in the Secretaryship. After a period of over 30 years in office, chiefly as Footpaths Inspector and latterly as Secretary, Mr H.E. Wild will retire, and Mr Arthur Smith has accepted the Council’s invitation to become the Secretary.

### **Voluntary Footpath Survey**

"Mr Redford, the Survey Secretary has been kept exceptionally busy attending conferences, meeting officers of local authorities, distributing, and later collecting six inch Ordnance Sheets from the Volunteer Surveyors. In a number of cases photostat copies of the official survey sheets have been made available for comparison.

### **Cranberry Clough Footbridge, near Slippery Stones, Upper Derwent**

"As the result of a letter in the 'Manchester Guardian', drawing attention to the unwillingness of the West Riding County Council to accept its liabilities under the 'Footpath Repair' clauses of the National Parks and Access Act, in respect of this footbridge, renewed pressure was brought to bear on the County Council, the former decision was reconsidered, and a satisfactory footbridge has been provided by the highway authority...

### **Finance**

"The continued cost of the Footpath Survey work amounting this year, the third, to £46. 10s. 1d, has of course been taken from reserves in the shape of the 'special fund' as in previous years. The three years of activity in this field have accounted for a total expenditure of £139. 7s. 5d. In regard to the special funds, the Defence Fund has been increased by Donations received by £24 3s. 8d. to £526 9s. 3d., and the Post War Reserve Fund by 12s. 6d. to £24 6s. 11d. This latter fund has now been closed as it is felt that it has fulfilled the function for which it was created. The Sheffield Clarion Rambling Club has continued its very helpful and remarkable support.

## **1952**

"One of the Society's most urgent needs is a greatly expanded income. A step towards its fulfilment will be the appointment of a Membership Secretary at the Annual meeting. Here are a few facts: from 1938 to the present day, there has been an intermittent series of deficits in the general working fund, which have been met by raids on reserve funds. In the past year deficits were incurred nine times, and except for 1946 and 1951 the six surplus years were war years when activity was restricted to a minimum. The deficits began quite modestly with a mere £8 in 1938, but with the exception of the years mentioned, peace time has shown a mounting rise in the deficits. In 1951 there was a surplus of £30. But if the cost of the Survey work done in that year, £47, had been charged to the account, there would have been a deficit of £17. For 1952, in spite of the subscription having been raised to 3/6d the previous year, after having remained at 2/6d. for many years of peace and war, a phenomenal deficit of £119 was incurred (reduced as the Treasurer points out in his financial Report, to £60, by raids on reserve funds). So a remedy cannot be sought in a further increase in the subscription rate.

### **Footpath from Hassall to Sandbach, Cheshire**

"This path having been obstructed by barbed wire fences by a recent purchaser of Sandbach Vicarage was investigated by Mr Nash. In spite of a documentary history of nearly 300 years the first mention of it being in 1681 – the Congleton R.D.C., took a lot of persuading to act upon it, the Secretary having to make a special visit to the Clerk. However, they are now acting vigorously and the future is hopeful.

### **Footpath Library**

"13 books and reports, nine maps, and the Peak National Park Designation Plan have been added to the Society's 'Footpath Library', housed in the Special Collections Department on the Fourth Floor of the Manchester Central Library. Books and maps may be borrowed from the Footpaths Library on presentation of the special Library Ticket.

## 1953

### Footpaths Survey

"The footpaths survey which is being conducted under the National Parks Act, continues its lumbering way. In no part of our Area has the time-table envisaged by the Act come within a year of its execution. In itself this has enabled the faithful few to do their work of checking official maps with greater thoroughness. At the time of writing, all the West Riding and Lancashire Draft maps have been exhibited, about a quarter of the Cheshire maps, but no maps of our part of Derbyshire and Staffordshire. Objections by landowners, farmers and others, to paths shown on the draft map, have arrived in spate at the County Record Offices, and it is in connection with these that help is needed from Clubs and individuals. Mr N. Redford, the Survey Secretary, has given time and energy unstinted to this work, and once more he and his helpers have been driven about the countryside by Mr L. G. Meadowcroft who has unreservedly placed his motor and his time at the Society's disposal.

## 1954

Diamond Jubilee Year and the first Annual General Meeting to be held in the Friends' House, Mount Street, Manchester.

### Diamond Jubilee Celebrations

"To celebrate the foundation of the Society in 1894, members and friends gathered at Lyme Hall on 4th September 1954. Parties walked from Middlewood and other places, and a representative gathering had tea, after which speeches were made by the

Mayor of Stockport, our President, the Chairman and others. The celebrations are not yet ended. For there is to be an exhibition at Manchester Central Library next March which will be opened on the first day by the Lord Mayor of Manchester. It is also hoped to have a smaller exhibition at the Manchester Ramblers' Association Rally at Lyme Park on 26 June.

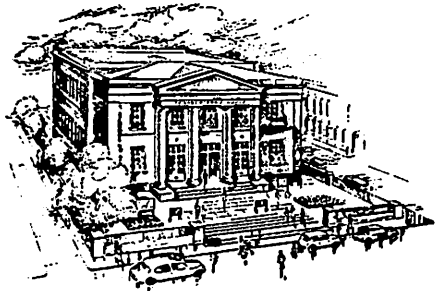
### Membership

"We require a constantly increasing membership to renew the Society's life blood. Apathy and complacency are our greatest enemies. There are too few workers for too much work, some who could do more are doing less. Ours is a fine heritage of footpaths, but it will assuredly melt away like last winter's snow, however many Acts of Parliament may exist, if the walkers of yesterday and today do not realise their responsibilities. When a beautiful scene is faced with desecration or a historic building with demolition, a great outcry arises. But when a footpath equally beautiful or of equal antiquity is threatened, in silence it is often allowed to disappear. The same knight-errantry is required in the defence of a footpath as of an old hall or precious scene.

## 1955

### Footpath Survey

"S.O.S. Draft Map. The most urgent task before us today is that of obtaining evidence to justify our claims to paths in North Staffordshire. A plan of the 193 paths involved has been prepared, together with forms for statements and signatures. Unless prompt action is taken to complete the forms, a great many paths in the Peak District and vicinity will be lost. Ten per cent of our footpaths are in danger. This clearly points the need of co-operation from every member, either by his stating the use he has made of the footpaths or by his taking forms and obtaining





statements from users, This responsibility extends equally to every member of an affiliated organisation. The work already done will be largely nullified unless this also is done.

### **The Society's Area**

"The Committee recommended the boundaries of our area to be:

**North:** Leyland to Sowerby Bridge. **East:** Sowerby Bridge to Ambergate, including the whole Peak District. **South:** Nantwich – Ambergate. **West:** Nantwich – Leyland.

"A pleasing feature of the year has been the **financial support given by local authorities:**

Bollington, Bowdon, Manchester, and Stockport received in that order. As an appreciation of the Society's work in freeing from obstruction the path leading from Tytherington Lane to the Iron Bridge, Bollington, the Bollington U.D.C. contributed £5 5s. to our funds. Next came a complete surprise a donation of £1 1s. from Bowdon U.D.C. as a mark of appreciation of our work. This led us to approach certain other corporations, and we are pleased to report from Manchester Corporation a contribution of £25 and Stockport Corporation a donation of £2 2s. to our funds – a total of £33.8s. from this new source. We give our best thanks to all four authorities.

## **1956**

### **Derbyshire County Council's Scheme**

"During the year the welcome news has been received from this authority that they have decided to signpost all the footpaths in the County, a programme that will take about 30 years to complete. The average annual number of paths to be covered in the Peak District will be about 75. In July we convened a meeting of kindred bodies at Chinley and subsequently submitted a list of about 100 paths as a suggested priority. This activity on the part of Derbyshire County Council should give us an opportunity to attend to some other parts of our area that urgently need consideration. And meanwhile we hope that this example will be imitated by other county councils in our area.

**Disley Golf Course:** "The Golf Club have placed a notice in the club house asking players to avoid walkers using the public footpaths.

## **1957**

### **Footpath Survey in Lancashire**

"The Society has been represented at many hearings held during the year, and many of the determinations have been in our favour. The two most noteworthy were the County Council's decision that the whole of the Towpath of the Rochdale Canal should be shown as a public footpath, and the important paths that the Heywood and Middleton Waterboard conceded to be public in the Hailstorm Hill and Knowl Hill area, all of which will now be on the Provisional Maps. The Water Board recognised public right of access to the Urban Common land on these moors. The County Council, as a result of our representations, added paths to the Draft map in the Ashworth Valley, but the landowner indicated that many paths in the area would be challenged at the Provisional map stage.

### **Diversion and Closure of Footpaths**

"Bredbury and Romiley Urban District Council. Because of agricultural development, an order was made to divert a path between Beacom Houses and Radcliffe Fold, Werneth Low, but as the path was omitted from the Draft Map the Minister refused to confirm the order. The Urban District Council, with the assistance of the Society, was able to obtain declarations proving the path to be a public right of way under the Rights of Way Act, 1932, and the minister has now confirmed the Order.

## **Footpaths in Derbyshire**

“Stakeside Path via Stake Clough and Deep Clough to Goyt Road. We reported Lord Derby’s keeper for turning people off this path and wrongly stating that it was not a public right of way.

## **1959**

### **Derwent Packhorse Bridge**

“We welcome the re-erection of the 17th Century Bridge by the Sheffield C.P.R.E as a memorial to the late John Derry. A few members of the Council attended the Dedication Ceremony on 26th September 1959. The bridge had been carefully dismantled and stored before Ashopton was submerged by the Ladybower Reservoir, and in its new position it replaces the old footbridge at Slippery Stones. Difficulty was experienced at first as the new site was off the line of the old footpath, but Derbyshire CC readily agreed that the footpath should be diverted in accordance with Section 2 of the Bridges Act, 1803, and we are pleased that the West Riding CC has now also agreed to this proposal. The responsibility for the future maintenance of the bridge has been accepted by both the County Councils.

### **Footpaths in Cheshire: Whitegate, Pettypool**

“A member of the public was threatened with prosecution by the Forestry Commission for cutting wire on a footpath in this area. Mr Nash was present at an interview between the Police Inspector and the person concerned, after which the charge was not proceeded with. A meeting is shortly to be held between the Forestry Commission, Winsford RDC, the Society and members of the public.

### **Footpaths in Lancashire on the North Bank of the River Mersey**

“During the construction of the new Kingsway extension, the Society approached Manchester Corporation suggesting a new section of path joining up the two existing paths and giving access to the new bridge. A new path along this line has now been made.

## **1961**

### **Proposed Errwood Reservoir, Goyt Valley**

“Stockport Corporation engaged a landscape architect to revise the plans for the proposed Errwood Reservoir. In addition to the rights of way already proposed, his plans provide for a high level path going up the valley from Goyt Lane. This, at the Society’s suggestion, will join the footpath from Burbage Edge near to the memorial Bridge, recently erected by the Manchester Area of the Ramblers’ Association, and the construction of a new bridge over the River Goyt will be unnecessary. Although Stockport Corporation do not feel able to create a right of way along the east side of the existing reservoir, we hope it will be possible for the old mineral railway line to be used as a public footpath when the construction of the new reservoir is completed.

### **Footpath in Millers Dale**

“At a hearing into the Society’s claim for a right of way between Litton Mill and Cressbrook Mill, the mill owners stated that as the way had been originally constructed to connect the two mills and a toll had been collected for a period, they did not consider it to be public. They were, however, prepared to allow it to be included in the draft map on the understanding that their water rights allowed them to raise the weir a further 13 inches and that the Society was prepared to agree to a diversion of the footpath to avoid the mill yard. The Society readily agreed to this as the path is considered to be one of the finest of the Derbyshire riverside paths.

## **1962**

“The total membership now stands at 649 members and 75 societies which is still about half the strength required to meet the cost of the Society’s present activities.

## **1963**

### **Footpaths Survey of Rights of Way: National Parks etc Act 1949**

“It is felt that the next few years are likely to test most strongly the efforts of various societies, clubs, etc. to keep footpaths on the map, so open for public use. Apart from attacks by objectors, the threatened withdrawal of railway passenger traffic from certain country districts, will, if put into effect, deal damaging blows to the hopes of those who took part in the voluntary surveys in the 1950s. The work put in has already proved worthwhile but the loss of railway transport would be a tragedy and most probably result in numbers of footpaths becoming ‘lost’ through lack of use. Meanwhile clubs, and other bodies, would be well advised to assist in keeping footpaths open by breaking occasional new ground when building up their programmes of rambles.

## **1964**

“The 70th anniversary year of our Society has seen widespread activity on the Survey front, with many important hearings in Cheshire at which we have been actively represented. Now that the final definitive maps for our area of Lancashire, Staffordshire and Yorkshire have been published, the Derbyshire hearings completed, and those in Cheshire nearly finished, we can look forward to the completion of this massive operation which has occupied us for a great many years and consumed much time and energy.

## **1965**

“Although the Survey is still with us, our attention is turning more and more to the wave of obstructions and petty interferences with footpaths which is sweeping our district, in common with many others. Theoretically the remedy is simple. The law abiding citizen reports to the local authority concerned, and they secure the removal of the difficulty. But, all too often this does not happen. The report goes in, but months and even years may elapse before anything effective is done. For one reason or another, some authorities are just not doing their duty. We have even been asked in one difficult case to advise our members not to use the paths until the definitive map has appeared, this year, next year or sometime.

## **1968**

“Early in the year under review our Annual Meeting decided to shorten the Society’s title to ‘**Peak and Northern Footpaths Society**’ – the first such change ever to be made since its foundation in 1894. Would that other desirable changes could be made so easily!

## **1969**

### **75th Anniversary Walk**

“About 80 people took part in the Anniversary Walk from Hayfield to Glossop via the Snake and Doctors Gate led by our President on August 2nd. Heavy rain fell shortly after lunch had been taken at Ashop Head, but the event attracted many people, young and old. Several had come from distant towns, including a former Stalybridge resident who came up from Bexhill, Sussex.

## 1970

### Wildboardclough paths

“A number of contested paths in the Macclesfield Forest and Wildboardclough areas came before Quarter Sessions Hearings at Knutsford during the year. On 9th April objections to Macclesfield Forest 18 and 27, from Broughsplace to Torgate and Bottom of the Oven respectively, were withdrawn, and objections to two other paths at Whitehills Farm were defeated. On 19th October, objections to the path from Broughsplace to Clough Bridge and Dry Dry Knowl were defeated, but the opposition to the section from Dry Knowl to the Clough Road via High Ash Farm, was upheld.

## 1976

“Footpaths are increasingly treated as ephemeral tracks to be shifted about without formality to suit private or alleged public interests, and at times there seems a danger that the real law may be replaced by a sort of informal folk law. During the year we have come across a number of instances where well meaning officials have way-marked alternative permissive routes at the request of householders and farmers, and in one case, at least, people were subsequently reprimanded for using the legal route. Of course, there is a place for common sense in solving footpath disputes and where there are good grounds for diversions the Society is ready to agree to reasonable alternatives, but we do not favour concessions to people who have defied the law, nor widespread and unnecessarily permissive changes which could lead to confusion and difficulties for map users.

### Our 150th Anniversary

“150 years’ existence as a footpath society were celebrated on the 14th November 1976 by a large scale public walk over The Bottom’s Path at Flixton, the controversial footpath which brought about the formation of our forerunner ‘The Manchester Association for the Protection of Ancient Footpaths’, of whom we are the successors. Some five hundred people assembled at Flixton Railway Station, and were led by Donald Berwick, one of our oldest active members, to a point along the path where an inscribed plaque commemorating the event was unveiled by the Chairman of Greater Manchester’s Highway Committee. This was followed by two short speeches, one of which was by Harold Wild, a previous secretary of many years’ service, and whom we were very glad to have with us on this occasion. After the ceremony the walk was continued and finally completed by ending at a local hall where refreshments were available for all who had participated. On the Monday following, nearly 70 members attended the Anniversary Dinner which was held at the New Albion Restaurant. A feature of the evening was the cutting of the Anniversary Gateau, a symbolic presentation of the Society created by the head chef of the restaurant. Another feature of our celebration was the holding of a Footpath Exhibition in the Manchester Central Library during the first three weeks of November and which was visited by a number of people. The full story of the inauguration of the Society is given in our anniversary booklet’ – *The Flixton Footpath Battle*’ – compiled by Don Lee.

### Extract from the President’s Anniversary Dinner address (by Dr Frank Head)

“We are commemorating 150 years of work for footpaths carried out by two successive societies operating from the City of Manchester, and that is something to be more than a little proud of, both as footpaths enthusiasts and Mancunians. When Harold Wild claimed that ours was the oldest amenity society in Britain, and obviously much older than the London Commons Society of 1865, Tom Stephenson rather irritatingly dug out an even older body, the ‘Association for the Protection of Ancient Footpaths in the Vicinity of York’ founded in 1824, two years before the ‘Manchester Association for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths’ .... and with an even

longer title. Though not a Lancastrian by birth, I cannot help wishing it had been somewhere other than York, but there it is, and it is only fair to say that the Manchester Association obtained advice from, and was modelled upon the York society. The York people, indeed, expressed pride in the part they had played in helping the Manchester Association, and I am sure they would have felt even prouder if they had foreseen that it would still be in existence now, 150 years to the very day from its inauguration. Whether the York Association, or any successor body, still exists I very much doubt, but we of the Peak and Northern are clearly the successors in title to the 1826 Association. Unless Tom Stephenson has some further evidence up his sleeve, I am going to claim boldly that our Society is almost certainly the oldest surviving amenity society in Britain today. It is not only a matter for pride, but places us under a heavy responsibility to carry the work forward into the future.

## **1979**

### **Bulls**

“The need for a total ban, and for its strict enforcement, was well illustrated earlier this year by the attack on our Vice President, and former Signpost Supervisor, who was taken unawares by a bull that he had not spotted in a herd of cows. Mr. Ewart was walking in the Bolton district where a total ban bye-law operates at present and sustained several broken ribs, but fortunately was rescued before worse happened and made a good recovery. We are pleased to say that after a less serious episode in Derbyshire the police warned neighbouring farmers.

## **1982**

### **General Secretary’s Report – Cleared Paths**

“In more general terms the work of the Society has proceeded apace with the number of obstructed path files growing as each passing week adds more to the total and very few problems appear to be resolved. That is not to say that we have not had some successes! Litton FP1 is now clear with new stiles erected. This path as been in dispute for some years and it is gratifying to be able to report its clearance. Belmont 28, where a fence round the car park of the ‘Wright’s Arms’ obstructed the path, has also now been cleared. A sea of stable manure and refuse which obstructed Hyde 153 has also been cleared and there are many others.

### **Inspectors**

“One of the great strengths of our Society is the dedicated people who act as footpaths inspectors. Without them I could not continue to maintain an efficient organisation. During the year we have had many offers of assistance in this field and several new inspectors have been appointed. However we are always on the look-out for more. We need people who are prepared to give as much time as they feel able, to walk paths, to note problems and to report them to me. I will take the necessary action, but it is vitally important that any obstructions, unofficial diversions etc, are noted in our records.

### **‘Outside our Area’**

“An Australian solicitor, who was greatly impressed by what he saw on a visit to our district has written for information on public rights of way and signposting. Don Lee has been reminded that Australia is outside our operational area.

### **Society’s Slide Lecture**

“This has recently been revised and now contains well over 100 35mm colour transparencies illustrating the work of the Society and its members. It is hoped that this will prove to be an additional fund raiser and publicity medium.

"On Wilmslow FP 128, adjacent to Dairy House Farm, the farmer and his daughter threatened to throw the Chairman into an adjacent pond. Police informed.

## **1983**

### **Local & District Plans (from the Secretary's Report)**

"One of the more time consuming tasks on behalf of the Society is to receive, consider and make comments on the many local and district plans which appear regularly. This year we have dealt with ten. I often wonder if the time and effort involved in studying and formally lodging our comments on these Plans is really worthwhile. It is very not often that we see any evidence that our observations have resulted in any sort of amendment, but I suppose we must continue to show our interest.

## **1985**

### **Greater Manchester County Council – R.I.P.**

"Whatever it is and has been said about Greater Manchester County Council, this Society will certainly mourn the loss of an extremely good friend. In April 1986, the County Engineer's Department which deals with rights of way will be disbanded and we will be left with having to deal with district councils whose track record on path matters has in the past been abysmal. It is with the deepest regret, therefore, that we say a fond farewell to all at County Hall, both officers and councillors, involved with highway matters.

## **1986**

### **Magistrates Courts**

"Following complaints made by the Society, Derbyshire County Council took a landowner in Charlesworth to court in view of his refusal to remove a blockage from a stile. The court found the landowner guilty of obstructing the way but gave him an absolute discharge. As a Society, we are reluctant to press local authorities to prosecute in cases of obstruction until all consultation procedures have been tried. In this case we felt that all reasonable persuasive methods had failed and we were pleased when the County Council decided to take the case to court and have written to the Clerk to the Justices at Glossop expressing our disgust.

### **Signposts**

"This has been another busy year including the erection of eight new posts. All are memorial or anniversary posts with the sponsor paying between £30 to £50 each to cover all costs.

## **1989**

### **Thirty bridges required**

"We often have problems with missing bridges but take a look at the footpath report (Greater Manchester – Irlam 6). 30 plank bridges required on a path less than half a mile in length, this must be a record of some sort. Peat working takes place in this area of Cadishead Moss with complete disregard for public rights of way. Salford are the responsible authority but are slow to take action.

## **1990**

### **Cown Edge Way**

"The saga of the Cown Edge Way on Werneth Low continues. The Ombudsman now having again been brought in to deal with the laggardly Tameside Council who failed to keep their promise to the Ombudsman to provide an alternative footpath route – on their own land, as

an alternative to the dangerous Werneth Low Road. At the close of the year we have now received another communication from the Ombudsman that the work is now programmed for completion by March 1991. It is also pleasing to report that Stockport have now officially recognised the Cown Edge Way with advance direction signs at Hazel Grove after our request of some four and a half years ago.

## **1991**

### **Ploughing**

“Despite the recent Rights of Way Act with regard to what is now legally described as ‘Disturbing the Surface’, we are finding there is still a large number of farmers who continue to ‘disturb’ and do not reinstate. It is extremely important, therefore, that this Society continues to press local authorities to ensure that the provisions of this Act are adhered to. We can only do that if we are kept informed of ploughed out paths.

## **1992**

### **The Society’s Areas of Operation**

“The Society divides its eight-county coverage into two major areas which we describe as Inner and Outer. In the Inner area, which is that covered by our inspectorate we deal with all matters, i.e. closures, diversions, creations and obstructions. In our Outer area we deal only with closures, diversions and creations. We do, however, have contacts in our Outer area who deal with obstruction problems on our behalf. In this Outer area we are gradually appointing agents to be our eyes and ears and who will respond quickly to our request for on-site information with regard to proposals to close or divert rights of way. We already have agents covering Staffordshire (South) and West Yorkshire (North) and we are on the look out for the sort of person to represent us in Merseyside and Lancashire (North).

### **Dovedale footpath**

“We continue to press for a footpath along the Derbyshire bank of the river between Lode Mill and Mill Dale on land held by the East Midland Branch of the National Trust who continue to oppose this despite their National Annual Meeting’s resolution to provide greater public access to their land. This Branch has also stated their intention to close an adjacent concession path. More recently we learn they have received grant aid under the Countryside Stewardship of the Countryside Commission. This scheme has, as one of its conditions, the granting of additional public access to the recipient’s land. We are taking steps to draw the attention of the authorities to this involvement of public monies and failure to provide necessary facilities. The granting of this riverside path has been the subject of applications for well over ten years!

**Membership:** With the 11 honorary life members, total membership now stands at 1083 which means we have achieved four figures for the first time.

## **1993**

### **Treasurer’s Report**

“Do not be misled by the fairly substantial surpluses shown on the accounts. The Society is at a difficult point where it needs to grow significantly – to continue its work at its best levels. The Society at present relies upon the use of a significant area of the premises of the secretary and the chairman. It would be very advantageous for it to have its own premises, but the cost would be much higher than the present surpluses! Also the chairman and secretary are subject to very heavy demands upon their time, and it would again be of advantage to the Society to have paid employees to assist them.

# CENTENARY YEAR 1994

*from Hansard... (by courtesy of our Vice President)*

No. 88	Notices of Motions: 21st April 1994	4513
1095	<i>PEAK AND NORTHERN FOOTPATH SOCIETY</i>	21:4:94
Mr Andrew F. Bennett Mr Jim Callaghan Mr Ken Eastham Mr Tony Lloyd Mr Keith Bradley Ann Coffey		
★ 20		
Mr Colin Pickthall	Mr Peter L. Pike	Mr Joe Ashton
Mr Peter Kilfoyle	Mr Stanley Orme	Mr Terry Lewis
Mr Peter Hardy	Mr D.N. Campbell-Savours	Mr Robert Litherland
Jane Kennedy	Mr Brian Sedgemore	Mr Roy Hughes
Mr Bryan Davies	Mr Richard Caborn	
<p>That this House congratulates the Peak and Northern Footpath Society on its centenary; notes that, for 100 years, its members and officers have worked to preserve existing footpaths and rights of way, and to extend access to the countryside; wishes its committee and members every success in the future; and hopes that by the year 2000 not only will every public footpath be free from obstruction, but legislation will extend public access to all mountain, moorland, heath, downs and foreshore.</p>		

The main events and activities celebrating the Society's Centenary Year are –

## **Centenary Dinner**

This most enjoyable event was held on Friday 22nd April at the Freemason's Hall in Bridge Street, Manchester. We were very fortunate in having as our guest speaker Sir John Johnson, Chairman of the Countryside Commission, who gave the address and toast to the Society. Andrew Bennett MP, our Vice President, responded and Maurice Deakin, a Derbyshire footpath inspector gave the vote of thanks. The 120 members present fully enjoyed both the meal and these three excellent speeches.

## **Unveiling of Plaques**

On the 16th August, precisely the same date as the inaugural meeting in 1894, the Lord Mayor of Manchester will unveil a plaque on the former YMCA building in Peter Street, Manchester. This is not the same building but occupies the site of the former YMCA Hall.

On the following Sunday, 21st August, a plaque on the Hayfield Information Centre will be unveiled by Martin Doughty, Chairman of Derbyshire County Council.

## **Floral Display**

Stockport MBC has created a superb floral display based on, but rather larger than, the Society's cloth badge. This is located at the junction of the A6 (London Road) and Torkington Road. Our grateful thanks to that Council for this excellent contribution to our centenary celebrations.



# PAYING MY DUES *and a tribute to Arthur Smith*

by Donald Lee

My first introduction to the Peak District & Northern Counties Footpaths Preservation Society, as it was then named, was when I came across their huge cast iron signposts dotted around the Peak where I did much of my teenage walking in the fifties. However, what really caught my eye was the series of letters from the pen of Arthur Smith, Vice President that he published in local newspapers. These, usually accompanied by a sketch map, asked readers to walk various networks of lesser known paths. They sometimes appealed for '20 years use' so that specific routes could be added to the Draft, provisional or Definite Right of Way Map being prepared by the county council. One of these sketch maps covered the Birtle/Ashworth/Norden area north of Heywood and, being fairly close to my home town of Middleton, came in very handy during my walks there, particularly as he included the path numbers on his maps.

However, the event which set me directly on the road to footpath preservation took place on a casual visit to Manchester Central Library. A small exhibition of the Society's work was on display to publicise the fact that their collection of books, maps and leaflets had been donated to the library. A few copies of the Society's 1961 annual report were available and the centre spread was an Arthur Smith map of the paths around Plattwood Farm near Lyme Park. He was asking for greater use of the network and particularly FP19. By chance, I had arranged to go walking in that area the very next weekend, starting from Higher Poynton. On reaching Griffin Cottage on FP19, a woman hurled abuse for daring to walk the path, yet the route on the ground was a clearly defined cart track. I continued and five minutes later was crossing the yard of Plattwood Farm when I heard an angry male voice and the sound of a dog being let out. The dog bit me on the ankle, it was then called off and disappeared back into the farmhouse where the door was slammed shut. I hobbled to Lyme Hall, phoned the police and spent the rest of the day identifying the dog and making statements.

The next day I wrote to Arthur Smith telling him what had happened and applying for membership. He invited me to the next Society Council meeting, then as now held in the Friends' Meeting House, where I explained the events at Plattwood Farm. By that time the police had taken appropriate action and, although I do not know what if any court action was taken, the Society was never again to hear of threats to walkers in that area. Footpath 19, then at draft stage, is now definitive thanks to the behind-the-scenes work of Arthur Smith.

Most of the committee seemed elderly and, being by far the youngest there, I was soon co-opted as a footpaths inspector, perhaps to redress the age imbalance. As now, Society meetings were lively affairs with plenty of controversy but I soon realised that Arthur Smith, who had taken me under his wing, was having to fight internal dissent from the moderates as well as battle for footpaths. He was an elderly man with a mane of white hair and mischievous twinkle in his eye. Crippled by arthritis, he could walk only with support and his efforts in fighting for footpaths he knew he would never be able to walk, was a big encouragement to me to learn footpath lore and law. He encouraged me to appear at public inquiries (fortunately my first, at Denton, was a success), explained the delights of urban footpaths; his 1951 book '*50 Weekend Walks around Manchester*' is now a collectors item.

When Arthur Smith died, the Society recognised his work and achievements in the cause of footpath preservation by negotiating a new public footpath to the summit of Shutlingslow and installing a commemorative plaque. This was his favourite hill near to his home town of Macclesfield but public access had always evaded him during his lifetime.

# SIGNPOSTS

by Fred Ogden, Signpost Supervisor

Throughout the Society's history, considerable importance was attached to the erection of pathway direction signs, starting in 1905 when some 25 sites, mainly in the Hayfield area, were identified. The first post was erected at Carr Meadow, near Hayfield.

Signpost No. 100 was erected in 1939 near Abney Grange and was later replaced by Derbyshire County Council. Signpost No. 200 was erected in 1987 near the summit of Shining Tor. At the time of writing, the latest post is No. 241; this was erected near Bottoms Hall, Marple Bridge, and was donated by the Oldknow Community Arts Forum to commemorate the bicentenary of Samuel Oldknow.

Most of the Society's signposts are in the Peak District, including several in the Derwent Valley / Ladybower area erected by the Hallamshire Society, and Cheshire. The most northerly is situated on Darwen Moor. The most southerly is near Dovedale, close to the Isaac Walton Hotel at Ilam. Signpost No. 33 is no longer visible – this was erected in 1933 almost opposite the Vicarage at Derwent which was subsequently flooded by the creation of the Ladybower Reservoir.

Many of our signposts were removed by the highway authorities during the invasion scare in 1940 but happily, as noted earlier in this booklet, were subsequently reinstated. In 1957, a Braille plaque was donated by the Manchester & District Rambling Club for the Blind in memory of Reg Watson, chairman and founder member of the club; this was fixed to signpost No. 120 close to Gun Farm, Ludworth.

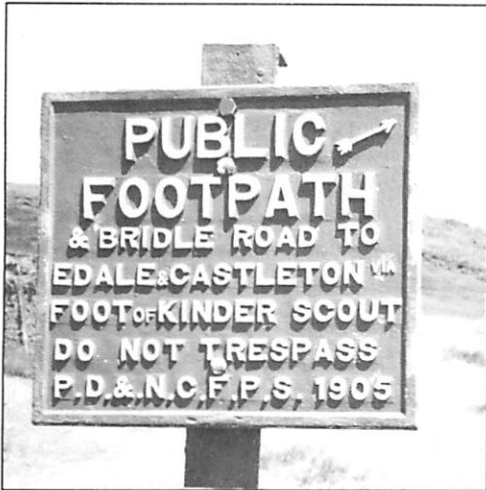
Over the years the Society has used a variety of designs and materials. The original plates were strongly and very attractively made of cast iron, both the plate and lettering were relatively ornate, and often showing the altitude of the location. Many of these early posts still exist and, in terms of both endurance and aesthetics, have stood the test of time extremely well. This is reflected in the design and construction of the Society's present plates; first used in 1989, these are of a cast alloy metal and feature prominently the Society's logo. This was designed by Mr Percy Hutchinson, the Society's signpost secretary from 1987 to 1993.

Many of the Society's signposts have been donated, particularly as memorials for loved ones, and the Society always welcomes further requests of this nature.

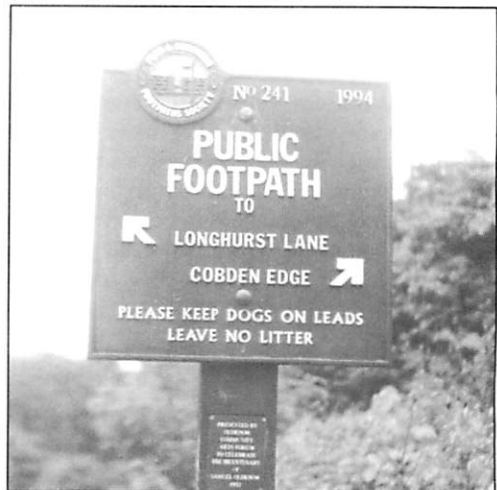
Extract from a letter dated November 1963 from a farmer in Derbyshire –

*"..... I shall be pleased to know whether or not you have given authority for the erection of a signpost outside a farm gate by the Peak District & Northern Counties Footpath Preservation Society. This signpost is offensive to me and my farming interests...."*

Our records show this signpost was erected in 1906 and has been maintained regularly.



*The first (1905) at Carr Meadow and ...*



*... the latest (1994) – No. 241 at Bottoms Hall*

*Seen in our annual reports...*

**1923**

"Owing to the limited funds available the notices which were erected during the past 2½ years, had necessarily to be of wood, with lettering painted. The wooden notice boards and the painted letters are subject to decay, therefore your Council has decided to replace them with the old type of cast iron plate notices and lettering.

**1945**

"The Iron Foundry, where up to the beginning of the war the Society's direction plates were cast, went out of business during the war, and so far your Council's efforts to find another foundry able to undertake the Society's work have not been successful. Difficulty has also been experienced in finding local joiners who would attend to the repair or renewal of the Society's direction posts, while in addition practically all such direction posts and plates require repainting.

**1946**

"The direction post and plate near Mossylea Farm, Glossop, indicating the entrance to the Doctor's Gate track was damaged whilst the area was being used as a gunnery range, The Society has received £3 10s. 0d. from the War Office in settlement of its claim in respect of such damage.

**1947**

"The Society's direction post at Stoke Ford, near Abney, and the post near Longside Plantation on the Disley-Whaley old road were removed for 'security' reasons during the war, but since 1944, in spite of many enquiries, the whereabouts of the two posts could not be ascertained. They were eventually found – the former in a farm building, and the latter in a Golf Club House, and they have been repainted and re-erected. The direction post at Barber Booth disappeared during the year, but was eventually found in the bed of the stream nearby. It is hoped to have it repainted and re-erected in the near future.

# DIARY OF A FOOTPATHS SUPERVISOR

Harold E. Wild was the Society's Footpaths Supervisor for 30 years from 1921 to 1951 and its Secretary from 1949 to 1951. For many years afterwards Harold served as much respected 'elder statesman' and Vice President. He also served as secretary of the Ramblers' Federation. Harold died in 1979; his widow, Dorothy, celebrated her centenary in 1993 but, sadly, died early this year just before the start of our centenary celebrations.

He searched old tithe maps and records, establishing land ownership and roads and paths, in some instances dating as far back as the 1760s. His activities ranged far and wide throughout the Peak District and his descriptions of walls, fences, gates and stiles were absolutely superb.

He meticulously recorded his itinerary from early in his stewardship with complete descriptions of routes taken, and accompanied by precise and accurate drawings of signs, sketch maps, etc. He must have made or used maps for his descriptions because he refers to points by letters, A, B, for example. Perhaps we shall never know.

The following extracts are from his notebook for the period from 1929 to 1935.—

The first entry was for 16th March 1929 –  
*Visited Mr J Higginbotham, Clerk to Poynton Parish Council, re Birch Hall path. He mentioned following as persons who know of the path .. (including) ... Joseph Shrigley, Grocer & Confectioner, Poynton (went that way courting).*

28 September 1929

*Col. Crook, Mr Price, Mr Boulger and I travelled in Mr Abbott's 'car' to Whaley Bridge. Had tea at Coudocks then on by Goyt Bridge up the Roman Road to the Errwood Farm turning, then continuing on foot to the commencement of the path to Normanwood, etc. Here about 120 people assembled for the dedication of the new direction post and plate. Colonel Crook formally received the post on behalf of the Society.*

8 February 1930

*Twitchill Crossing: Called on the Vicar and inspected the Enclosure Award Plan and Tithe Plan. The Enclosure Award Plan indicated the Fulwood Road but this was awarded as a private carriage way.*

23 February 1930

*Benfield Path: Went over path with H. Ogden re plans for footbridge & stakes, etc. Called on Bennett (farmer) but found he does not get home from milk round till 1.00pm.*

7 March 1930

*Went with H. Ogden and 2 ton lorry to Benfield Farm taking 2 14ft x 9 x 3 planks, 2 directions*

*posts & plates, 4 stakes & other timber, cement, spar, 100 bricks & piping for handrail. When Mr Swindells realised where line of path was to be it transpired he has misunderstood my previous verbal description ... We then got the driver to turn round and after a difficult journey reached Far Clough Farm ... Mr Bennett came up and took an interest in our plans ... and agreed to keep our cement dry under cover.*

25 May 1931

*Went up Eccles Road, following Mr Batchelor's letter, and found posts 24 & 39 down, requiring renewing. I was informed the latter had done some damage to a motor car in falling while a scout was touching it.*

24 September 1931

*4/- North Western All-Day Ticket. Inspected new position of Hartington post and gave post coat of red paint & plate 2 coats of white.*

29 November 1931.

*With H. Ogden and C. H. Wright went to Glossop and prepared to move Doctors Gate footbridge. We got assistance from six passing walkers and with some difficulty carried the remains of the footbridge back to position and built a new buttress of loose stone in the water.*

15 January 1933

*By arrangement met P.A. Barnes at Hope Station. Went over alleged disputed way at Killhill Bridge. We then proceeded to Church Hotel, Edale and*

P.A.B. after lunch opened out his maps prepared for C.P.R.E. on which he was entering ownerships, public paths, disputed paths & trespass routes in separate colours. I gave him a fair amount of information on footpaths.

5 February 1933 (Sunday)

Met Mr L. Chevens of Station Road, Hathersage and went with him over disputed path to which he had drawn the Society's attention .... Later in the day, at J5.2.33 I came across a notice which I had not seen previously, worded – 'Persons are Advised not to use the Stepping Stones when the River is high'. There appeared to be a similar post on opposite bank but as stepping stones were under water I did not go to the post.

19 February 1933

Met G.H.B. Ward by arrangement at Edale (re Penistone Stile path etc). the Executive Committees of the Manchester and Sheffield Rambling Federations held a joint meeting in the Church Hotel to which I remained by invitation. I then fixed a bronze name plate on post No. 14.

14 April 1933 (Good Friday)

Mr F. Beard with his motor lorry arrived at H. Ogden's about 8.0am. At Glossop we reclaimed H. Ogden's pick & spade from Mrs Sellars and left an old oven door with her for use of mooring the Doctor's Gate footbridge later.

23 April 1933 (Sunday)

A party totalling 26 persons assisted in the erection of 4 finger posts and one large plate on the Derwent – Moscar bridle road. Mr Pashley's bus carried 13 of us from Hope Station to Derwent for 17/6d. The party carried the posts and 3 borrowed spades etc. and Ogden fixed them.

14 May 1933

I took my cycle in the train to Hope, had lunch at Derwent then, by appointment following a letter from J Twigg, gamekeeper of Moscar Cottage, Moscar, I interviewed him.

27 May 1933

Went with H. Ogden to Glossop. At Mr Sellars we reclaimed old oven door which was left some weeks ago. This we carried with spade to Doctors Gate footbridge. A pulley chain was securely bolted to one side of bridge and the other end of chain bolted to oven door. We dug an 18 - 20

inch hole, buried the oven door, filled in the hole and onto the surface moved a heavy stone which took 15 minutes to move. We finally left the line of chain beneath the soil level to prevent persons tripping over it and to prevent mischief.

30 March 1934

Approaching Moorside Farm, Chisworth by path from SE, I found the following notice (drawing) in white letters on black – "Keep to the Path Anyone Trespassing will be followed and Given Into Custody".

5 May 1934

The main occasion of my call (to Mr Eric Lees of Stodhart) was the destruction of paths at Great Rocks Dale by the I.C.I. Ltd about which Mr Lees had written us. Mr Lees' father was managing director of Buxton Lime Firms Co. Mr Lees was born in the district and states he is one of the few persons who know the public paths of the district who are not employed by or interested in the I.C.I.

21 May 1934 (Whit Monday)

I went by train to Hope, called on the vicar and paid him 2/- after which I made a tracing of the Westend – Alport path as indicated on the Woodlands Tithe Plan. Later I called on the vicar of Hathersage and spent about an hour with him inspecting the Hathersage Award plans.

11 August 1934

I went to Ashopton by bus to meet G.H.B. Ward, chiefly to discuss Derwent Edge Road. Mr Ward had arranged for Mr Joe Edwards to go with him over (DE) Road and to make enquiries from the Wains at Grainfoot. Unfortunately Gamekeeper Twigg met them, ordered them back, Ward refused to go; Twigg used a lot of foul language and twice raised his stick to strike Ward. Tempers were high and part of the time Edwards stood between Ward and Twigg ready in case he used his stick. Eventually the two went forward along the (DE) road and Ward shortly after received a further solicitor's letter in relation to his trespass.

30 November 1934

By appointment I went to the I.C.I. offices at Buxton and interviewed the delegate director and the managing director re the Great Rocks paths. They were surprised to hear the gates on diverted way were wired.



*Sadly, we have little further information about this item of equipment*

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## **A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S**

We offer our grateful thanks to those who provided help and information for this booklet.

We would particularly like to mention  
John Harrop and WH (Bill) Shercliff  
(author of *Nature's Joys are Free for All*)  
for information about the history of the  
Society and the outdoor movement.

Anita Armstrong Lee and John Houfe  
*Editors*

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