

THE PEAK DISTRICT & NORTHERN
COUNTIES
FOOTPATHS PRESERVATION
SOCIETY.



REPORT
OF THE COUNCIL

For the Year Ended 31st December, 1927.



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The Peak District & Northern Counties Footpaths Preservation Society.

President :

COL. H. T. CROOK, M.Inst.C.E., D.L., J.P.

Vice-Presidents :

T. SKELTON COLE, Sheffield.

E. VIPONT BROWN, M.D., Surrey Lodge, Birch Lane,
Longsight.

SIR HAROLD ELVERSTON, 4 Addison Road, London, W.14.

ABEL HEYWOOD, J.P., Manchester.

F. HOWARD, 3, Woodlands Road, Alexandra Road,
Manchester.

C. P. SCOTT, J.P., Manchester.

F. WILLETT, 49 Spring Gardens, Manchester.

J. CUMING WALTERS, M.A., "Manchester City News,
Strutt Street, Manchester.

Council :

J. ASHTON, The Glen, Longden Road, Shrewsbury.

F. E. AMOR, 88, Wellington Street, Alexandra Park, Manchester.

K. W. ATKINSON, 44, Hartington Street, Moss Side, Manchester.

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T. H. BARKER, Sunnycroft, Dore, near Sheffield.

F. COLLIER, 2, St. George Street, Hague Estate, Stalybridge.

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C. DALE, 121, Meadow Road, Lower Broughton, Salford.

C. D. DOYLE, 100, King's Road, Prestwich.

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B. GILL, 140, Prince Street, Ardwick.

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W. HOWARTH, 21, Barrett Street, Old Trafford.

W. INGHAM, Cromwell Buildings, Blackfriars Street, Manchester

J. R. JACKSON, 38, Bramhall Lane, Stockport.

W. JONES, 38, My Street, Eccles New Road, Salford.

C. W. JORDAN, 7, Delamere Street, Higher Openshaw.

CONSTITUTION AND RULES.

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 the public highways, footpaths, bridlepaths, bye-ways, 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.
- (e) And all objects conducive to the foregoing, including the combination, or co-operation with other societies or persons in the promotion or furtherance of the aforesaid objects, or any of them.

3. An annual subscription of 2s. 6d. or upwards, payable in advance on the first day of January 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.

5. An annual general meeting of the members of the Society shall be held in the first quarter in every year, and shall receive, consider, and, if approved of, adopt the report of the Managing Committee for the past year, and transact any other business that may arise.

6. An Extraordinary General Meeting shall be held without delay whenever occasion shall arise, upon the requisition of five members specifying the reason for the meeting and communicated to the Honorary Secretary. Such meeting shall also be held before the institution or defence of any legal

proceedings, the costs of which the ordinary revenue of the Society shall be insufficient to defray, and a favourable vote of not less than two-thirds of the members present at such meeting shall, subject to the necessary funds being duly subscribed or guaranteed, be sufficient sanction for the institution or defence of such proceedings, provided that no liability in respect thereof shall attach to any member beyond the amount of such member's individual subscription to the Society, or the amount of such member's guarantee towards the funds necessary to conduct such proceedings.

7. The Managing Committee shall by themselves or by Sub-Committees appointed from their number :—

- (1) Induce—or, if necessary, compel—as far as possible, all Local, Public, or Urban Authorities and District Councils to perform their duties as conservators of the said public rights.
- (2) Institute, or defend, assist others in instituting or defending, continue, compromise, abandon, or prosecute to judgment, at their discretion, and generally give instructions for all the legal proceedings sanctioned by general meeting as aforesaid.
- (3) Keep a map, or series of maps, wherein the situation of all footpaths and other public ways shall, so far as possible, be indicated and recorded, and visit, inspect, survey, and report on the same from time to time, and receive, consider, and investigate complaints of violation of any of the said rights, or of the abuse thereof.

8. All Sub-Committees shall, from time to time, report to the Managing Committee.

9. The Society shall subscribe and be affiliated to such national Society or Societies constituted for like objects, as may from time to time be determined in general meeting.

10. All General Meetings, whether Annual or Extraordinary, shall be convened by the Hon. Secretary's written notice, posted or delivered to members at their usual or last known addresses, at least three days before the day of meeting, and indicating the business for which the meeting is to be convened. Ten members shall form a quorum.

11. These rules may be rescinded, supplemented, or altered by resolution passed in General Meeting, but not otherwise, and then only after a week's notice in writing of the proposed alteration.

REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1927.

IN presenting the report for the year ending December 31, 1927, the Council again draws attention to the marked increase in the work of the Society in the protection of public rights of way and in the erection and maintenance of direction posts. Many of the cases investigated have involved prolonged enquiries and subsequent negotiations or discussions with local authorities and landowners. The Society can, therefore, justly urge its claims for an enlarged membership and substantial financial support.

It is with deep regret that your council has to record the death during the past year of Mr. Phillip S. Minor, LL.B., for many years past a very active colleague on the Council of the Society and also the president of the Alderley Edge, Wilmslow and District Footpaths Preservation Society.

Some, among the many matters which have occupied the attention of the Society and its officers, are referred to in this report.

Doctor's Gate.

In accordance with the recommendation of your Council expressed in the last annual report the public have used the old track during the periods when the Mossylee end of the diverted track has been physically closed, by the fastening up of the Gate. In consequence of the infraction of the arrangements made with the late Lord Howard, that there should not be at any time physical obstruction to the right of way, a new signpost (on which the old request not to use the track during certain seasons of the year has been omitted) has now been erected with the consent of the Derbyshire County Council at the junction of Thomasson's Hollow and the main road. In addition, instructions have been given for three signposts to be erected in Glossop as follows :—

1. A three armed post at the point where the path from Glossop Station emerges on the road, a little above Glossop

Church, and to be marked "Woodhead Road," "Glossop Station," "Doctor's Gate."

2. A single armed post marked "via Doctor's Gate to Ashopton" to be erected at a point where it will be visible from the path at the side of Glossop Church, close to the old cross.

3. A single armed post at the Tram Terminus at Old Glossop.

Benfield Footpath.

The negotiations that were entered into in April last with a view to reaching an amicable settlement of the matter have broken down consequent upon the attitude of the farmers. At the conference, held the week before Easter, the suggestion was made that the parties should agree to a joint case being prepared for the opinion of counsel as to whether the maps and plans indicated a public footpath or a private road. Such conference was adjourned to enable the parties to consider the matter and to intimate to the chairman of the conference that they were agreeable to such course. Although your Council immediately agreed, no definite reply could be obtained from the farmers; more than four months having elapsed, the Council was forced to the conclusion that the farmers had no intention of agreeing to the suggested case for counsel, and intimated to the chairman that it must regard the negotiations as being at an end, and the matter has now been placed in the hands of the Society's solicitors. The attitude of the farmers is hard to understand, for when the public demonstrations took place last March they, themselves, suggested a conference with a view to obviating the necessity for any further demonstrations.

Westend—Alport Bridle Track.

After being open for many months, the "obstructing" gate on this land belonging to the Water Board has again been closed and locked and "no road" notices have been re-erected. Despite the locked gate, however, the track appears to be very freely used.

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. After considering generally the question of the remaining paths through the forest it was arranged that the Council should indicate the whole of the paths claimed to be public, when the divisional officer would consider the matter with the Forestry Commissioners and that a further conference could subsequently be arranged. A plan showing the paths claimed to be public has now been forwarded to the divisional officer and his further communication is awaited.

Footpath from the Haimfirth-Glossop Road to the Sheffield Road, Woodhead.

Your Council regrets to record the fact that no reply to its many communications to the Town Clerk, Manchester, has been received. It will be remembered that the various statements obtained from residents and others supporting the Council's claim that the path was a public footpath and bridle track were forwarded to the Manchester Corporation Waterworks Committee and a request made that the path be re-opened. These statements were, it is understood, passed on by the Waterworks Committee to the Town Clerk for his opinion, but although the papers have apparently been in his department for twelve months his opinion is not yet forthcoming, nor any explanation given for the long-continued disregard of the Society's communications. The Council finds it difficult to understand the significance of this remissness by a public body.

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. The Inspector of Footpaths is continuing his investigations and should he be able to obtain sufficient evidence to justify the public's claim your Council will take the matter up again with the Hayfield District Council.

Footpath from Knutsford to Arley.

Your Council has now heard from the Bucklow Rural District Council that a request has been made to the agent to the Arley Estate to re-erect the footbridge over Arley Brook by Littley Farm. The attention of the Bucklow Rural District Council has also been called to the obstructions that have again appeared on the footpath near Hollow Wood Farm.

Bridle Path, Hollins Cross to Mam House Farm.

Complaints having been received that this bridle path had been obstructed a formal complaint was made to the occupants of the farm concerned, as a result of which your Council is pleased to record that the obstructions have been removed.

Slippery Stones Footbridge.

Owing to the very heavy floods that occurred during the past winter, the footbridge erected in 1925 at Slippery Stones, at the joint expense of the Society and the Rural District Councils of Wortley and Chapel-en-le-Frith, has been damaged. It is estimated that repairs costing, approximately, £15 will be necessary to reinstate the footbridge. On being asked by the Wortley Council whether the Society would contribute a third share of this sum your Council readily agreed to do so. It is understood that the work will be put in hand as soon as the Chapel-en-le-Frith Rural District Council has agreed to make a similar contribution.

Footpath from the Manchester Road to Huddersfield Road, Mossley.

Your Council, being informed that the Mossley Corporation were applying to Quarter Sessions to close the above footpath, and before the hearing of the appeal had proceeded to interfere with the surface of the path, making it dangerous for pedestrian use, immediately protested against such unwarranted action and intimated its intention to oppose the application. The notification of this intention to apply for an injunction to restrain the Corporation from further destroying the path was apparently effective, for the appeal was not proceeded with and a satisfactory diversion has now been made with the approval of the Council and its representative. Had it not been for the intervention of the Society, it is most likely that this footpath would by now have been lost to the public, and have formed part of the Mossley Corporation Gas works.

Roman Road at Winele.

The attention of your Council having been called to the locking of the gate on this road near Long Gutter Farm a request was made to the farmer to unlock the gate, which request has now been complied with and the road freed from obstruction.

The farmer complained that the gate was left open by some persons using the path, thus allowing his cattle to stray on to the main road. Members of the Society and of Rambling Clubs do not need reminding how dangerous to the interests of pedestrians, by the ill feeling it causes, is this act of carelessness or indifference, but the force of their example of "shutting the gate" will, it is hoped, influence other casual wayfarers to carry out this trifling obligation.

Footpath at Oakenholt, Flint.

The help of the Society was sought by the residents at Oakenholt in regard to the obstructions that had been placed on this footpath and, although the footpath in question was outside the Society's area, the matter was taken up with the Holywell District Council. As a result of the representations made, the obstructions have now been removed, and it is understood that notices will be put up at each end of the path denoting that it is a public right of way.

Footpath from Old Lane, Luzley End, Mossley.

Complaints were received that this footpath had been obstructed, but the farmer on being interviewed gave an assurance that he had not intended in any way to obstruct the path.

Footpath along River Derwent from Froggatt Bridge.

Investigations are at present being made with a view to determining whether the path on the west side of the River Derwent from Froggatt Bridge and through the grounds of Stoke Hall, is a public way. The result of these investigations, after consideration by the Council, will determine what further steps, if any, it may be necessary to take.

Footpath from Settle to Stockdale.

It was reported that the gate at the Stockdale Lane end of this path had been fastened with a lock and chain, but

members of the Leeds C.H.A. Rambling and Social Club, who kindly arranged to go over the path, report that the gate is now unlocked and consequently the path freed from obstruction.

Ramblers' Federation Conference.

At the instance of the Ramblers' Federations of Manchester and Sheffield, a conference was held at Hope in October last. To this conference this Society, the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society and the London Ramblers' Federation, sent delegates. The proceedings of the Conference were most interesting and valuable, and, at its conclusion, it was resolved that it was most desirable that conferences on a wide representative basis should be organised for this and following years. Steps are accordingly being taken to arrange a conference at Birmingham in the autumn, to which it is hoped the numerous societies whose object is to preserve the amenities of the countryside and freedom of access thereto, will participate.

Footpath from Brooks' Drive to Yew Tree Lane, Ringway.

In the last Annual Report reference was made to the demolition of the stileway at the Brooks' Drive End of this path. It is now reported to the Council that by the enterprise of a group of enthusiastic pedestrians the stile has been rebuilt and other manipulations conducive to the alteration of the track at its commencement at Brooks' Drive counteracted. It is further reported that it is the intention of the same group of persons to traverse the path periodically in order to see that the way is not again obstructed.

Footpath from Long Lane to Marsh Hall, Chapel-en-le-Frith.

The Society has reported to the Chapel-en-le-Frith Rural District Council the attempted interference with the public's right over this footpath, and the latter Council has promised to give the matter attention.

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

Council—continued.

- H. H. JONES, 8, Birch Grove, Rusholme.
 A. C. KIRK, 35, Barrfield Road, Pendleton.
 R. B. KNOTT, solicitor, Norfolk Street, Manchester.
 L. D. MYLECRINE, 58, Clarendon Road, C.-on-M., Manchester
 J. MACAULEY, 60, Albert Grove, Longsight.
 A. MILNER, Lindum House, Didsbury.
 MISS L. MORRIS, 14, Bowness Street, Stretford.
 H. PHILLIPS, 17, Avondale Road, Gorse Hill, Manchester.
 J. W. PRICE, F.R.G.S., Alexandra Villa, Mersey Road,
 Ashton-on-Mersey.
 W. M. ROBOTHAM, Duffield Road, Allestree, Derby.
 A. ROBINSON, Fern Villa, Goyt Crescent, Brinnington, Stockport.
 W. A. RALSTON, 108, Hulton Street, Moss Side, Manchester.
 E. ROYCE, 5, Byrom Avenue, Barlow Road, Levenshulme.
 A. E. RICHARDS, Duncan Road, Longsight.
 J. R. SLANEY, 6, Ashbee Street, Bolton.
 R. R. SMITH, 150, Belgrave Road, Oldham.
 S. SUGDEN, 1351, Ashton New Road, Higher Openshaw.
 Miss M. SOWERBUTTS, 72, Cleveland Road, Crumpsall.
 Miss A. SHIELDS, 71, Oxford Street, Heaton Norris, Stockport.
 W. A. SPRUCE, 8, Berrie Grove, Levenshulme.
 D. THOMPSON, Birch Heys, Cromwell Range, Fallowfield.
 W. R. WHITEHEAD, 26, Eckford Street, Cheetham, Manchester.

Hon. Solicitor :

L. CARADOC EVANS, Town Hall, Salford.

Hon. Treasurer :

F. W. WIGELSWORTH, 36, Brownsville Road, Heaton Moor,
 Stockport.

Hon. Surveyor :

COL. H. T. CROOK, M.Inst.C.E., D.L., J.P., Lancaster Avenue,
 Manchester.

Hon. Auditor :

A. E. BOWEN, 7, Brazennose Street, Manchester.

Hon. Secretary :

A. R. MOON, LL.B., 55, Brown Street, Manchester.

Correspondence Secretary :

T. BOULGER, c/o A. R. Moon, 55, Brown Street, Manchester.

Inspector of Footpaths :

H. E. WILD, 20, Slade Grove, Longsight, Manchester.

Asst. Inspector of Footpaths :

G. H. B. WARD, F.R.G.S., Storth Lodge, Moorwoods Lane,
 Holmesfield, Sheffield.

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.

The scheme for the purchase of this large tract of land, in order to save it for ever for the public, is one which should find generous support in this district, for it is of fairly easy access and the charm of its scenery is well known to many.

It is understood that of the £14,000 required by the National Trust for the purchase of the 747 acres upwards of £9,000 has already been contributed or promised.

The funds of this Society having been subscribed for the specific purpose of footpaths preservation and maintenance, the Council considers that, even if it had the means to do so, it is precluded from devoting any part of its funds in support of the projected land purchase, but it most heartily commends the scheme to the public of this district in the confident expectation that effective aid will be given towards providing the balance of the cost of the purchase.

Direction Posts.

A finger post indicating the commencement of the bridle path via Carr Meadow to Glossop has been erected below Stonyford on the Hayfield-Edale Road. At Stonyford itself the Society has had for many years an iron plated direction post indicating the footpath via Tunstead Farm to Hayfield. The post itself had rotted and instructions were given for the fixing of a new post. When the spot was visited for the work to be done it was found that the iron plate had disappeared. This action is clearly deliberate, and members of the Society would be rendering service in reporting to the proper quarters wilful mischief of this description or other damage to the Society's property. In the present case, if the missing plate is not found, a further plate will be cast.

New posts have been fixed to the Society's direction plates:—

- (1) On the Hope-Ashopton footpath indicating sufferance path to Win Hill Peak.
- (2) On the Hope-Alport Bridge Roman Road, near Hope Cross, indicating path by Jagger's Clough to Edale.
- (3) At Hartington, indicating commencement of Beresford Dale footpath.

Instructions have been given for the fixing of a new post to the direction plate of the Society at Barber Booth, and it is hoped to arrange in the near future for the erection of a

new post at Alport Bridge indicating the commencement of the Oyster Clough Roman Road, and the new post for the Goyt Valley (on "The Street") made possible by the special contribution of the Stockport Rambling Clubs.

Finances.

There has been another increase during the past year in both the number of members and the total amount of subscriptions and for the first time for many years the income exceeds the expenditure by, roughly, £12. The Society is, however, desirous of increasing its activities so far as regards the branch of its work devoted to the erection and maintenance of direction posts. It need hardly be pointed out that the income of the Society must determine the extent of its activities in that direction and an earnest appeal is made for a larger membership. The burden of supporting the Society would still appear to be undertaken by a small percentage of ramblers and those interested in the preservation of foot-paths. The secretaries of rambling clubs and kindred societies would be doing a very useful service if they would bring to the notice of their members on all convenient opportunities the objects and claims of the Society and urge individual membership.

The Defence Fund has, during the year, increased from £94 0s. 8d. to £117 16s. 8d., but it is urged that the minimum fund of £250 aimed at should be established without delay.

Membership.

The terms of membership are quite simple; there are no formalities other than the payment of a subscription of not less than 2/6 per annum, which entitles the member to a copy of the annual report, and to any information which it may be in the Council's power to give.

In fixing so small a minimum subscription, the Society had in view the desirability of obtaining the largest possible amount of public interest but, of course, the revenue from subscriptions at this low rate is quite inadequate to the requirements for the conduct of the Society's operations.

The Council, therefore, renews its appeals for subscriptions higher than the minimum and for donations to the Defence Fund, mentioned above.

Affiliation.

The minimum fee for Rambling Clubs and other Societies desiring to become affiliated is 10/6 per annum. The payment of the fee carries with it the right to nominate a delegate to attend the Council's meetings.

It is encouraging to note that many more Rambling Clubs have become affiliated, in response to the Society's invitation of last year. There are still, however, many similar associations in the district which are not yet affiliated, and a special invitation is extended to these to attach themselves to the Society, for, by so doing, they would help financially, and, through their delegates, take a part in its management.

"The Rambler and the Law."

The second edition of this very useful booklet is still on sale at the exceptionally low price of 3d. No member should be without a copy of the booklet, which clearly defines in simple language the legal points which are always a source of trouble to pedestrians.

Affiliated Rambling Clubs & Societies.

- Alderley Edge, Wilmslow and District Footpaths Preservation Society.
 Altrincham & District Natural History & Literary Society.
 Ancoats Brotherhood.
 Ardwick Rambling Club.
 Art Museum Field Club.
 Associate Rambling Club.
 Barnsley C.H.A. Rambling Club.
 Bolton C.H.A. Rambling Club.
 Bury and District C.H.A. Rambling Club.
 Campers of Gt. Britain & Ireland (L.C. & N.W. District Asscn).
 Co-operative Holiday Association.
 Chorlton Road Congregational Church Rambling Club.
 Comradeship of the Christian Endeavour Holiday Homes (Manchester Section).
 Derby C.H.A. and H.F. Rambling Club.
 Derbyshire Footpaths Preservation Society.
 Edgeley Botanical Society.
 Field Naturalists' and Archaeologists' Society, Manchester.
 First Timperley Rovers.
 Glossop Field Naturalists' Society.
 Hans Renold Social Union Rambling Section.
 Hallamshire Footpaths Preservation Society.
 Heywood and District Botanical Society.
 Holiday Fellowship Limited.
 Holiday Fellowship (Manchester Group).
 Holiday Fellowship (Stockport Group).
 Hyde and District Footpaths Preservation Society.
 Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society.
 Manchester Amateur Photographic Society.
 Manchester & District Library Fellowship, Rambling Section.

