

THE PEAK DISTRICT AND NORTHERN
COUNTIES
FOOTPATHS PRESERVATION
SOCIETY.



REPORT
OF THE COUNCIL

For the Year Ended 31st December, 1923.



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Report of the Council

For the Year Ending December 31st, 1923.

In submitting to the members the Report for the year ending December 31st, 1923, the Council desires to express its regret of the loss by death of Mr. William Bell, who did so much good work for the Society in its early days, and Mr. W. Beckett, who has for many years been a member of the Council.

It may be seen from the many matters dealt with in the Report that the year 1923 has been one of increasing activity and responsibility, necessarily involving larger expenditure and increased liabilities. The continuation and further extension of the Society's work must depend upon the amount of support which it may receive. Further reference to this requirement is made in a subsequent paragraph of the Report.

Signposts.

The erection and maintenance of signposts has, from the foundation of the Society, received constant attention as a work of importance. Signposts are of great utility both as guides to pedestrians and as indications of the existence of public rights of way, rights which otherwise might be obscure.

Owing to the limited funds available the notices on the signposts named below, which were erected during the past 2½ years, had necessarily to be of wood, with lettering painted.

No. 50, on Mickelden Edge, where the tracks from Langset and Hazlehead converge.

No. 51, at Little Brookhouse, on the Hazlehead path, between boards 50 and 52.

No. 52, at the entrance to the path at Hazlehead, nearly opposite the Flouch Inn.

No. 53, on the Hayfield-Snake Inn footpath, at Ashop Head.

Nos. 54 and 55 on the footpath between Long Lee Farm and Blackshaw Farm, Rowarth.

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.

This replacement work has been put in hand. Additional signposts will also shortly be erected at the following places :—

No. 56, at the commencement of the Oyster Clough Roman Road, a short distance above the Snake Inn.

No. 57, at Bridge End, Derwent, to indicate the Pack Road to Glossop.

Your Council has also given instructions for the erection of two additional guide stakes on the Tunstead—Stonyford footpath ; also for the construction of three finger posts to be erected as follows :—

- (1) Near the quarry by Hayfield Cemetery, " Public Footpath to Ridge Top."
- (2) At Ridge Top, " Public Footpath to Phoside."
- (3) At Phoside, " Public Footpath to Peep o' Day."

To the notices on the plates of these new signposts it has been decided to add the words "Leave no Litter." To the genuine rambler nothing is more dear than the preservation of the beauties of the countryside ; he resents its desecration by the careless. The many Rambling Clubs do all they can to prevent thoughtless acts of destruction of plants, trees and flowers, and the leaving of paper, bottles, tins and other rubbish on path and field, or the casting of such refuse into stream or pond. The limited space of a notice plate will not allow of more than the short reminder "Leave no Litter," but it is hoped this may be of some effect in checking a practice which is a source of much annoyance and of many complaints.

Slippery Stones.

The negotiations mentioned in the last Annual Report for the erection of a footbridge over the Derwent at Slippery Stones, to replace that washed away in 1900, are proceeding satisfactorily, thanks to the spirit shown by the Wortley Urban District Council. That Council is prepared to contribute towards the erection of a footbridge, the estimated cost of which is about £20. Up to the present, the Chapel-en-le-Frith Rural District Council, which has jurisdiction over the Derbyshire side of the river, has not consented to bear any share of the expense on the ground that in its opinion the cost would be at least £40. Your Council, however, is advised that after making due allowance for the remoteness of the site, and the other difficulties of estimating costs in these days, that the lesser sum should suffice for the simple character of structure which it and the Wortley Urban District

Council contemplate. A footbridge is certainly needed at this spot, so the Society has offered to bear one-third of the cost up to the limit of £10. It hopes now for a favourable reply from the Chapel-en-le-Frith Rural District Council which has the matter under further consideration.

Footpath from Hayfield to Snake Inn.

Members will be very glad to hear that, at your Council's request, the Chapel-en-le-Frith Rural District Council has drained and made less boggy this path around Mill Hill.

Old Roman Road via Oyster Clough.

As the Chapel-en-le-Frith Rural District Council declined to give the necessary permission for the erection of a signpost on the Sheffield - Glossop main road indicating the commencement of this track, which was in danger of being lost, your Council sought the consent of the Derbyshire County Council, which was readily given.

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.

Field Path by Peakshole Water from Castleton to Hope.

The Society's signpost indicating this field-path stood within what has now become the curtilage of a newly-erected dwelling, and consequently a new site had to be found for it. A request was made to the County Council for permission to re-erect the signpost on the main road at the commencement of the path, and permission was duly accorded.

Footpath by Haddon Hall to Fillyfoot Bridge.

The persistent efforts of your Council to get some effective measures taken in regard to this well-known and beautiful pathway and various other paths in the neighbourhood, which have during the past few years been closed or obstructed, have at last brought the matter to issue. The proceedings of the Bakewell Urban and Rural Councils, and the action taken by their surveyors and workmen, in removing the obstructions and notice boards, have been fully recorded in the press.

The Society's Inspector has spent much time and spared no pains in research, and has collected a good deal of evidence in support of the public rights over these paths. A statement, embodying the result of his work and the evidence, has been prepared and submitted to the Bakewell Councils for their information. What the outcome of the local Councils' action will be, remains to be seen, but your Council wishes them every success, and to that end will continue to render them all the assistance which may be within its means to afford, for this is a case of first importance and of deepest interest to all pedestrians.

Footpath from Litton to Priestcliffe by Priestcliffe Lees.

The Council's attention having been drawn to the apparent disagreement between the owners of Lees Farm and the owner of the land adjoining the Farm concerning the correct line of a section of this well-known path, and, as a consequence of the dispute, that pedestrians were being stopped from going through the farm yard, as in the past, or threatened with prosecution for using the alleged alternative path, a letter was addressed to the owners of the farm, pointing out the injustice to the public occasioned by this disagreement. To this letter no reply has yet been received, but whatever may be the merits of the dispute, members may rest assured that the Council will see that the public rights over the path are maintained. It is an unusual type of case, for it is not disputed that there is a footpath, but, by a difference between adjoining owners as to the exact location, the interests of the public might have suffered if action had not been taken.

Encroachment at Eyam.

This is one, if not the most serious case of the year. The encroachment in question is the unlawful appropriation of a " roadside waste " by the erection of a wall forming the fence

of a forecourt to a cottage which was built in 1868 on the edge of the roadside waste. Although evidence of unrestricted public use of such land for upwards of 50 years was produced to the Bakewell Rural District Council, and despite the fact that such Council on the 16th April last passed a resolution that "They considered that an encroachment had been made, and that the encroacher be informed that he might be called upon at any time to remove the wall," the encroachment has not been removed. Moreover, the Bakewell Rural District Council instructed a deputation to attend the spot, and although the chairman of the deputation and another member thereof confirmed the fact that there was an encroachment, a resolution was passed to the effect that nothing further be done in the matter, which resolution has been faithfully adhered to, despite a request to remove the encroachment made by your Council.

Previous to your Council becoming concerned in the matter, an Eyam resident had approached the Minister of Health and the Attorney General, but, apparently, they were both powerless to compel the removal of the encroachment. The County Council was also appealed to, but replied, saying that "There seems to be no effective remedy if the Parish Council are unwilling to make a representation." As the Parish Council considers the encroachment to be an improvement, it will be seen that there is not much hope of representation being made to the County Council. Thus this appears to be a flagrant instance of neglect of the public's interests by both the Rural and Parish Councils. Having failed to induce the local Councils to take action your Council has decided to lay the facts of the case before counsel for his opinion, and will be guided by his advice as to the best procedure to obtain restitution of the appropriated land.

Encroachment at Foolow.

This also is a serious encroachment allowed by the Bakewell Rural District Council. The detail of this matter is at present under investigation, and when completed, a request will be made to the Rural District Council to have the encroachment removed.

Bridle Way from Padley Wood to the Hathersage Main Road across Burbage Brook and Hollowgate.

The closing of this bridle-way, which is stated to be one of the oldest in Derbyshire, created an outburst of indignation.

Your Council immediately placed the facts before the Hathersage Parish Council, which has taken the matter up with the owner—the Marquis of Granby. In the meantime members of the public have taken things into their own hands and knocked down the obstructions.

Lyme Park Footpaths.

Several complaints having been received of the closing of footpaths in this neighbourhood, in particular the path between Knight's Low, Clews Hey and Moorside, your Council submitted the matter to the Macclesfield Rural District Council with a request to have the obstructions removed, but, unfortunately, this Council takes the view that there is not sufficient evidence of a public right of way to justify it in taking action. However, it appears to your Council that there is evidence of a public right of way, and accordingly the matter is being further investigated.

Hyde Footpaths.

With the assistance of your Council, the past year has seen the advent of another Society—The Hyde and District Footpaths Preservation Society. This Society has undertaken to investigate any complaints as to footpaths within and around the Borough of Hyde, so far as it can, and thus relieve our Society of some detail work in that district.

Delamere Forest.

Doubts having arisen as to the identity of the paths referred to on the numerous notices warning against trespass, which have been erected in the forest, your Council communicated with the Commissioners of Woods and Forests. In reply it was stated that many important sylvicultural operations were now being carried out in the forest, and, in order that those operations may meet with success, it was essential that the areas under treatment should not be disturbed, but assurance was given that the notices referred only to the plantations and those rides over which the public had no right of way.

Pickmere Lake.

Your Council has for some time past been endeavouring to get the Bucklow Rural District Council to call for the removal of the obstructions which have been erected on the path on the north side of this Lake, but, so far, the latter Council has not done anything in this direction, although

evidence of use as a public right of way, which it asked for, was furnished many months ago. Representation has, however, now been made to the Pickmere Parish Council with a view to the latter Council petitioning the County Council to exercise its powers.

Footpath between Ellcage Covert, Peover Superior and Ollstock Farm, Lower Peover.

This path has for some time been practically rendered impassable owing to a gate and stile having been wired to a height of about 5 feet ; the local Council, however, on being appealed to by your Council, caused the wire to be taken down, and pedestrians can now proceed through the gate.

Arley Footpaths.

In reply to many enquiries, your Council wishes to record that it has under consideration the question of the attempt to obstruct and close paths in this area, and also the advisability of erecting one or two signposts to properly define the paths.

In addition to the above, many other cases have been dealt with and information has been sought and given to members and others who have asked assistance of the Society, and a large number of complaints of obstruction or of paths in disrepair are at present being investigated with a view to appropriate action being taken.

Finances.

It is gratifying to be able to state that the Society's membership has considerably increased, and that many individual supporters have increased the amount of their subscriptions. On the other hand, the expenses of the year have again been heavy in proportion to the resources. The necessity for a larger income is constantly impressing itself upon the Council. The call for the Society's services steadily increases. If the good work which the Society has been doing is to be continued and developed to meet the circumstances of the times, it must have greatly enlarged resources. There is one great change proceeding throughout the country which is often attended by danger to public rights of way. By the sale and breaking up of large estates where, in past time, a length of right of way crossed the lands of but one proprietor, it may now traverse the properties of a number of small owners with all or any of whom difficulties may arise.

The Society should be in a position to be able to take whatever action may be deemed necessary so soon as any case brought before them has been investigated. It is quite possible that one or two of the questions at present under consideration may result in litigation, and it is most essential that a reserve or defence fund should be accumulated to meet contingencies.

Membership.

The terms of membership are quite simple ; there are no formalities other than the payment of a subscription of not less than 2s. 6d. 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 highest possible amount of public interest, but, of course, the revenue to be expected from subscriptions at this low rate would be quite inadequate to the requirements for the conduct of the Society's operations. The Council, therefore, renews its appeal for subscriptions higher than the minimum, and for donations towards the defence fund mentioned above.

Affiliation.

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

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

“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 exceptionally small 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 and Societies.

Ancoats Brotherhood.
Art Museum Field Club.
Alderley Edge, Wilmslow and District Footpaths Preservation Society.
Co-operative Holiday Association.
Co-operative Holiday Association, Bury.
Co-operative Holiday Association, Barnsley.
Co-operative Holiday Association, Sheffield.
Co-operative Holiday Association, Manchester "A" Section.
Co-operative Holiday Association, Manchester "B" Section.
Co-operative Holiday Association, Manchester "C" Section.
Derbyshire Footpaths Preservation Society.
Field Naturalists and Archœologists Society.
Holiday Fellowship Limited.
Holiday Fellowship (Manchester Group).
Holiday Fellowship (Stockport Group).
Hallamshire Ramblers Federation.
Hyde and District Footpaths Preservation Society.
Manchester Rambling Club.
Manchester Pedestrian Club.
Manchester Amateur Photographic Society.
"Nomad" Rambling Club.
Old Salfordians Rambling Club.
"R" Club.
Rucksack Club.
Ramblers Federation.
Stockport Field Club.
Salford P.S.A. Rambling Club.
Sheffield Clarion Ramblers.
United Field Naturalists' Society.
Workers' Educational Association.
Zion Rambling Club.

PEAK DISTRICT AND NORTHERN COUNTIES FOOTPATHS PRESERVATION SOCIETY.

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR 1923.

INCOME.	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE.	£	s.	d.
Balance from 1922	49	5	10	Printing and Stationery	9	16	3
Subscriptions, 1923	75	19	4	Maps	2	0	2
Bank Interest	0	14	8	Hire of Rooms	5	7	0
				Advertising	1	19	3
				Travelling Expenses, etc.	3	7	2
				Insurance Premium	1	0	6
				Privilege Rent	0	1	0
				Donation re Monsal Dale Bridge	5	0	0
				Postages	4	17	2
				Correspondence Secretary's Honorarium	20	0	0
				Footpaths Inspector's Honorarium	5	0	0
					58	8	6
				Balance.....	67	11	4
					£125	19	10

F. W. WIGELSWORTH,
Hon. Treasurer.

Audited and found correct,
W. GREGSON, Hon. Auditor.