

THE PEAK DISTRICT AND NORTHERN
COUNTIES
FOOTPATHS PRESERVATION
SOCIETY.



REPORT
OF THE COUNCIL

For the Year Ended 31st December, 1924.



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The Peak District & Northern Counties Footpaths Preservation Society.

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

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 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.

5. An annual general meeting of the members of the Society shall be held in the month of October 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 31ST, 1924.

The Council of the Society has pleasure in submitting to the members the Report for the year ending December 31st, 1924. The Report shows the increased amount of work that has been accomplished during the year in safeguarding the rights of the public, and consequently the strong claims of the Society for an enlarged membership and generous financial support.

Signposts.

During the past year the following four cast-iron Direction Plates have been erected :—

- No. 51 at Little Brookhouse on the Hazlehead-Slippery Stones footpath (replacing wooden direction board).
- No. 52 near the Flouch Inn, Hazlehead at commencement of Slippery Stones footpath (replacing wooden direction board).
- 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.

The Society's iron direction plate at the commencement of the field-path from Castleton to Hope by Peakshole Water has been removed to the opposite side of the main road.

The iron plated direction posts between Bamford and Hathersage which had fallen, have been refitted and erected in proper position. These two posts, together with the Society's two posts at Grindleford will henceforth be maintained in position by the Bakewell Rural District Council, in whose area they stand. During the current year it is intended to replace the remaining four wooden direction boards by the cast iron plates, and, in addition, to fix a new plate at Hope, to replace one damaged. The re-erection of fallen posts on the Hayfield-Snake footpath will be put in hand as soon as the weather allows.

Your Council has to report that the wooden direction board on Mickleden Edge, at the junction of the paths from Hazlehead and Langsett, mysteriously disappeared in the early part of the year. No trace of the post has since been found, and no information has been received as to the persons responsible. In this case the disappearance of the post is not of great consequence, as it is one of the four yet to be replaced by the

cast iron plate and stronger post. But it illustrates the need for all the members of the Society to exercise vigilance in protecting the property of the Society from wanton destruction or damage.

Footpaths Around Haddon Hall.

It is hoped by the time this Report is published that the result of the action pending, between the Marquis of Granby and the Bakewell Urban and Rural District Councils, will be known, and that the decision may be favourable to the rights of the public over the many well-travelled paths in the vicinity of Haddon Hall.

But whatever may be the result of the action, the thanks of all members are due to the Bakewell Councils for the efforts they have made to maintain the rights of the public. In any event, the costs of the litigation will doubtless be heavy. Your Council think that it would be in accordance with the policy of the Society, and the desire of its members, that a contribution should be made towards meeting these expenses. In order that effective help may be rendered in this cause the Council earnestly appeal for generous donations to the Defence Fund.

Doctor's Gate.

For some time past your Council has been very much concerned as to the effect of the periodical closing by the late Lord Howard, of the gate at the Mossylee bridge end of the track. Ultimately it was decided to obtain the opinion of counsel. A preliminary report has been received, but as there are further points to be discussed with counsel, it is not possible at the present moment to say more than that every care is being taken to preserve the public rights over this ancient track. The sale of the estate of the late Lord Howard has been publicly announced, and it is understood that the land traversed by the Doctor's Gate way has been sold.

Eneroachment at Middlewood.

Your Council's attention having been drawn to the fact that a portion of the highway at Middlewood had been taken in by a local farmer, the matter has been reported to the Macclesfield Rural District Council.

Westend-Alport Bridle Path.

As mentioned in the last Annual Report, it had been arranged that the Agent to the Devonshire Estate should, without prejudice, and with a view to continuing the happy relations

that have always existed between the Society and the owner, submit proposals for the use of this path by the public. The only proposal, however, that the agent would make, was leave to the public to use the path on the first Saturday and Sunday in each month between the hours of 9 a.m. and sunset. The Council did not feel justified in entertaining a proposal of this nature. But as the offer was a final one they had no alternative but to bring the matter to the attention of the Chapel-en-le-Frith Rural District Council, asking that Council to call for the removal of the obstruction, and of the deterrent notice boards. The Council, at the request of the latter body, obtained a good deal of evidence of the public right over the path, but, subsequently, the gate forming the obstruction has been unlocked so that there is now free access to the path. The Council is continuing its investigations so as to be prepared for any eventuality, and will be glad if anyone possessing local knowledge or information regarding the use of this way will communicate with the Hon. Secretary.

Slippery-Stones Footbridge.

After a rather lengthy period of correspondence, the Chapel-en-le-Frith Rural District Council consented to join the Wortley Rural District Council in the erection of a new footbridge over the Derwent at Slippery Stones. It is estimated that the new footbridge will cost about £30, and in order to bring the negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion, when it was doubtful whether the first-named Council would join in, your Council agreed to contribute one third of that sum.

Encroachment at Eyam.

Having failed to induce the Bakewell Rural District Council or the Eyam Parish Council to have the wall, forming the encroachment, removed, your Council submitted a case for the opinion of counsel, and were advised that the attitude of the Rural District Council was totally wrong. Acting on his advice, the facts were laid before the Derbyshire County Council. The latter Council, however, stated that until representation was made to them by the Parish Council they had no power to act. There is some diversity of opinion as to whether or not a County Council has such powers under the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894 in relation to encroachments on roadside wastes. If the contention of the County Council be correct, it would seem that an amendment to the Acts is urgently required as the position would be that if, as has occurred in at least 3 cases at present under consideration,

the District Council refuses to do its obvious duty, and the Parish Council will not make the necessary representation or petition to the County Council to take over the duties of the District Council, nothing could be done, unless a public spirited ratepayer took proceedings in the matter, which might, if unsuccessful, involve him in heavy costs.

It is understood that the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society has several times suggested an amendment to the Act, which would remove the difficulty.

Encroachment at Foolow.

The title deeds to the land in question having been inspected, your Council is satisfied that no encroachment exists.

Bolton Corporation Parliamentary 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.

The thanks of the Society are due to Mr. Chubb (Secretary to the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society) for perusing the Bill on the Council's behalf, and for the very valuable assistance he was able to render in the matter.

Footpath from Litton to Priestcliff by Priestcliff Lees.

The persistent efforts of your Council in regard to this path, which was in danger of being lost to the public by reason of a dispute between the respective owners of the land in question as to the correct line of the path, were rewarded by obtaining an acknowledgment from the Buxton Lime Firms Company (one of the landowners) "that we now find that this footpath runs through Priestcliff Farm Yard, and also there is another footpath that runs across the Lees past the farmyard."

Footpath Around Pickmere Lake.

No reply being forthcoming from the Pickmere Parish Council to your Council's request to that body to make representation to the Cheshire County Council to exercise its powers to call for the removal of the obstructions your Council reported the matter to the County Council, but, as in the case of the Eyam encroachment, the latter Council, after fully considering the matter, stated that they had no power to act.

The matter will be thoroughly investigated to see whether something cannot be done to get the Bucklow Rural District Council to remove the obstructions.

Footpath Between Broadbottom and Glossop via Gamesley, Hargate Hill and Simmondley.

Complaints having been received of the closing of this path by the erection of a barb-wired fencing and disappearance of a stile which formerly existed on the path—the matter was reported to the Charlesworth Parish Council.

The owner of the land responsible for the obstruction, on being appealed to by the latter body, agreed to remove the obstruction, and, moreover, has since agreed with the Society's Inspector of Footpaths upon the site where the stile should be re-erected by him.

Footpath Between Higher Mutton and Marton Church.

Your Council is also pleased to report that with the assistance of the Macclesfield Rural District Council, obstructions, which had been reported on this path, have been removed.

Footpath from Birch Vale to Bank Vale.

Your Council at the request of the Hayfield Parish Council, is investigating the rights of the public to this path, at the commencement of which path a "No road" notice has been erected.

Footpath between Grimsditch Farm, Mobberley, and Fir Tree Farm, Ollerton, across Pedley Brook. Footpath between Hopcroft Lane and Wood Lane.

For some time past efforts have been made to get the Bucklow Rural District Council to re-erect certain stiles and foot-bridges that formerly existed on these paths, and also to remove obstructions thereon, and an assurance has now been received that the necessary instructions have been given for the matters to be attended to.

Footpath from White Hall to Combs Village.

This path having been seriously obstructed your Council is in communication with the Chapel-en-le-Frith Rural District Council, with the object of getting that Council to remove the brick wall forming the obstruction.

Footpath from Benfield to Cloughside, Compstall.

In conjunction with the Hyde and District Footpaths Preservation Society your Council has been endeavouring to get this footpath re-opened. Representatives from the two Societies, at the invitation of the Compstall District Council, attended at Compstall to meet the respective landowners and tenants, and, subsequently, owing to the non-attendance of the owners and tenants at the first meeting, at an adjourned meeting. The Clerk to the Compstall District Council has inspected the Tithe Map of 1841 on which the path is clearly shown.

An opportunity has been given to the landowners to inspect the Tithe Map, after which the District Council will further consider the matter. The Hyde Society continues to do much useful work, and has several matters under investigation—in addition to which it proposes to erect signposts on various paths which are in danger of being lost sight of.

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 5s., it need hardly be pointed out that the income of the Society must determine the extent of its activities in this direction.

The balance sheet discloses that the appeal for donations to the Society's Defence Fund has been very disappointing—but few members or Rambling Clubs having made donations.

The efforts of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, Sheffield C.H.A. Rambling Club, Peak Ramblers and the Derby C.H.A. and H.F. Rambling Clubs, in forwarding between them £8 0s. 9d., the result of collections on various rambles, are to be heartily commended, and it is hoped that other rambling clubs and kindred organisations may be induced to follow their example.

The Society should be in a position to be able to take whatever action may be deemed necessary as soon as any case brought before it has been investigated.

It is quite possible that some of the many matters at present under consideration may involve heavy expenditure, and it is very essential that the Defence Fund should be considerably augmented in order to enable the Society to meet such contingencies without hesitation. Occasions have arisen in the past, and may at any moment recur, when the possible financial responsibilities have delayed or prevented the regular action being taken for the preservation of public rights.

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 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 appeal for subscriptions higher than the minimum, and for donations towards the defence fund mentioned above.

Affiliation.

The minimum fee for Rambling Club 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 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.

"Rambler and the Law."

The second edition of this very useful booklet is now 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 and Societies.

Ardwick Rambling Club.
Ancoats Brotherhood.
Art Museum Field Club.
Alderley Edge, Wilmslow and District Footpaths Preservation Society.
Barnsley C.H.A. Rambling Club.
Co-operative Holiday Association.
Chorlton Road Congregational Church Rambling Club.
Derby C.H.A. and H.F. Rambling Club.
Derbyshire Footpaths Preservation Society.
Glossop Field Naturalists' Society.
Holiday Fellowship Limited.
Holiday Fellowship (Manchester Group).
Holiday Fellowship (Stockport Group).
Hallamshire Footpaths Preservation Society.
Hyde and District Footpaths Preservation Society.
Manchester C.H.A. Rambling Club (Section "A").
Manchester C.H.A. Rambling Club (Section "B").
Manchester C.H.A. Rambling Club (Section "C").
Manchester Rambling Club.
Manchester Pedestrian Club.
Manchester Amateur Photographic Society.
Manchester Field Naturalists' and Archaeologists' Society.
Plymouth Grove Wesley Guild.
"R" Club.
Rucksack Club.
Ramblers Federation.
Rotherham C.H.A. Rambling Club.
Stockport Field Club.
Salford P.S.A. Rambling Club.
Sheffield Clarion Ramblers.
Sheffield C.H.A. Rambling Club.
Workers' Educational Association (Stockport Branch).
Whalley Range Presbyterian Rambling Club.
Zion Rambling Club.

PEAK DISTRICT AND NORTHERN COUNTIES FOOTPATHS PRESERVATION SOCIETY.

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR 1924.

INCOME.	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE.	£	s.	d.
Balance from 1923.....	67	11	4	Printing and Stationery	16	14	10
Subscriptions, 1924	83	4	6	Hire of Rooms	4	7	0
Sale of Booklets	2	4	6	Legal Expenses (Encroachment at Eyam)	9	18	9
Bank Interest	12	11		Insurance Premium.....	1	0	6
	86	1	11	Advertising	1	7	0
Defence Fund	22	9	3	Signposts	6	0	0
				Lecturers' Expenses	5	5	0
				Postages, Travelling Exps., Materials, etc.....	26	9	1
				Correspondence Secretary's Honorarium	20	0	0
				Footpath Inspectors' Honorarium	5	0	0
				Balance—Defence Fund	£22	9	3
				„ —General Account ...	57	11	1
					80	0	4
	£176	2	6		£176	2	6

F. W. WIGELSWORTH,
Hon. Treasurer.

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