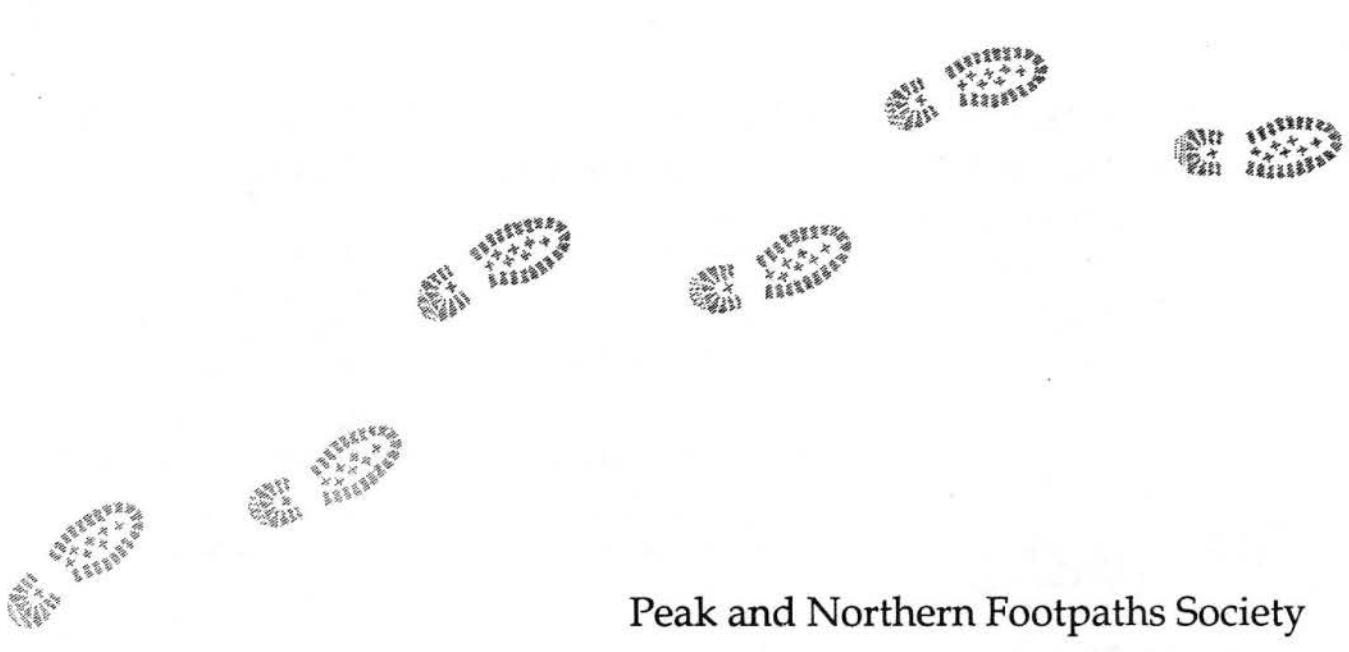


PEAK AND NORTHERN FOOTPATHS SOCIETY

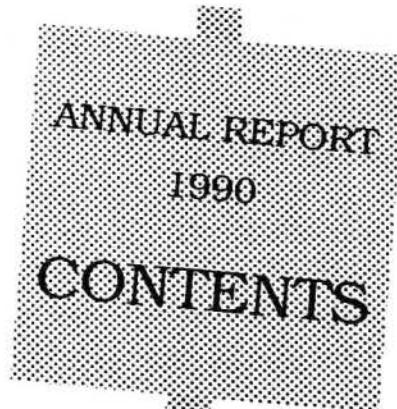
ANNUAL REPORT 1990





Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

Founded in 1894; Manchester Association founded 1826



Members of Council	page 2
Chairman's report	4
Fifty years ago	7
Secretary's report	8
Signpost report	16
Footpath inspectors	20
Treasurer's report and Accounts	24
Membership report	30
Constitution and rules	36
Midweek walks	38
Endpiece	40

Our thanks to Jack Ogden and his sister for supplying the cover photograph

Vice Presidents

A Bennett MP
D T Berwick
G S Cooper
P Daley
T Ewart

MEMBERS
OF
COUNCIL

Chairman

L G Meadowcroft
1 Nelson Street
Hazel Grove
Stockport
SK7 4LR
☎ 061 483 2482

Hon General Secretary

D Taylor
15 Parkfield Drive,
Tyldesley
Manchester
M29 8NR
☎ 061 790 4383

Vice Chairmen

N H Edwards
5 Godward Road
New Mills
Stockport
SK12 3BR

H A Hadfield
3 Lakeside Drive
Poynton
Stockport
SK12 1BR

Honorary Treasurer

S Shaw
10 Alstone Road
Stockport
SK4 5AH
☎ 061 432 6097

Membership Secretary

T Whittaker
51 Queensway
Heald Green
Cheadle
Cheshire
SK8 3ET
☎ 061 437 1226

Inquiries and Courts Officer

D W Lee
7 Mossway
Alkrington
Middleton
Manchester
M24 IWR
☎ 061 653 4560

Auditor

E McCormick

Trustees

G S Cooper
L G Meadowcroft

Signpost Officer

P S Hutchinson
1 Oaklands Avenue
Marple Bridge
Stockport
SK6 5DB
☎ 061 427 1718

Probably the most important item to emerge during the year under review was the Rights of Way Act 1990; which came into force during the month of August. This originated as a Private Members Bill in the House of Commons and was known as the Ploughing Bill, but after becoming an agreed measure the name was subsequently changed to its present title.

One of the most important clauses deals with disturbance of the surface soil of a right of way by any means, including ploughing and its subsequent reinstatement within 14 days, and within 24 hours if a second disturbance takes place. The surface must be repaired and the path made apparent on the ground. A booklet on the Act is available from Countryside Commission Publications.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The worst item of news was the government's breaking of an election manifesto to safeguard and provide access to common land as agreed by

the Common Land Forum, a representative body of all interests.

During the last few years the Society has become increasingly involved meeting local authorities and this year we are beginning to see that the message of footpath protection is registering with some of them as a duty.

The Society's mobile exhibition has been on display at Chesterfield, Bollington, Lyme Park, and the National Trust Open Day in the Edale valley. We are grateful to those who manned these events.

We have been saying for some time that prosecution of those that illegally obstruct rights of way is a costly and time consuming business, and is subject to the whims of local magistrates for an effective conviction. The Highways Act 1980 provides an effective instrument in one of its sections whereby a local authority can give a 28 day notice for the removal of an obstruction and after that period can remove and charge the full cost to the person responsible. One authority who has taken up this procedure reports an almost 100% success rate, which, after notice serving, proved effective without further action.

At a Staffordshire footpath inquiry we heard the story of three landowners who had agreed, in writing, with the Ramblers Association to the creation of a new footpath, suddenly changing their minds after receiving a visit from the County Footpaths Officer. One can only ponder thoughts on such action by a representative of a local authority.

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,

after further investigation, 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 CEW with advance direction signs at Hazel Grove after our request of some four and a half years ago. This authority has also now created the missing path in Red Brow Woods, Romiley, after we threatened them with Ombudsman action.

Towards the end of the year we learnt that Sir Derek Barber, Chairman of the Countryside Commission was to retire in early 1991, and we offer our thanks to him for past service. His successor is Sir John Johnson, of Mancunian origin, a former diplomat and whose recreations are listed in Who's Who as "climbing, reaching remote places, and gardening".

After several years of agitation we were pleased to receive from the Peak Park Board copies of "Rights of Way Changes" which denotes official alterations to the Rights of Way network within the Park during the period 1987-1989. Copies are available from the Board's office and information points and the details can easily be transferred on to one's own maps.

At the recent AGM of the National Trust we were interested to note that one of the motions which was passed, in addition to stag hunting, dealt with providing maximum public access to Trust land, and "in particular the Trust should ensure that all existing rights of way are properly maintained, and dedicate new rights of way on foot". A statement by the Trust "welcomed the resolution and warmly supports the general sense of its proposals".

In relation to the latter part of the endorsed motion, we shall be expecting that there will be progress on the controversial missing link between Lode Mill and Milldale, alongside the River Dove, by the Regional body.

The Ordnance Survey having adopted the Global Positioning System for controlling the network will result in OS trig stations becoming redundant, and the problem arises as to the future maintenance of these 'trig points', especially useful as a landmark and a navigation beacon for walkers. The OS expect that a pocket sized navigational aid based on GPS will be used in the future.

Turning to the future and that of the Society which, having made considerable progress during the last few years and is at present operating at a highly intensive standard for a voluntary society, poses the question whether we can continue to operate and maintain this present achievement. For the last few years we have been extremely fortunate in that we have not only been able to maintain two operational bases, but that we have had the advantage of several dedicated officers and members to service these outlets. Members must be made aware that these services will not continue ad infinitum, and it is time for serious thought to be given to contingency plans, and also a critical look at the existing workload in a positive manner. At the present time the Society has

two dedicated senior officers who are each voluntarily giving half a full working week to the aims of the Society, whilst we also have several dedicated 'backroom' workers on whom the Society is dependent.

It is time to closely examine the present situation, and the prospects for the future by more than lip service given in our monthly Council meetings. The views and voices of the silent majority need to be heard, with a possible commitment to assist, if we are to continue into the future. □

Leslie Meadowcroft

1990 ANNUAL DINNER

This year's speaker was none other than Richard Thomas, Regional Director of the Countryside Commission, North West, a man not unknown to several members of the society.

It was an appropriate occasion to express the gratefulness of the Society for the financial assistance we had recently received from the Commission towards the updating of our administration equipment and the new style signposts plates, one of which we had on display.

The evening was voiced a great success by all concerned, and once again the catering reflected the usual high standard of the establishment.

It is my pleasure to present for your consideration, my report for the year ended 31st December 1990. My report for this year takes on an entirely different form than that of previous years. Previously I have assembled a footpath report giving in great detail all the obstructions and clearances reported during the year. Assembling this mass of information has required a considerable amount of time and effort which I feel could be very much better employed pursuing local authorities with a view to having obstructed paths cleared.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

This year then I propose to give a resume of the situation in the various highway authority areas starting with:-

Greater Manchester

In the Greater Manchester Area are 10 Metropolitan Districts and each one carries its own highway responsibility.

Bolton MBC

This year some six new obstruction cases have been reported to the Council, this is in addition to the many outstanding obstructions submitted in previous years which have not been cleared. The Bolton Authority host a liaison meeting at which the Ramblers' Association, Bolton Group and Peak & Northern are represented. Our representative on that body is Kay Wells who is our inspector for that area. Reading the minutes of that meeting over the years it has become apparent that the authority has, to a large extent been paying lip service to the question of resolving footpath problems and I note recently that the RA members on that committee have expressed concern at the lack of progress on footpath matters. One would hope for some improvement in the general situation in Bolton but that is not evident at this time.

Bury MBC

Bury has recently extended an invitation to Peak & Northern to attend a footpath liaison meeting and our inspector for that area Fred Darwin now attends these meetings on a regular basis. There does appear to be a genuine effort by the Council to deal with footpath problems but having said that, I have several on books which have been obstructed for some considerable time, and they have still not been cleared. This year three new obstructions have been reported to the council.

Manchester City Council

Within the Manchester City administrative area, are very few definitive rights of way, however a number of those in semi-urban areas have been obstructed for some time, with the Council being extremely reluctant to take the necessary action to have them cleared. One such is the path from Blackley New Road to

the Crematorium and known as West Street. This path is completely overgrown and out of use and at the Crematorium end is illegally obstructed. We have been promised action on this early in the new year but as we go to press the situation remains unchanged. Two additional obstructions have been reported to the Council this year. In previous years the Council have been somewhat lax in their attitude towards field footpaths, as they call them, but I sense that this year there is a positive move towards clearing up some of the problems, many of which have been with us for some years. Time will tell if this is a new broom and if in fact it sweeps as clean as we would like it to.

Oldham MBC

In the Oldham area there are a considerable number of rights of way. We have no formal meeting contact with the Borough Council and there are many, many outstanding footpath complaints, particularly in the Saddleworth Area. This year no less than twenty two new obstruction cases have been reported to the Council. In recent correspondence I have indicated the Society's general concern at the lack of effort in clearing blocked rights of way but the Council have replied indicating that they are doing as much as is possible under the present financial constraints.

Rochdale MBC

Again we have no formal meeting contact with Rochdale on footpath matters but the Chairman and I did meet with Officers and Elected members of the Council in 1989 when we were able to stress to them our concern for the major problems that they had with regard to obstructed rights of way in the Borough. Members should be left in no doubt that the problems of obstructed rights of way in Rochdale has reached massive proportions. As I appear to make little progress in my complaints to the Council, at the turn of the year I have indicated to them that I will be assembling a number of cases for onward transmission to the Ombudsman. I will be submitting allegations that the Council are failing to carry out their statutory duty under the Highway Act to protect the rights of the public to the enjoyment of highways. I will also be alleging that the Council have no procedure for dealing with wilful obstructions to Rights of Way and if in fact they have such a procedure they are completely failing to carry it out. Rochdale is a Council on which the Society must apply increasing pressure during 1991.

City of Salford

Salford again is a Highway Authority with rather less footpaths than its neighbours. There is a real problem however in this area in that complaints are lodged with the Chief Executive's Department which is merely a postbox for the Engineers who are responsible for the maintenance of rights of way. There is no doubt in my mind that the lines of communication between the Chief Executive and the Chief Engineer are down. There are many problems in the

Salford area which are just not being resolved not least of which is the Footpath Swinton & Pendlebury 51 at Grid Ref. 764007 where the right of way adjacent to the Garden Centre has been blocked for many years. We first drew the attention of the Council to this problem in March, 1981 and despite many promises of urgent action we would appear to be as far away from resolving the matter now as when the whole episode commenced. Last year in my report I mentioned that on one footpath in Irlam, 30 bridges were required, despite our complaints, 30 bridges are still required. The situation in Salford is not good and again we will need to apply greater pressure on that authority during the coming year.

Stockport MBC

I think it is fair to say that Stockport is the jewel in the crown of Greater Manchester Authorities with regard to footpath problems, though the crown is perhaps somewhat tarnished in one or two cases. There is no doubt however that we do appear to have made a deal of progress in the area over the last 18 months. I am quite sure that this improvement is as a result of our having formal meetings with the officers and Chairman of the appropriate committee. In common with other local authorities however, when footpath complaints have reached a stage when legal action is required the situation appears to grind to a halt. There appears to be an inbuilt reluctance on the part of council legal officers to actually begin legal proceedings even when they have a perfect case. This year in Stockport we have only had occasion to lodge new obstruction complaints with regard to four paths yet we have had ten clearances. I am hopeful that the excellent work of the footpath officers together with continued meetings with the Council will allow Stockport to retain its Crown during the coming year.

Tameside MBC

Tameside have, over the years been a thorn in our side, we have applied pressure from every possible angle in an attempt to persuade the Council to carry out its statutory duties with regard to rights of way but I have to say that we have had little success and what success we have had has been due entirely to the efforts of the Groundwork team and not to those of the local authority. This year we have reported three new problems to the authority and we will continue to apply pressure during the coming year. We have no formal meeting contact with this authority, although we now have the name of an officer in the Engineers Department who has been charged with dealing with footpath problems and he has promised me that our complaints will now be dealt with rather than just put to one side for future action.

Trafford MBC

This year we have had a clean sheet with regard to Trafford with no new obstructions reported and five previous obstructions reported as being clear.

Again we have no formal meeting contact with the authority but we do now have the name of a person in the Engineers Department who has been given responsibility for footpaths as part of his general work on roads throughout the Borough. In one particular instance during the year we had cause to complain again about a path in Dunham Massey which had been ploughed and not restored. This situation had applied year after year with Trafford M.B. failing to take action against the perpetrator. We did however find out that the farmer responsible was a tenant of the National Trust, Dunham Estate and a meeting was arranged on site at which the Farmer, The National Trust Agent, the Representative of Trafford Council, our Inspector for the area Harold Thornley and myself were present. I got the distinct impression at that meeting that the Trafford Council representative would have preferred to side with the farmer but the facts of the case were indisputable and even the National Trust agent had to concede that the law with regard to the ploughing of footpaths, as it applied at that time, was not being complied with. One good point did emerge from that meeting and that was that the Agent invited me to inform him personally if any of their tenants transgressed on footpath matters and he undertook to have them resolved without recourse to the local authority. I felt that that particular meeting had been extremely worthwhile and we will have to see if matters in that particular area do improve.

Wigan MBC

We have a formal meeting each year with the Chairman of Highways and officers of the Council. My considered opinion is that the meeting is called merely to allow us the opportunity to listen to excuses as to why the Council cannot carry out its statutory duties. There is no doubt that we make little progress in the Wigan Area, many paths remain obstructed which have been reported to the local authority over four years. Two major problems remain unresolved in that area. A large reclamation site at Higher Folds, Leigh is crossed by some 50 rights of way all of which were temporarily closed some 12 years ago. We have still not managed to persuade Wigan that a new footpath network should be established or the temporary closure orders should be removed and the existing definitive rights of way reinstated. The other major problem is at Pennington Flash Country Park where the definitive path network is a total mess with a considerable number of legal rights of way underwater due to mining subsidence. I have been asking Wigan MBC to come up with a new footpath network for the area for the past twelve years, but their answer is that they do not have the resources to carry out this type of work. I suppose this excuse might be valid if in fact they made some progress towards improving other rights of way in the Borough but of course they do not. Wigan is also one of the remaining authorities who have as yet failed to update their definitive map, every year we ask the same question "when do you propose completing the updating of the definitive map" and each year the excuse is slightly different but really amounts to the same, "we do not have the resources to do the work". We are maintaining pressure on them to do this as a matter of urgency.

Cheshire

I mentioned in my report last year that the administrative set up for dealing with rights of way in Cheshire was to say the least somewhat complicated. At the moment we deal with the County Council as Highway Authority at Backford Hall, Congleton Council with an agency agreement for certain paths and Macclesfield Borough Council who operate under a similar agency agreement as also do Warrington Council. Would though that the situation was as simple as that. In the Macclesfield Agency Area, some paths are the responsibility of Macclesfield itself, others are dealt with by the Bollin Valley Project people and others by the Heritage & Recreation section of the County Council. It is often very difficult to pin point exactly where a complaint should be lodged and it is therefore quite easy under those circumstances for Macclesfield B.C. to "push the problem around" which results in total confusion which is what I suspect is the intention.

However, with regard to those paths dealt with by the County Highways at Backford Hall, a massive number of complaints are passed to them annually. I calculate that there must be in the region of some 500 outstanding complaints at the moment and that is only in the North Cheshire Area.

During the year under review I had the opportunity to present a paper to the Countryside & Farms Sub Committee of the County Council who were holding a seminar on rights of way matters. I have to say that in that paper I pulled no punches, making it clear that the problem they had was one of massive proportions and that the way they were dealing with it at the moment it would never be resolved. I spoke for about half an hour on what we saw as being the shortcomings of the Council, praising where I thought praise was due but castigating those sections where I felt that sufficient effort was not being applied. It is difficult to know just how my paper was received but at least in the question and answer session afterwards some very pertinent questions were asked and I trust that the answers I gave will result in some improvement in rights of way matters in the future.

There is at the moment, as we move into 1991 a massive re-organisation of the rights of way section taking place, this will remove responsibilities for rights of way from the Highways Section to Heritage & Recreation. Only time will tell if this re-organisation will be successful but as I said to them it is a question of the will to do things, if the will is there then all things are possible but if the will is absent then we waste our time. The Society has no formal meeting contact with the County Council though at a meeting late in 1989 to discuss the Cheshire Countryside Strategy document, such a meeting was suggested and I understood that the need for it was accepted by the officers present. We have yet to see a meeting called along those lines.

Congleton BC

Congleton Borough Council only have highway authority responsibility for a very small area, by far the greater part of the footpaths in the Borough are dealt with by the County and so I have very little contact with that Council.

Macclesfield BC

With this Council we have a major problem, we have no formal meeting contact with them and they appear to put very little effort into resolving the hundreds of footpath problems in their agency area. As with several other authorities, any matters which require the attention of the Council's Legal Department come to a grinding halt. Paths in some of the Parishes within the Macclesfield Agency Area which covers the parishes of Adlington, Alderley Edge, Bollington, Macclesfield Borough, Mottram St Andrew, Poynton, Prestbury and Wilmslow are dealt with by the Bollin Valley Project, others are dealt with by the Countryside & Heritage Department. It is always a problem to know exactly where to aim complaints.

Early in the year we were experiencing major problems with the Bollin Valley Project people, they appeared to have no concern whatsoever for the definitive rights of way network in their area and erected bridges, stiles and signposts on concessionary routes throughout the area completely ignoring the fact that definitive lines were obstructed. There was one particular case where a first class bridge was erected across a watercourse and yet some short distance away the bridge on the definitive line was in such a dangerous state as to be unusable. The situation had deteriorated to such an extent that I felt it necessary to lodge a formal complaint with the County Heritage & Recreation Officer. I feel that the complaint did produce the results I expected for almost immediately the Bollin Valley Officer began to respond to my letters and recognise at long last the importance of ensuring that definitive rights of way in his area received attention before work on concession paths was undertaken.

With regard to work carried out by the Heritage & Recreation section I can only say that this branch does an absolutely first class job. Unless it is a major problem, when I report an obstruction to them, one can almost guarantee that within two months the problem will be resolved. Now here's a thought, if all the Highway paths are to be moved to Heritage & Recreation in the new year, which is what I understand will happen, one would hope that the quality of path maintenance provided by that section at the moment will be reflected on the paths which are transferred from the Highways Section. I suspect that this will take some time but we are ever hopeful.

Warrington BC

Strangely I have very little contact with this council, certainly there is no formal meeting but the very few cases which are referred to them are certainly

not given the priority I would wish. I have quite a number of outstanding cases in the Warrington Area at this time. In North Cheshire as a whole during 1990 a total of 107 paths were reported as being obstructed

Derbyshire CC

We have established a very good rapport with the footpath officer of the County Council and although work on resolving obstruction complaints is not carried out to my entire satisfaction, there is no doubt that the response is better than most. Most of our problems in Derbyshire are reported direct to the County Council, as the Borough of High Peak asked some years ago that its responsibility for footpath matters should be withdrawn. We are now in the process of joining in consultation meetings with the County Council on footpath matters and we hope to be represented at the first meeting in February 1991.

Derbyshire Dales DC

Formerly the West Derbyshire District Council. We do have a number of problems in this area and the response from that local authority is, in the main, quite good although they have recently lost their Footpath Officer and have asked that we do not press non-important problems for the time being. We understand that early in 1991 a new officer will be appointed and many outstanding cases will be resolved. In Derbyshire as a whole this year, 30 new cases were reported and 27 clearances were noted.

Lancashire CC

Our dealings with the County are in respect of an area surrounding Chorley and our experience with that Council has not been as good as it might have been. We have a number of outstanding problems in the area and a considerable number of missing signposts. It is perhaps interesting to note that Lancashire County Council is one of the very few councils in our area who do not consult us prior to making orders for the closure or diversion of rights of way. This situation results in the Society having to oppose many closures and diversion at order stage when in fact many could have been resolved if prior consultation had taken place. An additional problem in this area is that despite repeated requests the County Council will not provide the Society with copies of the definitive footpath map. They are in fact the only authority which does not do so. Again this causes problems, particularly with closures and diversions when our panel of assessors need to know what the overall footpath network in an area looks like before deciding, for instance, if a diversion is acceptable.

Blackburn BC

I am really at a loss as to what to say about this authority. Some years ago we attended regular liaison meetings with officers of the Council but we quickly

recognised that these meetings were a "window dressing" exercise and very little positive action came from them. The situation deteriorated to such an extent that I had to regrettably withdraw from meetings with that authority. There are many, many problems in the borough and the action taken by the authority would appear to be nil or very close thereto. Early in the new year, the Council have invited the Society to a meeting to discuss what they call the borough's "Greenwatch" and a document "For Managing the Environment" has been produced outlining their strategy for all items "green" in the borough. With regard to rights of way all that I can see is an item listed under "Countryside" which says that the Council will "improve and manage access to the countryside as part of its policy of identifying long distance footpath routes" It is my intention to be at that meeting when I will be making clear to the authority that the production of glossy brochures indicating their proposals is a poor substitute for removing obstructions on definitive rights of way. I am distinctly unhappy with the situation in Blackburn. My only consolation is that the situation can only improve. During the year a further three cases were added to an already large list of obstructed rights of way in the borough.

Rossendale BC

We have no formal meeting contact with this Council but their record on path work is almost as bad as Blackburn. They have some wonderful walking areas in the borough but members walking in that area will find an extraordinary number of obstructed rights of way. It would appear that there is no one person responsible for footpaths in the borough so it is really difficult to get anything done. During the year a further three obstruction cases were reported to the Council.

South Yorkshire

This is one of our more distant areas where problems generally speaking are taken care of by more local organisations. The very few occasions when I have had cause to make contact with Boroughs in South Yorkshire it is apparent that there is a real concern for rights of way and problems are resolved with very little delay. We do have formal meetings with Doncaster MBC.

Staffordshire

The Society deals with obstructions in the north of the county only, that is in the area of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council who are not the Highway Authority nor do they operate under an agency agreement. Consequently our contact is always with the County Council. We do have formal meetings with that authority and I have to say that over the years, problems have been many and the rate at which they are resolved very slow indeed. However there does seem to be a new mood afoot in the County to improve work on rights of way and at our last meeting the County confirmed that they would shortly begin a

programme to signpost all rights of way were they leave a metalled road. They indicated that this work would commence in the Staffordshire Moorlands Area and would be completed by the end of 1991.

I do however have one major complaint and that is that the County have decided to institute a priority system for dealing with rights of way problems. They have categorised complaints into five sections and it is interesting to note that complaints in category (1) will be dealt with "as a matter of urgency", category (2) & (3) "within two months", category (4) "within three months" and category (5) "when resources allow but unlikely to be within three months" the sting in the tail of this categorisation is that the time scales mentioned are for the complaint to be investigated and not to be resolved. When I asked the question, "what category do my many complaints fall into", I am told that most if not all fall within category five. I have to say that I am distinctly unhappy with this system and I have made my case quite clear at meetings of the Liaison body. When I lodge my footpath obstruction complaints with the County I am not even told into which category the complaint falls ... I ask myself, and anyone else who will listen, "who determines into which category each individual complaint falls" ... and for goodness sake if all my complaints which fall within category five are not to be investigated within three months, just when will they be resolved. At the next meeting of the Liaison Committee I will be looking for some positive answers to my questions or I will again be referring several cases to the Ombudsman. In the meantime 26 new complaints were lodged with the County during the year.

West Yorkshire

In this county the Society deals with obstructions to paths in two highway areas:

Calderdale MBC

There are hundreds of outstanding complaints in this area. The Chairman and I have met Councillors and Officers of the Council at the Town Hall Halifax and have stressed our concern at the way in which problems are dealt with or more correctly not dealt with. We were told that shortage of money and staff were causing the problems but we were encouraged to hear that additional staff were to be recruited and that some positive progress would be made in the very near future, We expected that this progress would be reflected in the year 1990 but I have yet to see any positive improvement in that area. In Calderdale 26 new cases were reported during the year.

Kirklees MBC

We are only just beginning to deal with paths in this area so I have very few outstanding complaints but our dealings with this authority with regard to closures and diversions gives me little confidence in their concern for public rights of way generally. We will be monitoring carefully the situation in 1991 and in my report next year I will perhaps be able to give you a clearer picture.

Thanks to inspectors

It is my usual practice to express my appreciation of the work done by the Society's footpath inspectors during the year and once again this report allows me the opportunity to continue with that practice. All the Officers of the Society play a valuable part in its efficient administration and my thanks go to them all but my main contact is with the Inspectors and I would therefore wish to express my appreciation of the first class job they do as my "eyes" in the countryside.

Our chief (and only) statistician

Our Inspector John Hindle who operates in Rochdale and Calderdale has recently sent me details of his inspection walks during 1990 which I think you will find to be of interest.

In Rochdale:

Total walks	29
Time	125 hrs 14 mins
Miles	281.3
Total blockages	117
Paths cleared	6

In Calderdale:

Total walks	10
Time	42 hrs 52 mins
Miles	90.45
Total blockages	29
Paths cleared	6

As an afterthought John adds that, since becoming an inspector in 1983, he has walked 6325.25 miles and found 1661 blockages, an average of one every 3.81 miles.

Conclusion

As a measure of the amount of work undertaken by myself on behalf of the Society, can I add a few statistics of my own. Since 1978, when I first took over as secretary, up to December 1989 new files opened averaged 240 per year. In 1990 I opened 608 ... I now hold some 3200 files on obstructed rights of way ... what a busy life we lead!

Derek Taylor



This has been a difficult year as I have been out of action since Mid-September because of a fracture in my back. Also Frank Macree, a member of the regular signpost team, suffered a stroke in September. The main activities during the year have been in erecting new and replacing signposts. Consequently little general maintenance - of which there is a considerable backlog - has been done.

SIGNPOST REPORT

Trafford MBC have been approached for permission to erect signposts at either end of the historic "Bottoms Footpath" in Flixton. Sites are still to be investigated for the proposed signpost in the Ollersett Moor area to be donated by New Mills WEA. Investigation required into proposed signposting of Blackrod 40 footpath - reported by Mrs K Wells. A request has been received for a memorial signpost from Mrs Janet Davies, preferably in the Wildboarclough area. This would be to remember her parents, Mr & Mrs F Wellburn, former life members.

On behalf of the Society I wish to thank all those who have actively assisted with signpost work during the year and in particular during my absence. □

Percy Hutchinson

Signpost work completed

SP 81 Flittigate	707782	SP 122 Hope	173841
White letters re-painted.		New replacement signpost erected, 1957	
SP 218 Tabley	706806	original reported missing in 1966.	
New signpost to replace original finger-post 22 which was broken.			
SP 95 Whitehall	034764	SP 225 Combs	042792
Re-furbished and re-erected on new post.		New signpost erected, donated by Mrs A M Booth in memory of her husband.	
SP 94 Thornhill	197835	SP 226 Middlewood	952844
New replacement signpost erected. 1938		New signpost in memory of Colin Fenton erected, donated by his family and friends.	
original reported missing in 1983.			
SP 222 Peak Forest	11657880	SP 90 Tabley	709805
New signpost erected.		New replacement signpost erected, 1937	
SP 223 Peak Forest	11557875	original reported missing in 1984.	
New signpost erected, donated by Manchester CHA Club in memory of Edna & Arthur Hodkinson.			
		SP 221 Lyme	95208236
		New signpost erected by Hazel Grove Scout Fellowship for Sam Evison's 80th birthday.	

SP 220 Combs	043792	SP 5 Peep O'Day	047850
New signpost to replace original fingerpost 1.			
SP 36 Hope	171832	SP 72 Derwent	171919
New replacement signpost erected; 1908 original replaced in 1953 reported missing in 1982.			
SP 224 Hope Woodlands Valley	16388185	SP 191 Derwent	174909
New signpost erected, donated by Mr & Mrs P G Warwicker in memory of Mrs Warwicker's brother.			

Work in progress

SP 57 Reeds Bridge	983794	Mrs A Harris in memory of her husband.
New replacement signpost to be erected. Awaiting a proposed alteration to gateway by landowner.		
SP 228 Marple Bridge	967788	SP 227 Ollerton
New signpost to be erected. Donated by		77947586 New signpost to be erected, awaiting production of crossplate.

From the General Secretary's postbag ...

*from a local authority in the Manchester area ...
to "The Peak and Northern Football Society"*

*from a lady seeking details of membership ...
to "The Peak and Northern Building Society"*

from Wigan MBC Legal Department replying to a letter asking them to confirm that they had received 20 'evidence of use' forms:

"Dear Sir

Thank you for your reasons to let us regarding this matter. I was concerned that the evidence of use forms have been received by the Council and that the matter will be given full consideration as soon as possible."

Well ... did they receive the forms ??

Once more a successful year with total funds increasing by more than the rate of retail inflation. We received an exceptional income of £3500, compared to £2300 in the previous year. These amounts are most welcome and assist us to build up our funding for a future period of difficulty.

TREASURER'S REPORT

In connection with this, it may be noted that the fairly large increase in our subscription levels this year will raise only approximately an extra £500 in 1991, compared to a total income of £12,400. Our finances, continue to come largely from investment income and, with the close of 1989 seeing record interest rates, we may fairly expect to see this source of income decline.

Subscription rates have increased this year.

Please ensure that your renew at the new rates (see below) and that any membership forms you may hold which quote the old rates are amended or destroyed and new ones obtained. This will save us great deal of administrative time.

The difficult financial conditions have meant a decline in the market value of our equity investments and continue to dictate that we hold large cash balances on which we are receiving interest at rates well in advance of retail inflation figures. Although not as satisfactory as last year, dividend income has increased slightly although equity yields remain well below cash yields.

The Society receives very valuable contributions which do not appear in the balance sheet, the contribution of time and talents by a small but hard working band of volunteers. You will see that we have the finances to fund voluntary work by more volunteers - can you assist us? Perhaps with publicity? Maybe with greater contact with our members. Footpath inspection? Office work in the Archive Centre, signpost maintenance? There are a large number of jobs, and even an hour or so per week would be greatly welcomed.

As forecast, the upgrading of our office systems, while it has enabled us to handle a greatly expanding workload, has also led to increased costs and we expect to see these continue to increase as the pressures on the footpath network alas also increase.

The CAFCASH fund you see mentioned under Assets in the balance sheet is operated by the *Charities Aid Foundation*, and has enabled us to obtain interest rates often in excess of Bank Base Rate on a fully realisable investment. The fund is open only to registered charities. The *Charities Aid Foundation* offer other services of value to us and you may wish to note that, as we are a registered charity, donations may be made to use by the *Give As You Earn* scheme operated by CAF, and that donations may be directed to us through the CAF Voucher scheme.

The latter scheme is one in which you make a covenanted donation to CAF for a minimum of four years, and then make your charitable payments by means of a special voucher rather like a cheque book. Thus you increase your charitable giving by the amount generously added by the Inland Revenue (you must be subject to Income Tax for this to work) You also remain fully in control of how much goes to each charity and are not tied to giving a fixed amount to a particular charity each year for four years. For details of this please write to: Charities Aid Foundation, 48 Pembury Road, TONBRIDGE, Kent TN9 2JD. The CAF is itself a registered charity.

Legacies and bequests

In the last two years we have benefitted from legacy income and this is most welcome. We are grateful if members would remember the Society when making or reviewing their wills. To make a bequest to the Society the wording shown in the form on page 29 is suitable. The Charities Aid Foundation also offer a service which allows you to bequeath a sum or portion of your estate to Charity in general, and then leave informal written instructions for specific disposal; this makes it easier to redirect funds if your interests alter, without having to have a new Will made out, or a codicil added, both of which may produce income for your Solicitor. The form of wording would be:

My trustees shall hold shares (or I bequeath the Sum of £.....) for the Charities Aid Foundation of 48 Pembury Road, TONBRIDGE, Kent TN9 2JD (Registered Charity No 268369) upon trust to distribute the same and the income thereof for charitable purposes (including its Foundation Fund) and I request the trustees for the time being of the Foundation (without intending to create any binding trust or legal obligation) to distribute the same or part or parts thereof to such charity or charities and in such shares or proportions as I may have made known to them during my life or as may be recorded in any note or memorandum found amongst my papers after my death but so that notwithstanding such request the Trustees of the Foundation shall have absolute discretion as to the distribution of this Gift and shall be entitled to make a contribution of 3% of this gift to their founder, namely the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, for its charitable purposes as required by the Trust Deed establishing the Foundation.

Rather lengthy but very valuable; do consult your legal adviser on such matters.

Subscriptions

Members are encouraged to pay their annual subscriptions by banker's Standing Order and a suitable form is included at the end of this report. To confirm that 1991 subscription rates are:

Ordinary: £3.00 Joint: £5.00 Junior: £1.50

The subscription rate for affiliated organisations is £6 and an (optional) annual charge (currently £5) is made for sending copies of the minutes of Council. □

Stephen Shaw

2
Income and expenditure for the year to 31 December 1990 (please also see notes on page 28)

Income	1990	1989	Expenditure	1990	1989
Subscriptions			Annual Report	529.80	442.02
Ordinary	383.00	352.00	Stationery etc	599.65	227.70
Joint	338.50	303.00	Photocopier maintenance	486.67	
Transfer from 10 year suspense	635.10	496.20	Postage and telephone	886.35	648.64
Junior	3.00	3.00	Maps	34.85	36.72
Affiliations	505.00	535.00	Room rent: meetings	95.00	80.00
total subscriptions	1864.60	1689.20	Archive Centre	338.00	351.41
Donations	1797.30	509.98	Expenses of Archive Centre	116.36	122.46
Investment Income			Travel	626.76	528.59
Received net	834.27	769.63	Gen Secretary: expenses	150.00	125.00
Income Tax refund due	278.09	256.55	honorarium	150.00	100.00
<i>sub total</i>	1112.36	1026.18	Subscriptions and donations	43.00	32.00
Received gross			Publicity/exhibition	66.45	62.13
Government Stock	2277.62	2349.12	Bank Nominee charges	30.25	33.00
Short term deposits	2722.03	1349.59	Insurance of work parties	18.50	26.50
total investment income	6112.01	4724.89	Conference fees	213.70	
Profit on refreshments		30.90	Loss on refreshments	8.60	
Affiliates Service Charge	140.00		total ordinary expenses	4393.94	2816.17
Sales of badges	10.00	20.00	Office Equipment	108.77	1466.93
Sundry		10.70	Transfer to Defence Fund		250.00
total ordinary income	9923.91	6985.67	total expenditure	4502.71	4513.10
Grants received		1840.00	Excess income over expenditure	7921.20	4806.88
Legacies to General Funds	2500.00	350.00			
Sale of bonus Scrip		64.31			
Sale of equipment		80.00			
total income	12423.91	9319.98			
				12423.91	9319.98

Funds of the Society as at 31 December each year

name of fund	1989 b/fwd	+ income	- expenses	1990 c/fwd
General	37823.20	12423.91	4502.71	45744.40
Defence	3966.40	68.16		4034.56
Signpost	780.58	896.34	906.75	770.17
Survey	398.53			398.53
Memorial funds				
E Royce	54.66			54.66
H Wild	250.00			250.00
F S H Head	142.00			142.00
	43415.37	+ 13388.41	- 5409.46	= 51394.32

notes

- The Signpost Fund is for the erection and maintenance of Society footpath signposts.
- Signpost income for 1990 includes a grant from the Countryside Commission of £345 for the new signpost plaques, which are shown in Signpost expenses for 1990 at £641.70 and for 1989 at £120.75.

□ The Survey and memorial funds are not open to further donations; the Survey fund was for the original survey of rights-of-way and the memorial funds are for use when required to maintain the appropriate memorials.

□ The Defence Fund is for use as and when required to cover the costs of obtaining professional legal advice and, if required, meeting expenses relating to legal actions.

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 1990

Assets	1990	1989
Investments	29040.72	30140.72
Current Account	95.09	48.52
Deposit Account	197.11	1240.09
NSB Investment Account		1359.95
Premium Account	12123.20	21821.80
Cafcash Deposit Fund	13106.26	
Cash float (Archive Centre)	20.00	20.00
Tax refund due	278.09	256.55
	54860.47	45887.62
Liabilities		
Funds of the Society as shown	51394.32	43415.37
Ten year membership suspense	3466.15	2472.25
	54860.47	45887.62

Notes to Accounts

□ Income for 1990 (page 26) includes a legacy of £2500 from the estate of Edna Robinson and exceptional donations of £758.14 from the Wigan Society and £250 from a member.

□ A grant from the Countryside Commission of £80 has been received in respect of the 1990 Conference fees and will be shown in the Accounts for 1991.

Investments

All investments are quoted on the Stock Exchange

	1990	1989
Equity investments		
Cost of purchase	11474.43	11474.43
Market value on 31 December	12014.59	16009.43
Government Stock		
Cost of purchase	19008.05	19998.38
Market value at 31 December	18952.95	20356.57
Maturity value	17566.27	18666.29

□ During 1990, Treasury Stock having a nominal value of £1100 was repaid on maturity.

□ Equity investments are shown in the Balance Sheet at cost of purchase, which is lower than total market value as at 31 December. Government Stock, which is held until maturity, is shown in the Balance Sheet at the maturity value, which is lower than both purchase cost and market value as at 31 December.

□ Assets purchased by the Society are fully written off to expenditure in the year of purchase. All sanctioned expenses for the year are shown, no significant claims awaiting sanction were known of at the end of the year. Income is recorded as it is paid into the accounts, the only item of accruals shown is the tax refund due on net investment income. □

Auditor's report

I have examined the Society's Accounts and in my opinion and to the best of my knowledge and belief the Income and Expenditure Report and the Balance Sheet here given provide a true and fair view of the revenue and transactions for the year ended 31 December 1990 and of the state of affairs as at that date.

date 25 January 1991

signed: E McCormick, Honorary Auditor

The Society has 11 honorary life members and the total membership at the end of 1990 stands at 929, a net increase of 115. Donations for the year amounted to £1050, excluding those donations paid direct to the Treasurer, and the generosity of members and clubs is very much appreciated by the Society.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

10 year members

There are now 485 members, including 103 married couples, an increase of 74

Annual members

The membership is 433, including 114 married couples, an increase of 44. The recruitment drive was very successful but this was offset by 57 members who did not renew in 1990 despite several

reminders. Also a number of annual members realised the advantage of 10 year membership, particularly when the Treasurer had forecast an increase in subscription rates. The Chairman wrote in January 1991 to all the members who had not renewed offering them 10 year membership to the year 2000 at the old rate if they paid the 1990 annual subscription, 10 members accepted this offer and will be included in the 10 year list in the next annual report.

Affiliated societies

There are 105 societies affiliated as at 31 December 1990, a reduction of four from last year; we had two new affiliations but six clubs did not renew. □

Ted Whittaker