

PEAK & NORTHERN FOOTPATHS SOCIETY



A N N U A L R E P O R T 1 9 9 5

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

LESLIE MEADOWCROFT

Having just about recovered from celebrating the Society's centenary, we have been taking a long, hard look at the Society's operations. What is most evident is that our activities are causing problems of their own, for example, we can foresee space problems in the not too distant future at both Hazel Grove and Tyldesley. Because we are entirely voluntarily manned, we have to ensure that we are accessible to our trained workforce. This means adequate storage facilities for our extensive records, much of which need to be kept intact and with sufficient room for expansion. We have considered various forms of storage systems but much of our work is with original documents, often needed in that form and, again, needs to be accessible to our workforce. Your officers are giving this matter considerable attention and are aware of the various financial options available to charitable organisations.

This is the year in which we said a reluctant farewell to Sir John Johnson, Chairman of the Countryside Commission. As a well liked, popular and respected figurehead, he will be a hard act to follow but we send warm wishes to his successor, Richard Simmons, a farmer and ex Euro MP, and look forward to making his acquaintance and observing his leadership. The recent transfer of the Countryside Stewardship scheme from the Countryside Commission to the Ministry of Agriculture does not, we trust, raise questions on administration and policy, such as we have experienced in Dovedale with the National Trust and their grant aid and denial of access.

We are still pursuing the creation of an off-road alternative on National Trust land to the riverside section between Lode Mill and Mill Dale, Dovedale, where the Trust have adopted a totally negative attitude over many years. NT members may care to comment at suitable Trust meetings.

At the closing of the year, a new environmental organisation suddenly appeared upon the countryside scene. After announcing its presence with large advertisements in the national press, it gave the impression that this infant was fairly well endowed with promotional finances. It is felt that its promoters' aims and direction need careful study.

For many years I have represented the Society on the North West Council for Sport & Recreation but, due to re-organisation, the number of allocated places is being reduced. However, we still have a voice on the North West Federation Executive; we are also represented on North West Water Recreation, Derbyshire Agenda 21 and related bodies, the Kinder Advisory Committee. We attend regularly the highway related committees of most county and some district councils; we have regular meetings with the Peak Park Planning Board. We are affiliated to the Open Spaces Society and the Byeways & Bridleways Trust from whom we regularly receive much valuable information.

The Society's illustrated lecture, which is presented by myself or the General Secretary, is in fairly popular demand by outside organisations and is a welcome source of income for the Society.

I have been conducting a vigorous chairman to chairman correspondence with the Severn Trent Water plc on the much delayed implementation of the foot crossing of the Ladybower Dam. There has been much procrastination by the Company in an attempt to force through a further project for which they have been denied planning permission. We can only assume that the Ladybower fish farm is currently being used to raise red herrings!

Chairman's Report (continued from previous page)

We are still pursuing the creation of an off-road alternative on National Trust land to the riverside section between Lode Mill and Mill Dale, Dovedale, where the Trust have adopted a totally negative attitude over many years. Our NT members may care to comment at suitable Trust meetings.

In collaboration with officers of the Peak Park Planning Board, the National Trust are proposing to alter the path network and move the footbridge in the vicinity of the stepping stones near Thorpe Cloud rather than carry out necessary repairs. A public inquiry is more than likely on this issue. With allies like these who needs enemies?

During the year we made effective use of Highway Act, section 56 procedures by serving these on authorities reluctant to take effective repair action after much cajoling. Stockport were actually served with a summons to the magistrates court before they quickly made temporary repairs and we asked for the case to be adjourned sine die whilst awaiting permanent repairs. Similar cases with other authorities are reported elsewhere.

Our hard working Cosa Unit team are dealing valiantly with an ever increasing workload of planning applications which have to be scrutinised and checked with the definitive map to ensure rights of way are not affected. Several members perform other duties for the Society and others do additional work at home. To contain our work within reasonable bounds a few extra volunteers would be welcomed. We offer a good and interesting excuse for those suffering from television boredom and wishing to maintain mental agility and fellowship

As our AGM is imminent, you should be considering future officers for the Society. I have indicated previously that the time is nigh for a change of chairmanship after some 25 years in post next year. Mindful of the responsibilities endowed by being the country's senior footpaths organisation I would like to suggest that, subject to your approval, your current vice chairman, Norman Edwards, be elected chairman elect for the next year and that you consider a total transfer in 1997. Hopefully this should help to ensure smooth operational continuity.

❖ Annual Dinner 1995 ❖

On the 21st April 1995, over 100 members joined together in Manchester on the occasion of the Society's 33rd Annual Dinner. Again the venue was the imposing Freemason's Hall in Bridge Street and again the welcome, food and service were of the highest order, a factor which we have now come to expect. Our guest speaker was Councillor Joe Murphy, Chairman of Highways, Derbyshire County Council, and the response to the toast '*The Society*' was made by our General Secretary, Derek Taylor.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Mrs Kay Wells.

The occasion as always was a great opportunity to meet friends and colleagues who, due to the very wide spread of our operating area, we see perhaps only on that one occasion each year.

Make a note now that our dinner in 1996 is on the 26th April ... try to join us if at all possible.

AN INSPECTOR CALLS

DAVID FRITH

How, when and why does a footpath inspector investigate? Whether in the town or out in the country people who use or care for footpaths, on seeing an occurrence prejudicial to a path they use or know; often feel that someone should do something. Their first attempts to alert a local or county authority may appear ineffective so they look for a second line of attack either the Ramblers' Association or the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society.

Imagine the walker enjoying a well known path, perhaps has led groups over it; one day whilst following the familiar line the unexpected occurs. It could be heaps of tipped manure, worse, strands of bright new wire, a gate always easy to open now sporting a padlock, a misleading sign, 'Private'; or a new landowner ... 'Clear Off - there's no path through here!'

Knowing the address of the Peak & Northern Secretary, a letter is dispatched to Tyldesley. It is one of hundreds of items of correspondence the Secretary opens each month. Often the complaint contains scant information ... *the path lies between Carr House Farm and Robin's Wood ...* perhaps with no mention of parish or township. Firstly, the Secretary has to conduct his own investigation. The path is located through the Society's definitive maps and its unique definitive number (eg Longdendale 88) recorded. Two things are now done, firstly the definitive path and its problem can be filed, in so doing if there has been a previous reference to this route, the dates and nature of past problems will be brought to light; secondly, the footpath inspector allocated to the parish or town referred to in the definitive number will be sent a copy of the complaint, the path will be described

and in all likelihood a section of the definitive map showing the line of the path under investigation will be included.

The inspector is now expected to walk the path within the near future, identify any misleading signs or discover any obstructions which makes the path unusable, following the survey a report is then returned to the Peak & Northern's General Secretary and this is filed along with the complaint. If the complaint is proven, the Secretary then refers the matter on to the relevant highway authority and it becomes one of many items which are referred back to all the local authorities until they are dealt with.

There is an onus on the inspector to return after a period and see if the path and its problems have improved or deteriorated. Every 12 months an inspector may have a list of several complaints which have not been cleared up, these are reported upon in an annual review which the Secretary may use in face to face consultation with the local authority, urging them to clear up their backlog of path faults and comply with highway law.

When I moved from Hadfield to Hawk Green way back in 1983, I became the inspector for the area of Stockport MBC covering the definitive maps relevant to the former administrations of Marple, Hazel Grove & Bramhall; Bredbury & Romiley; Cheadle & Gatley; Stockport.

This area has now been split so I deal solely with Marple, Bredbury & Romiley. In the early days, wanting to know the areas in more detail I visited archives at Hazel Grove, and copied the definitive numbers of the paths in my patch onto 1:25,000 Pathfinder maps. This overcame a fundamental difficulty which must be faced by all inspectors, taking on a parish without having any pack of maps or definitive statements. Having got the requisite knowledge from Nelson Street I was enabled to exceed the requirements of an inspector and walk the majority of paths around Marple, Hazel Grove, Woodley, Romiley and Bredbury.

continued from page 6

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What swiftly became clear was that, whenever difficulties were reported to them through the Secretary, Stockport Council acted, erected signs and provided stiles.

Doubtless there were several paths which proved tougher nuts to crack, usually because landowners could not be traced or signs, when erected vanished time and time again.

Today Stockport raises few problems; one or two paths require an annual visit to ensure no deterioration has occurred. In the main the paths are signed, walked and raise few complaints.

Looking through this annual report, you may spot areas which have no inspector or notice an area which looks as if the workload could be shared.

There's nothing onerous about serving the Society in the role of inspector ... if you feel it's for you, contact the General Secretary.

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

DEREK TAYLOR

'All Rights of Way should be legally defined, properly maintained and well publicised by the end of the century ...

... so reads the national Target set by the Countryside Commission in 1987

Now, with only four years to run, the question on everyone's lips is will the target be met? I am prepared to put my head on the block and say that in 80% of authorities it certainly will not. Why should I say that? Well the target is a difficult one, being that the rights of way network has been so neglected over the years and so, to achieve that target, local authorities need members and officers with enthusiasm, drive, energy, initiative, foresight and, most importantly, the will to make it work. Based on my contacts with most of the authorities in our area, regrettably I find that some 80% or so are lacking those qualities.

I am aware also that financial constraints cause tremendous problems for local councils but it is surprising what money can be made available from all sorts of sources if it is sought with a sense of urgency.

I have been studying the '*Milestone Statement*' documents now being produced by most councils at the request of the Countryside Commission. These documents chart progress made towards achieving the target and plot the way forward. It is apparent that,

though some see the target being met by the year 2000, most are talking of 2006/2007 as being a more realistic date. The *Milestones* documents prepared by some authorities are so pathetic they do not warrant more than a cursory glance. What the Commission will think of them I know not. See my update next year, my prognosis may just be incorrect.

The comments which follow, reflect my interpretation of how the various local authorities in our inner area have performed in respect of the removal of obstructions. Closures and diversions are dealt with by our COSA unit based at Hazel Grove.

CHESHIRE

Cheshire County Council

Our bi-annual meetings with the County are now fully established and there is no doubt they are proving to be extremely useful in airing problems of general concern though we avoid reference to specific cases to avoid lengthy and inconclusive discussion. Recent matters discussed include ploughing, cropping, unofficial diversions, definitive maps review matters and the change to digital mapping. Work on the maintenance of paths and the erection of stiles and signposts proceeds apace though we have expressed concern that some major problems appear to receive less attention than they deserve. In all though I am happy with the progress made and being made by the County.

Maclesfield BC

In my report last year I said that I had yet to see any positive evidence of improvement in this Council's dealing with rights of way matters. I think I can now say that such improvement is evident, certainly there is a new approach which has resulted in more stiles and more path clearances being effected. However, there are still problems: attention to ploughed paths is one problem which does not appear to have been resolved, also there are many situations in the borough where paths are obstructed by buildings. This situation has arisen due to a lack of co-operation between the Council's planning officers and the rights of way unit. We are hopeful that a forum will be established in the new year where such matters can be discussed and hopefully resolved. As to the backlog, I guess that will take some time.

GREATER MANCHESTER

Bolton MBC

During 1993 and 1994 there was most certainly a very positive change in the attitude of this Council with regard to rights of way. Whilst the liaison meetings continue I am not sure the same energy is being applied to the clearance of footpaths as previously. Bolton is still well up in my league table of efficient authorities but the feedback we were receiving appears to have dried up.

The Council is to prepare costings for a replacement bridge across the River Irwell at GR764064. This bridge was demolished as unsafe some years ago but, fortunately, the footpath was never formally closed. When restored, the bridge will connect footpaths Little Lever 39 (Bolton MBC) with Radcliffe (St Saviours) 2 (Bury MBC). We will need to keep the pressure on here or this bridge will never be re-built.

Bury MBC

The Council responds well to complaints of path problems and their Milestones Statement gives a very fair reflection of

Warrington BC

I see very little improvement on rights of way in the borough though considerable work there has been done by the Mersey Valley Partnership. The Council cannot or will not get to grips with the Rights of Way Act 1990 (the ploughing Act) and use all sorts of excuses for dodging their responsibility.

Warrington is poised to become an independent authority as a result of the Local Government Commission's draft recommendations, I shudder to think what will happen to footpaths should the recommendations be accepted by the Secretary of State. We must await the decision with bated breath.

the time they see that it will take to resolve all problems - 2007 is their estimate. In my report last year I mentioned my concern about the illegal closure of Bury FP105 which is the footbridge over the railway at Belle Vue Terrace GR 80041041. This bridge is still closed and the Society has served a Highways Act s56 Notice on the Council. This notice will expire in March and if there has been no progress at that time we will then need to take the Council to the Magistrates Court. Further report next year.

Manchester City Council

Most of the outstanding problems in the city area, so far as obstructions are concerned, have been or are being dealt with though there are one or two items of very long standing which the Council would rather forget. There is still the odd problem in Ringway but these are being dealt with quickly as a result of the useful contact which has been made with the City Engineer responsible for the southern areas of the City.

Oldham MBC

No change since last year: I have had no complaints in this authority's area.

Rochdale MBC

Rochdale have a massive number of outstanding obstruction complaints; they are well aware of the problems having entered them all on a computer database. It is also fair to say that they are taking steps to resolve them as quickly as possible, considering the financial constraints they operate under. Their draft *Milestones* statement prefers not to talk of dates for completion of the various targets. I would have thought that to be a prerequisite of any such statement and, once again, I just wonder if the Countryside Commission will be prepared to accept what is really a rather 'woolly' statement.

Salford City Council

It has taken the threat of taking eight outstanding cases to the Council's formal complaints procedure, under the Citizens Charter, to finally move the Council. A footpath officer has been appointed and our first liaison meeting has taken place. I have to say that following that meeting I expected reasonably prompt action but that has not been forthcoming and therefore I have advised the Council that the undertaking I gave to hold off submitting a formal complaint, I must now withdraw. The case of the obstructed Swinton & Pendlebury 51 which has been ongoing for so long as to be unbelievable, I have now asked to be lodged as a formal complaint.

Stockport MBC

Slow progress would best describe how we see this Council's attack on rights of way problems. Meetings with council officers and elected members continue and there has certainly been some progress over the years. However, several problems remain and perhaps the most appropriate comment would be that we need to monitor the situation carefully; we shall certainly do just that.

Tameside MBC

An authority with very little, if any, concern for rights of way. I have had problems at Denton now for years and the Council are just giving me the runaround, stating that paths are clear when on inspection they are still obstructed. It would be useful if there was some form of formal contact with this authority but there is a reluctance to move on this issue also. I understand that a *Milestone Statement* has been produced and I have asked for a copy but have not as yet received one.

Trafford MBC

There was a time during the year when I really felt that we were making progress here ... the Council suggested that a meeting to consider all aspects of footpath work would be very useful. I, of course, agreed and suggested an agenda. I was told that a meeting was imminent but when I last wrote I was told there would be some delay. I wonder why? I also believe that a footpath officer has been appointed but this information comes to me second hand, the Council have not felt it necessary to let me know. Further pressure on this Council during 1996.

Wigan MBC

This Council's apathy continues. Yes, we meet twice yearly but I have noticed of late that what happens is that some two weeks or so before our meeting there is a flurry of activity, which usually results in very little progress. Immediately after the meeting all is forgotten for another six months. There are several long outstanding matters which the Council choose to avoid. To give one example, the Council's officer finds it totally acceptable that a large metal field gate should be supported at the hinge side by a loop of barbed wire, top hinge only, nothing at the bottom; he tells me he has no problem lifting it but I wonder if our lady members would agree that this is acceptable, I certainly don't. I feel that the Council has now reached the bottom of my league table and are set for relegation ... but where do they go? You can't get worse than dreadful, or can you?

DERBYSHIRE

Derbyshire County Council

I think I can report that there has been a marginal improvement during the past year though some issues still cause concern.

The County Council is responsible for signposting throughout the county and it is pleasing to report that, after many years, a programme of signposting has started in North East Derbyshire, but such is the backlog of missing posts that it will be well into the next century before this particular situation is resolved. We are represented at liaison meetings by our local inspectors.

Derbyshire Dales DC

Again there have been few problems reported this year. I feel pretty sure that the fact that a large area of the District is in the National Park helps to resolve problems almost before they are reported. Our thanks in that respect to the National Park Ranger Services for the assistance they give. We have also established a good relationship with the District Council's Footpath Officer.

North East Derbyshire DC

There are many problems in this area but I feel reasonably confident that they are being dealt with as quickly as possible. Problems never seem to get resolved as quickly as I would like but progress is certainly being made. It is particularly heartening to note the action being taken with ploughing cases. The Council is not averse to serving notice on landowners who do not respond to an initial complaint. This system seems to work quite well and other authorities would do well to use similar tactics.

LANCASHIRE

Lancashire County Council

The County Council has published its Milestone Statement Consultation Document and it was disappointing to note that the County were only going to achieve 65% of their target by the year 2000. This was said to be due to lack of resources.

The Society has highlighted its concern with regard to quarrying in Rossendale and Chorley where rights of way have been destroyed without legal authority. The County planners have a responsibility here but as we go to press they do not appear able to give reasons as to why this illegal practice should have been allowed. The pressure to have this matter resolved will be maintained during the coming year.

Blackburn BC

There are signs, perhaps no more than that, of an improvement in our relations with this authority. We have been sent a list of outstanding items taken from their records, that itself runs to several pages but I am not as yet convinced that appropriate action is to be taken to resolve what is, in fact, quite a considerable backlog. We have already met officers of the council

and a further meeting is scheduled for early in the new year. This must surely be progress. Blackburn is another authority poised to achieve unitary status... strange that our two worst authorities, Blackburn and Warrington, are both seeking to have the county shackles removed from them. I ask myself is there some significance which escapes me.

Lancashire (continued on next page)

Lancashire (continued)

Chorley BC

We continue to have good relations with this authority with most if not all problems being resolved promptly. There is a vacancy for an inspector in this area ... volunteers please contact the Secretary.

Rossendale BC

Our main concern in this area is the question of the illegal quarrying away of definitive rights of way, discussed earlier under *Lancashire County Council*. I have written to the Council on two occasions over several years seeking an explanation as to why they have allowed this situation to develop but I have not as yet had the favour of a reply. We will need to pursue this issue with vigour through the county channel. We have a vacancy for an inspector to cover Bacup, Haslingden and Whitworth and a volunteer to cover all or part of that area would be welcome.

WEST YORKSHIRE

Calderdale BC

I have not as yet seen a Milestone Statement produced by this Council; in fact it may be that they have not done so. When they do it should provide interesting reading for they have a massive backlog of problems and progress on resolving them is very slow indeed. All complaints of obstructions in this council's area are now sent direct to the Chief Executive with a copy to the Highways chairman. Initially this produced some positive results with an apology from the chairman and a promise to do better. I am not sure that he has honoured that promise.

Kirklees BC

The improvement I reported last year continues; there is a long way to go for the council covers a very large area with hundreds of miles of footpaths. We have two inspectors covering this very large area and we could certainly do with more. Members will note that an area is shown this year as being vacant and any volunteers to take over this area would be welcome. I can also break down the existing areas if sufficient volunteers emerge.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Staffordshire County Council

Our liaison meetings with the County continue and are proving to be very constructive. The Council's Draft Consultation Milestones Statement is now available and is quite a comprehensive document. The summary at the conclusion of the document is indicative of the situation across our entire area, it states ...

The inescapable conclusion is that none of the principal Milestones targets will be achieved by the year 2000, without significant increases in staffing and budgetary provision.

This statement might well be copied and added to every Milestone Statement document produced so far. In all honesty I cannot see either increased staffing or financial provision and of course one is directly related to the other and so, once again, I reach the conclusion as I did in my opening remarks that the Milestone target will not be achieved, not by a long way.

SOME OTHER THOUGHTS.....

Havannah Lane - the Challenge

Havannah! Now there's a name to be toyed with... one can almost smell the cigar smoke. Well I know that cigar smoke tends to linger but perhaps it is expecting a lot, for the cigar factory which gave it its name closed some 100 years ago.

I suppose there must be other Havannah Lanes in the country, but this one is just off the A536 Congleton to Macclesfield road in the Parish of Eaton, just on the border with Congleton and now sealed off at the Congleton end by a six foot high metal palisade fence complete with locked gate.

What a challenge to the Society, therefore. A route used by the public for years, not on the definitive map and its use now denied to the public because local people maintain the road is private and the County Council agrees. Can such a challenge be disregarded? I think not and so the search is on for evidence to prove either that the road is not private but public, or that the public have used the way for over 20 years pre 1954 'as of right'.

Search for the truth of the matter has meant painstaking research at the County Records Office, through our own archives and even the records office at Kew and I have to say that I am very much indebted to those who have taken part in the search so far, a search which in fact continues.

What do our members know of this lane? Let me give you some clues. It leaves the A536 at GR86546457, dips down through the delightful though now somewhat derelict valley of the Dane and emerges in Buglawton where there has been an official closure of a Congleton bridleway. We are looking for evidence, clues etc. For example, there is a 'Tollgate Cottage' just off the A536, but was the toll levied on what is now the main road or was it perhaps on Havannah Lane.

There are so many questions to be posed before I can be confident that we have all the answers from which we can finally decide the fate of Havannah Lane. Can you help in any way? Do you know of the lane, have you used it, have you any information which might help, do you know of any books which contain reference to it? I would welcome any information.

My thanks...

Once again I take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped me during the year, in particular and as always I include the footpath inspectors who do the work on the ground which enables me to keep the pressure on local authorities.

I would this year like to extend a very special thanks to Jeanne Grundy who has kindly taken over the task of taking, typing, preparing and posting the minutes of the Society's Council meetings. This has lightened my load considerably and has allowed me to concentrate more on other secretarial work. It has also meant that I now manage to get out to walk occasionally!!

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY

MRS EILEEN LEONARD

Looking back over the past year, it has produced some rather unusual successes for general small environmental pressure groups such as our own Peak & Northern Footpaths Society. The problem is that, for every successful footpath case won and helpful landowner, there are many devious and manipulative ones who will abuse and obstruct the legal walker trying to find the public footpath through an unbelievable maze of obstructions.

Recently the Society's footpath inspector for Blackburn sent me a press cutting from the *Bolton Evening News* informing its readers that National Wind Power is seriously considering a huge wind farm on Bolton's high moorland at Turton Heights. Bolton MBC has received a planning application for a measuring mast to be erected to record the wind speed and direction for one year.

Depending on the results is further development of the wind farm. Please watch this site with hawk like eyes. If the wind farm is built here it will be seen from the Cheshire Plain. Of course these big money businesses with their highly paid lawyers and barristers are very persistent with their demands for despoiling the countryside for decades to make a greedy, quick monetary fortune for a few shareholders, devastating the public footpath network and countryside for many.

Local councils and county councils may refuse an application for a development to take place, such as in the case of the Dumplington shopping complex. But this was allowed to be developed on appeal, even though local councils were against development. A very similar case is taking place on the Poynton/Hazel Grove border where the local and county councils have refused an application for open cast coal mining which will totally devastate the countryside and footpath network of the area. An appeal against the refusal has been made.

Of course, not all is gloom and doom as several high profile charities have had much publicity about access to their land. Whilst we must be grateful for publicity on access and the creation of new public footpaths, I feel that some of their publicity money could be spent on maintaining the public rights of way on their land.

THE SOCIETY'S SLIDE LECTURE

The Chairman or Secretary would be pleased to present the Society's slide lecture to any interested organisation.

Please contact either of them for further details

MATTERS FROM THE MINUTES

NB No meetings of Council were held in January or April

February

Smithy Bridge: canal towpath still obstructed although notice had expired. **Manchester Airport** runway objection put to inquiry. **Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan** was impressive. We attended Environment Agency Bill seminar promoted by Rivers Authority and CPRE. Our signpost in Marple Dale temporarily modified awaiting route classification

March

Signpost Officer (Ken Holt) appointed. **Marshall 1:** proposals not entirely acceptable. **M66 Northern by-pass:** five issues—appreciation of local inspectors work. **Mersey Basin Trust** meeting – inadequate access comment. **M6 Widening:** Congleton bridge loss – objection.

May

Snake path centenary plaque – replacement approved. **Thorpe Cloud** proposed footbridge removal, objection re-stated to PPPB & NT proposals. Comments on subscription increase – *comparatively we are still the lowest rated.*

June

Bolton Sports Village opposition. **Upper Derwent:** proposals acceptable, comment on lack of footpath on Ladybower Dam. We ask NT chairman, Lord Chorley, why oppose Mill Dale Lode Mill footpath? **Alderley Edge by-pass:** objections to rights of way affected.

July

Paths in Trafford: although ongoing since 1992 Ombudsman ruled no maladministration. **Sowerby Bridge 25 closure:** inspector ruled likely future use key issue. **Sawrey BR8:** DoE forces Lancs CC to make order; we object – evidence now needed.

September

Bury 105: damaged rail bridge, lax local authority now served with s56 order. Oldham RA require user evidence of path at Higher Acres Farm GR89200695 (contact 0161 652 7718). **Gawsworth 5:** canal bridge voluntarily repaired but Brit Waterways will not replace bearings – subject to s56 Order as is Sutton 37 bridge. Manchester City propose closure of **M56 underbridge** used by some 150 persons a day. We object and case adjourned *sine die*. Consideration to **Lottery** funding for our development.

Green Farm, Lyme Handley: applicant will not compromise, we object to new routes.

Bollinburn Valley–Macclesfield Canal: improvements promised by Cheshire CC, new bridge on Stockport section.

October

Dumplington Development: diversions must be definitive. **Stocksbridge Wind Farm** rejected. **Warrington Local Plan:** concern at non-representation.

November

Cheshire CC report BWB canal bridges to be repaired. **Winsford 'Loont' path:** closure refused at inquiry. **Lancashire:** illegal quarrying and path destruction opposed. **Salford FP8** long running cases referred to their official complaints procedure. Long running cases at **Rochdale**. **Hannah Lane, Congleton**, complicated issue being investigated. **Bredbury & Romiley 43:** s56 results in temporary repairs and adjournment *sine die*. **Hope 31** rationalisation temporarily withdrawn by applicant after objections. **Stockport, Bunkers Hill old road:** claimed by Society. Concern by Society over use of off-road vehicles.

December

Manchester: steps at Vauxhall Street: agreed oppose closure. Inquiry agrees add definitive path on **Walton Road to Bridgewater Canal** at Sale. Concern at **Woodland Trust** appeal proposal to purchase wood at Bollington in view of their past record at Broadbottom.

COURTS & INQUIRIES

ADRIAN LITTLETON

Proposed extinguishment of Sowerby Bridge path

At Halifax in April there was an inquiry into Calderdale MBC's Extinguishment Order of part of Sowerby Bridge 25: made on the grounds that a 165 metre section was not needed for public use. There is a ginnel nearby which enables the public to walk between the start and finish of the 165 metre section, albeit by a longer and steeper route.

At the inquiry I had resourceful support from Terry Norris, our local inspector. Terry had knocked on many doors to try to find people who would testify that they used the threatened path and would do so in future. He was unsuccessful, and the only evidence on this topic presented at the inquiry implied very little present and future use.

For this reason, the Inspector concluded that removal of the 165 metre section would not materially detract from the local paths network; therefore it should be extinguished.

M63 widening

Harry Hadfield took the M63 widening inquiry; where the Society objected to the proposed non-replacement of the footbridge carrying Sale 10b over the existing M 63. The outcome is awaited.

Ginnel in Chorlton on Medlock

In 1995, Manchester City Council aspired to close a ginnel near Skerry Close, Chorlton on Medlock, Manchester under an Estate Action redevelopment scheme in the (nebulous) interests of security; and to incorporate part of the ginnel into front gardens. Your Society, in collaboration with the Manchester Pedestrians' Association and the Open Spaces Society, defeated the Council's application in Manchester City Magistrates' Court.

Winsford Path saved after Inquiry

On 10 October 1995, I represented the society at a public inquiry in Winsford into the proposed extinguishment of an urban path between Swanlow Lane and The Loont, Winsford. The Mid Cheshire Society, represented by Ernie Vickers, also objected.

The Extinguishment Order had been made by Vale Royal District Council after strong pressure to do so from local residents, although the Council's survey showed that fairly large numbers of people used it. On the occasions when I inspected the path it was very peaceful. According to the local residents who gave evidence at the inquiry, at certain times of day/night the path is populated by skateboarders, motor cyclists, excreting dogs, urinating and sometimes copulating humans, breakers of domestic windows, bottle throwers, rubbish depositors, fence vandalisers and gangs of obscenity screaming teenagers.

Despite this evidence, the Inspector considered that the inconvenience which users of the path would suffer if it was closed required that it remain open.

SIGNPOST REPORT

KEN HOLT

In presenting this, my first annual report, I must firstly thank all of those people who have helped in the preparatory work, particularly Fred Ogden for site enquiries and associated work, Cliff Wilding for repairs and advice given.

Thanks also to Society members; Peak Park Planning Board rangers, National Trust rangers, water companies' rangers, Cheshire and Derbyshire County Council rangers; Buxton and other rambling club members for their help in erecting signposts, etc, sometimes under difficult conditions.

Thanks also to these same people for their observations and reports about the condition of signposts.

If anyone sees a signpost needing urgent attention, I would welcome being notified immediately.

Sadly I have to report on two known cases of vandalism discovered during the year -

SP 94 Thornhill (GR 197835)

Missing for about two years. Enquiries by Percy Hutchinson and myself proved negative and its whereabouts unknown.

SP 99 Stoke Ford (GR 211795)

A new crossplate '*Bridle Path to Bretton*' was fixed to the post on 12/7/95. Later found to have been removed before 29/10/95. Enquiries so far have proved negative.

A total of 53 signposts have been inspected and several of these earmarked for attention such as repainting, straightening, etc.

A complete list of the signposts erected by the Society can be had on request (please enclose stamped, self addressed envelope).

The schedules opposite demonstrate the impressive amount and variety of work carried out during the year.

Finally, might I add that donations to the Signpost Fund are always appreciated.

WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE YEAR -

No.	location	grid ref	donor	dedication
New signposts erected				
55	Rowarth	018894	G Deakin	M Deakin
227	Ollerton	779758		
244	Derwent Edge	198883	M Townley	H Townley
245	Higher Poynton	950824	H Axon	HJ Axon
246	Kishfield Bridge	994180	R Griffiths	AJ Gibbs
248	Upper Derwent	202880	P Robinson	A Dean
250	Bunsall Cob	025753	E Clements	V Clements
251	Gradbach Mill	994660	Nott'm HF Rambling Club	B & E Chamberlain
252	Tunstead Milton	033807	Eccles CHA	50th Anniversary
253	Longworth Moor	681170	M/c HF Rambling Club	80th Anniversary
254	Tunstead Milton	032808	W Wilson (landowner)	
255	Tunstead Milton	033807	W Wilson (landowner)	

Erected after repair, new post, repaint, etc.

50	Mickleden Edge	192986		
74	Ladybower	187884		
93	Hope	164843		
118	West End, Derwent	153928	M/c CHA Rambling Club	Coronation Eliz 2
142	Shuttlingsloe	975699		
152	Disley	984822	Miss A Hallows	
157	Kettleshulme	983794		HJ Widdecombe
160	Slippery Stones	170953		
192	Ilam	144508	Manchester RA	F Sale
198	Hollingworth	999975	Ashton HF CHA	M Doyle
243	Flash Bottom	015676	P & NFS	N Redford

Memorial Plaques repaired

80	Whaley Old Road	995822	M/c CHA Rambling Club	Anniversary
176	NNW Jenkin Chapel	980768	Altrincham Rambling Club	G Rockford

Signposts refurbished and repainted

8	Tunstead Milton	034800	
28	Tunstead Milton	034800	
38	Brough	182826	
92	Hope	163835	

TREASURER'S REPORT

KEITH WYKES

In general terms the Society has held its own and paid its way, insofar as a slight increase in total funds has been achieved.

However, complacency is not the order of the day as the modest decline in subscription income (1995 = -3.96%, 1994 = +7.7%) is worrying; especially so as the Society relies increasingly on its investment income. The pending subscription increase would appear to be both timely and necessary.

To mitigate against this decline in subscription income you may wish to consider making arrangements to pay subscriptions and/or donations by covenant and/or standing order drawn upon your bank; contact the Membership Secretary for further details.

Against this position, there is little to report in summary with the exception of my urging you to support the *Development Fund* as launched by the Honorary General Secretary; refer to separate '1996 Challenge Appeal' notice which requires all our support.

I acknowledge, with thanks, all donation supporters of the Society including those who forego their legitimate claim(s) for expenses. Your response to 1995's Signpost Fund appeal was remarkable.

Financial Statements

Your Trustees have elected, as permitted by the Charities Act, to provide a Statement of Assets and Liabilities (Balance Sheet) and a Receipts and Payments Account (Income & Expenditure) and the Society is exempted from the need for professional audit.

EXAMINER'S REPORT

I have had access to the books and documents concerning the Finances of the Society and consider that the Statement and Balance Sheet for the Year ending 31st December 1995, prepared by the Treasurer, presents a true and fair view of the Accounts as at that date.

signed: Ron McKnight

Hazel Grove

15th February 1996

all figures are £

FUNDS OF THE SOCIETY as at 31 December each year

name of fund	1994 b/fwd	+ income	± Transfers	- expenses	= 1995 c/fwd
Capital					
Development	0	161	+ 1000	- 110	1051
MIRR	0	12760	0	- 4722	8038
Revenue					
Defence	4086	51	0	0	4137
Signpost	1087	1278	0	- 1144	1221
Survey	399	0	- 399	0	-
General	67918	10667	- 1000 + 399	- 5326	72658
Memorial funds					
E Royce	55	0	0	0	55
H Wild	250	0	0	0	250
FSH Head	142	0	0	0	142
	73937	+ 24917	+ 0	- 11302	= 87552

- Funds of the Society should be regarded as 'earmarked' funds, to be used only for the specific purposes defined hereunder and as their titles suggest. They represent the maximum amounts against which the assets of the Society may be expended and in total are, therefore, the remainder of total assets less liabilities.
- The **Development Fund** is established for the purposes of acquiring replacement premises to house and equip the COSA/Archives Unit including upgrading present equipment where necessary. It was inaugurated by the transfer of £1000 from General Funds to supplement an initial £50 donation already received. Expenditure of £110 has been incurred relating to survey fees.
- The **(MIRR) Matured Investment and Revaluation Reserve** has been established voluntarily to reflect SORP (Statements of Recommended Practice) provisions which state '*all investment accounts should be valued at market value*'. Its balance represents a revaluation of government stock from maturity value to market value plus government stock investment acquisitions and disposals and it is a capital reserve against which future movements and revaluations will be adjusted.

- The **Defence Fund** exists for the purpose of funding professional advice and meeting any expenses of legal actions etc as, when and if required.
- The **Signpost Fund** exists for the purpose of erecting and maintaining the Society's footpath signposts. Your response to 1995's Signpost Fund appeal resulted in a +12% increase in this fund whilst expenditure has been maintained. Signpost related stocks, being of minor value, have been charged to expenditure. An invoice for £94 relating to 1994 expenditure was not submitted until 1996 and has been accrued to these accounts.
- The **Survey Fund** was closed during the year as its original purpose, ie for the survey of original rights of way, has been fulfilled; the £399 fund balance on closure was transferred to General Funds.
- Apart from the net transfers referred to above, General Funds have benefited from the receipt of the 1995 surplus of £5341 (1994 = £5275).
- **Memorial funds** are not open for further donations; they are for use, when needed, to maintain the appropriate memorials.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE for the year ended 31 December 1995

all figures are £

INCOME	1995	1994	EXPENDITURE	1995	1994
Subscriptions					
Ordinary	573	858	Annual Report	955	1012
Joint	660	670	Postages	755	
Transfer from 10 year suspense	1 279	1 103	Telephones	394	1 149
Junior	3	5	Stationery		395
Affiliations	558	564	Photocopying		352
Total subscriptions	<u>3 073</u>	<u>3 200</u>	Office equipment		147
Donations - General	608	1400	Travel	793	803
Investment Income -			COSA Unit expenses:		
<i>Deposit accounts and terms:</i>			Room costs:		
Long term accounts	2 460	2 295	COSA Unit	551	437
Medium term accounts	1 211		Secretariat	359	340
Short term accounts	2 335	<u>2 592</u>	Meetings	165	1 075
Total investment income	<u>6 006</u>	<u>4 887</u>	Subscriptions + donations	107	94
Other income			Map purchases (net)	20	8
Affiliates Service charge	115	105	Insurance (work parties)	26	26
Badge sales	42	53	Sundries	79	501
Fees for annual report ads and other donations	571	566	Total expenditure	5 326	5 572
Grants received	—	352			
Sundry	252	284			
Total other income	<u>980</u>	<u>1 360</u>			
Total income for the year	10 667	10 847	Surplus for the year		
			transferred to General Funds	5 341	5 275
				10 667	10 847



DONATION FORM

From:

Name

Address

I/we wish to make the enclosed donation to the following fund -

Defence Development General Signpost

Please return with your donation to Keith Wykes, Honorary Treasurer,
30 Langdale Close, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 7YS

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT - NOTES

- **Income** is shown as it arises during the year.
- Whereas **ordinary subscription** income has declined drastically (by 33%), ten year Membership Suspense Income has risen by 16%.
- **Ten year subscriptions** are credited to the Income Account in 10 even portions, one portion for each year in which they are received; portions not so credited are included in the Balance Sheet 10 year Membership Suspense Account as a liability until exhausted.
- **Donations** have risen by 14%; however within this outturn the Signpost Fund donations have increased significantly whilst General Fund donations have more than halved -

	1994	1995	±%
	£	£	
<i>Income & Expenditure Account</i>			
Donations	1 400	608	-56
<i>Balance Sheet</i>			
Development	-	161	-
Defence	25	51	+104
Signpost	418	1 278	+205
Totals	1 843	2 098	+13.8

- **Affiliates Service Charges** are a nominal sum towards the costs of supplying Council minutes; note that income from this source is in a ratio of 1:5 to Affiliations Income
- As in previous years, Interest Receivable on the 1st January 1996 on the Leeds & Holbeck BS Charity Account is accrued to the 31st December 1995 year end in the interest of providing true, fair and accurate accounts.
- **Investment Income**, which is credited automatically to the Business High Interest Account has increased significantly despite declining interest rates generally.

- The Society is increasingly reliant upon Investment Income which is running at twice the rate of subscription income.

• Sundry Income comprises -	£
- Centenary book sales	173
- Annual dinner (net)	40
- Recovered expenses	19
- Lecture fees	20
	<hr/>
	252

- **Expenditure** is recorded as incurred.
- Most expense head expenditure is at a similar level to 1994 with the exception of room costs which has increased owing to the usual application of Rents RPI.
- This expenditure reflects nominal rentals incurred in respect of significant areas of property used exclusively by the Society and are payments to the General Secretary and to member of Council, Mrs L Meadowcroft; there is no profit element involved.
- These rents may well be significantly below market value and the Society benefits greatly from the recipients' generosity.
- **Map expenditure** is net of a £100 financing donation received from, and with grateful thanks to, the Trustees of the Thomas Lockerby Footpath Fund.

• Sundry Expenditure is -	£
- Publicity/advertising	9
- 3rd party claim	
motor vehicle accident	50
- Conference Fees	20
	<hr/>
	79

BALANCE SHEET as at 31 December 1995

all figures are £

	1995	1994
ASSETS		
Investments -		
Long Term		
Government Stock at market value	34017	22744
Medium Term		
Woolwich BS 3 year 8.5% Fixed Rate Bond (matures 31 December 1997)	10000	10000
Skipton BS Two year 8.1% Fixed Rate Bond (matures 29 December 1996)	5000	5000
	15000	15000
Short Term		
Royal Bank of Scotland: Current	OD (80)	840
Business High Interest	3076	2518
Leeds & Holbeck BS Charity Account	2115	20218
Cafcash Deposit Fund	25529	18845
Hampshire Trust 12 month Deposit Account	15100	-
Cash float (COSA Unit)	20	20
Postages float – Membership Secretary	56	42
	45816	42483
Badge stock on hand	207	-
	95040	80227
LIABILITIES		
Funds of the Society (page 25)	87552	73937
Ten year membership suspense	7463	6272
Deferred income	-	6
Advance Subscriptions 1996/97	25	12
	95040	80227

BALANCE SHEET - NOTES

- As the Society holds increasing and substantial assets, the time has now come to reclassify investments according to the following criteria -

Long Term: > 5 years

Medium Term: > 1 year and \leq 5 years

Short term: \leq 1 year

- Government Stock**, which is held until maturity, is generally shown at market value (1994 = maturity value); refer to Funds note - *Matured Investment & Revaluation Reserve* (MIRR) - for additional information concerning this policy change.

- Government Stock** investment values -

	1995	1994
	£	£
Purchase cost	29 443	26 931
Maturity value	28 728	24 705
Market value	33 526	28 380

- Government stock is listed on the Stock Exchange with the exception of a 1991 stock delisted due to the small amount in issue; this stock remains payable in 2000/03 and has been included in the accounts at its maturity value as previously; as its market value is unknown it is excluded from the table above.
- The Society has received notice that the **Woolwich Building Society** proposes to convert to Plc status; should the conversion crystallise, then this Society may expect to benefit from a windfall substantial free issue of shares in the Plc circa 1997.
- The overdrawn position on the Royal Bank of Scotland Current Account is of a technical nature; it arises from the 1996 submission of expenditure claims and the consequent predating (to 31 December 1995) of the payment cheques; otherwise the actual balance would have been, and in fact was, £170.73 debit.

- A Hampshire Trust 12 month Notice Deposit Account was opened in November at variable rates of interest; at 31 December it attracted a 7.4% gross rate.

- The **Postage Float** reflects the cash and stamp values remaining from floats issued during the year; it does not take account of two unused cheques, drawn blank as to amount, payable to 'P.O. Counters Ltd' and marked 'Not to exceed £30'; they were held by the Chairman at the year end.

- The **Badge Stock Account** is established for the first time this year and represents the present estimated value of 253 badges held by officers at the year end

- The **Ten Year Membership Suspense A/c** comprises those amounts not taken to the Income Account as the income is deferred until the year in which it is due; this balance has further increased (1995 = £7463, 1994 = £6 272) reflecting the increasing incidence of ten year membership now accruing.

- 1994 **Deferred Income** (£6) is confirmed as 'not ours'.

- Advance Subscriptions** of £25 includes an element of 1996/97 subscriptions proffered at 1995/96 rates; the Membership Secretary will be contacting such prospective members to appraise them of their shortfall.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

ERNIE SUTTON

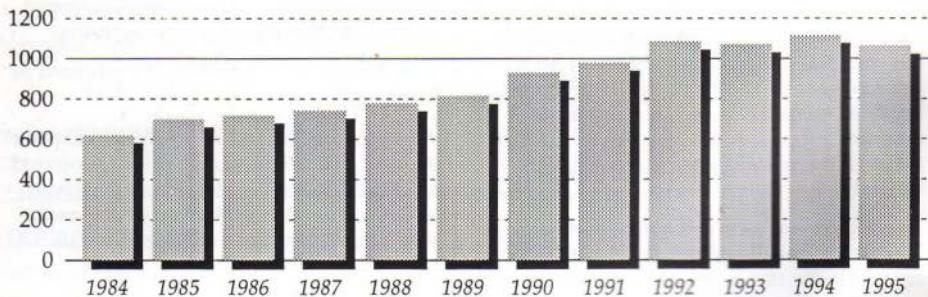
The membership year terminates at the annual general meeting, but for statistical purposes membership figures are shown as at 31 December

It is with regret that I have to report a decrease in our membership. This is due largely to 72 annual members, single and joint, having resigned or failed to renew their membership. Many had been members for only a short period, some only 12 months. A more pleasing factor is the increase in 10 year members, from 580 to 612, due mainly to members changing from annual membership.

We have lost one of our honorary life members and one junior. Our affiliated societies again show a slight decrease.

Once again, as in previous years, many individual members and affiliated societies have been generous with their donations to our various funds.

	1994	1995
Annual	516	429
10 year	580	612
Honorary Life	14	13
Juniors	3	2
Total membership	1113	1056
Affiliated societies	98	94



AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS

1 Alderley Edge, Wilmslow & District Footpaths Society	35 Good Companions Rambling Club, Sheffield	66 Poynton Rambling Club
2 Altrincham & District Rambling Club	36 Greenfield & Grasscroft Residents Association	67 Ramblers' Association: Bolton Group
3 Barlborough Parish Council	37 Hallhill/Springbank Neighbourhood Association	68 Ramblers' Association: Congleton Group
4 Barnsley Mountaineering Club	38 Hanliensian Rambling Club	69 Ramblers' Association: Derbyshire Area
5 Blackbrook Conservation Society	39 Hazel Grove District Scout Council	70 Ramblers' Association: East Cheshire Area
6 Brookfield Ramblers	40 HF – Bolton Group	71 Ramblers' Association: Manchester Area
7 Buxton Field Club	41 HF – Bury Group	72 Ramblers' Association: New Mills Group
8 Buxton Rambling Club	42 HF – Manchester Group	73 Ramblers' Association: North & Mid Cheshire Area
9 CAE	43 HF – Nottingham Group	74 Ramblers' Association: Oldham Group
10 CHA – Bolton	44 HF – Warrington	75 Ramblers' Association: Sheffield Group
11 CHA – Bury & District	45 ITT Rambling Club	76 Ramblers' Association: SYNED Area
12 CHA – Eccles	46 Knutsford Civic Society	77 RSPB – High Peak Group
13 CHA – Leigh & District	47 Leek Footpath Rambling Club	78 Rucksack Club
14 CHA – Manchester Rambling Club	48 Littleborough Civic Trust	79 Sheffield Clarion Ramblers
15 CHA – Mansfield	49 Longdendale & Glossop Footpath Preservation Society	80 Sheffield Co-op Party Rambling Club
16 CHA – Nottingham Rambling Club	50 Longdendale Amenity Society	81 Shirland & Higham Parish Council
17 CHA – Oldham & District Rambling Club	51 Macclesfield Rambling Club	82 St Catherine's Rambling Club
18 CHA – Rochdale	52 Macclesfield & District Field Club	83 Stockport & District Federation of TWG's
19 CHA – Sheffield: Section B	53 Manchester & District Retired Teachers Ass'n	84 Stockport East Area Bridleways Association
20 CHA – Sheffield A Section Rambling Club	54 Manchester Associates Rambling Club	85 Stockport Field Club
21 CHA – Stockport	55 Manchester Fellowship Rambling Club Independent	86 Stockport WEA Social & Rambling Club
22 CHA/HF – Ashton-under-Lyne	56 Manchester Field Club	87 Sutton in Ashfield Rambling Club
23 Cheadle Hulme & Bramhall Natural History Society	57 Manchester Rambling Club	88 Toc H
24 Cheshire County Scout Council	58 Marple & District Rambling Club	89 Towpath Action Group
25 Cheshire Tally Ho	59 Marple Community Council	90 West Lancashire Footpath Group
26 Christian Endeavour Holiday Homes: Manchester Section	60 Marple Naturalists	91 Wickersley Evening Townswomens' Guild
27 Crescent Ramblers	61 Mellor Society	92 YHA – Central Region
28 Derby Nomad Ramblers	62 Mid Cheshire Footpath Society	93 YHA – Stockport
29 Derbyshire Footpaths Preservation Society	63 North Western Naturalists Union	94 Zeneca Social Centre Hiking & Rambling Society
30 Derbyshire Pennine Club	64 Nottingham Wayfarers Rambling Club	
31 Elmton with Creswell Parish Council	65 Pennine Paths Protection Society	
32 Eyam Village Society		
33 Forest of Rossendale Bridleways Association		
34 Geriatrics Group		

AN ODE TO THE SOCIETY

ANON

*Y*ou can take a path through the woodlands, and follow it over the hill;
Continue along through the valley and go wherever you will;
The path gives you freedom to wander, to breathe in the sweet scented air;
But now, would you guess, the P.N.F.S. makes sure that path remains there?

Remember that fellow so powerful, a man of very great wealth?
He said he would build him a mansion, and he tried to do it by stealth;
He tried to stop up a pathway, so we could use it no more;
But for all his might, we soon put him right, our path went through his front door.

There was another, I'll tell you, who did something similar, to boot;
He tried to alter the pathway, so it went by an unpleasant route;
But we took aversion to such a diversion, and home truths we soon let him know;
Don't try to gamble with people who ramble. We use the same path as before.

A farmer, I know, ploughed his field and so, he hid a legitimate path;
He shouted out loud *That field has been ploughed*, in such a terrible wrath;
We continued on, where we previously had gone, and told him we didn't give a hoot;
We do nothing in hiding we're all law abiding that path is a definitive route.

Of course there are others who treat us like brothers, and welcome us with great smiles;
They maintain the palings, repair all the railings and service the gates and the stiles;
But sadly to say, one can walk many a day and not find such people as these;
So in any direction we need the protection to walk legitimate paths as we please.

There are owners of quarries, of horses, or lorries, who would fence off or, divert
our track;
And some so dire as to string up barbed wire on stiles, to make us turn back
So, the task of detecting, of firmly protecting our rights to walk through the heather;
Can only be done if we speak as one, and providing we all stick together.

We're free from all fetters when we send out letters to protest against any possession;
And, as a Society, accept no impropriety nor yield to any transgression;
We check any routes traversed by boots, and put signposts in woodland and moor;
The P.N.F.S. will guide you, no less, in places you've ne'er been before.

The members of COSA*, who toil on, 'sub rosa', protecting the paths that we tread;
Will send out objections, outright rejections or better suggestions instead;
And now dear member just listen, the purpose of this struggling rhyme;
Has merely been done to remind you to send your subscriptions on time.

*COSA - Consultations, Orders, Signs and Archives