

THE PEAK DISTRICT AND NORTHERN COUNTIES
FOOTPATHS
PRESERVATION SOCIETY.

REPORT

OF THE

COUNCIL.

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1910.

PRINTED BY
WILLIAMSON & CO. LTD. 10, ABINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.

**THE PEAK DISTRICT AND NORTHERN COUNTIES
FOOTPATHS PRESERVATION SOCIETY,**

1910.

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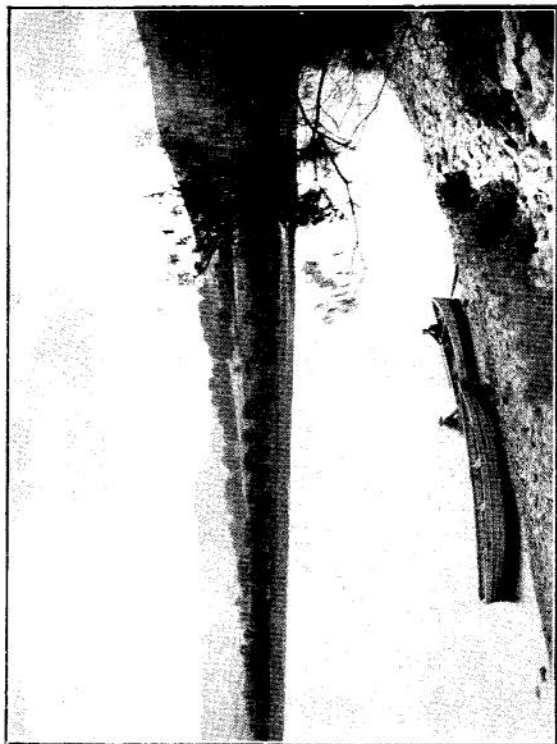
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Inspector of Footpaths :

THOMAS MOWER, Torr Street, New Mills.

REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31ST, 1910.

The Council herewith present the Annual Report of the Society for the year 1910.

This year has seen a large increase in the work of the Society and a fairly large access of new members. Perhaps the most satisfactory part about the new members is that the Society is receiving affiliation fees from various pedestrian and other Societies. They are particularly pleased to have now affiliated to them the Manchester Rambling Club (and for the current year the Rucksack Club), and trust that the example set by these Clubs will be followed by all walking clubs in the neighbourhood. It has often been a matter for reflection that a Society existing solely in the interests of pedestrians should not have the support of all clubs and bodies formed for this pastime. They hope in the future to have behind them the united support of all ramblers, whether individuals or clubs; the strength which would thus be given to the Society would be most valuable in its work.

The Society always does a good deal of unobtrusive work in dealing with questions and giving advice to all enquirers, whether members or not. At the last Annual Meeting it was suggested that the Report should contain a complete statement of all the work done by the Society. This has not been found practicable, not only because of the volume, but also because some of the matters dealt with by the Society are submitted to them in confidence, and it would not be desirable to give the details of these in the Report. A few of the principal matters dealt with are mentioned next.

BAKEWELL RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

In the last Report the Council had occasion to comment on the attitude of the Bakewell Rural District Council with regard to their opposition to the placing of the Society's Footpath Plates on the road sides under their control. The Society take this opportunity of expressing their pleasure that satisfactory arrangements have been made with this Council, whose district comprises a very large tract of the Society's operations, for effectuating this important branch of their work. Four posts will shortly be erected, and others as occasion should require. It is most satisfactory to the Society to have established satisfactory relations with this body, and they take this opportunity of testifying to the promptness with which the latter took the matter up.

DOCTOR'S GATE.

This long-standing dispute has occupied the attention of the Council continuously during the past year. A formal inspection of the path was made by them in July, and subsequently, at the request of the owner, an interview took place at Glossop Hall. The Council regret, however, to have to report that the owner has declined to recognise the rights of the public to traverse this road. The Council have the matter under their very serious consideration.

STRINES TO MARPLE FOOTPATH.

An obstruction to this path, which has long been thought to be a public one, has taken place. There has been correspondence with the landowner and his agent, but no satisfactory conclusion has yet been arrived at.

LATHKIL DALE.

The Council received an intimation, which was also largely made known in the Press, that the owner had made a demand for a penny toll on all who passed along this path on Easter Monday. The owner was communicated with, and his contention is that although the public have never been excluded from the dale, yet the owner has never dedicated the path to them. Apparently the right to a toll is only claimed on one day in the year. The Council have hardly sufficient information to enable them to do anything further.

WILLIAMS' CLOUGH.

Very extensive operations have been required to make good the damage done by frosts and winter rains. The great numbers who use this path in the summer completely justify the efforts of the Society to secure the walk for the public, and it is hoped that an increasing number of these will come to realise that but for the action of the Society they would not have had this walk.

PICKMERE.

Last summer the Council, though having no interest in it, had cognisance of a prosecution for removing obstructions in this neighbourhood. As a result the Society received an offer from the agent of one of the owners of an interview in order to ascertain exactly what the rights of the public were on that particular estate, and an invitation to confer on any points of difficulty. Although so far the interview has not yet taken place, the Council welcome the offer as shewing a distinct change in the attitude of mind of landowners towards the Society. Needless to say, in case of difficulty the offer would be willingly made use of.

MAPS.

In accordance with a resolution passed some years ago that the Ordnance maps in the possession of the Society should be placed where the public could see them, the Council are glad to be able to state that owing to the courtesy of the Manager of *The Manchester City News* this has now become possible, and 14 maps, mostly on the 6-inch scale, are now on view in their new premises in Strutt Street, Manchester.

CITY OF MANCHESTER.

The Council are glad to report that the Manchester Corporation has prepared for public use a record of all the public footpaths within its boundaries. This is accessible for inspection by anyone at the Town Hall. It is to be hoped that the example set by our own city may be followed by a similar action on the part of all local authorities. It cannot be too often emphasized that the local authority is the custodian of the rights of the public. If this were more widely known the work of the Society would be greatly strengthened.

KIRKHAM.

The Society were consulted, and gave advice, on a footpath which had been improperly obstructed, but no information as to the result has reached them.

KESWICK.

A deputation from the Society inspected shooting obstructions at Derwentwater. They reported to the Society that in their opinion the public rights were interfered with, and the matter is now under consideration.

The preservation of game is still thought more important in all parts of the country than public rights, and until the public, more especially local inhabitants, bestir themselves, they will in time be deprived of access to familiar spots.

The above matters are some of the more important that have been dealt with during the year. For the rest, the Society has, and is always, willing to render any service. Perhaps in the future its work may become more educational; at present the more popular conception of the Society is its combative moods.

With, however, a better and more widely-known knowledge of the rights and obligations of the public, and the remedies given to any body of inhabitants, it is thought that more and more pressure could be applied to local governing bodies to carry out the duties entrusted to them by the State. This the Society feels to be of the utmost importance, and to this end its advice is always given. There are signs of more being done in this direction, and any help, advice, or encouragement that is required, the Society will gladly and freely give.

RIGHTS OF WAY BILL.

Your Council feel that they must draw the attention of the members to Lord Eversley's Bill intituled as above. This Bill proposes to clear up conflicting judicial methods of deciding on the public dedication of a foot-path by substituting as a test 40 years' user, and so assimilating the law of public right to the law of private easement. This Bill has three times obtained a second reading in the House of Commons, and on the last occasion passed the Grand Committee, but from lack of time

