

Extract from lecture:

Introduction to National Trails
Part 1: their origins in the UK

Dave McGlade

Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail Officer

6th September 2015

Origins in UK: Report of National Parks Committee 1931 (Addison report)

In discussing the South Downs:

“There would be provided a 70 mile walk along a green ridgeway, through typical English country, with convenient halts and camping sites at regular intervals”

(Is this the first documented proposal for a long-distance route in UK?)

WANTED—A Long Green Trail

WHEN two American girls wrote asking advice about a tramping holiday in England, I wondered what they would think of our island, particularly of the restrictions placed in the way of those who wished to see some of our most captivating scenery.

If, at the end of their tour, these visitors from across the Atlantic are over-loud in their praises of their native "Land of Liberty," who shall blame them?

They mention their acquaintance with the Appalachian Trail, a footpath that runs for 2,000 miles through the Eastern States from Maine to Georgia, established by tramping, mountaineering and other open-air organisations, and generously aided by the Government and State authorities.

★ ★ ★

NOW this path has been eclipsed by the John Muir Trail which reaches from the Canadian border through Washington, Oregon and California to Mexico. For 2,500 miles without any slogging on hard roads, one may follow this track over lofty peaks, by deep-cleft canyons and through great National Parks and reserves saved for all time from spoliation by unplanned and irresponsible building.

After allowing for difference in geographical scale, what can we in England offer to compare with these enterprises?

Many have been closed, but new ones are unknown.

What will our visitors think of one of the most prevalent features in our landscape — "Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted"?

WHEREVER they go, from Kent to Cornwall, from Sussex to the Solway, they will see these wooden liars; on the edge of many a tempting wood they will be confronted with the blatant warning. By the banks of luring rivers, on bare downlands and shaggy moors they will read "Strictly Private."

They will discover that though walking is a most popular pastime with thousands of devotees, yet neither nationally nor locally has there been any serious effort to meet the needs of the growing army of young folk attracted to the healthiest form of recreation.

True enough we are still blessed with many a mile of alluring paths and downland and mountain tracks, but these form but a small fraction of our original heritage, for a century ago probably no country in the world had such a wealth of pedestrian ways. For four centuries the Romans were busy driving their straight roads across the country. Some of these are the foundations of our modern roads, some linger as grass-grown tracks, others have vanished beneath cultivation or the spread of towns. Medieval pilgrims and traders have left their imprint. Drovers, pack-horses, shepherds, landworkers and miners have left their complement to the criss-cross pattern, once well etched in the face of the land, but now often obliterated or only faintly visible.

Many of these ancient ways fell into oblivion, and many more have been deliberately closed to the public, sometimes after expensive litigation and often enough, for the lack of a village Hampden, without legal sanction. Others have only been retained by bitter

and costly struggles and though the Rights of Way Act has simplified the procedure, it is still necessary to be ever on the watch to prevent further encroachments.

Nowhere in Britain are the restrictions so rigid, and paths so few as in the Peak District of Derbyshire.

★ ★ ★

NO wonder the Manchester and Sheffield Ramblers continue to press for the passing of the Access to Mountains Bill, a measure which would provide that "No owner or occupier of uncultivated mountain or moorland shall be able to exclude any person from walking or being on such land for recreation, or study or to be walking or being."

Anyone doubt of a demand for such a thing? In Derbyshire Early in the morning host of trampers: dale from all s afternoon he will marching through limestone ruts, where 10, collect to reiterate demand for the fr

Without sacrifice why should we thing akin to Trail—a Pennine Peak to the Ch

This need be but a meandering needs be to include long range of concrete or asphalt which the feet

Trail

BY TOM STEPHENSON

portals of Gordale, and then over Fountains Fell and the dome of Penyghent they would strike the packhorse trail into Wensleydale.

The magic dell of Hardraw, with its plunging beck, would be visited en route for the far recesses of Upper Swaledale. From Keld they would turn to Tan Hill with its little whitewashed inn on a wind-swept moor with the authority of the Ordnance Survey to refute the claims of would-be rivals as the highest licensed house in England.

★ ★ ★

ON across "Stainmoor's shapeless swell," between Tees and Eden, the way would wind through bewitching desolation by barren haunts of plover and curlew, over seemingly endless moors to the crest of Cross Fell, the Pennines' topmost height.



Green dream: High Cup Nick (top) and 'founder' Tom Stephenson

Origins in UK: Report of the Committee on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas 1942 (Scott report)

“The principle that the countryside is the heritage of all involves the corollary that there must be facility of access for all”

“The recognition of such schemes for main hikers’ highways as the proposed Pennine Way”

“The re-opening of the old coastguard path as a right of way for walkers round the whole coastline of England and Wales”

Origins in UK: National Parks in England and Wales (Dower report, 1945)

“A first main installment of decisions (which should include schemes for the Pennine Way and other long-distance walking routes referred to in the Scott report) should be reached and put into execution as soon as possible”. (p38)

Origins in UK: Report of the National Parks Committee 1947 (Hobhouse)

“We also attach importance to the provision of long distance paths and bridleways in and between National Parks and Conservation Areas. There should be continuous routes which will enable walkers and riders to travel the length and breadth of the Parks, moving as little as possible on the motor roads.

The most widely advocated perhaps is the Pennine Way. Other attractive routes are the Ridgeway...the Pilgrim's Way...the South Downs path...the Offa's Dyke Path...and the Roman Wall Track from Newcastle to the Solway”. (p67)

Origins in UK: 1949 NPACA – Sections 51 - 55

‘Long Distance Routes’

“Where it appears to the Commission as respect any part of England or Wales that the public should be enabled to make extensive journeys on foot or horseback being a route for which the whole or greater part does not pass along roads used mainly by vehicles the Commission may prepare and submit to the Minister a report under this section”

Trail	Report approved	Opened
Pennine Way	1951	1965
Cleveland Way	1965	1969
Pembrokeshire Coast Path	1953	1970
Offa's Dyke Path	1955	1971
South Downs Way	1963	1972
South West Coast Path	1952 - 1963	1973 - 1978
Ridgeway	1972	1973
North Downs Way	1969	1978
Wolds Way	1977	1982
Peddars Way & Norfolk Coast Path	1982	1986
Thames Path	1989	1996
Hadrian's Wall Path	1994	2003
Glyndŵr's Way	2000	2002
Cotswold Way	1998	2007



Report OF THE NATIONAL PARK COMMITTEE

LIBRARY
COUNTY COMMISSION
JAN 10 1968
CLERK OF COURT
CLERK OF COURT

*Presented to Parliament by the Financial Secretary
to the Treasury by Command of His Majesty.
April, 1931.*

LONDON:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.
To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses:
Adastal House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2; 120, George Street, Edinburgh;
York Street, Manchester; 1, St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff;
15, Donegal Square West, Belfast;
or through any Bookseller.

Cmd. 3851.

Price 2s. 6d. net.

4

HMSO 1931
Cmd 3851



MINISTRY OF WORKS AND PLANNING

REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON LAND
UTILISATION IN RURAL
AREAS

*Presented by the Minister of Works and Planning
to Parliament by Command of His Majesty
August, 1942*

PUBLISHED BY HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

To be purchased from

York House, Kingway, LONDON, W.C.2 429 Oxford Street, LONDON, W.1
P.O. Box 569, LONDON, S.E.1
15a Castle Street, BIRMINGHAM, 2 1 St. Andrew's Crescent, CARDIFF
39 King Street, MANCHESTER, 2 Tower Lane, BRISTOL, 1
2 Edmund Street, BIRMINGHAM, 3 80 Chichester Street, BELFAST
or from any Bookeller

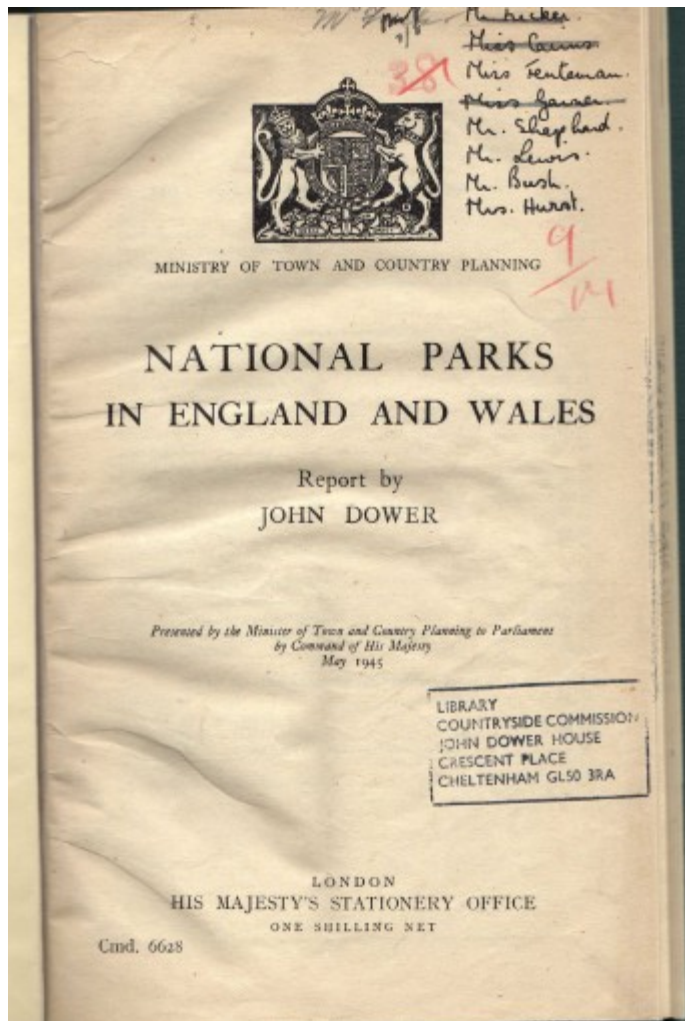
1942

(Reprinted 1912)

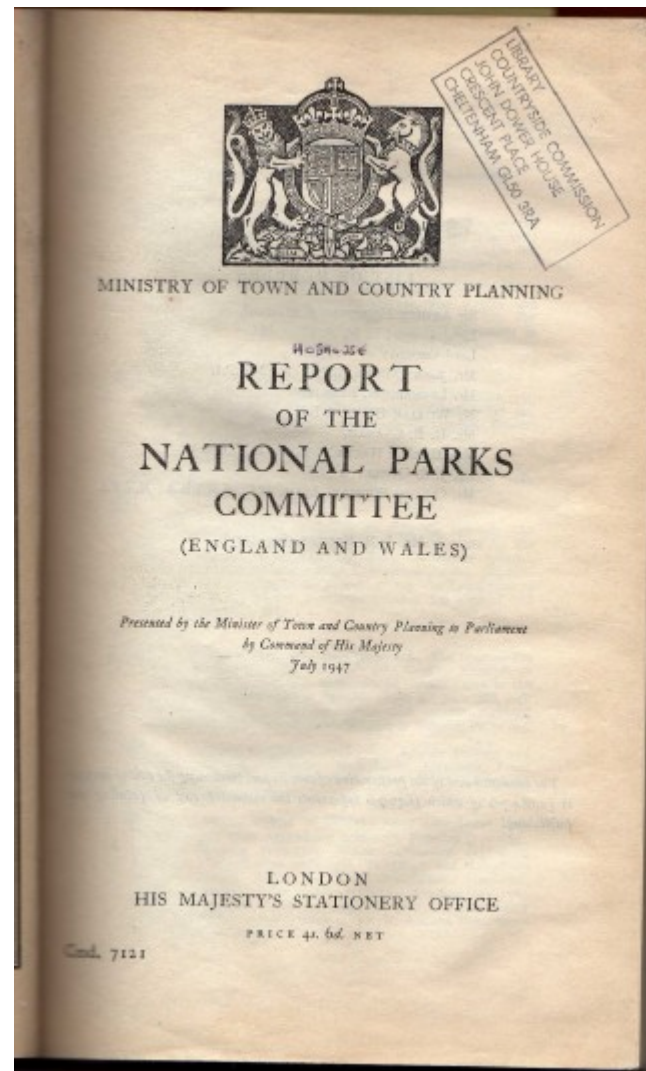
Price 4s. 6d. net.

Cmd. 6378

HMSO 1942
Cmd 6378



HMSO 1945
Cmd 6628



HMSO 1947
Cmd 7121