

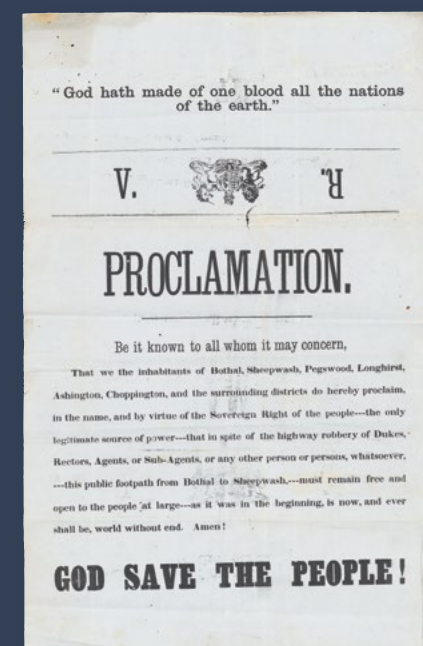
Access to the countryside

Growing interest in public rights of way and access to the countryside coincided with enclosure of common land, changing land use and anti-industrial sentiment.

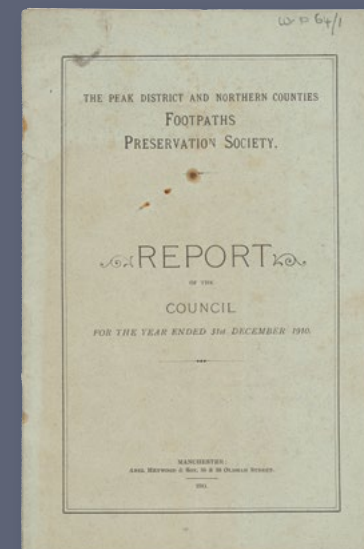
The nineteenth century witnessed the growth of the outdoor movement with many preservation societies and rambling clubs founded. The Peak District and Northern Counties Footpath Preservation Society was founded in 1894. Their Annual Report for 1910 noted 'a large increase in the work of the Society' and their affiliation with walking and rambling clubs. The various organisations founded at this time, to maintain and defend public rights of way, were the roots of the modern environmental movement.

Footpath closures provoked strong emotions. The Bothal Estate in Northumberland belonged to the Duke of Portland and was the site of outrage due to the diversion of a footpath near Bothal Castle in the 1870s. Local people responded by breaking down barriers and issuing a proclamation demanding the footpath 'remain free and open to the people at large'.

Conflicts between people demanding greater access to the countryside and landowners had intensified by the early twentieth century. Access remains contentious, with concerns about lost rights of way and the extent to which some people have greater access than others to the countryside.



Proclamation in the Bothal Trespass cases, 1874-1876. University of Nottingham, Portland (London) Collection, Pl E11/9/5/12/16 1876.



From top: Report of the Council of the Peak District and Northern Counties Preservation Society, 1911. University of Nottingham, Papers of Edward M. Wrench, Wt P 64/1

Photograph of bridle path in Thrumpton, Nottinghamshire, 1930. University of Nottingham, Manuscript Collections, MS 607/4/16

Plan used as briefing/evidence in the Bothal Trespass cases, 1874-1876. University of Nottingham, Portland (London) Collection, Pl E11/9/5/13/4



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