



Open Access – 10 Years On

A celebration of open access in the Peak District National Park

Friday 19th September 2014



The Peak District National Park has a legacy of access which continues today through its role to promote access.

In 2004 the public's rights to wander freely were extended to more than a third of the area of the National Park. On this 10th anniversary of the introduction of open access, an event was held at the Moorland Discovery Centre at Longshaw.

Access champions met to tell us about what access to open country means to them. Details of the speakers and their speeches are set out in the following pages.

The National Park's Access Fund (www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/accessfund) was also launched to seek contributions for future access improvements.

By working together the importance and benefits of access and the opportunities to improve access for all can be achieved.

Our challenge is to engage everyone in understanding, enjoying and appreciating these rights and to take these forward for the next 10 years and beyond.



With thanks to past, present and future access champions

www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/crow

Andy Cave

Andy is a passionate exponent of the importance of access to our wilder areas since being inspired by climbing on the gritstone edges of the Peak District. From his early days as a miner, Andy has ventured further and higher to become one of Britain's best climbers.



Andy told us about how being inspired by the moors has led to a lifetime in the mountains.

“2 weeks ago my wife, our 6 year old daughter and I walked up Crowden Clough on to Kinder. It was a stunning day. We didn't stick to the path but scrambled up the back of river-bed. One section of it is pretty steep, and you have to use your hands. It was the first time up there for the little one, which made it extra special. You can't help but think when you are up there, all the heather turned purple, how lucky we are to have this lot on our doorstep.

But of course open access among these wild places should never be taken for granted. It is the culmination of a lot of hard work, over many, many years.

My love affair with climbing started right here, for the princely sum of 2 pence we'd get the bus from Sheffield to the Foxhouse, the very edge of the

Republic of South Yorkshire and step into Derbyshire. We spent long days doing battle with the classic gritstone test pieces, on Burbage, Froggat, Stanage, Higgat Tor and Millstone. Bamford Edge was always more difficult as we had to phone the landowner to seek permission, no mobile phones, we had little money and the bloke was never in anyhow – things are different now, just one example of how CRoW has changed all that and it's great to be here today celebrating Open Access 10 years on.

I started climbing and walking through the Barnsley Mountaineering Club - some of the older members had been involved in fighting for the rights of walkers. The club was actively engaged in the consultancy process leading to the formation of the Peak District National Park putting forward the views of climbers, fell walkers and mountaineers. When the Park was formed in 1951, the first in Britain, our members took part in the voluntary wardening, as laid down in the Act. Wood Cottage, a club hut on the snake pass, was used as the base for wardens on Bleaklow.

Climbing here in the 1980s gave me a brilliant foundation in technique to go on and tackle bigger challenges, in the Alps, Patagonia, Alaska and the Himalayas. But wherever I wandered, I always loved getting back to the Peak. We are lucky to live in the Park now and I've certainly no plans to leave!

It is easy to take this magnificent landscape for granted. Sometimes it takes visitors to remind me how: Dutch climbers come for the weekend; Norwegian friends are planning on renting a house for a month here to climb; some of the hardest rock climbs in the world are here in the Peak District.

And many young people choose to study in Sheffield so that they are close to these cliffs and wild places. People often joke, that you come to University in Sheffield to climb and if you end up getting a degree that's a bonus!

Over the years I've encountered many issues over access to the high mountains – in the Himalayas of course you have to seek and pay for a permit, pay an official to travel with you, In China we had a man follow us around everywhere we went, to make sure we weren't spies I guess. Some areas once popular with climbers and trekkers are now war-torn areas and off limits. We should never take anything for granted.

Climbers are good at sorting out ethical issues on the crag, the style of how we should climb, debating the grades of routes. When it comes to access however we need help and the work of many organisations, especially the BMC have done brilliant work to secure access to many cliffs over the years.

Of course a lot of people visit here – 16 million people live within 1 hour - and it's vital that we take care of the Peak District National park – for me that means leaving it as wild as we can possibly allow.”

Terry Howard

Terry has been an access campaigner from a young age. He believes that people should have the right to responsibly enjoy their countryside heritage. Moorlands have inspired his lifelong interest and involvement.

Terry told us about his love of moorlands, what campaigning for access has given us, and the opportunities to continue to build on the legislation with further increases in access.



“My presentation represents a personal journey through “Access and the Right to Roam”, over what I consider, “our” moorland heritage using experiences as markers along the way.

As a child my father took myself and brother to explore a local moor. There was a mound in the distance with something on the top of it which caught our interest. Knowing it was a ‘private’ moor we gingerly climbed over the wall and crept along over the moor so as not to be seen by the gamekeeper. As we got close to it and looked up it was a sign that said ‘Keep Out’. Perhaps on this excursion it was where I first developed a feeling of injustice of not being able to walk freely on the moors.

On many occasions we set out from Parson Cross where we lived to walk to Margery Hill on the moors above Broomhead, which shared my mother's name. We never quite managed it, it was always a step too far for us youngsters.

As a member of the Woodcraft Folk we were out rambling, camping and hostelling every weekend throughout the year. I was always captivated by the tales of the mass trespasses on Kinder Scout, Abbey Brook, Stanage and Big moor of the 1930s. They gave a sense of inspiration and challenge to us youngsters.

Kinder Scout was the 'iconic' mountain and ultimate challenge to us. There were stories of people being lost and dying up there in atrocious weather conditions. There were bogs to fall in, rapid changes in weather conditions to be aware of and nowhere to shelter. So it was with some trepidation when we set out for Kinder on our first visit there. We walked up Grindsbrook then took a stream leading onto the top. We scrambled and climbed up the water falls with water running up our sleeves and getting fairly wet. We eventually reached the top and felt immensely elated and exhilarated on 'conquering' Kinder, and our fears. It was clear and you could see for miles over the plateau. We were on top of the world.

On being on Bleaklow for the first time I wondered where I was, it was barren, featureless with bog after bog. As I walked I didn't seem to be getting anywhere in the black morass, was I on some alien planet? I got to love its wilderness and isolation.

As youths my brother and I set out for Margery Hill intending to reach it this time. Leaving Ewden Valley behind we walked along the Dukes Road in worsening weather conditions. Rain turned to snow and by the time we reached Flint Hill it was snowing heavy. Not to be deterred I made a compass bearing for Margery Hill which meant crossing the wide expanse of Broomhead Moor. We set off. The snow deepened to a metre in places. We slipped, tripped, fell in to peat groughs but eventually reached Margery Hill. We had arrived at last. The snow had turned into an icy blizzard with all the rocks covered in thick ice. We needed to rapidly descend into the Derwent Valley, we did, but within a very short distance we had left the blizzard behind and we were pleasantly walking through heather and grass.

I was walking over Broomhead Moor, exploring its many fascinating features, I looked down and in front of me between two stones was a flint arrowhead, my first Stone Age arrowhead find. As I picked it up all sorts of thoughts came into my head, I was the first person to have touched this in perhaps four thousand years after whoever lost it. It was sort of communication between us two hunters. What was that person like, what language did they speak, what did they say on realising they had shot and lost this arrow? Perhaps they said something like 'It's taken me two days to make this arrowhead and now I've bloody lost it'. Probably with a Yorkshire accent.

Just before the 50th Anniversary of the Kinder Mass Trespass in 1982 a letter in a local newspaper asked what is being done about access in the Peak District as there was still over 50% of the moorlands in the Peak District without public access. The challenge had been made. A trespass walk was organised and to the surprise of the organisers over 200 people turned out. From this a walk another was organised to attend the 50th Anniversary Kinder Mass Trespass event in Hayfield. I remember going over Jacob's ladder and down to Bowden Bridge and joining the gathered mass. I, along with others from Sheffield, was inspired by the words of Benny Rothman saying, 'We must carry on where we left off in 1932'.

Back in Sheffield it was agreed to form the Sheffield Campaign for Access to Moorland (SCAM). This was followed by a regular programme of trespass walks over all the 'forbidden moorlands'.

On one walk we rediscovered the site of the 1932 'murder' of the 'Old Woman Stone' a two and half metre prehistoric standing stone that was felled by a gamekeeper to deter walkers from going on the moor. This stone was used by walkers as a marker to cross the moor as it would have been for thousands of years.

On the access "trail" SCAM influenced the Ramblers Association to be more proactive on access, which they did with vigour. Regular lobbying activities and meetings were held with the Peak Park Planning Board to make more Access Agreements or Orders for moorland access.

The fascination of New Cross on the Bradfield moors was always a draw. It was the base of medieval cross with the carving of a sword on it and on the route of an ancient burial road between Howden and Bradfield Church.

I remember a night out on Back Tor. I settled down for the night in a rock shelter when it started to rain. It was soon that I heard the trickling of water above me, then behind me then into my sleeping bag. The rest of the night was spent sat up waiting for morning. At first light I came out of the shelter, somewhat damp, and stood on top of a rock. The sun arose and its first warming rays hit my body. My arms outstretched to feel the full effect of the sun and to welcome the day. The moors below lit up and seemed to be clothed in green and brown velvet.

I would often lie on the moors on warm summer days with a sky lark above listening to the grass as it danced in the breeze to hear what it was saying. 'This is yesterday, tomorrow and yet still today – the breeze wipes over resting bodies and caresses them'.

I have stood on Bamford Edge when below was a sea of bubbling cloud with only the peaks of Win Hill, Lose Hill, Mam Tor, Kinder, Bleaklow and Derwent Edge showing above. It was a truly 'Wow' experience.

November 1999 at Midhope we stood with transistor radios in hand waiting for 11-0 clock to hear what was to be in the Queen's speech. It was there, the Government was to introduce the 'Right to Roam' legislation. Champagne emerged from rucksacs, it was a celebration not to be missed.

On Margery Hill
When the night is still
On a moonlit frosty night
You may hear a sigh
See the wink of an eye
As Wilfred watches close by'

This is Wilfred's Needle on Howden Edge, a rock formation in the shape of a bearded man with his eye wide open.

September 2004 was my 'first footing' on 'Access Land'. It was almost an anticlimax after years of campaigning and trespassing to raise the profile of the right to roam. I walked through the new access gate, stopped, looked around, no one watching me, the no access signs had gone, I was free at last. But I couldn't help thinking of all those past access campaigners who had gone and never saw this day which they long since campaigned for, GHB Ward, Benny Rothman, Bill Keen, and many others.

It was, and still is a journey of adventure, excitement, learning, challenge and exhilaration, with a feeling of a sense of place, belonging, ownership and commitment."



Yvonne Witter

Yvonne lives in Sheffield and is a Peak District Mosaic Champion and Walk leader for Conquerors walking group. She organises and leads walks in the Peak District to encourage others to get out, explore and enjoy their wonderful surroundings.

Yvonne told us about how everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy the Peak District and her work as a Mosaic champion which is also celebrating its 10th anniversary.

“I have had the pleasure of meeting many people who work for the national park and getting to know some of the many areas that are open access for people to enjoy the lovely landscapes and wild areas of the national park.

My first thought of a national park with open access was that of a big park with big iron gates and everyone had to pay an entrance fee to enter!

But, I must hasten to say that I made the effort with sheer determination to get to know about the Peak District National Park by becoming a Mosaic Champion with the support of some very enthusiastic and hard-working National Park Rangers such as Kevin Thomson, Tom Lewis and Terry Page to name a few.

I can recall a conversation with Jim Dixon, National Park Chief Executive, at Ravenstor YHA at a Mosaic Champions' residential event. My description of the Peak Park to him was 'it's like heaven on earth'.

I have been a Peak District Mosaic champion for a number of years and I have always, where possible, taken the opportunity to gain the necessary knowledge about how to access and explore the national park and introduce other people to what I also describe as the open countryside for all to enjoy.

Prior to starting my own walking group I went along with other groups when it was convenient for me to do so. Eventually I set up a group – Conquerors walking group - and led group walks in and around the Peak Park.

My job as a Community Health Trainer involves leading a walk every Thursday morning in Tinsley, Sheffield, (near to Meadowhall). But, I ensure I include a group trip to the Peak Park so the ladies can experience the tranquillity of the open space and leave all the cars and hustle and bustle of a busy little town and relax in the environment where they can call peace for a little while.

Some of these women have never been to the National Park before. A day out for them is sometimes only travelling by bus to Rotherham, 2 miles away. They had different views of a National Park, but they are amazed of the open space and wild life when they visited Castleton, Longshaw and Fairholmes, and look forward to the trip that I do each year before the start of Ramadan.

The countryside is for all to access and I am delighted when I see new people join the group, it makes me even more delighted when I received an email giving feedback and

someone expressing desire to actually take up the challenge of another walk over some of the hills to view the countenance of 'nature in its splendour'."

Roly Smith



Roly is an author and editor, vice-president of the Outdoor Writers' and Photographers' Guild, and former Head of Information Services for the Peak District National Park Authority.

Roly told us about the early years of the access battles and the first Freedom to Roam Open Access guides in 2005.

"These Peak District moors have always been in the vanguard of the century-old campaign for the Freedom to Roam, so it is entirely

appropriate that we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the implementation of the CROW Act of 2000 here today.

Before the CROW Act and the foundation of the Peak District National Park in 1951, workers in the surrounding industrial cities such as Sheffield and Manchester could see these blue, inviting moors from their factories and homes – yet they couldn't walk on them. We can only imagine how frustrating must that have been.

The problem all went back to the iniquitous Enclosure Acts of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when the right to roam was taken – some would say stolen – from the people. Before that, all these moors were common land, where you could walk, graze your sheep, collect peat, or just enjoy the freedom of the open air. The situation was encapsulated by this 18th century doggerel poem:

The law locks up the man or woman
Who steals the goose from off the common
But leaves the greater villain loose
Who steals the common from the goose.

GHB Ward and other members of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, Phil Barnes and Stephen Morton of the Ramblers and Gerald Haythornthwaite of the CPRE, were all inveterate trespassers, and there are many apocryphal stories of sometimes violent meetings with gamekeepers.

Ward was eventually served with a writ by the owner of Kinder Scout restraining him from venturing on the mountain, but recently-discovered photographic evidence shows that he continued to exercise his cherished right to roam.

Various attempts at Access to Mountains legislation had all failed since 1884, and matters were brought a head with the celebrated Mass Trespass on Kinder, organised by Benny Rothman and members of the Manchester branch of the British Workers' Sports Federation on April 24, 1932. Two groups also came over from Sheffield from Edale and crossed Kinder to join the Manchester-based trespassers at Ashop Head for a victory meeting.

There had been a few scuffles with gamekeepers, and as they returned to Hayfield six of the Manchester ramblers were arrested, and five were charged with public order offences. They were tried and imprisoned for periods of between two and six months.

Five months later, on September 18, a second, Sheffield-led Mass Trespass took place on the disputed Duke of Norfolk's Road above Abbey Brook in the Upper Derwent Valley. This time it was organised by the Sheffield Ramblers Federation with the silent support of Bert Ward, and supported by around 200 ramblers and members of the Woodcraft Folk.

Again there were scuffles with gamekeepers but significantly, in view of the furore which had followed the imprisonment of five of the Manchester trespassers, no arrests were made.

Ironically, it was the severity of the sentences handed down by the judge to the Kinder trespassers which finally united the ramblers' cause. But it was to take another 68 years before the CROW Act was passed, and the right to roam was regained.

I was privileged to be asked to write the first two Freedom to Roam guides to open access land here in the Peak shortly after the passing of the Act in 2000. But of course, at that time there was no definitive map.

With the help of Derbyshire County Council and Mike Rhodes at the Peak National Park, I eventually obtained the definitive maps, but no one at that time was certain where the access points would be. So I had to make some educated guesses, most of which turned out to be right.

The books were critically reviewed in the Observer by Mariella Frostrup, who apparently got well and truly lost. But as GHB Ward said: "The man (sic) who never was lost never went very far," and judging from her immaculate boots and clothing, she obviously was not a seasoned walker. She also hadn't read the introduction to the books, which explained why exact route directions were not given, merely suggestions of routes to points of interest in the newly-accessible countryside which the walker might like to find their way.

Although we now have the right to roam on these wonderful moors, we must not think the battle is won. We still do not have the right to roam along all of our wonderful coastline, nor in our woodlands. I believe we should be continuing to campaign until we have the same right of access to all our countryside, such as is enjoyed in most other European countries.

This week Scotland thankfully voted to stay within the United Kingdom. I think there is plenty we can learn from our cousins across the Border, especially from their Land Reform Act of 2003, which confirmed their existing de facto right to roam in all the Scottish countryside.



I believe we should not compromise for anything less, so the fight started by Bert Ward, Benny Rothman and others goes on."

Alex Hyde



Alex is a professional landscape and wildlife photographer based in and at the Peak District National Park. He uses photography as a means of connecting with the natural world, and never tires of exploring its beauty and form.

Alex told us about the beauty of the moors and the opportunities given by open access to explore nature away from the beaten path. Alex also encouraged us to spend time looking closely for wildlife on the moors.

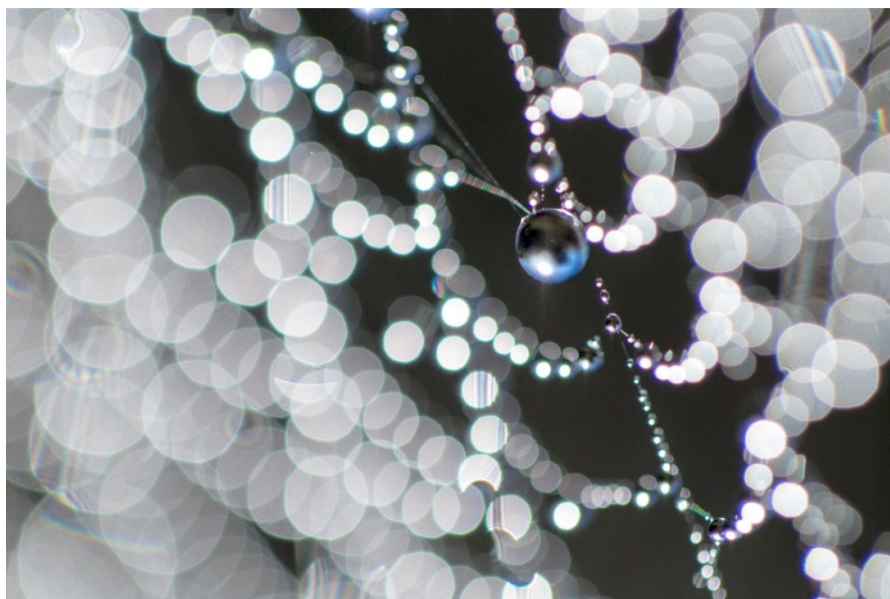
“I am privileged to live and work in the Peak District as a freelance photographer and part-time for the National Park. Over the years I have come to understand the diverse and intricate landscape of the National Park and to value its heritage and wildlife.

I enjoy the contrasts that I come across, from bleak frozen moorlands in the depths of winter, to the steep-sided limestone dales in summer, bursting with life and colour. The opportunities to explore and enjoy access

land are fantastic for me and provide me with an opportunity to connect with the natural world.

When composing a scene of an insect or spider, I am always struck with a sense of discovery. I delight in revealing tiny details of subjects that would be missed by the naked eye. Many of my pictures involve photographing moving subjects smaller than a grain of rice, requiring highly specialised equipment and a fair measure of patience.

Over the last few weeks I have been studying orb weaver spiders on the moors. The morning dew picks out the webs found covering the heather, creating compositions of hundreds of tiny water droplets. Whilst capturing pictures of these and other subjects I am also able to enjoy the solitude of the moors, something I have really come to value.



Cobweb coated morning dew © Alex Hyde



Emperor moth caterpillar © Alex Hyde

Today I have brought along a cocoon of the emperor moth, which can be found across these moors. In late summer you might find one of the large green caterpillars of this species trundling across a footpath before it spins its silk cocoon amongst the heather. We can get some pretty intense winter weather in the Peaks and when the moors are buried under snow it always amazes me to think of the emperor moth pupae enduring the elements until they emerge as adults in spring

Nature provides me with an endless array of fascinating subjects and I am confident that I will never tire of photographing them.”



Ling heather sunset © Alex Hyde

Lynn Crowe



Lynn is Professor of Environmental Management at Sheffield Hallam University and ten years ago was Chair of the Authority's Park Management Committee involved in making decisions on implementing the new rights in the Park

Lynn told us about the fears at the time of the introduction of open access and how those fears don't seem to have materialised to any great extent, current challenges, and why access to our wilder places is so important.

"This is such a rewarding occasion for me - but also slightly surprising. It's always surprising when someone reminds you that 10 years have passed and you haven't really noticed. Ten years ago I was still on the National Park Authority - chairing the Park Management Committee - and we were a bit nervous, but quietly confident about the new access arrangements.

There was a huge amount of work between the passing of the CROW Act and the actual implementation four years later - involving so many people. Our Access and Recreation Service, brilliantly led by the inspirational Sean Prendergast, really did most of that work - assisted by people from right across the Authority and many of our partners. I still can't really believe Sean isn't here with us today - we miss him. But under Sean's leadership, Access management plans were agreed with over 300 separate landowners, and Sean also undertook to have someone from the National Park Authority communicate with all landowners in the newly opened areas. That wasn't required by the legislation, but we knew it was the right thing to do.

People across England now have around 865,000 hectares of land across which they can walk, run, explore, climb and watch wildlife, without having to stay on paths. The new rights came into effect across all of England on 31 October 2005. But we got there a little sooner - as usual! The Peak District also became the focus of the national launch - at Derbyshire Bridge on 19 September. A wonderful day of walks and celebrations which many of the people here today attended.

We can look back and try to remember what issues we were anxious about then. The biggest concerns were voiced by both landowners and conservation interests. Would open access interfere too much with other land uses, and would increased access to our wildest places have a detrimental impact on the conservation of these special areas. I did a bit of a

literature search before today - another surprise - there is very little academic literature on any of these problems. What that says to me is there are surprisingly few problems out there. Certainly, I think we have realised that public access is very low down on any list of detrimental impacts to conservation - there are far greater (and, indeed, much more controversial) impacts than a few additional boots across our hills and moors, which occupy our minds today.

Natural England published their National Open Access Visitor Survey (2006-2008, Executive summary, NECR036) in September 2011. This survey confirmed what many of us anticipated at the time. Across the whole country, there has been surprisingly little change in the patterns and extent of use of open access land, and surprisingly few members of the public are really aware of their new rights.

This actually doesn't bother me too much - for two reasons.

Firstly - it is still very early days - ten years is actually no time at all when it comes to changing people's behaviour. I recall a presentation by the South West Coastal Path officer around the time of the Marine and Coastal Access Bill discussions a few years ago- she believed it had taken a full generation - 30 years - for ordinary members of the public to take for granted their access to the coast in that part of England. That they could walk to the coast and turn right or left - and have the freedom to walk in either direction just as a matter of course. It's still very early days for our `right to roam`.

Secondly - the celebrations today aren't just about the practical results of being able to walk knee deep across heather or through peat bog away from the usual pathways if you wish - important though those are. There is a principle at stake here too - that our wildest and most remote places have a special place in our hearts and a special value that rightly should be shared amongst everyone in society.

What there is in the academic literature now is study after study which emphasises the importance of people experiencing nature - particularly getting right away from it all to our wildest places. It keeps us physically and mentally fit, it reduces stress, it just makes us feel better. And there are also plenty of studies which highlight that many people still do not enjoy these opportunities - particularly and increasingly, young people. In a single generation since the 1970s, children's `radius of activity` - the area around their home where they are allowed to roam unsupervised - has declined by almost 90%. We don't really know the terrible impact that this lack of engagement with the natural world, and the consequent decline in personal confidence and physical and mental capabilities, will have on our young people. The more we can do to address this, the better.

There are also excellent pieces of research which emphasise how important informal recreation and simple tourism is to rural communities - to provide economic opportunities, but also to attract younger people and families to live in these areas, and to ensure they remain vibrant, living communities. I was also involved recently in a piece of work funded by Sheffield City Council, which emphasises the importance of the outdoor economy to that city - it's not just our rural communities who benefit.

I know that the Peak District Local Access Forum continues to meet, and hopefully has broken down barriers between groups and individuals, emphasising that most of us want the same things from these special places, and we can work together to achieve them. Mike Rhodes still sends me reports of meetings and I follow your work with interest.

Of course there remain challenges.....There remain too many barriers to access, and we need to continue to address these. New technology is certainly helping here. And the Peak District NPA and its partners can be justifiably proud of the way they are working to increase

opportunities for outdoor recreation more generally. We need to work more closely with our neighbouring urban areas to encourage more people to enjoy their local countryside. As Roly Smith mentioned earlier, there are still access campaigns to fight also. Roly compared our situation in England and Wales, with the extensive legal access rights our Scottish friends enjoy. We still have a very long way to go before we achieve reasonable access to water in this country. There have also been some recent promises made on the roll-out of coastal access - but we wait to see if resources will follow.

The management of our hills and moors is also an increasing challenge. Here the Peak District is again leading the way - with the incredibly important Moors for the Future project showing how important a well managed ecosystem is to the whole of society. But we must consider how we can enhance biodiversity and work together to create richer habitats for more species. We're short of not just some bird species in the Peak District (and I know raptors in particular always make the headlines) - but mammals and reptiles too. We may never have wolves in the Peak District - but more Pine Martens and Otters, and more Adders - surely a realistic proposition? We must be looking to enhance natural ecosystem processes in these areas - `natural capital` which can benefit everyone.

And the rather boring, but incredibly important issue of funding? How do we achieve everything we want to in a time of declining public expenditure? I know the usual answer is to be increasingly creative in terms of new partnerships and ways of working. I'm sure you are all working on that, even as I speak.

But the current crisis in support for what I might call the `public realm`, isn't really financial - it's political. Perhaps today of all days, when our friends north of the border have reaffirmed a commitment to remain part of the UK family, but in doing so seem to have rediscovered a desire to engage more with political process and to link that with an expression of their love for their land, perhaps we can learn from them? We need to work even harder at making our concerns about our landscapes and wildlife relevant to both decision makers and to the public more generally. If we - the people who care so passionately about these places - allow our discussions about who governs us and who sets our agendas to focus solely on jobs and the economy - without speaking up equally about the damage done to our enjoyment of nature and the land itself, then we cannot expect others to take it seriously either. We have to win hearts as well as minds.

Quoting William Blake – ‘Great things are done when men and mountains meet’ - so let's celebrate today, but let's look forward to continued progress also.”





John Thompson

John is Vice-chair of the Peak District Local Access Forum and ten years ago was Director of Recreation at the National Park involved in considering how to implement the new rights and making recommendations to its Members.

John told us about how the good practice developed from the earlier access agreements demonstrated how to implement the new access and the work that goes into improving access.

“In the Peak District, additional access land under the provisions of the CROW Act 2000 was launched at a National Event at Derbyshire Bridge in the Goyt Valley on Sunday 19 September 2004. It is fitting to have this 10th Anniversary event today thanks to the Peak District NPA, Ramblers Association and British Mountaineering Club.

Then it was my privilege and pleasure to have been Director of Recreation and Education at the Peak District NPA during the time of:

- 1) Recognising the need for legislation on Access in the National Park to build on areas of access after the scope for reaching more agreements with owners had dried up
- 2) Pressing for the new powers enacted in the CROW Act in 2000, and then considering how best to implement and manage them in the Peak building on good management practice from Access Agreements, and as a Partnership with owners, managers and users - all working together
- 3) Working with some great officers in the late Sean Prendergast (huge charisma, enthusiasm and an inspirational driving force), and Mike Rhodes and Rangers; together with very supportive members including Lynn Crowe, Tony Hams and the late Sir Martin Doughty.
- 4) The introduction of the first Local Access Forum in the country
- 5) The roll out of additional access in the Peak where it more than doubled from 249 to 542 sq kms (92 to 193 square miles) - equivalent to 37% of the National Park. This provided people with opportunities to walk in some of the most wild and impressive scenery in the country

Now I am delighted to work with a wide range of people acting voluntarily to seek ongoing progress on access, recreation and rights of way through the Peak District Local Access Forum (LAF) advising the Peak District NPA, and Derbyshire CC in the north west of the county.

Looking forward, the Peak District LAF has urged for dedication of access areas on Authority owned land (including further woodlands), in the National Park linked to this 10th Anniversary - you can do that under the CROW Act and delighted to read of plans being identified for the North Lees Estate in the report to Committee.

We are reviewing and updating a "Wish List" within LAF working with officers to enable important improvements needed to be identified and pursued.

We welcome the Access Fund which will be launched with £3,000 as a start up.

All speakers have made very positive and inspirational contributions on our walk around the adjoining moorland areas and spoken with great passion about their interest in and experiences of access.

Special thanks to Sue Smith and Mike Rhodes and the Rangers for organising this event and for their work on access which gives enjoyment to thousands of people (visitors and residents), and is of huge benefit to their health and well-being, understanding and enjoyment of the National Park environment and provides crucial support to the local economy."



Andrew McCloy

Andrew is Chair of the Authority's Audit Resource and Performance Committee and ten years ago was Chair of the Peak District Local Access Forum involved in advising on implementing the new rights.

Andrew told us about the continuing importance of access and asked us to consider the next 10 years.

"Certainly it's right we celebrate the first 10 years, but what about the next decade? Where will we be in 2024? Now is a time to look forward and challenge ourselves:

Will open access to the hills and moors still matter in 10 years?
How do we make it matter?
Who's it really for?
And how do we keep its legacy going?

There are 3 broad points to consider:

1) Escape from the city - Access to the hills and moors always provided vital recreational opportunities for industrial Britain and Monday-Saturday wage slaves; physical recreation went hand in hand with spiritual/mental freedom on the day off and access to the hills and moors provided that opportunity.

If present trends continue, by 2024 rural depopulation will be mirrored by increased urbanisation, and a likelihood of the problems of inner city deprivation and social isolation.

Open access to the hills and moors is arguably just as important in 2024 as it is now, ten years ago or even 70 years ago; it reconnects to the natural world in an age ever more dominated by urban lifestyles and technology, and nowhere is that more keenly felt than in the younger age groups.

Access has to be made relevant to these younger urban generations – so they know the importance of access land and why and how to treasure it.

A 2024 scenario: NP and partners lead major initiative targeted at inner city Manchester, Sheffield, Stoke and Derby, with the aim of reconnecting young urban dwellers with nature, wild places and accessible uplands

2) A healthy nation - Following on from the urban theme...We're aware as a nation that we're getting more unfit, unhealthy, fat, and so on, especially among children and younger age groups.

Open air recreation is the most natural prescription – but National Parks are only just waking up to the potential role they could play delivering a new health agenda; as a National Park we must tap into this and make National Parks and all they represent (including access to the countryside) relevant to this audience.

Enjoying open access to the hills and moors of the Peak District offers physical and mental benefits, obvious to us all here – so why don't more people do it?

A 2024 scenario: instead of prescribing pills and medication GPs prescribe health walks along Stanage, around Stanton Moor and in Upper Goyt Valley – in other words, on access land

3) Access for everyone - As a previous LAF Chair I've written and spoken about recognising that the word "access" has multiple meanings. It can be physical access and on-the-ground improvements, signposting where to go and making it easier to reach, eg through the splendid new Access Fund.

But if we are true to the term 'access land' we must also look for opportunities to develop and promote routes for all abilities, including users with disabilities – we have to enable everyone to share the prize.

Most of today's audience is white, middle aged (like me!), no doubt confident with a map and familiar with the great outdoors; but if access land is to still matter in 2024 we need to redouble our efforts to reach out to urban and ethnic communities - for many if not most of them 'open access' means absolutely nothing.

The commendable work of Mosaic needs to be mainstreamed – it must be placed squarely as Second Purpose work for the National Park Authority

A 2024 scenario: we have at least 2 or 3 National Park rangers – plus trainee rangers – from black or minority ethnic minority groups; there will be regular programmes of walks laid on for urban community groups to explore and enjoy access land

If we are to celebrate Open Access and Access Land in 10 years' time we must do so with a new and energised audience, so we can perpetuate the legacy and ensure its lasting future.

Sue Smith

Sue is Access Officer at the Peak District National Park Authority and worked with others to organise the event. Sue told us about the importance of partnership working and the launch of the Authority's Access Fund and other future initiatives.

"Better together has a certain resonance particularly at the moment. Today, we, who champion and cherish access, have met to celebrate the tenth anniversary of open access within the National Park.

Our event today is a joint one with the BMC and the Ramblers on land owned by the National Trust. It is supported by many others - many of whom are here today, and some you've heard from earlier and all who have been inspiring.

Partnerships are important. The Moors for the Future has given us a green Kinder. The Sheffield Moors Partnership are giving us our valley back at Burbage. And our Local Access Forum members work in partnership to reach a consensus.

It is clear that with more we can do more. On that theme the Authority has today launched an access fund. This will be used for improvements to and on access land. More information is on our website at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/accessfund. We have kick-started it with £3000 and we will be adding to it using donations and any income that is generated.

We will also be highlighting opportunities for enjoying, protecting and enhancing access this anniversary year. Look out for dedications of new areas of access land, workshops to help communities open up access through guides and leaflets, photography competitions, events and a new beer in the New Year. All of this will be in the new newsletter which will be coming out later on this month."

Mary Bagley

Mary is Assistant Director of Enterprise and Field Services at the Peak District National Park Authority. Mary told us about the role of the National Park in promoting understanding and enjoyment and gave thanks for all the work by past, present and future access champions and in particular our speakers today.

"Thank you to Andrew for his inspiration for the future. Thank you also to our speakers for putting into words all the things that we care about and need from our wilder areas

The progress that we have today is by standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before and who have fought for and implemented these rights. Some of whom we have heard from today.

Access is important wherever it occurs but perhaps no more so than in a National Park where it is enshrined in its purposes. It is important that we look after this special place by continuing to build on the understanding and enjoyment provided by access and by working together to improve this for all."

