THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACT OF FORMAL
LONG-DISTANCE FOOTPATHS IN GREAT BRITAIN

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1. INTRODUCTION

It had been the National Parks Commission itself which had held together the programme for long-distance routes at planning stage, during the implementation of routes and, in the case of the Pennine Way which had been formally opened, in the management stage. The continuation of the leading role by the new Countryside Commission was considered essential. The old Commission had been willing to become involved in all aspects of the development of routes, but the main difficulty had been that it never had the capacity to make the impact on the programme that was needed. Its staff had already been increased in anticipation of the enactment of new legislation and it was hoped that this would help the situation, and that a reinforced Long-Distance Routes Section of the Countryside Commission would be able to clear the backlog of work and increase the momentum of the programme. This had been the declared intention of various representatives of the Ministry, when pressed both inside and outside Parliament to do something about the delays in implementing paths, that more staff would be available for the programme, "once circumstances permitted."

However, despite the fact that long-distance routes retained a central place among the new Commission's responsibilities, the Countryside Commission now had very much wider responsibilities. The National Parks Commission had been mainly concerned with the 9% of England and Wales which was in national parks and to a lesser degree with the further 7.3% in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. One of the few responsibilities of the old Commission outwith these areas had concerned long-distance routes. The new Countryside Commission now
had responsibilities for the whole of the countryside of England and Wales, with threefold duties spelt out in the Countryside Act and summarised by the Commission as firstly, the improvement and provision of facilities for countryside enjoyment; secondly, the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty in the countryside; and thirdly, the securing of public access. Although there was at first no new involvement the Commission in grant-aiding apart from experimental schemes and, outwith national parks, the only footpaths for which the Commission could secure government funding were long-distance routes, nonetheless, there was the concern that the new Commission would 'water down' the importance of long-distance paths just as there was a major concern that the national parks themselves would lose their status.

How the Commission responded to the new situation is the subject of this chapter. Changes in the Commission itself are briefly reviewed and the effect of official reports, such as that of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Sports and Leisure, the Government White Paper on the same subject and the Report of the Commons Expenditure Committee are examined to ascertain the pressures on the role of the Commission itself and the status of long-distance paths in discussions. Changes in legislation are examined to see their effect on long-distance routes and other Parliamentary interest in the subject is also noted. Attention is paid to the Commission's own dealings with the facility, including a special report it commissioned on Long-Distance Routes ('The Yapp Report') and its own publication Footpaths for Recreation. The research is based mainly on official documents, government reports and the minutes of the Commission, together with personal interviews.

Long-distance routes continued to be a provision generally approved
of by those with an interest in the countryside and the nature of the routes was still as originally envisaged by their proponents. They also continued to be something with considerable public appeal. The history of the development of long-distance routes had involved many crises during the life of the National Parks Commission, but the unique and central position of the facility within the national planning framework had survived. The facility had come virtually unchanged through the enactment of the Countryside Bill but the new situation was uncertain. Further developments in the concept of long-distance routes and their actual implementation are the subjects of this and the next chapter.

2. GENERAL OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENTS

(a) The Countryside Commission

As we have seen, personalities had been so important in the forming of policies and the moulding of the character of facilities and programmes, especially in the early life of the National Parks Commission. One of the concerns about the new Commission was the lack of members associated with the outdoor movement now that Ritchie, Yapp and Pauline Dower had been removed. The criticism was to continue through the 1970s and into the 1980s, although, in fact the amenity group did welcome the replacement of Lady Wooton of Abinger by John Cripps as Chairman of the Commission at the beginning of 1970. In 1975 the amenity movement received a boost when one person who was very closely associated with outdoor groups was appointed to the Commission. This was Gerald McGuire who made a fair impact. He had been prominent in the campaign for long-distance paths in the North-East and was now an official with the Youth Hostels Association and President of the Ramblers Association. However, he was removed in

In 1978 Cripps was replaced by Lord Winstanley, who was himself replaced at the beginning of 1981 by Derek Barber.
August 1979 by the new Conservative government angering the amenity groups and moving the Commission to record in its annual report that "We were disappointed by the decision of the Minister not to renew the appointment." Currently the only Commissioner with strong connections with the outdoor movement and who is in favour of long-distance paths seems to be Lady Elizabeth Kirk.

Changes in the Commission staff were also detrimental to the standing of long-distance paths. T.G. Miller, who had headed the Long-Distance Routes Section of both Commissions for several years, returned to the Ministry (now the Department of the Environment) in October 1972. He had a special knowledge of, and interest in, the subject and had enjoyed very good relations with the Ramblers Association. He was to write a popular book describing the various official long-distance paths in England and Wales. In 1980, Reg Hookway retired from the post of Director. He had joined the National Parks Commission in 1965 and his well-publicised walk along part of the Pennine Way had convinced him of the worth of the facility. Indeed, following his death in 1982, the Commission's Annual Report had at the foot of the obituary the acorn with the caption: "The symbol used on Long Distance Routes which Reg Hookway did so much to promote".

In 1973/74 the Commission moved from London to Cheltenham, a move which was seen by some observers as weakening it. Certainly it was a very disruptive experience. There was also displeasure, particularly among some outdoor groups, at the results of a general reappraisal of the work of the Commission which took place at this time. This review had been reported to the Secretary of State at the beginning of 1972, and there commenced a five-year programme, aiming at giving more attention to advisory and promotional work, interpretation and

1 CC Twelfth Report (1979), pl. 2 Miller op. cit.
3 He was succeeded by Adrian Phillips.
information services and recreational management training. This resulted in 1973 in the establishment of a completely new structure with three divisions - Executive, Administrative and Advisory. The former branches of the Commission, carried over from the National Parks Commission, became part of the Executive Division, divided geographically into four sections.

This had a major impact on long-distance routes, which had been supported by a Section employing one Senior Executive Office, two Higher Executive Officers, two Executive Officers and one Clerical Officer. The Section was now split functionally and geographically, with the planning and strategic assessment of routes going to the Planning Branch of the Advisory Division and work associated with the implementation of routes going to the Executive Division. This was seen by the interest groups as removing the special status of long-distance paths and the Ramblers Association voiced its opposition in evidence to the Commons Expenditure Committee in 1976 that:

"The Commission themselves seem to be adopting the form of an agency whose main role is to advise and promote. The decline in the Commission's enthusiasm for such things as long-distance routes and access agreements is symptomatic of the shift of emphasis. We regard this as very unfortunate." 3

The shift in emphasis was reflected in the structure of the annual reports of the Commission for, after 1971, the section devoted to long-distance routes was reduced from about four pages to about one page. In 1975 the subject became a subsection of the section on 'footpaths and bridleways' (and later 'public access'), which was under 'Recreation Uses, Facilities and Services'.

However, as we have seen, the special nature and public interest in long-distance routes ensured continued interest in them and, being a specific facility in which the Commission was directly involved (and one where the Commission already was heavily committed), they did

1 CC Fifth Report (1972), pl.
3 National Parks and the Countryside Statement by the Ramblers Association to the (HC) Environmental Subcommittee on National Parks and the Countryside. 1976.
continue to feature prominently in the Commission's publicity. The series of leaflets on routes continued to be most popular and references in the Commission's reports indicated periodic upsurges in interest. The Commission took exhibition space at the Olympia Camping and Outdoor Life Exhibition in 1972, entitling its stand 'Holidays along Long-Distance Footpaths and in National Parks'. Maps published by the Commission, in its reports and elsewhere, and indeed, most maps published during the period pertaining to leisure and recreation, highlighted the network of long-distance routes.

Indeed, despite the claims that the Commission had reduced its interest in such routes, there is evidence that it did continue to expend more energies on the subject than was necessary (and this will be illustrated later in the examination of specific developments) at least up to the middle of the 1970s. In addition, long-distance routes were for the first time the subject of a special report to the Commission. Developments specifically related to long-distance routes will be examined in a later section, but first official government activity is reviewed to examine further the factors which did affect or could have affected, the status of the Commission itself, and to see the role of long-distance routes in official discussion.

(b) Official Government Reports

(i) The Select Committee of the House of Lords on Sport & Leisure

One of the main themes through the 1970s in the field of recreation was the relationship between sport and other leisure-time activities, and in the early 1970s a Select Committee of the House of Lords was considering this. It reported in 1973 and was very wide-ranging, overviewing developments in the ideas originally stimulated by the reports of the ORRRC in 1962.

The report was able to make a clear distinction between the work

2 Select Committee of the House of Lords on Sport and Leisure First Report and Proceedings HL 84 (1972-73); Second Report HL 193
of the Countryside Commission and the Sports Council, noting that the latter looked to the "young and lusty" and that the Commission looked to demands from families and the population in general for informal recreation. To the relief of the Commission, it recommended that it be strengthened and that it be given more powers to grant-aid schemes, together with more executive participation and powers in countryside schemes throughout the country. The Committee commended the view of hierarchies of provisions, stressing the importance of planning for recreation in such terms and giving examples of successful schemes, such as those in the Greater London Development Plan for a system of parks.

It also examined footpaths closely, for the subject of the role of footpaths in the second half of the Twentieth Century had not been very satisfactorily resolved by the Gosling Committee. The report stressed the evidence given by the Ramblers Association that footpaths were a most important element in the national system for recreation and that, although "the network of footpaths is, on paper, remarkable, averaging 2.07 miles per square mile, on paper the resources for the walkers' needs are there; in practice ramblers are very seriously impeded." It urged local authorities to ensure that their statutory duties for the preservation of paths be undertaken. However, it went against the recommendations in the Gosling Report and took the part of the National Farmers Union rather than that of the Ramblers Association in recommending that:

"redevelopment of rights of way in the light of modern needs and circumstances should be treated as a task of importance and urgency... we must aim at redesigning the network of public rights of way to meet the needs of today's visitors." 2

1 ibid. HL1939 pplxxxvi/ii.
2 ibid.
However, this rationalisation would involve the premise that, where average densities of footpaths were well below the average for the country as a whole, mileages would be increased.

It recognised the validity of a hierarchy of footpaths, from local walks to long-distance paths. It commended the traditional long-distance routes, but felt that:

"Long and medium distance routes, linking towns would also be advantageous; these footpaths do not have to be confined to consistently beautiful parts of the countryside, and routes closer to towns should be fostered."  

It noted the Countryside Commission's interest in paths over 70 miles (112 km) in length, recording that:

"With over 1000 miles [1600 km] achieved and another 1000 in the pipeline, the English Countryside Commission, for instance, has made swift progress. The Committee note that the Country Landowners Association [CLA] look with great favour on these paths."

The "swift progress" suggested a lack of understanding of the situation, but the reference to the CLA illustrated the increasing importance of the organisation of landed interests as the 1970s progressed.

(ii) The White Paper on Sport and Leisure

In August 1975 the Government published its White Paper on Sport and Leisure. The subject had been debated in Parliament in June 1974 and in July 1974 a new ministerial title had been announced, with Dennis Howell becoming the Minister of Sport and Recreation.

It was therefore not surprising that a main proposal of the White Paper was the establishment of Regional Sports and Recreation Councils. These were in fact set up from 1976, although at first they had no staff. However, the Commission had been anxious that it should not be amalgamated with the Sports Council, and the Commission's

1 ibid.
2 Cmd 6200.
integrity was to be retained at national level. Indeed, in some ways it had been strengthened by the creation of a regional presence.

The White Paper recommended the modification of the network of footpaths in the countryside - "In the government's view there is scope for local initiatives to modify the existing demands for access with the needs of the farming community." It was, however, careful to stress that, on average, the modification of the system should not increase or decrease the mileage of footpaths in an area.

Rationalisation of footpath networks was to be a continuing and dominating theme through the 1970s, and in 1978 the Commission appointed consultants to make a study of the subject. Their report, produced in December 1978, reviewed several existing schemes and highlighted deficiencies in the current legislation. The Commission later reported to the Secretary of State recommending that he established a review committee. However, partly because of the recognition of costs involved and the bureaucratic complexity with some schemes (for example, that in West Sussex) and partly because of modifications to the legislation which were made at the beginning of the 1980s, including the changing of procedures for updating definitive maps, the move towards wholesale rationalisation lost much of its momentum and there has not been any attempt to amend the legislation to facilitate large-scale rationalisation.

The White Paper made favourable comments on long-distance routes:

"The development of long-distance footpaths under the auspices of the Countryside Commission has, over the past years, added an important new dimension to the historical footpaths network. Over 1000 miles [1600 km] of route are approved and opened. The Commission will shortly be publishing their proposals for future policy and practice in relation to such routes in the light of a consultant's report."\(^5\)

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1 ibid. p17. 2 Generating flurries of correspondence in the Times in the early-1970s.
4 CC Twelth Report (1979) p32. The Commission has also sponsored a Rights of Way Advisory Committee.
5 Cmnd 6200 op. cit. p15.
The Report on National Parks and the Countryside
by the House of Commons Expenditure Committee

The fact that the Commission's reaction to the report on long-distance paths was awaited prevented another important committee considering the facility in depth. This was the Environmental Subcommittee of the Expenditure Committee of the House of Commons, which examined National Parks and the Countryside, reporting in May 1976.

The Committee had attracted a considerable amount of evidence, including a 55-page submission by the Ramblers Association which, as was previously noted, was extremely critical of developments within the Commission. However, the Commission was well-pleased with the outcome of the Committee's deliberations, for despite being critical of the "luxuriant growth of official bodies", the Committee recommended that the Commission should receive more independence and, partly because of the Commission's important and unique work in the field of conservation, it came out strongly against amalgamation with any other body. The Committee pointed to the "high cost-effectiveness of countryside investment [which is] not an inessential fringe benefit," even though the Commission's annual spending had increased over two and half times between 1968/9 and 1972/3.

Much of the report reviewed matters examined in another very important Report - that of the National Parks Review Committee which had been chaired by Lord Sandford. The Sandford Committee had reported in 1974, and had called for major changes in the management of the national parks. It was in favour of the further development of the footpath network in national parks, although it had little to say about long-distance paths.

The Commons Committee also commended the idea of further

1 Sixth Report of the Expenditure Committee, HC 433 (1975-76)
2 ibid. pxxv.
development of paths within the national parks, although it recognised the special problems already developing with walks such as the Lyke Wake Walk in North Yorkshire and the Three Peaks Walk in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It made favourable references to long-distance routes in national parks, but, although in evidence to it the Ramblers Association had stressed that "We feel there is both the scope and the demand for long-distance paths formation for many years to come," the Committee refrained from making specific recommendations for long-distance paths.

(c) Legislation

(i) The Countryside Bill (1978)

Despite the fact that the Government had published its own White Paper in 1975 and formally accepted some of the recommendations of the Sandford Committee in January 1976, it was not able to find time for new legislation until the end of 1978. Labour's Countryside Bill was published in December 1978 and one of its seventeen clauses had relevance to long-distance paths. This covered the long-standing desire that countryside wardens should be able to operate, with a landowner's consent, where the public had access to private land. This was at present only possible where there were formal access agreements where byelaws could be made, and its enactment would no doubt have eased the negotiating process for long-distance paths, providing land-owners with the safeguard that there would be control over ramblers (and their dogs) crossing land on new and existing rights of way.

In fact, in 1977 the Department of the Environment had anticipated the preparation of legislation, and had invited the Commission to give its suggestions for measures to be included in a tidying-up bill. One of several proposals put forward by the Commission in a letter in the National Parks and the Countryside op.cit. pp53-4.
2 HC Bill 47 (1978-79).
3 ibid. clause 10.
middle of 1977 concerned:

"the procedures for the creation of long-distance routes, it being commonly agreed that the present procedures deriving from Sections 51 and 52 [of the 1949 Act] are laborious and unsatisfactory... the Commission seeks legislation to provide a shortened process for the creation of long-distance routes. Their suggestion would provide for consultation on a proposed route, designation by the Commission, and a public inquiry into any objections, after which a single ministerial decision would create a right of way along the whole route." 1

This procedure would have been similar to that which Tom Stephenson had expected at the beginning of the life of the National Parks Commission - although in fact there was no reason why it could not have been followed under the existing legislation. However, its specific inclusion in legislation would have given it force and certainty, and John Cripps, Chairman of the Commission, saw this as the only way to achieve reasonable progress for the programme for long-distance paths.

It was not, however, included in the Bill and in February 1979 the Commission published its comments on the Bill. In 'Further Matters for Legislation' it repeated the need for this process but there seems to have been no serious consideration of adding it to the Bill during its passage.

At the Bill's second reading at the end of January 1979 there were tributes to Barbara Castle, Arthur Blenkinsop, Lords Silkin and Dalton and, from outside Parliament, Tom Stephenson for their part in furthering the provision of facilities in the countryside, and it was noted that the Ramblers Association was at the fore of the outdoor movement. Bob Cryer (MP for Keighley) highlighted the Pennine Way:

"The Pennine Way was achieved only because of great strength of purpose and determination over many years to ensure access. It remains one of the most important areas for walking and access to the countryside." 4

3 Cripps himself had been replaced by this time.
(ii) The Wildlife and Countryside Act

Labour's Countryside Bill lapsed at Committee stage when a general election was called in 1979. However, despite having opposed the measure, the new Conservative government did include parts in its Wildlife and Countryside Bill, which received its Second Reading at the very end of 1980.

This was a large wide-ranging Bill, with Part I considering wildlife, Part II dealing with nature conservancy, the countryside and national parks, and Part III dealing with public rights of way. Of relevance to long-distance paths were a number of provisions, including one which put definitive footpath maps under continuous revision, and others which tidied up the creation and change of rights of way. Sections 27 to 35 of the 1949 Act, dealing with rights of way, were repealed. The measure allowing wardens to operate where the public had rights of access was included and, in fact, wardens could be appointed to patrol public footpaths with or without consent of the land owner. Part IV of the Bill, among other things, obliged the Countryside Commission to "Inform persons resorting to the countryside of their rights and obligations", and schedule 13 finally made the Commission a 'body corporate', releasing it from civil service status.

The Commission had made similar recommendations to those it had made previously for measures to be included in the legislation, including that to revolutionise the procedure for creating long-distance routes, and apparently the Ramblers Association had backed the suggestions; but once again there is no evidence of this having been treated seriously.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act reached the statute books in 1981.

2 ibid. Section 62.
In the first half of the 1970s, there were two pieces of legislation which were only marginally related to the countryside but which had a considerable impact. The first was the Local Government Act of 1972 which reorganised local government in England and Wales. It gave responsibility for environmental matters to district councils, but gave the counties other responsibilities. It also cut the number of committees and boards dealing with the national parks by half - to one for each park - but it required the Commission to comment on draft national park plans which had to be produced, in addition to its having to be consulted in the production of structure plans outwith the parks. These various responsibilities were, in fact, to take up a considerable amount of the Commission's time and energies, encouraging the criticism that the Commission had become more of an advisory body. This extra work load had an impact on its other activities as did the disruption caused by the change in local government. Both these factors can be seen to have impeded the progress with long-distance paths, in the latter case by necessitating a completely new start to negotiations that had been in progress in some instances for many years.

The second piece of legislation was the Local Government Act of 1974. This modified some existing legislation relating to the countryside, and, for example, removed the Minister's powers of default relating to the creation of long-distance routes, which had been available under the 1949 Act. Arthur Blenkinsop drew attention to this and expressed his concern during the passage of the Bill, noting the provision of long-distance routes as one of the main activities of the Commission. In fact, this section had never been

1 1972, Chapter 70.  2 1974, Chapter 7.
3 Section 105.
used, and powers of default were technically still available under section 29 of the Transport Act of 1959.

Of more importance was Section 9 of the 1974 Act, which replaced specific countryside grants by supplementary block grants to be paid on the recommendation of the Commission. Part 10(b) of Schedule 1 of the Act specifically repealed Section 98 of the 1949 Act, which had given long-distance routes their unique status, allowing local authorities 100% reimbursement for their implementation and maintenance.

(d) Other Parliamentary Interest

(i) Adjournment Debate on Countryside Routes

It was during the passage of the 1974 Act that Carol Johnson called an adjournment debate on 'Countryside Routes', by which he meant long-distance paths. He was particularly concerned with the aforementioned repeal of Section 98 of the 1949 Act, which was revealed to Johnson by the Municipal Journal (22/6/73) and which noted that "Special grants it is proposed to discontinue include those for long-distance routes." He was concerned to discover that the level of grant aid for establishing such routes would now be at the discretion of the Commission.

The debate lasted 21 minutes, and Johnson gave the background to the "imaginative proposals for the creation of long-distance paths" of Hobhouse, continuing that:

"This was no new idea for routes such as the Pennine Way had already been mooted. But its proposal to provide continuous rights of way for walkers and riders over long distances was of very great importance at that time because it was a necessary lead-in to legislation on the matter...... all this led to high hopes that at long last the long felt need for long-distance paths, with unrestricted public rights the whole way, would be met and that they would quickly become available for all those who loved the countryside."

However, he highlighted the reality of slow progress, noting that a whole generation had had to wait to enjoy the Pennine Way. He was also critical of the premature opening of routes before they had in fact been completed. In addition, although part of the reason for his having called the debate was because the Commission had requested a special report on long-distance paths, he was concerned that the Commission's programme for routes seemed to be "coming to a halt".

Johnson was critical that the Commission apparently could not cope with demands for new paths – and he referred to "dusty answers" given to requests for two particular suggestions, the footpath along the Thames and another path along the River Ribble from Preston to the Yorkshire Dales. He concluded that it was a matter of finance and he felt that only the government could deal with that. He was adamant that paths had always brought:

"so much worthwhile pleasure to thousands of citizens at so little cost. To build a few hundred miles of long-distance paths costs about the same as a few hundred yards of motorway." 1

Eldon Griffiths, Under Secretary of State for the Environment, replied, affirming that "The Government do take most seriously the need to make available to the public more countryside routes so that people can enjoy their increasing leisure." 3 He conceded that "I must say, having examined this matter in some detail, I think that the past has not been good enough". He recognised the chain of decision-making from the time of "insemination" to approval by the Secretary of State – which could take up to five years – and the "period of gestation" from approval to opening, which had in the case of the North Cornwall Path been 21 years. "I do not think anyone looking at the record could deny that the procedures are far too long."

1 ibid. col 1121. 2 ibid. col 1123. 3 ibid. col 1124.
However, concerning the finances, he did note that in no year had repayments for work on long-distance routes approached the amount available, and he stated that the future was brighter, with more staff for the Commission and an assurance to the local authorities that they would continue to be fully reimbursed for work on routes.

"With the advent of new and larger local authorities, reorganisation of the Commission's approach and improved financial proposals, I believe we can look forward to substantial progress in the years to come." 

Griffiths did, in fact, refer to a number of specific problems raised by Johnson, generally supporting decisions made by the Commission. He noted that his Department was having discussions with the Commission on guidelines for developing footpaths and, in the context of the appointment of Brunsdon Yapp, who would be reporting to the Commission on Long-Distance Routes, he referred to new types of footpaths being considered. Indeed, implicit in much of what Griffiths said is a possible change in the interpretation of what constituted a long-distance path. It is difficult to know whether Griffiths was intentionally implying this or whether perhaps this was part of the brief which could have originated from in the Commission itself.

Griffiths continued that "The government certainly wants a wider spread of footpaths of all sorts", adding that the new grant-aiding procedures "might well enable the Commission to support new, different and indeed more ambitious types of footpath proposals". Nevertheless, he maintained that this "might well make the future of the long-distance route more rosy than it has even been," and he also stated that:

"Looking to the future, the Commission is paying increasing attention to long-distance footpaths and the government supports the Commission in doing so." 2

1 ibid. col 1128.
2 ibid. col 1125.
(11) Other debates and questions

Another Adjournment Debate on long-distance routes took place in 1975, this time on the subject of the Wolds Way. The debate itself continued for some thirty five minutes, and Kevin MacNamara, MP and President of the East Riding and Derwent Area of the Ramblers Association, made an uncompromising attack on the Countryside Commission - "the landowners' poodle". In addition, Andrew Bennet added that instead of the one or two long-distance paths being examined by the Commission per year, "we require one or two of these proposals to be put forward each month."

In his reply, Denis Howell, the Minister for Sport and Recreation, was not specific about the Wolds Way, and he spoke of his hope in the light of the Yapp Report that procedures for creating long-distance routes in general would be speeded up. However, he did make the point that it was better to get routes right, because they were permanent facilities:

"Do the thousands who now get pleasure from the Pennine Way find their enjoyment any less because the route took such a long time to bring into operation."\(^3\)

There was also a debate in the House of Lords in 1980 on the Ridgeway, and these three debates and other questions focussed attention on long-distance routes in a way that had never happened since the 1940s and early 1950s. Parliament continued to show almost as much interest in the facility as it had at the beginning of the life of the National Parks Commission.

The Pennine Way attracted two questions through the 1970s, the Pembroke Coast Path two (in the Lords), the Ridgeway a debate and the Wolds Way attracted three questions and featured in two debates. Long-standing supporters of the facility raised issues, including Arthur Blenkinsop, Lord Merthyr and Lord Chorley. In a debate in the

1 HC Reports 1974-75 vol 873 cols 1804-20 (see also the section on the Wolds Way in Chapter 10 below.)
2 Ibid. col 1814. 3 Ibid. col 1815.
4 See the section on the Ridgeway in Chapter 10 below.
House of Lords on the Fifth Report of the Commission, Lord Chorley referred to long-distance routes as "one of the outstanding achievements of the Commission in the past, and I am glad to know it is still working on them." Chorley also made the point in the context of national parks which has come out strongly in this study in the context of long-distance paths, that successes had been the achievement of personalities (and he gave the example of John Foster), rather than administrative arrangements.

Parliamentary questions in the House of Commons required information on the mileages of route opened. Another in 1976 asked the Secretary of State whether he was satisfied that dangerous roads were being avoided by long-distance routes - Howell replied that the Commission in the first instance chose "suitable routes which are attractive and interesting" and that it did take regard to road safety, and he noted that the 1949 Act implied extensive use of roads should be avoided. Finally, in 1979, in an Adjournment Debate on footpaths in general, Kenneth Marks, the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, summarised progress on long-distance routes, with eleven opened and two "progressing well", continuing that "long distance walkers are generally well catered for." He noted that the Commission had changed its emphasis to other types of footpaths, including circular walks and links, and paths created on the initiative of local authorities and voluntary organisations, and he gave the example of the Calderdale Way.

3. DEVELOPMENT SPECIFIC TO LONG-DISTANCE PATHS

(a) The Commissioning of the Yapp Report

The statements in official reports and ministerial answers in Parliament reflected the change in the status of long-distance paths

1 HC Reports 1973 vol 342 vol 794.
as brought about by changes in Commission policy in the middle of the 1970s. This section examines these changes in detail.

The National Parks Commission had wished to become actively involved in other paths as well as long-distance routes and, with the Countryside Act and imminent changes in legislation which would be likely to allow the new Commission to widen its financial involvement in recreational facilities in the countryside, it seemed this would soon be the case. Moreover, the major reorganisation of the Commission staffing structure at the beginning of the 1970s made it desirable to set guidelines for further policies, including policies for the development of footpaths. These were the two main reasons put forward for the Commission to look critically at its policy for access. However, instead of reviewing the whole subject as one, it decided to look specifically at long-distance routes in the first instance - providing further evidence that the Commission still considered the facility to be an outstanding and special one.

A paper put to the Commission at the beginning of 1973 briefly reviewed a number of characteristics of long-distance routes which were to influence the terms of reference for the report subsequently commissioned. The paper recognised the variety of 'categories' of paths, including mountain and hill walks, rideways, coastal paths, and others (such as Offa's Dyke). It noted that the shortest so far approved was eighty miles (128 km) in length, and referred to the special problems which had become apparent in catering for long-distance riders. As may have been expected, given the shift in emphasis apparent from towards the end of the life of the National Parks Commission, it looked at management problems, including overnight accommodation noting that "There is a case for positive planning for the provision of hostels and other accommodation on LDRs"
It noted the provisions for waymarking, but conceded that the recently-published Pennine Way survey had found it inadequate. Finally and perhaps surprisingly, it pointed to "widespread ignorance about the existence of LDRs," and suggested "there is obvious scope for improved publicity, information and interpretive facilities." 1

The Commission agreed to appoint a consultant with the following terms of reference:

"To consider the needs of walkers, riders and cyclists for footpaths and bridleways of more than a local nature in the countryside of England and Wales; to examine how far the present system of long distance routes and associated facilities provided under Part IV of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 meets those needs; and to make recommendations eg with regard to routing, length, type of path, maintenance, wardens, information, accommodation, and car parks etc., bearing in mind the statutory and legal constraints. The report may contain suggestions for the amendment of legislation directly affecting the provision of these paths, and for the improvement of the existing procedures and machinery for creating long distance paths, so as to achieve quicker results." 2

In July 1973 W. Brunsdon Yapp was commissioned. Yapp was a member of the National Parks Commission from 1953 to 1966. He had written a useful report on The Weekend Motorist in the Lake District for the Commission in 1969. He had for a time chaired the Long-Distance Routes Committee of the old Commission and had a special interest in the provision. An impressive Steering Committee was appointed for him, comprising the Chairman and Director of the Commission and another former member of the national Parks Commission with a very strong association with long-distance routes - Francis Ritchie.

That the Commission had decided to consider long-distance routes separately, rather than reviewing all the provisions for walkers in the countryside, could be interpreted as holding considerable potential for the development of the provision in the future. The terms of reference were wide ranging and would allow for a comprehensive review and plan for the future. The quality of the

1 ibid.
2 Long-Distance Routes - A Report by W. Brunsdon Yapp OBE MA CC 1975, pl.
consultant and his steering committee would also seem to reinforce the standing of long-distance routes at this time.

Moreover, from 1969 to the middle of the 1970s new long-distance routes were being opened at the rate of one a year — with two in 1973 — and a considerable momentum had built up. The provision attracted an Adjournment Debate and the ministerial pronouncements during the debate, held in 1973, immediately after Yapp had been appointed, held great promise.

(b) The Yapp Report

Yapp received evidence from sixty-five groups and individuals, and produced the first draft of his report in August 1974. The draft accepted by the Commission was dated October 1974, and issued in December 1975. It ran to 109 pages.

Yapp considered in detail the semantics of his terms of reference. He concluded that the paths he was dealing with should be a minimum of twenty miles (32 km) in length to be "extensive," as called for in the 1949 Act and to have "more than local significance". He noted that the demand for such facilities was growing, but he concluded that estimates of demand for such a facility were impossible to quantify: "The only approach is to decide whether they are a good thing, and if they are to provide them and see what happens."

He considered the 'nature' of the facility, assessing the 'form' and the 'geography' of long-distance routes. He discussed at length the possibility of making routes in the form of loops and chains, or with deltas and spurs, or as circuits. Under 'geography' he classified possible types of routes as following mountains and hills, the coastline, the side of water, valleys and plains, or antiquities. He included sections on green lanes, and on disused railways, concurring with the Appleton report that they would seldom make good walking

1 ibid. p6.
routes, although he later commended the idea of long-distance paths along towpaths. Other types of routes he considered were urban long-distance paths and linking routes.

Having discussed the form and the geography of routes he then examined criteria for choosing the general line and determining the details of long-distance routes. Here we have the first detailed discussion of criteria for selecting long-distance routes, although Yapp's presentation is not very clear. He commences, illogically, with details moving later to general principles, and he suddenly introduces the idea of two classes of routes serving national and regional purposes respectively. Detailed criteria for National Routes given by Yapp can be summarised as follows:

(i) routes should be needed, with express demand or expectation of use;
(ii) they should be of adequate length ("in the order of 100 miles [110 km] minimum") - although the different forms, including the structure of a network, do complicate this;
(iii) they should be suitable for walking - Yapp felt too much had been made of the 'quality' of scenery of routes, which he felt was a matter of personal taste, and yet had been used by the Commission to reject potential routes. Quality of scenery should be taken into account in the detailed planning, but no so much at the earlier stages, Yapp maintained. Variety would very often be a more important criterion than quality of scenery;
(iv) routes should avoid easily-damaged surfaces, nature reserves, dangerous places and "spots of specially precious solitude". (Yapp dealt in detail with a number of specific points elsewhere in the report, including nature conservation, antiquities, and crowding and public pressure, and later in a section largely on the management of

1 Yapp op.cit. pp33-4.
routes he examined in some detail the types of surfaces for paths, including vegetation);

(v) they should include a fair proportion of existing rights of way, and the whole line should be chosen to minimise interference with agriculture;

(vi) consideration should be given to 'feeder routes' from population centres and places of access - this is not really a criterion, although Yapp summarised it as such.

For Regional Routes, demand would be the most important criterion, and most of the routes would be on existing rights of way.

Yapp then went on to examine the machinery for creating routes. In his first draft, he was extremely scathing about the Commission's record with this, and even in the watered-down final version he was adamant that the Commission should pay less heed to landed groups; if it felt that there was a good case for creating a facility, it should proceed with it. He maintained that, in the case of the Two Moors Way (described later) the Country Landowners Association (CLA) and the Timber Growers Organisation had exerted pressure and this had been a major reason for the Commission abandoning its plans. Yapp felt the Minister's position in the procedures to create long-distance routes was sufficient to safeguard the landed interests.

The report worked through the logic of the consultation procedure. Yapp concluded that, on balance, individual landowners should not be consulted at the planning stage, and it followed that it would be impracticable to consult local branches of the landowners' and farming groups. The corollary of this was that local branches of the users' groups should not be consulted either, although the headquarters of each type of group could be consulted in general terms with experience showing whether that would work or not.

1 ibid. p37.
2 ibid. pp38-40.
From this, Yapp concluded that a more general line should be devised by the Commission for a new route than was at present the case, with more flexibility for variation of the line of the route during negotiation, although later this seems to mean the giving of a number of alternative lines where this is possible. This development was in fact not thought through properly by Yapp, although it would have made a very useful contribution to the concept of planning new paths in general.

The report stressed the problems perceived by landowners and farmers, and a later section of the report dealt with the education of townspeople likely to use the routes. Yapp concluded that many problems in the past had resulted from the lack of understanding of the desires and needs of the two sides.

The report highlighted the delays in implementing routes in the past and Yapp examined the papers of the National Parks Commission to find the reasons for delays, isolating fourteen reasons:

1. the lack of completed definitive footpath maps;
2. uncertainties about a motorway or engineering problems;
3. difficulties finding ownership of land;
4. shortage of competent staff in district councils;
5. lack of will on the part of the district councils;
6. local authorities in dispute with a landowner over another matter, which tied up negotiations for the long-distance route;
7. refusal of a district council to do anything;
8. owners refusing to make a footpath agreement;
9. complicated legal situations with landownership;
10. the agents of landowners causing unnecessary delays;
11. landowners insisting on bartering, for example, the closure of a path in exchange for the creation of another;

1 ibid. p68.
(xii) difficulties over compensation (Yapp later considered this at length);
(xiii) most importantly, "the express and known intention of the Commission not to urge local authorities to make Orders or to ask the Minister to use his default powers, if it can possibly be avoided. All the other reasons listed above would fall down if Orders were made."
(xiv) Ministerial refusal to confirm an Order.

Yapp stressed a point surprisingly not highlighted before during the development of long-distance routes: that Parliament had willed the creation of the facility and given powers of default and compulsion, meaning that they should be used if necessary. Yapp was highly critical that these powers had not been used, and he was particularly critical of the Commission and the Ministers.

Later Yapp went on to draw a strong analogy between long-distance routes and trunk roads, pointing out that both were now the responsibility of the Secretary of State for the Environment. The main difference, according to Yapp, was in the time taken to create the two sorts of highways - 15 to 20 years for a long-distance route as opposed to three or four years for a trunk road. He highlighted the timetable built into the legislation for creating trunk roads - and, in fact, suggested that existing sections of the 1959 and later Highways Acts could be in theory used at present to create long-distance routes in a similar way.

He then tied several of his strands together, proposing a scheme for the creation of long-distance routes akin to that for trunk roads:

1 ibid. pp55-6.
2 ibid. p57.
(i) the Commission should consult local authorities and other official bodies, then publish its proposal for a new long-distance route;
(ii) if new rights of way were required, alternative lines should be given if possible;
(iii) a fixed period should be provided for public discussion;
(iv) provisional Orders would be made;
(v) if Orders were opposed a Public Inquiry would be held;
(vi) the Secretary of State would give his decision and confirm such Orders as necessary;
(vii) compensation would be paid;
(viii) in the case of (ii) to (vii) there would be a time limit - Yapp suggested two to three years.

Yapp did not give alternative schemes, although earlier he had noted that various amenity groups had called for the Countryside Commission to adopt executive powers and be the body responsible for negotiating new rights of way for national long-distance routes. Yapp had considered this to be "an attractive proposal", but because it did not fit into the above procedure, he did not recommend it.

The report continued, to discuss grant-aiding, recommending that the 100% grant continue for national routes and Yapp discussed at length maintenance and other management issues, such as accommodation and wardening.

Finally, Yapp examined 'The Choice of Routes' making proposals for an "integrated pattern of non-local paths for England and Wales." He noted that, of fifty proposals put to the Commission from outside bodies, it was actively considering about five. Yapp himself had some three to four dozen other routes drawn to his attention. He noted that, because of the ad hoc way in which these were proposed, no

1 ibid. p76.
pattern emerged, and he was very keen that these should be put in a master plan for the future development of a network of routes.

"The national LDR should, in my opinion, be planned as a network, so that it is possible, starting from any point on one of them to reach any point on each of the others." 1

This seems to contradict Yapp's earlier agreement with the Ramblers Association that "every LDR should have a special purpose or theme, whether following a natural feature or an antiquity, or in relation to a catchment." Moreover, he himself had recommended that each national route should have its own distinctive waymark, in place of the acorn which was sponsored by the Commission.

Earlier he had said:

"There is a case for more, but perhaps not very many more routes, of the same order of length as the existing LDRs. However, from the evidence submitted to me, it appears that for the most part the demand is for extensions and connections to existing routes, so as to form something of a network, rather than for completely new and independent routes." 2

Indeed, the Ramblers Association in its submission did request "the completing of the present network of long distance paths by some judicious and carefully planned new LDPs," but it had stressed:

"The LDP network is not a motorway network. Its utility does not depend on the interlinking of paths which constitute it. But it is clear that there is a demand from those who especially appreciate walking long distance paths over extended periods (e.g. a two week holiday) for routes which interlink." 3

In fact, this demand from the Ramblers Association came largely because a number of the new routes being proposed by regional groups of the Ramblers Association did link with existing routes, such as the Ribble Way, or were designed to link together in a long string of paths—such as a route which it was hoped would reach down the whole of the east coast of England. The resulting in a network was of minimal importance and the Association was keen to see individual character retained for each route. It went on to say that "the

1 ibid. 2 ibid. p26. 3 ibid. p32. 4 Long Distance Paths - Submission by the Ramblers Association to the Countryside Commission Review January 1974, p2.
creation of routes simply as links in a network regardless of the inherent quality of the walking provided is to be deprecated."

In fact, Yapp swung even further towards the concept of a totally linked network when he considered his proposals for a future plan. He wanted complete flexibility for the long-distance walker and the possibility that England and Wales could be crossed in various directions from coast to coast:

"I recommend that the Commission should, as a matter of priority, plan a complete network of national LDRs, and should cease to take routes into their programme on an ad hoc basis. Those that they are at present working on should be abandoned if they do not fit into an overall pattern." 2

Routes proposed were illustrated on a map, which in fact bore some resemblance to one published in the Fourth Report of the National Park Commission in 1953, showing routes which were being planned and possible future routes. The reason for any similarity was that both maps had included several of the chalk ridges in the south of the country. A main difference, however, was in the extension of routes to the coast - the Pennine Way, for example, was extended south and then south-west in Yapp's scheme to terminate at Lyme Bay on the south coast. Yapp also proposed that a path be created as a long-distance route around the whole of the coast of England and Wales. Other routes which he proposed included paths along rivers and paths encircling all large towns - although most of these (with the exception of that encircling London) were considered Regional Routes.

(c) Yapp - a consideration

The Yapp report is a strange document. It contains much of interest and much stimulating discussion on long-distance routes, and many aspects of the facility were put forward for the first time in print in the Report, such as the comprehensive study of the delays in implementation and the criteria. However, the Report was far too

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1 ibid. p3.
2 Yapp & Sh pp76-7.
3 ibid. p99.
4 NPC Fourth Report (1953) Between pp16-17, reproduced as Map 1.
academic and the Commission complained that it was far too long. It was also very unclear in places, and had it been rewritten, half its length, with more structure, it would have made a much more useful document.

It became confusing in its distinction between National and Regional Routes for, while this was a useful distinction to make for paths with a significant non-local use, the Report considered both as long-distance routes under the terms of the Act, with the proposal that the Commission supervise the creation and maintenance of Regional Routes, with the Secretary of State delegating powers of approval to the Commission. Had this ever been politically feasible, it would have put an intolerable strain on the Commission, even if only a few of the Regional Routes proposed by Yapp had come about.

The Report failed to follow through the distinction implied between the planning of a general line for a route and the specific right of way. It went off at tangents, tilting at windmills and discussing points such as compensation and footpath surfaces in considerable and unnecessary detail for such a report. Having looked at different types of 'form' a route could take, it did not pursue this, concentrating on the traditional linear path woven into a network.

Yapp failed to grasp properly the importance of the individuality of long-distance routes, which had been their main characteristic. Although he did agree at one point that routes should have some individuality of purpose, he became carried away with the concept of an interlinking network, denigrating the fact that routes had been: "The product of local enthusiasm... which will never produce a satisfactory system of LDRs." As this present study has seen, throughout all their history it has been the individuality and 'character' of routes which has made them such a popular facility.

\[1\text{Yapp op.cit. p}\text{81.}\]
allowing them to survive crises and retain their considerable status within the recreational planning framework of the country. Indeed, the main reason for their popularity and success as an idea has been that they were associated with men like Tom Stephenson, rather than being facilities dreamed up by planners. Yapp was now proposing that the Commission's planners set to to "organise a network".

The reality of the mid 1970s was not faced by Yapp, either. He seems to have assumed limitless funds and manpower available to the Commission. While he did propose a procedure for implementing routes which could have improved the situation, in fact it is unlikely that it would have resulted in a smaller workload, particularly if public inquiries had to be prepared for. There was certainly no proposal for dealing systematically with potential new routes.

One of the main problems seems to have been Yapp's seduction by what saw as the great similarity between long-distance routes and trunk roads, an analogy of limited usefulness. Certainly as far as procedures for implementing routes went, more attention to the timetable built into the legislation which applied to trunk roads could have proved useful, but so far as planning for the use of long-distance routes as a network the comparison with the trunk road network was meaningless.

The Report proposed a radical change in the Commission's thinking on long-distance routes, widening its programme to a considerable degree, and, one may say, debasing the traditional long-distance route. It did not give alternative suggestions for strategies for the Commission which would have been useful, and Yapp's sweeping changes, such as those involving the Secretary of State's role in the implementation of routes - were highly unlikely to succeed. The financial implications were unreasonable, for it would put such a
strain on the Commission’s resources – at a time when other projects were demanding a share.

The Report did not give the Commission a clear way ahead and many of the detailed recommendations in the Report were either unattractive or clearly impracticable for the Commission. In fact, so far as the Countryside Commission was concerned, the Yapp Report was an embarrassment.

(d) The Response to the Yapp Report

In late 1974 the Commission had considered a draft of the Report and decided it could not publish it because parts were unacceptable. It made suggestions for the deletion or softening of "provocative or potentially contentious remarks" and, in fact Yapp was able to agree to some of the changes, and amendments were made to no less than twenty-seven pages. Where originally the Commission had given the commissioning of the report considerable publicity and it had intended to make the report public it now proposed that the report be circulated only to those bodies directly concerned with long-distance routes who had submitted evidence to Yapp. Furthermore, the Commission was to wait for over a year until December 1975, after its draft policy paper on footpaths had been produced, before circulating the report. It also appended a two-page preface.

This preface noted that the Commission found the report “of great value in provoking thought and discussion” and claimed that some of the ideas had been incorporated into its policy paper. However, it asserted that the financial opportunities of the Local Government Act of 1974 had changed the situation, making the Commission review the topic somewhat differently than Yapp had done. In fact, it expressed surprise that Yapp had felt "constrained by his terms of reference" to concentrate on long-distance routes, and not respond to changes that

1 Confirmed by Commission officials and others.
3 74/237, December 1974.
4 Yapp op.cit.
were made possible by the Act, despite the fact that the changes had been known before the terms of reference for the study were drawn up, and Yapp did indeed refer to the Act. This did, however, make it easier for the Commission to explain its relative inaction over Yapp.

According to the preface, the Commission specifically rejected Yapp's inclusion of relatively short routes as potential long-distance routes and also rejected the recommendations that priority should be given to a national network of routes: "The Commission do not accept this concept as a valid long term objective." The analogy with the roads system was also rejected, as was the idea of making a path around the coast and paths around towns long-distance routes. The Commission pointed out that it was unlikely that resources on the scale needed to implement Yapp's proposals would be available.

It is probably true to say that the report did stimulate thought, and the report on the Cambrian Way by Ray Woolmore, referred to later, perhaps benefitted from Yapp's pioneering consideration of criteria for long-distance routes. Moreover, it is possible that Yapp's proposals for the implementation of routes through the use of ministerial orders influenced Cripps in his pressing for inclusion of a new procedure for the creation of long-distance routes in the context of legislation being drawn up towards the end of the 1970s.

Yapp's discussion of types of surfaces for paths and his general points about the management of routes also contributed to the development of ideas on these topics in relation to footpaths in general at this time.

However, the Yapp Report was a unique opportunity for the development of the idea of long-distance routes, but it came to virtually nothing. No action seems to have been taken on any of the twenty-one recommendations. It caused a pause in the Commission's
programme for long-distance routes while the results of the study were considered and the Commission decided what to do next in relation to the facility; but instead of the Report giving a clear way forward, injecting new life into the programme, the Commission found itself with an embarrassing academic report, critical of them and other bodies, but with a lack of realistic proposals and pointers.

The reaction to the Report from other quarters was muted, and very much overshadowed by the Commission's policy on Footpaths for Recreation. The Ramblers Association felt Yapp's proposals for a new method of creating long-distance routes, akin to the process used for new trunk roads, was "a splendid idea". However,

"The Yapp Report generally is one which the Ramblers Association would be a lot more enthusiastic about if we did not have the sneaking suspicion that the Countryside Commission ... have shelved the whole thing and have relegated long distance paths to a much lower position in their list of priorities."1

(d) The Commission's Consideration of Footpaths

The Association's suspicion was well-founded, and in fact the Commission had made its mind up about long-distance routes and its future policy well before that statement was written and indeed well before it offered the Yapp Report for consultation.

In April 1973 the Commission had issued broad guidelines for priorities in its work. This coincided with changes in the staffing structure of the Commission which, as previously noted, caused the disbanding of the separate section for long-distance routes. In the guidelines, no specific references were made to long-distance routes and it was clear that a strong case would have to be made to ensure that these would continue to feature prominently in the Commission's programme. So far as access was concerned, the Commission's priority would be "The rapid provision of more facilities for informal

1 Rucksack vol 8,5, Spring 1976, p18.
countryside recreation where they are most needed."¹ Long-distance routes were generally near the end of the spectrum furthest away from where the Commission's major concentration was to be. They were usually designed as low-impact facilities, for relatively small numbers of users, compared with the sort of provision which was now considered a priority, and they were most often away from centres of population where the demand for facilities was the greatest.

Nevertheless, there were still a number of signs which suggested that the Commission was prepared to make long-distance routes a special case. Firstly, the decision to commission a report exclusively on long-distance routes had allowed a strong case to be made and for the facility to retain its strong and unique position. Secondly, in 1974 the Director of the Commission had walked a section of the Pennine Way, and, as will be discussed later, this had convinced him of the worth of the "quality experience" which could be derived from such provisions. Thirdly, also in 1974, the Commission responded to the new powers available to it under the Local Government Act by issuing a circular to local authorities explaining its likely position on grant-aiding. This gave long-distance routes fair prominence, promising a continuing of full reimbursement of expenditure. Other paths would be likely to be able to attract grant aid, but long-distance routes were classified as "a high priority", including hostels and information services relating to them.²

The immediate positive response to long-distance routes points to the fact that in the latter part of 1974 the Commission still continued to view the facility as a special one. However, the problem with the Yapp Report changed this, with no realistic recommendations for developing the programme for long-distance routes in the report and with the embarrassments over the document itself. Commission staff seem to have decided that they could no longer justify concentrating

¹ ibid.
resources on the development of new routes as it had in the past. The facility had lost its opportunity for special treatment in the future policy and would now be treated as just one part of the Commission's overall strategy for access.

In July 1975 a paper was prepared for the Commission which considered "Footpaths". It highlighted the enormous value of footpaths as a recreational resource in the countryside and recommended that much more attention be given to them, their management and maintenance. It adopted the term 'Recreational Path', which was used by the Department of the Environment in its Advisory Notes on Structure Plans, and it recommended that well thought out strategies for systems of footpaths be developed at both county and district level. The paper further recommended that several objectives be adopted to enhance the value of footpaths in the countryside and it spelt out types of schemes where the Commission should give grant-aid. These included "recreational paths of more than local significance", and examples were given which in some cases were similar to Yapp's 'Regional Long Distance Routes'.

Long-distance routes were treated separately in the paper and Hookway's experience on the Pennine Way is reflected in the following paragraph:

"The justification for the Commission's continued involvement in creating and maintaining routes lies not in the quantity of use but in the quality of recreational experience for individuals; the opportunities for people to spend several days walking through some of the finest countryside and remotest areas. The Commission is concerned with the conservation of beauty in these special areas and also with promoting their enjoyment. The value of long-distance routes for extensive recreation, consistent with conservation of the character of these areas, cannot be judged by the same criteria used for assessing the value of intensive recreational areas, easily accessible by car. The Commission should be closely identified with the quality of recreation as well as quality of landscape. Also these routes were initiated by them. Therefore they have a special obligation that they are well maintained and managed and provided with adequate facilities to
enable them to be fully used for the primary use for which they were created under the Act. This itself has become a major task."

The paper noted how the situation had changed since the 1949 Act, claiming that long-distance walkers were now well provided, with 1499 miles (2413 km) of complete or approved long-distance routes and with a diversity and choice of official routes, "as well as publicised unofficial routes and routes of their own devising." It continued that: "There is little evidence of over-use of long-distance routes for the extensive journeys, is the purpose for which they were created."

This emphasis on the management of routes was an important one. In its guidelines for priorities published in 1973 and referred to previously concentration had been focussed on "the enhancement of the quality of new and existing recreational facilities by encouraging higher standards of maintenance and design," and increasing attention had been put on the management of long-distance routes. In its paper on 'Footpaths' there were recommendations that no change be made in giving long-distance routes the "highest priority" (in terms of 100% grant aid) but that concentration should now be on:

(i) the completion of routes already officially opened and/or approved;
(ii) improved monitoring, management and maintenance of established routes; and
(iii) the provision of accommodation to ensure the full use of routes.

The paper recognised that some minor additions might be necessary to the existing system, such as alternatives in heavily used sections of existing routes, but the paper recommended that these be created as Recreation Paths, rather than by using the "cumbersome procedures of the 1949 Act".

1 ibid. paras 10-11.
3 75/104 op.cit.
"Apart from the routes already under consideration, low priority must be given to proposals for further long distance routes in view of their need to devote increasing effort and resources to the management and maintenance of existing routes over the next few years."

Nonetheless, the paper went on to propose significant changes in the Commission's procedures for planning future long-distance routes. It recommended that in some areas access agreements be planned as more appropriate than footpaths, and that in popular areas "the need may be to disperse use rather than increase concentration along a particular route." Of more importance, refuting the idea that long-distance routes could be planned in isolation, the paper suggested that:

"At the early stages of planning, more consideration will be given in future to planning the route in relation to regional footpath strategies eg as contained in National Park Plans."

The outstanding routes on which it seemed the Commission would proceed as a 'high priority' were discussed. The Cambrian Way, which "would undoubtedly function as a popular LDR, on the evidence of use of the Pennine Way", had such complex problems that it was recommended that it be dealt with as three separate routes. Sections through Snowdonia and the Brecon Beacons National Parks would be developed as part of the footpath strategies for the Parks, contributing to the objectives of the National Park Plans.

The Wolds Way (which, it noted, could have been "a Recreational Path of Regional Significance", rather than a formal long-distance route) and the extension to the South Downs Way were at the stage of statutory consultation. Norfolk County Council had done a considerable amount of work on their proposed Peddars Way and Norfolk Coastal Paths, but the suggestion was made that the County Council consider these being progressed as Recreational Paths, which would ensure that they be dealt with more quickly for the purpose of grant.

1 Ibid. para 32.
Finally, it was noted that little progress had been recorded on the Dartmoor Way and it was recommended that in the National Park the status of the route be reconsidered and the route proceeded with (probably as a Recreational Path) in the light of the footpath strategy for the National Park as set out in the Park Plan.

The paper asserted that some of Yapp's suggestions had been incorporated into the ideas expressed in the paper but recommended that the Commission reject the concept of a national network of long-distance routes as being:

"invalid even as a long term objective....Use of long distance routes does not depend on their interlinking; and an analogy with the motorway or national roads system is inappropriate. Apart from this, the Commission could not consider any significant extension of its long-distance programme with its present resources and constraints."\(^1\)

Finally, in the context of Yapp's detailed criticisms of procedures for consultations and the implementation of routes, the paper conceded that the strategy for consulting individually with a large number of landowner and farmers in the case of the Wolds Way was clearly unsatisfactory. It acknowledged the criticisms from user groups and the Minister about delays in implementing routes, but stated: "These criticisms can be refuted in that no supporting evidence of urgent public need has ever been produced to justify greater resources being devoted to this work by local authorities." However, it did recommend that the Department of the Environment should be involved in consultations to see what changes if any should be made, and whether changes would be needed in the legislation. These were questions which Yapp had been appointed to answer, but there was no reference here to his proposals.

\(^1\) ibid. para 33.
(f) Footpaths for Recreation

The Commission accepted the recommendations in this paper, and a consultation document based on it was produced and circulated. It gained widespread support, particularly from the user groups, and little criticism of changes proposed for the programme for long-distance routes was made. In the issue of Rucksack following the one quoted above, where Alan Mattingly had expressed the "sneaking suspicion" that the Yapp Report was about to be shelved, the Secretary of the Ramblers Association had written:

"In the last issue of Rucksack I suggested that the Countryside Commission may have 'relegated long distance paths to a much lower position in their list of priorities'. What I neglected to say was that I largely agree with their reasons for doing so, with the proviso that they should bring to a speedy conclusion the projects (like the Wolds Way) which they already have in hand and should deal expeditiously with problems which arise in LDPs which are now open... It would seem to be a misdirection of resources to develop an interlinked national network of LDPs as recommended in the Yapp Report."  

This was in spite of the lengthy submission on long-distance routes submitted to Yapp and in fact the Ramblers Association, when it was formally consulted on the draft statement by the Commission on 'Footpaths for Recreation', had expressed considerable agreement with the Commission, clarifying only a few points, and making no comment on the major implications for long-distance routes.

It was difficult to argue against the Commission's case and there was now no individual in a position of strength who would champion the cause of long-distance routes. So far as the outdoor movement was concerned, the prospect of the development of other footpaths was very exciting. Nevertheless, when the Commission did publish the final version of its policy statement, the media did take special note that long-distance routes had been relegated.

2 Rucksack vol 8.6, Summer 1976, pl1.
3 Footpaths for Recreation - Comments by the Ramblers Association 1976.
The Commission's Footpaths for Recreation - A Policy Statement was published in October 1976 and the Commission itself recorded the importance of the policy document as "something of a landmark in the history of public rights of way." In content it was similar to that presented to the Commission fourteen months earlier, although it did differ in detail. In the paragraph dealing with special quality of long-distance routes, for instance, the analogy with the Commission's concerns with areas of special landscape value was included, but the published document continued: "Where local use is negligible and recreation use brings few obvious advantages to the local community, local authorities cannot be expected to give high priority without appropriate assistance from central government." Presumably extra justification was thought necessary for the continuation of 100% grant aid for long-distance routes.

'Recreational Paths of more than local significance' were now called 'Major Recreational Paths'. These would seem to merge with the less strenuous long-distance routes, although:

"The aim would be to provide walks of varying length, including circular walks, which are attractive to the casual day visitor and short distance walker ... some of the most attractive routes for short as well as longer walks follow broadly linear geographic features, such as ridges, coasts, canals and rivers. Loops off these paths could provide for a variety of circular walks. Some major Recreational Paths could themselves provide links or loops with long distance routes in the most popular easily accessible areas." 3

The section on long-distance routes had been shortened, and significantly the reference to 'highest priority' for approved routes was omitted. It had in fact been misleading for this phrase had referred to the 100% grant aiding. The policy document nevertheless confirmed that grant-aiding would continue as before, but in rather more bland terms: "No change is proposed in the arrangements to defray the cost of approved expenditure on the creation and maintenance of

1 CCP 99 dated September 1976. CCP 100 was an explanatory memorandum on grants.
3 CCP 99 op.cit. paras 22-3.
long distance routes." It was noted that low priority would be given to any future long-distance routes ("over the next few years"). There is no note of the routes being worked on by the Commission as there had been in the paper, although references were still made to routes in the context of area footpath strategies and to access agreements being a suitable way of implementing parts of long-distance paths.

There had been developments in the examination of the delays in creating routes, following discussions with the Department of the Environment, and the policy document stated:

"The main cause of delay is probably the low priority attached to the implementation of proposals by some local authorities, and the lack of skilled staff available for the work. The Commission consider that skilled project officers, employed by local authorities, are needed and this must be accepted as part of the cost of providing long-distance routes if these are to be completed more quickly than in the past." 1

(g) The Commission's Procedures for Long-Distance Routes

The Commission had now just one outstanding item in its policy for long-distance routes. It had, at an early stage, agreed to continue 100% grant aid for routes and to keep financial considerations as before. It had set long-distance routes in the context of footpaths in general in its Footpaths for Recreation, publishing its intention to proceed with any new long-distance route as a low priority. This had obviated the necessity to work out official criteria for selecting routes, for it envisaged that the remaining few ideas to which it was committed would occupy all the available resources for years to come. The third consideration, and that not resolved in the policy document, was the actual procedure that the Commission would adopt in producing reports on long-distance routes for the Secretary of State.

In January, 1977, the Director of the Commission prepared a paper for the Commission outlining alternative procedures for consultations. 2

1 ibid. para 30.
2 77/35.
He listed three possible strategies: the first going by the letter of the law and involving only consultations with local authorities; the second continuing the current practice, which by now had evolved to take in consultations with over a dozen other organisations as well as carrying out the statutory consultations; and the third involving "fully comprehensive consultations."

Hookway went over some of the ground examined by Yapp, and both concluded that there was no satisfactory halfway house - either consultations must be strictly limited, so as not to bog the Commission down in individual negotiations, as had been the case with the Wolds Way, or they must be comprehensive. Yapp had felt that on balance it was better to limit consultation; Hookway came to the opposite conclusion.

He had begun his paper by suggesting that procedures may have become unsatisfactory, and he noted that:

"It is current policy to stress the importance of public participation in areas of central and local government activity where planning and allied issues are under consultation. The practice is now commonplace but hardly existed when the 1949 Act was drafted."

He conceded that there were safeguards in the statutory consultations and in the Highways Acts but stressed a point which never previously carried weight, namely that the designation of long-distance routes may increase the usage of existing rights of way and that land-owners ought to have a chance to comment on this. He noted that some such consultations did take place at present and to go back on this procedure would attract adverse publicity. Finally, he reiterated the point that the goodwill of landowners and farmers was essential for the successful implementation and functioning of long-distance routes, and that consultation at an early stage may help with this.

A six-point procedure was recommended, although, again, there was no

1 ibid. para 10.
hint of a consideration of the steps leading up to the choosing a route for study. The points were:

(i) the Commission would indicate the alignment of a route on a small scale map such as 1:250,000;
(ii) consultations would ensue, and more detailed maps would be compiled;
(iii) statements would be publicised and 1:50,000 maps would be desposited for public consultation;
(iv) reactions to this consultation would be incorporated into a further step in which routes would be drawn on maps at a scale of 1:25,000, for informal discussions with local authorities and landowners where new rights of way would be involved;
(v) after this, formal consultations would take place, again with the public invited to inspect plans and comment;
(vi) consideration of the various responses would be followed by the submission of a report to the appropriate Secretary of State.

The Commission itself would review the plan at each stage.

These procedures were agreed to and the redefined procedures were given publicity by the Commission. In its Tenth Report it stated:

"We have revised the administrative procedures leading up to our submission of report proposals for long distance routes to the appropriate Secretary of State. The revised procedure will take account of increased public interest in these routes, and will allow for greater public participaration in their preparation."

Nevertheless, at this time only three potential routes were in the Commission's programme, one of which, the extension to the South Downs Way, was soon dropped. This left the Norfolk Paths and the Cambrian Way although it had been decided to deal with the latter as three separate projects.

The paper had concluded by reminding the Commission about the concerns expressed over the management of existing long-distance paths: that this in itself would take up much of the Commission's energies at national and local level.

It was, in fact, not expected that the procedures for planning "low priority" new routes would be much used, and it could be argued that the Commission was tidying up and rationalising its policy after the event.

4. CONCLUSION

Despite the creation of a new Commission and the enactment of the Countryside Act, 1968 was not a particularly significant threshold so far as long-distance routes were concerned. In fact, changes made in 1966 in anticipation of new legislation had had far more effect, on the positive side increasing manpower and allowing a separate Long-Distance Routes Section to be created, and on the negative side changing the composition of the old Commission to the exclusion of known supporters of long-distance routes and focusing attention on a much wider area of interest than national parks, AONB's and long-distance routes which had in essence been the Commission's interest up to that time.

The next major changes came in the early 1970s, with the passing of Local Government Acts. The first of these reorganised local government, causing considerable disruption to the programme for long-distance routes and the second, in 1974, changed legislation directly relating to long-distance routes and had a fundamental effect on the functioning of the Countryside Commission. It replaced specific countryside grants, paid on the recommendation of the Commission, by block grants, which could apply to a whole range of new projects, including footpaths other than long-distance routes. In doing this,
it repealed Section 98 of the 1949 Act, the section which had made long-distance routes unique ensuring 100% grant aid for their creation and maintenance.

Also at the beginning of the 1970s, coinciding with the Commission's move to Cheltenham from London, was a reappraisal of the work of the Commission, which left the organisation more involved in promotion and advisory work than before. This reappraisal led to an examination of the question of footpaths in the countryside, and the Commission appointed Brunsdon Yapp to report on possible future developments of a long-distance routes programme. This and other pieces of evidence point to long-distance routes being given every chance to retain their special place at this time, as does the Commission's swift publication of its intention to retain 100% grant aiding for the facility once the implications of the second Local Government Bill became known. However, as has been discussed at length, the Yapp Report proved to be unsatisfactory in many ways, and did not give the Commission clear and realistic options for the future.

Without a clear policy or justification for continuing its programme to develop new long-distance routes, it was inevitable that they became considered as part of the whole question of footpath and access matters. The Commission therefore formulated a policy for stimulating the development of all kinds of footpaths in the future, and, as long-distance routes were a relatively well-developed part of the footpaths spectrum, the facility inevitably lost its prominent position and future development of new long-distance paths was officially categorised as "low priority". Attention was switched to Recreational Paths, shorter paths mainly in places where it would be expected that use would be greatest. This new policy was published in
Footpaths for Recreation in 1976, which also highlighted and formalised the growing stress being put on the management of facilities. Indeed, the management of existing long-distance routes, including their maintenance, development of facilities and promotion, received "high priority" status. Routes in the pipeline were also to be treated as "high priority", although once the momentum had been lost in the Commission's programme for new routes, there is no sign that the routes already being considered by the Commission were treated as high priority.

Throughout the period, outside interest in long-distance routes continued, in fact growing significantly during much of the lifetime of the Commission. This growth did influence the Commission's decisions, although its new emphasis on footpaths in general deflected much of the attention which the amenity groups had hitherto placed on long-distance routes. There was, in fact, general acceptance of the Commission's change in policy and later criticism of the Commission, particularly from the Ramblers Association, was made because it felt that insufficient attention was being paid to projects for recreational provision and that the concentration of the Commission had shifted to promotional and advisory work and conservation matters, at the expense of recreational schemes. Although the reduction of attention paid to long-distance paths was sometimes given as an example of this shift in emphasis, there was little opposition to the decision that resources should be diverted from developing new long-distance routes to developing other sorts of paths, particularly those on the urban fringes and in national parks and other intensively used areas. Various factions did continue to press for the establishment of particular new routes, but it was generally agreed that the provision of formal routes was more or less adequate by the middle of

1 Although the Ramblers Association has periodically urged the Commission to continue and latterly to expand its programme for new long-distance routes.
the 1970s, in view of the routes by that time opened, approved, or in the pipeline and the new opportunities for creating Recreational Paths. Indeed, the availability of this new type of path which the Commission could grant-aid was important, partly because of the recognition that, as used, the machinery for the creation of long-distance routes contained in the 1949 Act was "cumbersome" and extremely prolonged, whereas swifter progress was likely with Recreational Paths.

Parliament continued to show interest in the facility, and there were three Adjournment Debates relating to long-distance routes in the period as well as several questions and other references. There were other references in three important official reports, the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Sport and Leisure, the Government's White Paper on the same subject, and the Expenditure Committee's Report on National Parks and the Countryside and in these long-distance routes were generally accepted as being a good provision although their authors refrained from commenting in much depth on such routes because the Commission's reaction to its consultant's report on the subject was awaited.

These reports also vindicated the existence of the Commission itself as a separate agency, because of its unique and valuable role in the field of conservation and the provision of opportunities for informal countryside recreation. This conclusion was very important to long-distance routes because of the essential role of the Commission in their development. The Commission survived the attempts of the new Conservative Government after 1979 to reduce the number of 'Quangos' and indeed it finally received its independence from the Department of the Environment in April 1982 as a result of the Conservatives' Wildlife and Countryside Act.
Although it may be too late for this development to have any bearing on the provision of long-distance routes, the relationship of the Commission to the Ministry has nonetheless been important. In fact, throughout the life of both Commissions it was felt by groups such as the Ramblers Association that the calibre of some of the staff of the Commission was not as high as it could have been, a weakness that was blamed on the fact that staff were seconded from the Ministry. It was felt that the situation might improve with the creation of the new Department of the Environment in 1971, and in fact the Commission welcomed its creation, commending its initial enthusiasm for countryside matters. However, it very soon found itself at loggerheads with the Department, commenting just two years later in the context of the reconstruction of the A66 trunk road through the northern part of the Lake District, that the Department's actions:

"revealed profound differences of opinion between ourselves and the Department.... We conclude that the Department got their priorities disastrously wrong. They pursued a simplistic highway solution to a complex traffic and environmental problem; the result will be a permanent monument to insensitivity towards superb scenery." 2

Frictions with the Department did not help the Commission's programmes of activity, although the Government was committed to assisting the Commission with extra staff to match its increased responsibilities, and the numbers of staff did increase during the period. The old Commission had employed 43 in 1965 and this number rose to 67 at the beginning of the life of the Countryside Commission. It continued to rise to 86 in 1971 and to 124 in 1977. This increase could have had a major impact on the programme for long-distance routes and in fact it did help for a time. However, the 1968 Act and other measures all greatly added to the workload of the new Commission, with development casework and statutory planning policies

to review and advise upon, and the Commission also became involved in a proliferation of committees and other bodies. Moreover the workforce declined from the end of the 1970s - to 98 in 1982, with the Secretary of State requiring a reduction to 93 by the end of 1983.

The Department of the Environment invited the Commission to make suggestions to be incorporated into new legislation, and there were attempts made to improve the law relating to long-distance paths. The recommendations of the Yapp Report were not accepted by the Commission, although the Commission itself did put forward revolutionary proposals for modification of the legislation, which would have created approved long-distance routes by way of Ministerial Orders following Public Inquiries, if necessary. These proposals were not accepted by either main party in Parliament, when the Countryside Bill or the later Wildlife and Countryside Bill were being considered. In fact, by the time the proposal was being put forward, the Commission had already relegated new long-distance paths to being "low priority", there were very few routes in the pipeline and there is no evidence of the proposals being seriously promoted.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act became law in 1981, and some of its provisions, such as the extension of warden services and the improvement in legislation regarding rights of way and definitive footpath maps, could have had an effect on long-distance routes, although by the time it was enacted the programme had slowed down to almost a halt.

There was much interesting discussion as to the nature of long-distance routes during the period, in the Yapp report and elsewhere, in particular in the Commission's own report on the Cambrian Way, and criteria implicit in the devising of routes can be seen in various statements. Moreover, in 1977 the Commission worked through the

procedures for planning long-distance routes, and adopted a refined procedure for future routes, although, again, by this time, most of the momentum of the programme had gone. Because the programme lost its momentum so early, there was little need to make decisions concerning new routes to be added to those being considered by the Commission, despite the fact that the routes in the Hobhouse Report, dominant up to the life of the Countryside Commission, were now mostly adopted.

The changes described and the major watershed in the middle years of the 1970s give the background for the programme for long-distance routes, a programme which built up a considerable momentum in the first years of the Commission, as new routes at last came to fruition, but which, perhaps inevitably, succumbed to the pressures both within and outwith the programme in the middle 1970s. Pressures within the programme will be seen in the next chapter and growing opposition to a number of the Commission's schemes, while the pressures from outside included those mounting up from the early 1960s which were working against facilities being planned as ends in themselves. Because of this, long-distance routes at last succumbed to being considered as part of the whole subject of footpaths in the countryside and were therefore submerged in a much larger programme, in which, being relatively well-developed by the midle of the 1970s, the creation of new routes lost its priority. In addition, there were pressures to put more emphasis on the management of facilities, and this had an impact on the programme, with resources being diverted to this objective.

Some of the points introduced in this chapter in the context of the general programme will be examined further in the next chapter, which reviews the development of the actual routes during the life of the Countryside Commission.
CHAPTER TEN
THE DEVELOPMENT OF LONG-DISTANCE ROUTES IN ENGLAND AND WALES
FROM 1968 TO 1983

1. INTRODUCTION

At the implementation of the Countryside Act in August 1968 the new Countryside Commission for England and Wales inherited a situation where eleven plans for long-distance routes had been submitted to the Minister by the National Parks Commission. All except one (the North Downs Way, submitted as one of the last acts of the Commission) had been approved and represented 1273 miles (2037 km) of approved long-distance routes. Of this total, 340 miles (544 km) of new rights of way had been required at approval, and over a fifth of this latter figure was still required. Indeed, only one route, the Pennine Way, had been officially opened with a right of way throughout its length. That had taken fourteen years and on other routes there were even more serious delays in implementation. The North Cornwall Coastal Path, for example, still needed 5 (8 km) out of 45 miles (72 km) which had been required at approval to be implemented, after sixteen years. In the case of the South Devon Coastal Path, nine years after approval, thirteen (21) of the original 18 miles (29 km) of new rights of way which had been required at approval still had not been secured.

A main problem as has been clearly seen, was the inefficiency of local authorities whose statutory responsibility it was to implement the approved routes. No fewer than 163 separate local authorities had been involved in the routes so far approved. The new Countryside Act made few changes which were likely to have a bearing on long-distance routes but it did give county councils a concurrent power with the district councils to create new rights of way, and it was hoped this would help the situation. This change had frequently been called for

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1 See T.G. Miller 'Long Distance Routes' in Town and Country Planning vol 37, 1969, pp103-7.
by the National Parks Commission, but in fact it had been possible before the Act with the district council's consent for the county (or National Park Planning Board) to take over this responsibility. This had happened several times throughout the country - with little evidence of success in speeding the creation of new rights of way.

Although it was the nature of the bodies charged with the implementation of routes which was considered to be the major problem, there were other factors which had hindered the development of long-distance routes, and Yapp had highlighted no less than fourteen. Most of these continued as problems into the life of the new Countryside Commission, although there were changes in prominence - such as the rise of the influence of the lobby of landed interests.

Developments which took place during the life of the Commission which could have had a bearing on the development of long-distance routes have been examined in the previous chapter. The 1968 Countryside Act and the 1974 Local Government Act formalised the previous situation where the old Commission had been involved in extra-statutory activities relating to long-distance routes, and the new Commission continued and increased its involvement in all the phases of the development of routes - their planning, implementation and management once they were open. The ability of the Commission to grant-aid officials to concentrate on routes in all their different stages was to be of particular importance, for project officers proved themselves to be an effective way of progressing development.

The changes in policy, the main feature in the life of the Countryside Commission so far as long-distance routes were concerned, have been examined in detail, together with other developments which
affected, or could have affected, the general programme for long-distance routes. This chapter examines the developments in specific routes, developments which are complementary to the general matters discussed in the previous chapter. It continues the examination of specific routes which have been included in the chapters on the National Parks Commission. Other developments are noted at the end of the chapter, particularly the growth in the number of informal long-distance paths.

The specifics of the Commission's rolling programme for long-distance paths are summarised, for in fact the rolling programme inherited from the National Parks Commission and first devised in the mid-1950s was adopted more or less unchanged by the new Commission. As previously noted, this programme had resulted in 1968 in one route being opened, ten others reported (9 approved), and there were other potential routes in the pipeline. These distinctions account for the section headings of this chapter.

2. LONG DISTANCE ROUTE ALREADY OPEN - THE PENNINE WAY

The Pennine Way had been formally opened in 1965. The Commission's interest in the route was in continuing publicity and in the development of its use. It also advised the local authorities on its management, an extra-statutory responsibility taken very seriously by the new Commission, as it had been by the old. The route continued to attract considerable publicity. The BBC, for example, produced a film on the route in 1969. The Pennine Way also featured prominently in many of the Commission's publications, and at the end of 1969 it published the official guide to the route, which had been written by Tom Stephenson.

1 Tom Stephenson The Pennine Way Long Distance Footpath Guide No 1, HMSO, 1969.
This book had been so long in production having been begun in the mid-1950s and completed by Stephenson to coincide with the route's opening, that by the time it appeared its style was rather dated and many hikers continued to use other guides which had appeared earlier in the 1960s, most notably the Pictorial Guide produced by A. Wainwright. Nevertheless, some 26,500 copies of Stephenson's book were sold in its first four years, and sales were increasing towards the mid-1970s, statistics which underline the prominence of the Pennine Way.

The possible inadequacy of the official guide was noted by the Commission's Director, Reg Hookway, who walked a section of the Pennine Way in May 1974. The walk, undertaken with the Director of the English Tourist Board, was very well publicised and it clearly impressed Hookway, strengthening the standing of long-distance routes prior to the middle of the decade. He prepared a paper for the Commission, in which he described "the quality of excellence" of the route:

"In every sense it is a 'quality' experience of the countryside. On the other hand, though in what must be accepted as a minor detail, the path, stile and gate management, and waymarking do not reflect the quality of treatment which I look for in a facility directly provided by the Commission."

Indeed, he noted that waymarks were a particular problem - "they are frequently a mess" - and the Commission subsequently tried even harder to encourage the local authorities to improve waymarking.

To help with the management of the route, the National Parks Commission had been involved in a conference to set up a new Pennine Way Association, in November 1966 (the old Pennine Way Association having been disbanded in 1965 on the opening of the route). This had involved, primarily, the Ramblers Association and the Youth Hostel Association, and the idea was to develop interest in and use of the

2 Yapp op. cit. p8.
3 74/127, 29th May 1974. 4 Ibid.
route, as well as to improve its management. In May 1971, the Pennine Way Council was established, mainly at the instigation of the Ramblers Association, linking the National Farmers Union, the CLA, the Ramblers Association, the YHA and the local authorities, with input from the Commission. Its aims were to secure the promotion of the Pennine Way, to provide information, to educate users to respect the countryside through which the route ran and to provide a forum for the different interests. Tom Stephenson was its first Chairman and, not surprisingly, one of its first actions was to urge the Countryside Commission to realign the route in Northumberland, an aim on which it was not successful.

In the Summer of 1971 the Commission conducted a study of the use of the Pennine Way (in conjunction with the Nature Conservancy Council). This can be compared with the survey of 1965, which was used as the basis for designing this new survey, although the 1971 survey was in fact more comprehensive. Its explicit object was to gather information "to guide management decisions on the Pennine Way". Once again the survey was aimed primarily at long-distance hikers (those spending one day or more on the route) and census points were located to eliminate as much of the casual use of the route as possible. Four surveys took place at intervals of two and a half weeks. Of the walkers interviewed at the twenty survey points 61% were long distance walkers and approximately half of these who replied to the postal questionnaire which formed part of the survey completed the whole route. The postal questionnaire used in addition to a simple interview in the field, which was conducted by volunteers from the YHA and Ramblers Association, obtained a response rate of 88.5% reflecting a very high level of interest and involvement by the long-distance walkers.

1 Rucksack vol 6,7, Summer 1971, p20. See also Pennine Way Council (leaflet) no date.
A majority of the long distance hikers were adult males and half were under 25 (contrasting with the day walkers, who resembled more closely the profile of the general population). Approximately a quarter belonged to walking clubs and the distribution of their homes confirmed that the Pennine Way was a national facility, for one quarter were from the south-east of England, one quarter were from the north, one quarter from the north-west and almost a quarter from the rest of Great Britain. Two per cent of those who completed the route were from overseas.

From the survey it can be estimated that over 1000 people completed the Pennine Way in the summer of 1971. The report claimed that this represented a three-fold increase from 1965, basing this assumption on the total numbers interviewed in the respective surveys. A further indication of this increase - and of its continuation - can be found in the registers of the Border Hotel in Kirk Yetholm at the north end of the Way. In the Pennine Way Companion Wainwright had promised a free drink for those completing the whole of the route in one journey.

Numbers registered were as follows:

1968 - 266
1969 - 277
1970 - 318
1971 - 482
1972 - 1145
1973 - 1110
1974 - 1250
1975 - 1532

Clearly, this registration was open to abuse and it excluded southbound walkers but it gave an indication that there was, in fact, a significant increase in the numbers of long-distance walkers in the early 1970s. From this and other observations an estimate could be made that between 2000 and 3000 walkers completed the whole of the Pennine Way each year in the mid-1970s and that this continued to grow slowly.

1 Figures abstracted by the present writer from the 'Wainwright Register', Border Hotel, Kirk Yetholm, Easter 1976. The register and the free drink were subsequently discontinued.
The record at Kirk Yetholm is also interesting in that it indicates the absolute dominance of July and August as months for walking the Pennine Way.

Month and year in which walkers registered at the Border Hotel

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In the Commission's survey only 6% of long-distance walkers thought that there were too many other people on the Pennine Way, which is in marked contrast from the impression gained from some articles in the media. The attitude of a part of the media was exemplified in the journal Climber and Rambler, which declared in an article 'Feet Versus Footpaths', "Several sections [of the Pennine Way] have deteriorated to a deplorable condition," arguing that remedial action should be a priority. The same journal had earlier asked in an editorial: "Is the dream becoming a nightmare? Is the popularity of the Pennine Way destroying its very existence?" It launched a new competition, inviting readers to submit lines for an alternative Pennine Way, and it hoped to publish selected ideas over a seven month period. However, readers obviously did not agree with the journal's idea that a new line was needed, and the competition had to be abandoned because of the very poor response from readers.

Later in the decade, John Merrill wrote:

"The route [of the Pennine Way] is beyond doubt excellent, and should remain as originally conceived. I cannot understand the purpose of altering the route, nor can I understand where places of excessive footpath erosion are."
His attitude had been echoed in letters published in the hikers' journals throughout the decade, with walkers questioning the journalists' assertions that the route was badly eroded. Related to this, a number of hikers commented that they met very few people on the Pennine Way. Merrill, who became well known as a professional long-distance walker (making his living writing and lecturing about his epic hikes) had himself seen between 50 and 70 hikers a day during the peak times of the year, and generally the experience was that at most times most parts of the Pennine Way were lightly used outside the few sections which were popular for day hikers. "Take absolutely no notice of anyone who tells you that the Way is overcrowded or worn out!", commented Frank Duerden in an article on Long-Distance Routes in 1978.

Other surveys confirmed the characteristics of users of the route and the rates of usage, which seem to have increased steadily through the 1970s. A study of the 'Use of the Pennine Way on the Alston Block', for example, suggested that in the middle of the decade over 150 walkers completed the route each week during the summer. This survey also looked closely at the problem of erosion. It concluded that overall the physical impact of hikers on the Pennine Way was acceptable, but:

"the narrow restricted nature of the path tends to accelerate the physical damage to the peaty sections of the footpath. These sites are likely to cause concern in the near future unless some form of maintenance is carried out."

It found that at some sites the footpath had already spread to 22 feet (7.6 m).

Part Four of the Pennine Way Survey of 1971 also examined the condition of the footpath and, although it found that sections of the path were up to 45 feet (15 m) wide, two-thirds of the 5634 samples taken along the route were less than the mean width of 4 feet (1.5 m),

3 Ibid.
and some sections of the route were still without any worn path. It concluded that a twenty-fold increase in the use of the path would be required to cause erosion along the whole path as bad as at the section it identified as the worst - the start of the Pennine Way in the Grindsbrook Valley at Edale, where, it must be noted, there were strong objections to the routing of the path in the early 1950s partly because of fear of erosion.

The surveys, particularly the Commission's, did reveal those sections where work was becoming essential, and remedial work along the Pennine Way was undertaken through the 1970s. This included the laying of a quarter of a mile (400 m) of plastic carpeting where the route crossed Featherbed Moss (north of Kinder Scout) and the provision of duckboarding in Upper Teesdale near Cow Green. By the beginning of the 1980s, the Commission seems to have become more concerned with the state of parts of the Pennine Way. In the section on the Yorkshire & Humberside area in the Commission's Fourteenth Report there was reference to "the major problem" of erosion in the uplands:

"a variety of engineering and other solutions is being tested but it becomes clear that the Way, or certain sections of it, cannot withstand the pressure of walkers. The cost of repairing footpaths in remote upland areas is high."2

The Pennine Way became the focus of surveys which would probably never have been undertaken on an unnamed footpath, and some important and fundamental principles applicable to the design and management of rural footpaths were highlighted. Examples of these were the desirability of avoiding areas with acid soils or with shale as the bedrock, the relationship of poor drainage and the lateral spread of the path and the disproportionate impact of the use of paths in winter. All this helped in the development of ideas in what was, at

1 Pennine Way Survey op.cit, p52. See also N.G.Bayfield & R.G.Lloyd 'An Approach to Assessing the Impact of Use on a Long-Distance Footpath - the Pennine Way' in Recreation News Supplement vol 8, March 1973, pp11-17.
the time, the very inexact art of creating footpaths for recreation. However, apart from identifying the remedial work that was necessary, there is little evidence that the conclusions to be drawn from the surveys were acted upon in the management of existing routes or in the planning of new ones. Indeed, although the Commission's survey was frequently mentioned, it could be argued that it was something of an academic exercise for no formal management plan came from it and later Commission staff were to criticise the inadequacies of the survey, such as its exclusion of socio-economic information on footpath users, which greatly reduced its value.

The surveys had also examined patterns of use of accommodation by walkers. The 1971 survey found that half long-distance walkers camped, while 63% used one or more youth hostels (some people used more than one type of accommodation). The apparent importance of youth hostels vindicated the policy of the National Parks Commission in encouraging the development of hostels along long-distance routes and the new Commission continued to support the YHA in the completion of chains of hostels along routes. However, the Commission tended not to take initiatives, despite its responsibilities in the 1949 Act for planning for accommodation and refreshments. In evidence to Brunsdon Yapp, Gerald McGuire of the YHA had expressed concern that, where a county council was reluctant to act in the provision of hostels along routes, despite assurances from the Commission that 75% Exchequer Grant would "almost certainly" be recommended, the Commission had hesitated to use Section 5 of the Countryside Act whereby it could assist the YHA in default of action by the local planning authorities.

1 For an illustration on the general dearth of knowledge see T. Huxley Footpaths in the Countryside CCS, 1970.
2 See for example Roger Sidaway Long Distance Routes in Britain Paper to the Appalachian Trail Symposium, 1977.
4 Letter, McGuire to Yapp 27th November 1973 - ref (YHA) F/8A/GMcGeG.
There had been a continuing criticism that accommodation was not being developed along routes, particularly the Pennine Way, fast enough, but by the end of the 1970s the situation along the Pennine Way was becoming satisfactory. In 1972 a 60-bed hostel at Hawes was grant-aided through the Commission, while later a 36-bed hostel was created at Dufton. The Commission agreed to spend £35,200 on a 30-bed hostel at Alston in 1974, and later became involved in one at Howarth. In 1980, Balderdale Hostel, north of Bowes, was opened by the Commission's Chairman. This more or less completed the chain of hostels along this route. The Commission also cooperated in the provision of bothies, one in the Cheviots and one, a converted barn, in the Yorkshire Dales on the line of the Pennine Way, although it did little for campers.

The Pennine Way continued pre-eminent among long-distance routes in England and Wales. The interest shown in the path by the media and the general public, hikers and non-hikers alike, continued to be far greater than the rates of usage of the path for long-distance walking would suggest should be the case. Usage did increase and the management lessons learnt by the Commission did enhance the general experience in the development of recreational footpaths, particularly regarding waymarking and the control of erosion. Increasingly, the provision of countryside wardens, grant-aided by the Commission, has greatly assisted with the maintenance and management of the Pennine Way, which is monitored by the Pennine Way Council, the group linking local authorities, amenity groups and others and existing to "protect and promote" the route.

The Countryside Commission has continued to play a leading role in the development of the route and, under its stewardship, the Pennine Way continued to capture the imagination of the country. Despite increased use and despite the sensationalism in some reports in the

\[\text{The provision of these various facilities is noted in the Commission's Annual Reports.}\]
hiking press and elsewhere, the Pennine Way retained the characteristics of the long-distance footpath as had been originally envisaged by the proponents of the idea. It enabled an increasing number of people to enjoy the unique experience of journeying on foot for many days along a well-planned route through the English countryside, the object of its creation, and it also kept its prominent position in the public eye.

3. APPROVED ROUTES

(a) The Cleveland Way

The Cleveland Way proved one of the easiest routes to implement, mainly because of the work of the local amenity groups in the original planning and in tasks such as waymarking and the interest by the local authorities. As much of the route was in the North York Moors National Park, it is likely that the local authorities were more geared to thinking positively about the provision of recreational facilities to be used by outsiders than was perhaps the case in other parts of the country.

Ironically, the Cleveland Way had been the only route reported by the National Parks Commission which had not been in the original list of proposals published by Hobhouse. It had been approved in 1965, giving fifteen local authorities the task of creating 12 miles (20 km) of new rights of way out of the total length of 93 miles (149 km), and such was progress that it could have been completed before the Pennine Way. In the event, it was opened in 1969 by the Joint Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Arthur Skeffington, at Helmsley Castle.

The official guide was produced by the Commission in 1972. It represented a further development in the design of guidebooks, for it

1 The Times 'Hundred Mile Hike', 26th May 1969, p2h.
depicted the route at the scale of 1:25,000 and was rain resistant.\textsuperscript{1} In the first 22 months 3576 copies of the guide were purchased.\textsuperscript{2} The Commission reported in 1971 that the route was "well used" although in the mid-1970s it was still possible to walk long distances along the path and see no one, even in summer.\textsuperscript{3}

(b) The Pembrokeshire Coast Path

The Pembrokeshire Coast Path had been the third route approved, in 1953. Throughout the life of the National Parks Commission problems of erosion, clearance of vegetation and difficulties encountered with the local authorities, particularly some of the rural district councils, in the implementing of the route had delayed its completion. However, in May 1970 Wynford Vaughan Thomas, of the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales, officially opened the route, at a widely-reported ceremony at Saundersfoot.

Nevertheless, the route was not complete even then. In November, 1971 an outstanding Public Path Order was confirmed, but another Order, made in 1969, had still not been confirmed. In 1974, Lord Merthyr raised the question of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path in Parliament, and the Minister conceded that the situation was not satisfactory on a four-mile (7 km) stretch at Angle.\textsuperscript{4}

The official guide was published in December 1974 and the Path was considered a major resource within the National Park. Long-distance walkers represented a much smaller proportion of users on this than on the cross country paths. However, there is evidence that the season of use of this long-distance path was an extended one, possibly because it is a relatively easy route, entailing little climbing and therefore used to a great degree by retired persons outwith the main holiday periods, and because the flora and fauna

\textsuperscript{1} Yapp op. cit. p3.  \textsuperscript{2} CC Fourth Report (1971), p18.  
\textsuperscript{3} Personal field observation, Summer 1976. 
\textsuperscript{4} HL Reports 1973-74 vol 349 col 548. 
\textsuperscript{5} John H. Barrett The Pembrokeshire Coast Path Long Distance Footpath Guide no 3, HMSO, 1974. 
\textsuperscript{6} Confirmed in discussions with officials, plus personal observation, June 1976.
along the coast are particularly interesting especially in the springtime and in the autumn.

The character of this route was not quite as envisaged in the early 1950s, because of the development of the deep-water port in the Milford Haven area. The developers had in fact been generally amenable to the Path, the accommodation of which had on occasions been a stipulation of the planning permission. However, because of the nature of the developments and the problems of security, lengthy sections of the route ran between high-security fences adjacent to the factories and refineries, something alien to the concept of long-distance paths, but unavoidable in this situation.

There is no evidence of financial concern over long-distance routes at this stage. The original plan of the National Parks Commission had estimated that the Pembroke Coast Path would cost £10,350 and had put 1 maintenance at £450 per annum. In fact, construction and maintenance (combined in the records) in the first five years of the 1970s amounted to £8,475, £2,759, £14,744, £6,254 and £618 respectively, a total of £32,859. However, this did not seem to concern the Commission, which was in fact pressing local authorities in general to spend more on maintenance. A major problem encountered was the rapid encroachment of vegetation along the Path and also the periodic severance of the path by coastal erosion, which greatly added to the management problems and costs.

The Commission continued to take a close interest in the Path into the 1980s, promoting a management study in 1980 and grant-aiding youth hostels, such as one at Broadhaven. It also grant-aided an experimental bus service for walkers using the Coast Path in 1975.

1 NPC Pembrokeshire Coast Path unpublished Report to the Minister, 1953.
2 Evidence to Commons Expenditure Committee op.cit.- Welsh Office Paper.
c) Offa’s Dyke Path

Offa’s Dyke Path had been approved in 1954, and had illustrated the problems of creating a route through agricultural land and through a large number of districts. In March 1969, the new Commission reviewed the route and requested schedules of work and estimates of costs and management expenses to be drawn up by the district and county councils responsible for the route. The Commission had assisted in the setting up of the Offa’s Dyke Association to promote interest in the route and to coordinate work by volunteers on the path. General increased interest led to a flurry of activity around 1970, which pushed forward the development of the path.

There were, however, still some 32 sections causing hold-ups, and a series of Orders was prepared. Such was the activity prior to the opening that the cost of developing the route in 1971 alone amounted to £22,000 (compared with the original estimate of £8,615 to complete the whole route). A technique which was used by the Commission to accelerate the implementation of routes was to set an opening date before the completion of the route. This was designed to spur the local authorities into activity, and in the case of Offa’s Dyke it was possible to open the 168 mile (284 km) route in mid-1971, with some 300 people attending the opening ceremony at Knighton in July.

The route attracted much attention and the value of the publicity surrounding the opening of the path can be gauged by the fact that in the Pennine Way survey in 1971, Offa’s Dyke Path was named by over three-quarters of walkers who had completed the Pennine Way and who were asked to name other long-distance routes. This compared with 66% for the Cleveland Way and 38% or less for all the other routes (the comparable figures for all walkers interviewed were 61%, 49% and 27% respectively).

2 Pennine Way Survey op.cit, p23.
According to Yapp, some 13,000 copies of the Ramblers Association's booklet on Offa's Dyke were sold in the first eighteen months. However, actual use of the path as a long-distance route seems to have been very limited. A survey of the route and its use was abandoned by the Commission in 1978, ostensibly because of a shortage of staff but also reflecting the Commission's decrease in interest in long-distance routes. The official guide was produced in 1976 but an innovation in the production of guides in general was made by the Offa's Dyke Association when it published a set of strip maps of the route.

As with other official long-distance routes, youth hostels were opened along the route, and waymarking was actively encouraged by the Commission.

A particular problem on Offa's Dyke was the danger of erosion of the earthwork itself where it coincided with the Path. However, because of the low levels of use of the route, this problem did not arise through the 1970s nor did dogs become a problem, despite the fact that this had been one of the greatest fears of the farmers in the agricultural areas during negotiations. In 1982 an experiment began on the route in Powys in which the Commission assisted the county council to employ a Development Officer to work closely with the Offa's Dyke Association and stimulate a partnership between the highway authority and the voluntary sector in the management of the Path.

(d) The South West Peninsula Path

The South West Peninsula Path had been the subject of five separate reports by the National Parks Commission, based on the different counties. As the 1950s and the 1960s progressed it had

1 Yapp op. cit. p8.
2 Personal field observations, Summer 1976, including interviews.
become clear that the problems encountered in implementing most long-distance routes were in fact more serious along this path.

Delays were caused by the multiplicity and nature of rural district councils (despite general encouragement from the county councils) and by some general opposition to the Path on agricultural grounds. There were also serious setbacks caused by coastal erosion and problems associated with homes sited close to the coast. It was clearly more difficult to compromise on a route which was planned to follow the coastline than on a cross-country path with no definite feature to follow. When the county councils gradually took over responsibility for implementation, progress seems to have been frustrated through the illness or resignation of key officials. Of significance as well, the route did not attract the attention of the amenity groups as much as the cross country paths tended to do. This was because it was recognised that walking from end to end, or even long-distance walking, would be of relatively minor importance on the coast path, while there were not great population centres nearby with hiking groups which could "adopt" the route as was the case with the Pennine Way and the Cleveland Way, for example. It was not until the route was nearing completion that a body was established to promote the development and the use of the route—this was the 'Sou'West Way Association' whose aim is "the satisfactory completion of the Path as a continuous coastal route."

Eventually, the final gaps were being completed, or alternative routes were being found, and in May 1973 the North and South Cornish sections of the Path were opened by Lord Caradon in a ceremony in Newquay. In the case of the North Cornwall Path, implementation had taken 21 years from approval.

The final four mile (6 km) section of right of way had cost £16,000

2 CC Sixth Report (1973), p11 (the opening does not seem to have been well-reported by the media.)
3 The official guide was published in 1976. E.C. Pyatt The Cornwall Coast Path Long Distance Footpath Guide No 5, HMSO.
to acquire, illustrating an increasing problem: the inflated value of land and compensation payable. In fact, even after this, the Path at its opening was not as originally approved, for parts incorporated some rather unsatisfactory alternatives to the line first planned. On the other hand two sections around estuaries had been left out of the original plan, and the Commission drew up Varying Reports to fill these gaps.

The Commission's papers show that in August 1976 there were still eleven places where negotiations were still taking place to finalise agreements or to find more satisfactory alternatives. These also included sections where erosion was a problem and these continued to consume much of the Commission's time, for Varying Reports had frequently to be prepared.

One specific problem illustrates the type of situation which the Commission could find itself confronting under the existing procedures for creating long-distance paths. In 1962, the Quarter Session had decided that a two mile (4 km) path near Pinehaven, which formed part of the Coast Route, was not a right of way, as had been supposed during the planning of the route. This section remained incomplete and affected neighbouring sections where a satisfactory route had been secured. The rural district council refused to reopen negotiations following the decision of the Quarter Session. The county council similarly refused to become involved, as the land owner was unwilling to negotiate. In 1973 the Commission contemplated requesting that the Minister use his powers to over-ride the local authorities but in fact the extra pressure exerted by the Commission was enough to cause the land-owner and the county council to open negotiations. Nevertheless, these came to nought and in 1980 the Commission put

1 CC paper 76/212.
2 Through Section 29(3) of the Highways Act 1959.
3 76/111, June 1976.
forward a Varying Report to the Secretary of State, with the hope that he would use his reserve powers to create this section of the Path.

In Devon the County Council took over the implementation of the Coast Path from the district councils in 1969 and the Commission was able to grant-aid officials employed specifically to negotiate the necessary rights of way along the route. The South Devon section (along with the Dorset part of the route) was eventually opened in September 1974, although in August 1976 the Commission was still concerned with a number of sections of the route. In one situation, a bungalow had been built on the approved line for the Path and the route had to use a section of the busy main coastal road. In addition, as with the Cornish Paths, the original proposals had not included sections around estuaries, so that the route was not continuous. The Commission again rectified this by producing Varying Reports.

In 1972 the first grant-aided ferry was opened, making use of the Commission's experimental powers rather than the statutory provisions pertaining specifically to long-distance routes. The ferry was at South Hams, across the River Arun, and the Commission agreed to recommend the subsidising of the service as an experiment, with the ferryman recording the number of users and charging 4p per crossing.

A major specific problem continued to beset the Dorset section—the restrictions at Lulworth. The National Parks Commission and the Countryside Commission used this most unsatisfactory situation to argue against the Forces monopolising prime sections of coastline. Following the Report of the Nugent Committee on Defence, which broadly agreed with the Commission's argument concerning Lulworth, the Commission felt that it had at last won a victory and there was an official opening of the section of the Coastal Path through the

Lulworth Range in September 1975, at which the Chairman of the Commission was prominent. However, in 1977 the Commission was still concerned that the route had to use byways which it considered were still unsatisfactory for a long-distance path.

The Dorset section of the South West Peninsula Coast Path had been opened on 14th September 1974 at a ceremony at Beer, conducted by Viscount Amory. This was heralded as completing a 165 mile (267 km) section of the path and the Commission had again used the tactic of fixing an opening ceremony in advance of the completion of the route, hoping that the councils involved would make an extra effort in negotiating those sections which were still incomplete.

However, the Commission's quarterly paper on long-distance routes in October 1974 recorded:

"Owing to a last minute objection to a large 'package deal' of path diversions, extinguishments, and creations in the Abbotsbury area, it was not possible to complete this section of the Dorset Coast Path by the 14th September. A local inquiry is now envisaged."1

There was apparently "hostile publicity" from the press following the opening ceremony at Beer because the route was clearly not yet completed. Problems continued and, for example, as late as mid-1976 a Footpath Creation Order for part of the route was refused by the Secretary of State despite it being part of an approved route. In this particular instance, the district council which had been actively involved felt it could do no more and transferred its responsibility to the county council.

In the case of the remaining section of the Coast Path, that in Somerset and North Devon, two rural district councils, Barnstaple and Bideford, relinquished their responsibilities for negotiating outstanding parts of the Path to the Countryside Commission early in 1974 when the Commission began to concentrate on this section.

1 74/201, October 1974.
Much discussion seems to have taken place on the appropriate arrangements for the opening of this last section of the Path. The criticisms encountered following the opening of the Dorset and South Devon section certainly influenced the Commission and it was decided not to hold a ceremony to open the whole of the Peninsula Path formally until it was certain that it was in fact as complete as possible. The Commission had hoped to have the ceremony in 1975, but it postponed this and instead encouraged the authorities in Exmoor National Park to open officially the section of the Path within the Park.

Minute after minute recorded continuing problems. The Quarterly Progress Report in November 1976 for example, listed 28 locations where public rights of way were still required along the Peninsula Path, 21 of which were on the sections already formally opened. It was in fact 1978 before the opening ceremony for the Somerset and North Devon section was to take place, completing the whole South West Peninsula Path.

The opening ceremony was finally held at Minehead in May 1978, marking completion of the 515 mile (824 km) long-distance route, the result of 27 years of work. In its deliberations, the Commission had been worried about who should perform the opening ceremony. It would have been appropriate because of the Operation Neptune, in which the National Trust was acquiring sections of the coastline, to have had a figurehead from the Trust, but the Commission feared that such a person would detract from its own achievement. In fact, the Minister of State, Dennis Howell, performed the ceremony. Ironically, illustrating the lack of a really effective public relations section in the Commission, the media spotlighted other bodies, including the National Trust and the English Tourist Board. The latter and not the

1 75/27, February 1975.
2 76/212.
Commission was recognised by the Sunday Times, for example, in an article on the Path in August 1978, as being the instigator of the Path.

The South West Peninsula Path was henceforth considered to be a single route. It was thus the longest long-distance route in the country, and represented a considerable achievement for the Commission, despite the time it had taken. Use by long-distance walkers seems to have increased through the 1970s, although walking end to end is of considerably less importance than with other long-distance routes. Use by holiday makers for day walks is, of course, a very important use of the Path.

Remaining problems with rights of way are being gradually resolved and the Commission's Annual Report for 1982-83 was able to note good progress in closing the remaining gaps along the route. Nevertheless, coastal erosion and the clearance of vegetation are lasting problems, taking up much of the Commission's time and latterly the resources available to its Regional Office as the Commission continues to reimburse in full the county councils for maintaining the route; despite the fact that only a very small proportion of use of the Path is by long-distance walkers, the Peninsula Path represents a considerable and continuing drain of Commission's funds.

1 Sunday Times 6th August 1978, p18c.
2 Although the Commission produced four separate Guides for the Path.
(e) **The South Downs Way**

Excellent progress had been made on the South Downs Way during the life of the National Parks Commission and it was unfortunate that it was not opened before the Countryside Act. In 1969 the footbridge the Commission had been pressing for over the River Adur was approved by the Secretary of State and in 1970 a major variation to the route at Steyning was agreed. By 1971 the route was virtually complete and was waymarked, but it was not until 1972 that the official opening took place. This, the first long-distance route which was a bridleway, was opened on the 15th July 1972 by Lord Shawcross, the President of the Society of Sussex Downsmen.

The route proved a very popular one, particularly for walkers, and is possibly the second most-used long-distance route for long-distance walking after the Pennine Way. In 1974 a youth hostel was opened at Truleigh Hill with Commission funding, which catered for riders, and in 1977 the official guide appeared. The route featured in several prominent articles during the 1970s and 1980s, attracting more attention that any other route apart from the Pennine Way.

In the *Times* in 1978, for example, the route was reviewed at length in the travel section, which recommended that four weeks be taken over walking the route, with users urged to explore side paths while using the official Way as a spinal route. In 1969 Chris Hall, then Secretary of the Ramblers Association, had written an article on the Path - 'Up in the Downs' - in which he argued that the South Downs Way was a "second generation long distance route, unlike the more rugged Pennine Way and Cleveland Way." He felt it provided a family-style walk, and he recommended that it be thought of as a "countryside corridor", with the adjacent land preserved from the plough by the use of access agreements.

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3 The _Times_ 16th September 1978, p11d.
However, an extension of the route to Winchester, as originally proposed by Tom Stephenson, which was agreed in principle by the Commission in 1972 and worked on by the Commission through the 1970s, was finally abandoned, mainly because of a lack of proven demand from horse riders.

(f) *The North Downs Way*

The Minister approved the 140 mile (227 km) North Downs Way in July 1969. The Commission commented:

"Our first concern is applying the experience gained in the completion of previous routes and devising a way of ensuring that the procedures followed will quickly secure the 36 miles (58 km) of new rights of way required."¹

However, progress was not rapid and the Commission fully reviewed the situation in 1971. Footpath Officers were grant-aided for the county councils which were responsible for the implementation of the route, but in the case of Surrey, illness greatly reduced the effectiveness of this method. The Countryside Commission was able to concentrate on the North Downs Way from 1974, when Surrey County Council was asked to give greater priority to the route. It was, however, also informed that Footpath Creation Orders were seen as the last resort for implementing the route. In August 1976, four problem areas remained and were reported to the Commission. In one instance, a landowner had withdrawn an agreement after experiencing trespassers. In two other cases alternative lines for the route in contention were found, and the Commission produced appropriate Varying Reports.

In early 1977 the Commission hoped to be able to open the whole route by the end of that year, but Kent County Council felt that this was impractical. Instead, in the middle of 1977, a thirty mile (48 km) section of the Way was formally opened, using two temporary links.

² CC paper 74/122, May 1974.
³ 76/161, September 1976.
⁴ 77/54, March 1977.
There were however more delays, and it was September 1978 before the whole route was formally opened. The Archbishop of Canterbury officiated, opening the Path which linked Farnham in Surrey with Dover in Kent, allowing a journey to be taken on foot along the crest of the North Downs. The proximity of London has assured that the route has become very popular although there is as yet no evidence of erosion or other problems caused by the designation of the route as a formal long-distance path.

4. NEW ROUTES

(a) The Ridgeway

The Ridgeway had been one of the original routes proposed in the Hobhouse Report. It had attracted the attention of the National Parks Commission at an early stage, but failed to become a priority route, even though it was fairly straightforward. It did eventually become a priority at the end of the Commission's life and the new Countryside Commission inherited a situation where fieldwork and consultations had begun.

It had been decided to limit the potential route to the central part of the original proposal, and it was to be an 85 mile (136 km) path, through the counties of Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire. Swift progress was made during the first years of the new Commission; in 1971 formal consultations took place and the Commission submitted its report to the Secretary of State. The Minister approved the proposal in a relatively short period, and in July 1972 implementation of the route began.

The path required only seven miles (11 km) of new rights of way, although some paths needed upgrading from footpath to bridleway, for the route was to be a bridleway from Overton Hill to the Goring Gap.

1 The Times 30th September 1978.
It was then to continue as a footpath from the Thames to Ivinghoe Beacon.

The route was opened in record time, on the 29th September 1973, although the following year the Commission expressed concern that a section of the route had not in fact been completed. The route was to attract considerable attention, partly because of its proximity to London and its tradition of recreational use, which ensured its popularity, but also because of the conflict between walkers and riders and vehicles along parts of the route. Much of the route was classified as a public highway and, although, a Traffic Restriction Order (TRO) had been drawn up by Wiltshire County Council in 1970, this was experimental and was not proceeded with. The amenity groups, particularly the CPRE and the Ramblers Association, expressed serious concern over what they considered the spoilation of the route by vehicles and especially motorbikes. Rallies were held along the route by walkers and in April 1978 the Sunday Times carried an article 'Ramblers Vote to Give Cars the Boot' describing the concern over the erosion and incompatibility of use of the Ridgeway. "The Countryside Commission has been dragging its feet," concluded the article, but in fact the Commission had been active in trying to get the county councils to take out TROs. In the same month there was more criticism of the Commission in a debate on the Ridgeway in the House of Lords in which it was asserted that "Through muddle and ineptitude there has been a failure to protect the Ridgeway". It was noted that the Department of the Environment was against the use of TROs if they could possibly be avoided, and that "The Commission is responsible for the management of the Ridgeway and will appoint a field officer."

Following the 1968 Act, roads used as public paths (RUPPs) had to be redefined as highways, bridleways or public paths. The Commission

1 CC Sixth Report (1973), pl1. The official guide was published in 1976; Sean Jerret The Ridgeway Long Distance Path Guide No6, HMSO.
2 Sunday Times 9th April 1978, p19g.
3 The Times 15th April 1978, p3e.
concluded that retention of highway status would prevent the ploughing of the path, safeguarding its character, but that without restriction orders, vehicles would be free to use the Way. The counties had been loth to make TROs without an adequate knowledge of the seriousness of the situation and the Commission had therefore grant-aided an aerial survey of the Ridgeway in 1974. This had been inconclusive, but Oxfordshire did try to make an Order which the Inspector from the Department of the Environment turned down. The Commission therefore eventually appointed a Project Officer as mentioned in the Lords' debate, to examine the situation on the ground. He reported in 1979, concluding that management on its own could not maintain the character of the route and that TROs were needed. Nonetheless, the Commission also sought to reach a management agreement with the NFU and the CLA to improve the surface of the path and improve its general management.

In 1980 the Commission followed up the survey by asking the Minister to prepare a TRO under section 32(4) of the Countryside Act, concluding:

"In summary the Commission believes that a TRO would preserve the character of the Ridgeway Path by retaining highway status and remove the nuisance of noise and danger from cars and motorcycles. It would facilitate the passage of walkers, equestrianists and cyclists and improve their recreational experience."

However, it asked that the Order be not proceeded with until an assessment had been made of a new 'Motorised User's Voluntary Code of Conduct' and in 1983 it reported:

"We have been under considerable pressure to apply for a Traffic Restriction Order to be applied to the Western half of the Ridgeway Long Distance Path. This section of the ancient highway has vehicular rights of way, thought by many to be inappropriate to an important historical feature and a Long Distance Route. We negotiated a voluntary Code of Conduct with the motorised users in 1981 which had significant success. We believe that this approach, supported by more active management and promotion by the project officer must be given a fair trial before we press for the rights of one legitimate user to be extinguished so that the expectations of other users can be realised."

1 CC Twelfth Report (1979), p22.
3 CC Annual Report 1982083, p11.
This second Project Officer had been appointed in 1980, specifically to manage the Ridgeway. This was an innovatory development and part of his task was to monitor the use of the Path.

The situation on the Ridgeway has still not been satisfactorily resolved, and it illustrates again the use of a long-distance route with its attendant publicity for bringing matters of principle to the fore. In this case, the Ridgeway was being used as a showcase by the amenity groups in their struggle to keep motorised vehicles from pathways. The Commission had found itself in an invidious position, between the amenity groups, the counties, the Department of the Environment and the motor users (who were themselves vociferous), although in fact this was an issue on which the Commission felt strongly.

(b) The Wolds Way

The proposals put forward for a long-distance route in North-East England in the 1950s and early 1960s were originally for a path extending from the North Riding of Yorkshire into the East Riding. In the event, progress in the North Riding was expected to be so much swifter than that in the neighbouring county that the route, which became known as the Cleveland Way, was developed only as far as the county boundary (which was marked by an undistinguished field boundary, just short of Filey). It was expected that a continuation south would be developed at a later date.

As the development of the Cleveland Way progressed, attention began to be focussed again on the southern extension and this route, to be known as the Wolds Way, was to involve the Countryside Commission in problems on a scale hitherto unexperienced.

The idea of a Wolds Way was not, in fact, new, for A. J. Brown had discussed such a Way in the 1930s. In addition, although the Path would stand on its own, it was increasingly recognised by the rambling fraternity as being a link in a chain of paths which would one day extend down the whole of the east coast of England. It was therefore very important to ramblers, and particularly the East Riding and Derwent branch of the Ramblers Association.

In 1960, maps and supporting documents had been given by members of the Association to the East Riding County Council. It was recognised that problems might exist over the route because of the agricultural nature of the Wolds, and only half of the 70 miles (112 km) was on undisputed rights of way. However, it was pointed out that the situation would be similar anywhere in the Wolds, which had less than half of the national average density of footpaths, a point later to be made to the Lords' Committee on Sports and Leisure. Moreover, it was claimed that the NFU endorsed the scheme.

Progress was slow, and it was the end of the decade before major developments took place. In January 1968 the Guardian welcomed the production of a detailed scheme now developed by the Ramblers Association, although it feared that it would be "a long trek ahead", predicting that it would be 1980 before a Path would be achieved.

In 1968 the East Riding County Council agreed in principle to the plan for a Wolds Way, and three months later the National Parks Commission did the same. The new Countryside Commission could not concentrate on the route immediately, but pressure from the Ramblers Association, who were conducting negotiations with landowners, maintained momentum. The Commission began to examine the route in detail towards the end of 1970 and the Times was attracted to the plan at the beginning of 1971, when it commented on 'Big Step Forward in

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1 Rucksack vol 5,1, July 1960, p20.
2 HC Reports 1974-75, vol 893 col 1808.
3 See CC The Wolds Way unpublished report to the Secretary of State, 1976, p3.
Plans for a Wolds Way Walk It, too, recognised potential problems, but it greatly underestimated the time which would be taken to overcome these, for it felt that the route would possibly take eighteen months to be completed.

In January, 1973, the Commission began statutory consultations which involved the county council, four rural district councils and one urban district council. It also undertook extensive non-statutory consultations with the landed interests and with the user groups, and it found a marked polarisation of views.

The Ramblers Association welcomed the Commission's proposals: "In general we are extremely pleased with the proposals". However, the user groups were adamant that the route that they had spent so long planning should be altered as little as possible, and they were particularly concerned that the route should not be moved onto roads, as was being pressed for by some of the landed interests.

The Deputy County Secretary of the NFU, G. Jamieson, seems to have done his best to cooperate with the Commission and wrote a six page, closely-typed reply to the Commission's request for observations. He recognised that many farmers and landowners had been antagonised by some of the representatives of the Ramblers and noted that the appearance of a guide book to the Wolds Way had greatly upset some of his members. The book had, among other things, encouraged a number of charity walks along the unnegotiated route. Jamieson also noted the volatile situation with the current revision of the local footpath map. He isolated the problems of procedure for creating a route, something which was to concern the Commission throughout the 1970s (as has already been noted), and particularly the lack of an opportunity for individual farmers to be involved in negotiations before a route was approved. He also highlighted a further point which was to be

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1 The Times 24th February 1971, p14e.
2 Wolds Way report op. cit., appended correspondence.
seriously considered by the Commission, the fact that existing footpaths would experience a considerable increase in use if they were incorporated into a long-distance route, although the land owners over whose land the existing paths ran would have no say in the planning of the route. In addition, the NFU was to make a specific case for greater use of minor roads and their verges for the Path.

One of the responses, which was to have a critical influence on the Commission and probably later on the Secretary of State, was from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF). The letter from that Ministry's officials did not support general objections to the route on agricultural grounds:

"In general terms, having considered the proposed route for the Wolds Way and the country which it traverses, damage to public agriculture is likely to be relatively minor, provided the behaviour of users of the Path is satisfactory. If there are no acts of vandalism, and litter, tins, glass, etc. are not left about, and provided people do not deviate from the path, and again provided that dogs are kept on leads or under control and that children are kept under control, there should be little positive damage."1

However, objections by another Government Department to one section were to concern the Commission greatly. This was the 12 mile (20 km) central section between Wintringham and Thixendale. Here the Department of the Environment's Ancient Monuments Division objected to the route passing through Wharram Percy, a medieval village under its care and currently being excavated. Land owners also objected strongly to the line of the route in this section, and so Commissioners and officials visited the area in person. The outcome of this was that this section was changed and a new line, including a significant distance along minor roads, was adopted. This angered the user groups and others, and the Commission found itself in the middle of a bitter dispute not only over this particular section but also increasingly over other parts of the proposed route as the two

different interest groups became even more polarised.

The matter was raised in Parliament at the beginning of 1975 by Kevin MacNamara in an Adjournment Debate specifically on the Wolds Way. MacNamara was President of the East Riding and Derwent area of the Ramblers Association and he reflected the bitterness felt by the local hikers, much of which he projected to the Commission, called by MacNamara "the landowners' poodle":

"It is not too strong to say that the creation of the Wolds Way has been delayed and betrayed by the Countryside Commission, the body charged with bringing it to existence."2

He claimed that the Commission had allowed the route to be neutralised by the NFU and CLA, "both of which showed masterly powers of obstruction and delay" and he was highly critical of the decision to move the line of the central section, claiming that the Commission were strangers to the area, opting for "the landowners' road route", which ran along a plateau. He stressed that the Ramblers had already made concessions and that, for example, the route now being used as a basis for discussion had been the one adopted in February 1971 by the East Riding County Council, which differed in some detail from the Ramblers' original ideas. He was scathing about the substantial change, which moved the route from along valleys and slopes "providing a contrasting countryside of tremendous charm" to a route based on ridgetop roads "completely lacking in interest and charm". Moreover, the revised route had missed out a number of facilities, as well as places of interest, and MacNamara maintained:

"The real walker, as opposed to the armchair planner, would indeed be in difficulties, for in a country where buses and beds for travellers are few and cherished, there would be no bus route for about a dozen miles (20 km) and no overnight accommodation for about eighteen (29 km)"3

He concluded that "Local ramblers feel that with the amended central

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1 HC Report 1974-75 vol 893 cols 1804-20 (op.cit.)
2 ibid. col 1807.
3 ibid. col 1810.
section of the Wolds Way, the integrity of the whole route is now in question."

The reply from the Minister, Dennis Howell, avoided specifics and defended the Commission's methods - "although the process takes a long time" he commented, "it is better to get it right, as we are dealing with a permanent facility for our people" He noted that the Secretary of State had a quasi-judicial capacity and that he would not automatically accept the Commission's route.

Nonetheless, according to the Commission's minutes, Howell had privately instructed the Commission to see what it could do to speed up the process, and this had spurred a review of the situation. The Commission paper commented:

"The Wolds Way has been one of the most difficult of the long distance routes to handle, partly because of the antagonism which exists between the local landowners and the rambling community and partly because farmers fear that the route, which they regard as being unnecessary, will cause damage and spread disease in an intensively farmed area in a time of food and fodder shortages."2

The paper also acknowledged the Ramblers Association's bitter attacks on delays and the alleged bias, and it concluded that, however much extra work the Commission undertook in the way of negotiations, it was unlikely to ease the situation. It specifically noted that it should not seek to involve individual landowners (although much time had already been taken up with this) and it proposed that it should reopen statutory consultations, with a request that replies be submitted within two months. New statutory consultations were necessary partly because of the major changes in parts of the proposed route, but mainly because in the interim local government had been reorganised. There were now two county councils and four district councils involved in the statutory consultations and, as before, other bodies were invited to comment in addition to the local authorities.

1 ibid. col 1815.
2 CC paper 74/212, December 1974.
Comments were largely as before. MAFF reiterated its earlier points, although it now expressed some concern about the route passing through farms. The Commission pointed out that the specific cases referred to by MAFF were existing rights of way.

The NFU representative submitted two long letters, the first of which summarised the existing situation:

"I sense that as a result of recent behaviour and attitudes of those members of the public in the area who claim to represent the interests of those who enjoy walking in the countryside, there is a distinct hardening of views on the part of many farmers in regard to footpaths. Farmers who until recently were prepared to meet the problems associated with access at least half way have been forced to retrench in the face of militant and disturbingly discourteous attacks."2

The second letter reported a meeting held in October 1975, when a very high proportion of landowners and farmers affected by the proposals for the Wolds Way had met and had recorded their total opposition to the principle of a long-distance footpath in the area of the Wolds. The reason was said to be the incompatibility of the idea of such a footpath with land use in the area, it being pointed out that previous long-distance routes were over moorland or in coastal areas.

The NFU official stressed the importance of rationalisation of footpath networks, "an essential prerequisite if farmers are expected to accept the concept of a new path." He was critical of the Commission's "entrenched" stance on this topic.

The CLA similarly pressed for closures if new paths were to be created. In addition, one particular landowner had submitted a memorandum on long-distance routes. In it he isolated four criteria which, he felt, should presumably apply:

(i) the route should be a good walking route;

1 Wolds Way report op.cit., appendices.
2 ibid. letter 4th July 1975.
3 ibid. letter 22nd October 1975.
(ii) it should be acceptable to landowners and occupiers of land;
(iii) it should be acceptable to other parties and interests;
and (iv) the Countryside Commission should submit the plan to the Secretary of State if it was satisfied that the previous criteria were reconciled as far as possible.

Had the Commission accepted these criteria it would probably have shelved the plan, although it did record in a paper that:

"The Wolds Way could well have been considered as a recreational Path of regional significance rather than a long-distance route, but it is too late to consider any change in the procedure at this stage, particularly in view of the controversy over the case." 2

The situation was as before, with the landowners and farmers generally hostile to the idea of the Wolds Way, but the user groups were by now very critical of the compromises the Commission had made, particularly over the central section, and these included the Ramblers Association (which did continue to cooperate fully with the Commission concerning details of the route), the YHA, the Commons Society and a number of individuals, including the Archdeacon of York, who wrote to the Commission.

The local authorities generally approved of the route, although the North Riding County Council had sided with the landowners and had put forward counter-proposals for some sections to be moved to minor roads. The Commission did look at these proposals in the field, but felt that they were unattractive because of the criterion that lengthy road walking was not compatible with a long-distance route. Indeed, the Commission was already being bitterly criticised for countenancing as much road walking as it was. Gerald McGuire of the YHA for example, had noted that over 14 miles (23 km) of the 71 mile (114 km)

1 ibid. submission Lord Middleton to Secretary of State, n.d., 1975.
2 74/212 op.cit.
route was already planned to be on roads and he wrote:

"Paragraph 300 of the Hobhouse Report speaks of continuous routes for walkers and riders 'moving as little as possible on the motor roads'. It is disappointing that nearly 30 years later, with increased intensity of traffic on public roads, the Commission appears not to have given adequate weight to this principle in drawing up its proposals for the Wolds Way."¹

The Commission decided to submit a Report to the Secretary of State, despite the opposition, and did so in 1976. In a covering letter the Commission pointed out that, because of the lack of agreement, implementation would be difficult and protracted, and it recommended that skilled footpath officers should be used, adding to the cost of the scheme. It also noted that it would be necessary to use compulsory powers, but it did confirm that "the Commission are convinced of the merit of the Wolds Way as a walking way."²

The report summarised the Commission's part in the planning of the route. It noted that it had been unable to overcome specific objections of landowners and, in fact, in the first draft of the covering letter, the author stressed the inadequacies of the statutory procedures, with "excessive involvement of the Commission in detailed matters of local concern."³ In fact the Commission did not include this part in the final letter submitted with its report to the Minister, but did for the first time in the Report recognise that "Particularly in the case of proposed new rights of way, the exact line is subject to negotiations and may need to be varied in order to meet local conditions."⁴ This implies the recognition of a further step in the procedure for creating long-distance routes, with the Commission planning a general line and the local authorities, presumably working very closely with the Commission, negotiating a detailed line. This has happened in practice to a limited degree, but often involved the production of Varying Reports. This was the first time that the need for more flexibility in the implementation of a

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¹ Wolds Way report op. cit. letter 11th July 1975.
³ CC paper 76/121 (draft annexed to Commission paper)
⁴ Wolds Way report op. cit.
route was officially recognised.

The Report did not recommend any further provision for accommodation at this stage and followed the pattern of previous reports in emphasising the importance of waymarking, including the provision of mapboards. The estimated cost of implementing the proposal was £95,016. Of this £3,598 was to be expended on existing rights of way, with roughly a third for repairs and the rest for waymarking and new facilities. This left £91,418 for new paths, of which £88,500 was the estimated cost of acquiring the fifteen miles (24 km) of new rights of way which were required.

The Commission had been completely open about the fact that the route was controversial and gave the impression that it would not have been surprised if the Minister had rejected it. After a year's waiting, the Ramblers Association was concerned that "it is now clear that he [the Minister] has little enthusiasm for the project", quoting a letter from the Minister to Arthur Blenkinsop:

"This [the Wolds Way] raises the particular problem that, unlike some of the already approved long distance routes, it goes through intensively cultivated land and there has consequently been much opposition from local farmers. I realise that we have had the Countryside Commission's report for a considerable time, but I think it is important that differing views which have been put to the Commission are properly evaluated before a decision on the route is taken." 3

The Ramblers Association's interpretation of this was:

"It does not require much imagination to read between the lines of that passage: the DOE are primarily concerned about the opinion of local farmers and they are reluctant to confront them in any way. This is sadly typical of DOE's subservience to the Whitehall Branch of the NFU (known euphemistically in official circles as the Ministry of Agriculture)." 4

The Ramblers Association appealed to its members to write to Howell to counter the weight of the agricultural lobby.

1 ibid. Appendix B.
2 Rucksack vol 9,1, Summer 1977, p6.
3 ibid. 4 ibid.
In fact, the Minister took 16 months to consider the Report. His decision was reported in an answer to a Parliamentary question, in which Howell announced that the Secretary of State had approved the plans without modification. He was at pains to stress that compensation would be payable and he appealed for tolerance to reconcile the different interests.

The Secretary of State's letter of approval ran to almost 2,000 words. Contrary to the view of the Ramblers Association, it stressed the positive nature of the view of the MAFF and interpreted the stand of the NFU as agreeing in principle with the Wolds Way, but requiring a modification of the footpath network to be part of a scheme. He agreed that the area was unique because of the intensity of farming and the lack of a tradition of walking but he noted concern over the current militant attitude of some local walkers. He commended the Commission on its breadth of consultations, and on the criteria it had used, selecting a route on the basis of contrast which was attractive for the walker and the avoidance of roads as much as possible. He was satisfied that the Commission had make exhaustive searches for alternative routes but he noted that the Commission might feel it necessary to make further modifications once the definitive footpath map had been reviewed.

No one was completely happy with the approved route and problems were to continue. For example, in March 1978 it was reported that the North Yorkshire County Council Highways Committee had refused to work on the Wolds Way, ostensively because of the cut-backs. It claimed that funds should not be used to create rights of way in times of financial stringencies. However, grudgingly, the Council's Policy and Resources Committee had overruled this decision.

2 letter, Secretary of State's Office to CC, dated 26th July 1977.
3 Climber & Rambler March 1978, pl5.
In 1978 grant-aided Project Officers were appointed for Humberside and North Yorkshire and negotiations with landowners went more smoothly than might have been expected. In its Ninth Report the Commission hoped that the section in Humberside would be ready in early 1980, with the section in North Yorkshire ready in 1981. In 1979, progress was noted, with only one Order being made, and improvements were being made to the line of the route, particularly in the northern part of the route where major changes were being negotiated.

Nonetheless, relations between the Ramblers Association and the Commission over this issue continued to be strained, and in 1981 the Ramblers Association stated that it was "extremely concerned about the apparent willingness of the Countryside Commission to make variations to the original route to placate local landowners."

The Ramblers Association felt it had been dealt a final blow when the Commission announced that the route would be opened by Lord Middleton. Middleton was the President of the CLA and owned 12,000 acres and 30 farms in the heart of the Wolds. In the Adjournment Debate, MacNamara had been referring to Lord Middleton when he had complained of the "medieval" situation existing in the central part of the route, where one landowners could wield so much power. The Ramblers Association claimed that this massive land-holding had only one right of way through it, and that Lord Middleton had been a major instigator of the changes to the middle part of the route. He had also been a county councillor during the period and was seen as having been generally unhelpful to the progress of the Wolds Way.

Indeed, when Lord Middleton officiated at the Commission's ceremony to open the Wolds Way, on 2nd October 1982, at Fridaythorpe, the Ramblers Association held their own ceremony, near Millington, with
Lord Melchett, the President of the Ramblers Association, opening the route. The media highlighted this continuing conflict, the *Times*, for example, headlining its report 'Wolds Way opened in Duplicate.' The Commission was quoted as saying:

"It is a great sadness to us that the Ramblers Association should have chosen not to attend the opening. The lessons to be learned from the Wolds Way experience is that cooperation pays dividends."

The Wolds Way has once again illustrated the political role long-distance routes have taken throughout their history. In this instance, provision of a recreational facility seems to have become of secondary importance to the struggles between the organised ramblers and the powerful landowners in this unique part of the country. The Commission once again found itself in the middle and must be commended for seeing the project through. However, the Commission did expose itself to unwelcome attacks from both sides and found itself with an excessive work load trying to examine every part of the route and meet all the landowners who objected to a specific part of the line. Without doubt the Wolds Way reduced even further the Commission's enthusiasm for long-distance routes. Nevertheless, in what was a relatively short period, the Commission had managed to achieve a long-distance route of different character to the others, despite difficulties which must have seemed insurmountable at times.

(c) The Cambrian Way

Perhaps the most ambitious plan for a long-distance route in Great Britain was the idea developed by members of the Ramblers Association for a coast to coast path running north to south through the most mountainous parts of Wales. This became known as the Cambrian Way, and took up a considerable amount of the Commission's energies from the mid-1970s.

*The Times* 4th October 1982, p4a. Several newspapers covered the same story on the Sunday or Monday.
The idea was devised by a Cambrian Way Committee, comprised mainly of members of the Ramblers Association and the YHA chaired by A.J. Drake. It carried out field work on the line of the route from about 1967 and, in 1971, at the invitation of the Commission, submitted an interim report. The Commission's Committee for Wales considered the idea in January 1972, and "commended in principle" the idea for a 268 mile (429 km) footpath from Cardiff to Conway, passing over most of the highest mountains in Wales.

Although the Commission noted that "limited resources are likely to dictate a limited commitment to this proposal in the immediate future," a discussion paper was circulated to user groups and other interested bodies (but not the farming or landowning groups at this stage) and the response was generally enthusiastic.

An exception was the British Mountaineering Club (BMC) whose North Wales Area Committee rejected the proposal at the beginning of 1971 and again in 1972 as being unnecessary and potentially harmful to the Club's enjoyment of the mountains. The problem of waymarking in mountain areas was stressed and the BMC noted that it was strongly opposed to waymarking, but that it would be necessary if the Cambrian Way became a formal long-distance path. There were also fears that the creation of a formal route would reduce access elsewhere and there was objection to the erosion which it was felt would result from the designation of a single line as the Way.

This heralded a continuing opposition to the plan from the mountaineering interests in the country. A scathing article by a feature writer, Gwen Moffat, appeared in the popular journal Climber and Rambler in 1972. The proposal was referred to as "The ultimate pre-packaged, quick frozen Way", and reflected the elitist attitude of the mountaineers to the mountain areas:

1 CC paper 75/25, March 1975.
3 75/28 op. cit.
"Like a hundred other whiter than white commodities, the Cambrian Way is an extension of the rat race: an attempt to create a wholesome demand for something which has no need of existence."¹

The article predicted that "a broad eroded swath like the Pennine Way" would result from the Ramblers Association route.

Chris Hall, then Secretary of the Ramblers Association, led the response in the journal.

"There are always people who want to kill any wild area by over-exploiting it. There are always people who believe that only a highly-skilled elite should be allowed anywhere near a mountain, but who firmly resist any proposals which might enable others to learn the skills necessary to join that elite. The Ramblers Association is well-used to picking its way between the two extremities,"

and he and other correspondents felt that the impact of the Cambrian Way was being grossly over-estimated.

In July 1973 the Commission suffered a setback when the Secretary of State for Wales refused to confirm the designation of a Cambrian National Park and he also refused to authorise a public inquiry into his decision. The influence of the farming interests had triumphed and it did not bode well for the Cambrian Way, which ran through this area.

The proposal for the Cambrian Way was considered again by the Commission's Committee for Wales in September 1973, based on an eleven-page precis by Dr Margaret Davies, and the need for developing criteria to consider a specific line for a route in mountain areas was agreed. The proposal went forward to be examined in greater detail, and one of the Commission's Planning Officers, Ray Woolmore, spent the summer and autumn of 1974 working on the proposal.

His report was the most detailed examination of the nature of long-distance routes to be carried out. It was possibly influenced by Yapp's report, but was far more practical and developed a systematic approach to the selection of a line for such a route. It developed

² CC paper 73/205.
formal criteria for consideration, something which had never happened before in England and Wales.

From a desk study and from field work, Woolmore devised alternative lines for parts of the route and he assessed these against the criteria, which he had formulated from the qualities and constraints he recognised from a brief examination of the existing long-distance paths in Great Britain and overseas. He also noted that the Countryside Commission for Scotland had published criteria for long-distance routes, criteria based on the experience in England and Wales. The twelve criteria he isolated from this study can be summarised as:

(i) the route should have national interest, with high quality landscape, scenery, etc.;
(ii) there must be an expressed demand or an expectation that the route would be used;
(iii) disturbance to farming must be minimised and an existing base should be used for the route wherever possible;
(iv) the route should sustain several days' walking;
(v) there must be accommodation on or near the route;
(vi) the route must have continuity;
(vii) both ends of the route must be accessible by public transport;
(viii) the route should avoid National Nature Reserves and other sensitive areas;
(ix) when following archaeological or historic features extra care must be taken in planning the route to avoid potential damage;
(x) the possibility of footpath erosion must be minimised, with paths improved prior to opening in areas where erosion would be likely;
(xi) safety must be of paramount importance in mountainous areas, with high peaks and ridges where climbing or scrambling would be involved being avoided;
(xii) the route must avoid conflict with other recreational or sporting activities.

In the Commission's paper which accompanied Woolmore's Study, the main considerations were summarised as: firstly, the attractiveness as a long-distance route (including its quality, interest, avoidance of roads, lack of artificiality, challenge, availability of accommodation, length of time required to walk the whole route and to walk daily stretches); secondly, the existing availability of rights

1 Ibid. (Cambrian Way report).
of way and access; thirdly, the avoidance of conflict with countryside activities; fourthly, management implications, including conservation and especially erosion; and fifthly, mountain safety and the availability of alternative routes.

The Cambrian Way Committee's route was assessed against these, and it was found to be unsatisfactory in four respects. It ran through National Nature Reserves, it was felt that in terms of mountain safety a 'skyline trail' publicised as a long-distance footpath could be misleading and dangerous, it was also felt that there was unnecessary conflict with agriculture and various paths were included in the plan which would suffer erosion with substantial extra use.

Woolmore's modified route avoided most of these problems. It ran through Snowdonian passes, for example, instead of over the tops, and it was argued that the route did not lose anything in this, for the hiker was taken to places where he could stay and which would make excellent bases for mountaineering.

The modified route did in fact follow the line of the original proposal for most of the way. At the north end Woolmore had left a choice of routes to the coast. The examination of the alternatives was done in a Which? style, by Woolmore's colleague, Keith Pennyfather and the questions posed were - How long?, how strenuous?, how scenically attractive?, how easy to follow?, how interesting?, how much variety?, how challenging?, how safe?, how much conflict?, how much erosion likely?, how much access?, and how much scope for alternative routes?. The line from Ogwen to Llanfairfechan came out best in the review, which brings out nicely the assumptions of the character of a long-distance route of this nature. In the south, Woolmore had left out the section through to the coast, which he felt was relatively unattractive, and this had shortened the route to less

1 CC paper 75/23 op.cit.
than 200 miles (320 km) which he felt was a point in its favour, because it allowed the walk to be comfortably completed within a two-week holiday.

The Commission passed the proposal to its Welsh Committee in April 1975 and it decided, after much discussion on the nature of the route, that it should be restored as a coast to coast path (or be a castle to castle path). Woolmore's methodology for examining sections of the route was used to find the best line for the Way to Cardiff. The Committee and the Commission both further discussed the nature of a mountain route, agreeing that there could be the challenge of rock scrambling, although it felt that there should be alternative paths available where this occurred.

In August 1975 the Commission formally agreed to pursue the plan further. Recognising its complexity, the Commission agreed to examine it in stages, as the National Parks Commission had done with the South West Peninsula Path, and the route was split into three sections: the route through Snowdonia National Park; that through the Brecon Beacons south; and the central section.

However, progress was slow pending the Commission's decision on its policy for long-distance routes. In March 1976 the situation was reviewed and Ministerial criticisms of the delays in the planning of long-distance routes were noted. The Commission decided to use Project Officers to do the field work on the route, and in the first instance it was decided to employ an officer who would become part of the planning team in the Snowdonia National Park. However, before this happened, the Commission solicited comments on the proposal and in 1978 it recorded that "numerous arguments were put forward for and against the plan."

1 CC Committee for Wales Minute 318, May 1975.
2 CC paper W75/24, July 1975.
3 CC paper 75/104.
In the *Times* and the *Sunday Times* at the end of 1977 and the beginning of 1978 a series of articles and correspondence highlighted the problems inherent in the Cambrian Way. For example, it was reported that the idea was unanimously opposed by the county branches of the Farmers Union of Wales, in an article entitled 'Farmers Say Cambrian Way would increase damage'. The Commission had countered this by maintaining that a footpath was "the most practical way of giving controlled public access to one of the most beautiful and unspoilt parts of Britain." However, the Farmers' Union refuted this by using the old argument that "the very designation of a long-distance footpath of this nature tends to increase the numbers of visitors to an area, thus destroying the qualities it seeks to protect." The *Sunday Times* published a letter from the Clerk to the Allotment Holders of the Great Forest of Brecknock, which pointed out that, as the route would pass through bogs, the hikers' dogs would make the sheep run into these.

The mountaineers were still against the plan, and with this variety of opposition and with the problems being experienced elsewhere, most notably in the Wolds, the Commission began to have second thoughts about the Cambrian Way, despite its previous bold decisions to proceed with it. Nonetheless, it still tried to get the Project Officers, stating in 1979 that it hoped it would have one for each of the three sections it proposed to tackle. Instead of Snowdonia being the first area to be considered, as had been originally proposed, the first Project Officer was appointed for the southernmost section of the route, while the second was appointed for the central part, in 1981. Furthermore, instead of carrying out the wide-ranging negotiations to secure a line for the route, as was the Commission's new procedure for long-distance paths, the Project Officers were involved with producing

feasibility studies, reporting to the Committee for Wales.

At the beginning of 1982, the Countryside Commission decided to abandon the route. In its Report for that year it stated: "We decided with regret to proceed no further with the proposed Cambrian Way long distance path," giving as the reason the fact that local authorities, the national park authorities and the farming interests all opposed the plan.

The abandonment prompted Alan Mattingly of the Ramblers Association to write to the Times. In his letter, he pointed to the absurdity of the Countryside Commission being responsible for the designation of long-distance routes and paying the 100% grant, but having no powers and having to rely entirely on the cooperation of local authorities. He also pointed to:

"the more important lesson concerning the role of the Commission itself. The abandonment of the Cambrian Way has been offered as an example of the Commission's switch in priorities from recreation to conservation." 2

The following day, the leader in the Times was on 'Cambria's Untrodden Way':

"The Pennine Way may have done its abortive successor a disservice. It has become notorious in some conservation circles for its very success. Hearty ramblers have chased away much of its wildness and solitude." 3

This popular, if mistaken, image of the Pennine Way had caused a wide variety of interest groups to fear the impact of the Cambrian Way, were it to be designated, and the leader maintained that the Commission was probably right not to proceed with the idea, particularly as the local authorities, which opposed the idea, would have to create and manage the route. It noted that 80% of the route was already a right of way, and:

2 The Times 1st February 1982, p11.
3 The Times 2nd February 1982, p11.
"Imaginative and determined walkers will still be able to find their way from Cardiff to Conway and their achievements will be all the more if they have had to navigate themselves." 1

Long-distance paths were now seen as part of a wider problem, and the article commended the Commission for developing less exacting and more accessible paths, a point made a week later in a letter from the Chairman of the Commission, refuting Mattingly's assertions. The letter did agree that more emphasis was being put on conservation, but said that schemes for recreation and access would continue. Significantly, there was no reference in Barber's letter to long-distance routes.

The sorry saga of the Cambrian Way has been a particularly interesting one. It revealed much in the development of thinking on long-distance routes, particularly with Woolmore's work, and, as the Commission's 1975 paper said, the Cambrian Way "would undoubtedly function as a popular long distance route on the evidence of the Pennine Way." 3 However, the Commission had not found it possible to devote sufficient energies to the route, despite the considerable time that was spent on it. Project Officers were brought into the planning too late. But it is difficult to know how the Commission could have avoided the route having attracted only limited support and considerable opposition.

There are parallels between this route and the Grampian Way in Scotland, which was also shelved after considerable opposition, particularly from mountaineering interests. In addition there were parallels with the Wolds Way, in that the farming interests opposed the route. Despite the fact that it linked two national parks, the local authorities did not support the Cambrian Way and the park authorities themselves opposed the designation of a single line through the parks. Left with just the support from some user groups

1 ibid.
2 The Times 8th February 1982, p9g.
3 CC paper 75/28 op.cit.
(and even that was not wholehearted, because some of the members of the Ramblers Association pressed for the original route put forward by the Cambrian Way Committee, rather than the compromise route being put forward by the Commission), the Commission had little choice but to abandon its plans. It is interesting to note that in its Annual Report for 1982-83, the Commission stated:

"Having regretfully announced last year our decision not to proceed with the Cambrian Way Path we are pleased to say that we now have every hope that the southern section will be opened as a recreational path."

Nonetheless, the very fact that the Commission had developed the idea of creating a long-distance route for ten years, involving the amenity groups in considerable effort, and had come out in support of the idea meant that, when it abandoned the plan, it attracted the condemnation of the proponents of the route. Its decision perhaps reflects the fact that the Commission had changed its policies on new long-distance routes, as the momentum of the programme decreased. It certainly added to the inevitability that the Commission would be extremely reluctant to take any further schemes for long-distance routes which had any element of controversy.

(d) The Norfolk Paths

In 1971, Norfolk County Council put a proposal to the Countryside Commission for a 41 mile (66 km) long-distance path to run from Thetford to Hunstanton following the old Peddar's Way. The Commission was not in a position to concentrate on a new route at the time and in any case the shortness of the route made it seem an unlikely candidate. Nonetheless, the Commission recognised that that part of the country had no other such paths and it also appreciated the enthusiasm of the County Council. It therefore suggested to the Council that it examine the idea in greater detail and include a section of coastal path.

The Commission re-examined the revised proposal in December 1973 and agreed to adopt the idea, although it recognised that the route was of "lower quality" than others with which it had been involved. The onus was left with the County Council and in 1974 the Commission expressed concern over press reports that the Council was making little progress in developing its idea and was treating the examination of detailed lines for the path as a low priority. At this time, the Commission decided that the route should comprise the Peddar's Way and the coastal section of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in North Norfolk. It had decided not to extend the line beyond the AONB and it also decided to proceed with the Peddar's Way as a footpath, not a bridlepath, because of a lack of demand and in order to avoid extra difficulties with landowners in upgrading footpaths.

In 1975, when the Commission was developing its policy on Footpaths for Recreation, the County Council was given the option of proceeding with its routes as a Recreational Path, rather than a long-distance route, because this might make implementation easier. However, the County Council recognised the superiority of the status of a formal long-distance route and also the benefits of full reimbursement for the development and maintenance of such a route and the plan proceeded as a formal route.

In 1977, the Commission announced that it was about to open formal consultations and the following year a Field Officer was appointed, grant-aided by the Commission. It was hoped that a plan would be submitted to the Secretary of State in 1978. In 1979 some changes were made to the line of the route, following the discovery that there were objections from land-owners and farmers to about 14 miles (22 km)

of the 81 mile (130 km) route. The Commission at this time stressed in its annual report its policy of finding a line which was attractive to walkers but which did not jeopardise agriculture. In 1980 a further consultation paper was prepared and approved by the Commission and a report was finally submitted to the Secretary of State in 1981. This was for approval of a T-shaped route from Knettishall in Suffolk to Holme-next-the-Sea where it met the coastal part which was to run from Hunstanton to Cromer. The route was now 86 miles (138 km) in length.

The Secretary of State approved the route without modification at the end of 1982, and implementation has begun. This will become the tenth formal long-distance path in England and Wales and, although progress designing the route was slower than had been expected and there may be a few problems with the implementation, the Norfolk Paths Route has been relatively easy to achieve in contrast to the development of other routes in the mid to late 1970s. One possible explanation is that the route was sponsored by a county council and not by an amenity group. Although such groups were interested in the proposal, there was not the passionate interest as there was with, say, the Wolds Way, and it may be that the land owners were not pushed to take the extreme stance they did elsewhere, despite the fact that the route ran through an area of intensive agriculture. This was the first (and only) test of the Commission's new policy for developing a long-distance route, and it seems to have worked satisfactorily, particularly in its use of a Field Officer.

(e) Other Routes Considered

Of the routes examined above, only the Cambrian Way was not carried through to the reporting stage. However, there were other routes

examined by the Commission in detail which were abandoned as formal long-distance paths.

The Pennine Way Link Path, closely associated with the idea of the Dales Way, was seriously considered by the National Parks Commission at the end of its life, and a plan for a modified route, to be called the Dales Way, was put forward by the Ramblers Association in 1968. As previously noted the idea was put to the West Riding County Council in the first instance. One of the hopes of the Ramblers Association was that the Countryside Act would stimulate the creation of riverside paths, of which the Dales Way was a prime example. It argued that such paths would minimise agricultural and navigational problems, as well as being extremely attractive. As the Ramblers Association seems to have suspected, the Countryside Commission felt unable to adopt the idea of the Link Path or the Dales Way as a priority, although it still had a route "under review" according to its annual report in 1975. The Ramblers Association itself had continued to develop the idea and a guidebook was published in 1973. In fact, as developed, the route showed itself to be walkable without assistance from the Commission or much involvement of the local authorities and the Ramblers Association went ahead waymarking and publicising the Dales Way. The route ran 81 miles (129 km) from Ilkley to Windermere and became as well-used as most of the formal long-distance routes.

There was a similar story in the south-west of the country, where a Cotswold Way had been planned by the local group of the Ramblers Association. The Countryside Commission was asked for assistance, but here again, before the Commission could consider making it a priority, the amenity group had developed the idea in conjunction with the County Council (Gloucestershire in this case) and the route was formally opened in 1970. The route ran along the escarpment of the

2 Correspondence with Head Warden, Cotswold AONB, September 1976.
Cotswolds from Chipping Campden to Bath, a distance of 90 miles (144 km). It linked existing rights of way and had a high level of road walking, and the Commission indicated that it was unsuitable for designation as a formal route for these reasons. It had suggested that the County Council should review the line of the route and in addition to examine its extension from the Cotswolds AONB to Bristol. However, because the Path proved a considerable asset to the AONB and it could be managed by the Area's Warden Service, there seems to have been no serious examination of the Commission's suggestion.

A third route being considered at the start of the life of the Countryside Commission was one linking Dartmoor and Exmoor. Although it was not noted in the discussions of the 1960s and 1970s, this route had been proposed as an example of a category of path - 'shorter long distance paths' - put forward by the Ramblers' Association in its submission to the Hobhouse Special Committee in 1946. The idea of a Two Moors Way was revived in 1965 by a group including Tom Stephenson, then Secretary of the Ramblers Association, and Lady Sayer, of the Dartmoor Preservation Society. It was argued that the proposal was "urgent" - "we cannot wait even five years". In 1966-7 a Working Party had examined a line for the route and subsequently reported to the National Parks Commission. In 1969, the Countryside Commission took the route as a priority, and consulted the amenity groups, the NFU and the CLA. In 1970, it began formal consultations on its plan for a 145 miles (232 km) bridleway running from near Plymouth to near Lynton, a coast to coast route, with a loop through Dartmoor. However, in 1971, it recorded concern that, while most responses had been favourable, there was criticism of the designation of the route as a bridleway in the agricultural area between the Parks.

It therefore decided to re-appraise the project and held statutory

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1 ibid.
2 Rucksack July 1966.
consultations in 1972 on a revised plan for a footpath. However, in 1973 it reported that by then neither county council was prepared to support the idea and it subsequently shelved the full plan. The authorities in the Dartmoor National Park urged the Commission to examine the possibility of a Dartmoor Way, and in May 1976 the Commission began statutory consultations on this proposal. By this time, however, the concept of a long-distance path of this nature was being questioned in the light of the Commission's new policy for footpaths. It was agreed that if the route was to be developed at all, it would be a Recreational Path, planned as part of the footpath strategy for the National Park.

There was criticism, as has been seen, for example, in the Yapp Report, that local landed interests persuaded the Commission not to proceed with the Two Moors Way as a long-distance route as originally proposed, although it was the lack of support from the local authorities that made it difficult for the Commission to pursue the plan. The local authorities were persuaded to cooperate with the amenity groups, who set about creating a route linking existing rights of way, and this Two Moors Way, running some 100 miles (160 km) from Ivybridge on the southern fringe of Dartmoor to Lynmouth at the north of Exmoor, was formally opened in 1976 as a Recreation Path.

The rejection of the long-standing plan for an extension to the South Downs Bridleway has been previously noted. The Commission had agreed to the route in principle in 1972, but potential conflict with agriculture and a lack of sufficient demand led to its being rejected later in the decade. Bridleways proved difficult to create because they caused far greater impact and conflict with the agricultural use of land than footpaths and there has been little progress with plans for bridleways in the Two Moors Way, the Peddar's Way and the

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2 CC paper 75/104 'Footpaths' (op.cit.) (July 1975).
3 Yapp op.cit., p37.
extension to the South Downs Way being rejected. Although user groups of riders did support the plans, there is little evidence of much widespread positive demand for such facilities.

As has been seen, policy changes in the middle to the 1970s meant an end to the rolling programme for long-distance routes which had been in operation since the mid-1950s, with two routes being considered at any one time as priorities and two routes in reserve. After the middle of the 1970s, no new routes were adopted to replace those being reported or abandoned, and in 1982 the Commission's programme for developing new long-distance routes came to a standstill. There is just one possibility at present for a revival of the programme, and that is the Thames Way.

(f) The Thames Way

The idea of a long-distance path along the River Thames, based on its towpath, has a long history. It was one of the routes proposed by the Hobhouse Special Committee and received some prominence during the passage of the 1949 Act. It also received considerable support from such groups as the Commons Society. However, in 1950 the National Parks Commission rejected the idea, mainly because of the "very considerable expenditure" involved. The scheme was raised periodically during the life of the old Commission, and was first put forward for reconsideration to the Countryside Commission in October 1972. Again, it was felt that the cost of the project would be "disproportionately high in relation to its scenic quality." However, the idea was revived in 1977 and developed by the Ramblers Association and the River Thames Society. The Observer had a major article on the proposal which would involve reinstating one ferry and creating four bridges (three of which would be attached to existing structures).

In fact, the Ramblers Association took the idea not to the

Countryside Commission, but to the local authorities and the Thames and Chilterns Tourist Board fearing that the Commission would once again shelve the proposal. This time the local authorities did nothing, and the Commission did, following Yapp’s observation that the National Parks Commission’s decision not to proceed with the idea in the early 1950s was, in view of the inflation in the interim, "unwise and pusillanimous".

Francis Ritchie, who represented walkers’ interests on the Inland Waterways Advisory Council, put forward the proposal that the Thames Towpath should become a formal long-distance path - with 100% grant-aiding - in the middle of the 1970s. Reg Hookway, Director of the Commission, indicated that this was now a possibility and Howell, the Minister of Sport and Recreation, concurred with this. Moreover, the British Waterways Board gave its support for the concept and it was agreed to explore further the possibility of making the Towpath an official route.

In fact, the idea of making long distance routes along rivers and canals was announced at a Labour Party press conference and the Commission not only explored the Thames Towpath further but appointed consultants to look at other possibilities, with the three leading contenders being the Oxford, Grand Union and Leeds and Liverpool Canals. In its report in 1980, the Commission maintained:

"Not all long distance walking needs to be as challenging as that in the uplands. The opportunity to walk along canal towpaths would bring long-distance walking closer to urban areas and make it more accessible for older and younger walkers."

An agreement was reached with the Waterways Board and consultants were appointed to report in 1981; but this idea of extending the concept of

1 Yapp op.cit. p16.
2 Interviews with Stephenson and Ritchie, May 1979.
3 ibid.
long-distance routes, and effectively overturning previous decision of the National Parks and Countryside Commissions, seems to have been shelved.

In 1980, the Commission funded the Thames Water Authority to appoint a Field Officer to investigate the feasibility of creating a Thames Way 146 miles (249 km) in length to run from Thames Head in Gloucestershire to the Houses of Parliament. Part of this study would assess whether the project, if proceeded with, would involve designation of the path as a long-distance route or the creation of a string of Recreational Paths. The Commission’s Annual Report for 1982-83 noted that no decision has yet been made as to whether to proceed with the Thames Towpath and, if so, in which fashion. The momentum which seems to have built up in the mid- to late-1970s for this and other routes based on accessible towpaths seems to have declined, and the signs are that the plan for the Thames-side Path will not be proceeded with as a long-distance route. In "Our Programme for the Countryside 1983-88" the Commission noted that:

"Given growth of resources we would... devote more resources to promoting major recreational routes such as along canal towing-paths and along the Thames."

Note there is still considerable outside interest in the idea of a formal long-distance route along the Thames. It was the first of seven routes put forward to the Commission by the Ramblers Association in January 1984. (See Rucksack vol 11,6, January 1984, p6.) Were the project to attract the attention of a Minister, for example, it being a prominent enough idea with a very long history and considerable support, it is possible that special funds could be made available to the Commission to persuade it to take it on. However, there is no sign of this at present and, as noted, it is more likely that any development would be through making Recreational Paths rather than a formal long-distance route.
5. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Ironically, as the Commission's interest in new long-distance routes apparently waned, interest from other quarters grew in an unprecedented manner and the Commission's run-down of its programme for new routes was paralleled by a massive upsurge in ideas for new, informal long-distance paths developed by a range of interested parties. In fact, prior to the incorporation of machinery to create long-distance routes in legislation, it had been assumed that amenity groups themselves would create routes, as was the case in many countries. However, after the 1949 Act the National Parks Commission dominated the development of long-distance routes, and ideas were channeled to that Commission and, for a time, to the new Countryside Commission.

As has been discussed, the mid-1960s saw a great increase in interest in the recreational use of the countryside by planners, politicians and the general public. Following the Countryside Act public rights of way were signposted and subsequently waymarked, and this contributed to the considerable rise in walking for pleasure. Interest in walking in the countryside is reflected by the fact that in less than 2 years over half a million copies of the AA's No Through Road were sold at a price of £8.95 per copy. This book described over 200 circular walks in Britain, and like other general walking guides it described the formal long-distance routes. A further indicator of the revival of interest in walking is that the membership of the Ramblers Association expanded rapidly from 12,500 in 1962 to 32,000 in 1975.

In its evidence to the Environmental Subcommittee of the House of Commons, the Ramblers Association highlighted that in 1974 over half a million nights had been spent at youth hostels adjacent to the eight formally

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approved long-distance routes:

Summary of Overnight stays at youth hostels on or near long-distance routes in 1974

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Stays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pennine Way</td>
<td>145,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland Way</td>
<td>49,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offa's Dyke</td>
<td>116,463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridgeway</td>
<td>25,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Peninsula Path</td>
<td>139,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Downs Way</td>
<td>46,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Downs Way</td>
<td>33,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pembroke Coast Path</td>
<td>20,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>576,748</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While only a small proportion of these would be walking the whole or a substantial part of a long-distance route (ie long distance walkers), the signs are that long-distance walking also grew very rapidly from the late 1960s.

The Commission's survey of the Pennine Way undertaken in 1971 reflected a three-fold increase in its use since 1965, and, as previously discussed, the signs are that this increase continued steadily to the middle of the decade. The formal opening of the Pennine Way had provided an impetus for interest in the facility, and considerable interest was generated by the official opening of one or more new routes each year between 1969 and 1974 - nine routes in total including the separate sections of the South-West Peninsula Path.

The number of suggestions for new long-distance routes grew as did the frustration that ideas were being shelved by the new Commission. The Dales Way became the first route to be pursued by an amenity group once it became clear that the Commission was not in a position to adopt the idea. Similarly, the Cotswold Way, suggested as early as 1952 and rejected as a priority by the National Parks Commission at

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1 Minutes of Evidence taken before the Expenditure Committee (Environmental Subcommittee) (op.cit.), p420.
the end of the 1950s, was developed as an amenity within the Cotswolds AONB.

Both these examples owe much of their success to the drive of individuals. The former became popular (field observations would suggest as popular as some of the formal long-distance routes) partly because of the publication of a guide book by Colin Speakman; the latter benefitted from publicity and waymarking carried out by the staff of the county council employed in the AONB. It also owed much to the planning and promotion by members of the Gloucester District of the Ramblers Association and particularly, A. J. Drake, later the instigator of the idea of the Cambrian Way.

In June 1971 the Ramblers Association published a Factsheet on Long Distance Footpaths which listed eleven paths. Nine of these ultimately became official long-distance routes. As well as giving basic information on the routes, sources of further information were identified, comprising six leaflets published by the Countryside Commission, five pamphlets produced by the Ramblers Association and just six guide books.

In 1972 Rucksack noted:

"there is no sign of the momentum for the creation of long-distance paths fading. Apart from the major routes which are officially designated, or approved by the Countryside Commission, a second category of more local country routes is springing up" 2

In November 1978 an editorial in Climber and Rambler reflected: "The British passion for stringing footpath together and calling them 'ways' knows no bounds."

By February 1979 the new edition of the Ramblers Association's Factsheet listed no less than 47 long-distance paths in England and Wales, described by more than 70 guide books and special maps, in addition to a large number of new leaflets and pamphlets.

1 op. cit. (1973).
2 Rucksack vol 6, 10, 1972, p23.
3 Climber & Rambler November 1978, p17.
In November 1982, the latest Factsheet (now running to 22 pages) listed 67 long-distance paths in England and Wales and a corresponding increase in the number of guidebooks, pamphlets and leaflets. The total retail price of over 170 sources of information listed (excluding Ordnance Survey maps) was over £260.

Towards the end of the 1970s the Ramblers Association found itself reviewing more and more guides to long-distance paths and in Summer 1978 it began a separate section for these noting:

"Enthusiasm for long-distance paths may be on the wane in official circles but not so with the general public nor it seems with guide book publishers."

Such publicity probably generated yet more interest in new projects and in Winter 1980 the reviewer in Rucksack wrote:

"Until relatively recently the publication of a LDP guide was a rare event, more often than not the climax of years of patient endeavour in seeking out the best possible route for a walking holiday through the finest landscapes. Today LDP publications are scarcely less commonplace than ordinary walks guides, distances are often no more than an experienced rambler can tackle in a day and the countryside traversed is rarely other than nondescript."

Reviews of new guides have continued into the 1980s in Rucksack, sometimes occupying more than one page. Newspapers, including the Times and the Sunday Times frequently reported on new ideas for routes and opening ceremonies, and have carried features describing walks. Considerable space has been devoted to new proposals for long-distance paths in other journals including a new publication, The Great Outdoors. In March 1978, it published an article on 'The Long Distance Routes', by Frank Duerden, noting:

"Probably the most outstanding development in the walking world over the past 15 years has been the establishment of long-distance routes in England and Wales"

Duerden listed the eight formal routes and 36 others using 20 miles (32 km) as the lower limit for a path to qualify as a 'long-distance route'. The Great Outdoors also published a poster-map of Long-

2 Rucksack vol 10, 1, 1980, p15.
Distance Footpaths in Britain depicting over 30 routes in Great Britain.

Climber and Rambler described many new ideas for routes and reviewed the growing number of publications describing one or more such routes - despite frequent criticisms in editorials and in other articles on the idea of planned paths. In 1973 an article began: "Not another bloody way ... can't anyone route-find for themselves any more?"

In fact, growing numbers of individuals and groups were finding that they could map-read. A majority of definitive footpath maps had now been published and new Ordnance Survey maps (at 1:63360, 1:50,000 and then 1:25,000 scales) depicted rights of way. Ideas for new routes were evenly distributed throughout the country and came from a wide variety of sources including members of amenity groups (principally the Ramblers Association), individuals and local authorities, and frequently these involved simply the stringing together of existing rights of way.

The unofficial routes have much greater proportions of their lengths existing rights of way and indeed, in a majority of cases, they involve the creation of no new rights of way. Ideas were sometimes developed as special projects. Shorter paths were developed by local amenity groups, schools, even a Rotary Club, to celebrate a particular event - such as Footpath Heritage Year in 1980. One of the main contributions of the Ramblers Association to this was the publication of a book describing 12 of the unofficial long-distance paths.

The Factsheet produced by the Ramblers Association in November 1982 divided routes into three categories, reflecting the variety of types of path which resulted from this variety of sources. Category I

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1 Distance Footpaths in Britain, Climber & Rambler, December 1977.
were "well established on the ground" with a high standard of waymarking. Category II were less well established, and generally not waymarked, while Category III included "routes devised and written, often by an individual, where there is no intention to obtain recognition or to waymark the route" Indeed, in the case of some routes the guide books have become ends in themselves.

Category I was dominated by the formal long-distance routes, together with well-established paths such as the Cotswold Way (100 miles, 160 km), the Dales Way (81 miles, 129 km) and the Two Moors Way (103 miles, 168 km). Several local authorities created routes which were included in this category, sometimes explicitly to assist tying its area together or to create a corporate identity following the creation of new units in the reorganisation of local government in 1974. The Calderdale Way (50 miles, 80 km) devised by the Calderdale Way Association, which linked the local authority with local user groups, is a prime example of this which received much publicity. County routes include the Isle of Wight Coast Path (60 miles, 96 km) the North Bucks Way (30 miles, 48 km) the Oxfordshire Way (65 miles, 104 km) (produced in conjunction with the CPRE) and the Staffordshire Way (59 miles, 95 km).

Other routes in this category were the Greensand Way (55 miles, 88 km) devised by the Surrey Amenity Council, the Viking Way (140 miles, 274 km) and its extension, the Jubilee Way (17 miles, 28 km), planned by members of the Ramblers Association in conjunction with Lincolnshire and Leicester County Councils, and the Weald Way (80 miles, 128 km) devised by a Steering Committee uniting the local authorities with the user groups.

In Category II were two good examples of linking routes, for this was an important aspect of the use of the planning of informal long-
distance routes. The Ebor Way (70 miles, 112 km) linked the Cleveland Way with the Dales Way and the Heart of England Way (80 miles, 128 km) linked the Staffs Way with the Cotswold Way. In Category III the Derbyshire Gritstone Way (56 miles, 90 km) linked Derby with the Pennine Way at Edale, 'Leeds to the Sea' (90 miles, 144 km) linked that city with the Cleveland Way, the South Coast Way (81 miles, 129 km) linked the North Downs Way and the South Downs Way and the Wessex Way (103 miles, 168 km) linked the Ridgeway with the Dorset Coastal Path.

As previously noted, Brunsdon Yapp had favoured the idea of creating an interlinking network of long-distance routes and clearly there was a great deal of interest in planning such routes. Yapp also called for the creation of paths around towns and cities and, some of these were already being planned. A Hull Countryway (51 miles, 82 km) was a walk around Hull in Category II. In Category III were Bolton Boundary Walk (50 miles, 80 km), a Bristol Countryway (81 miles, 129 km) around Bristol, a Leicester Round (100 miles, 160 km) produced by the Leicester Footpath Association in conjunction with the local authority and the West Midlands Way (162 miles, 258 km) enclosing the western conurbations of the West Midlands Metropolitan County.

The London Countryway, a 205 mile (328 km) route attracted much publicity, although it was listed by the Ramblers Association as Category III. It was opened on St. George's Day in 1978 and the Sunday Times Magazine's 'Lifespan' devoted two pages to the route, with a large pictorial map and the headline 'London Encircled - by a 205 mile walk'. This described the development of the idea, which followed a pattern similar to the origin of many other routes. The project had taken six years to complete, following the idea first being put forward by Keith Chesterton. It had been developed by

members of the Ramblers Association and the Long Distance Walkers' Association and "Initially the determining factors were finding the most scenic routes, and easy access for those without cars". The route strung together existing rights of way, within a 25 mile (40 km) radius of Charing Cross, and it took special care to include places of interest.

Other circular routes in Category III were the Peakland Way (96 miles, 157 km) around the Peak District, a 100 mile (161 km) Navigation Way along towpaths around Birmingham, a 126 mile (202 km) Shropshire Walk around that country, a Sussex Border Path (150 miles, 202 km) and a 162 miles (259 km) Wiltshire Walk. Three Forest Way in Essex (60 miles, 96 km) linked by the 'Extension Epping Forest Centenary Walk' (15 miles, 24 km) to the 65 mile (104 km) Essex Way which was Category II. The Harcomlow Way (140 miles, 224 km) between Harlow and Cambridge resembled a figure-of-eight.

Because of difficulties associated with riparian interests, routes following rivers were surprisingly few, despite frequent approbation by official bodies and amenity groups alike. The idea of a Ribble Way was commended in Parliament, was pressed for by user groups and was used as an example of a 'middle-distance footpath' in the Department of the Environment's Structure Plan for the North-West. So far it has not been developed. However, the Dales Way followed rivers for much of its length, and in Category III in the Ramblers Association Fact Sheet was the Yoredale Way (100 miles, 160 km) based on the course of the Ure from York Minister to Kirby Stephen. The Derwent Way was planned to follow the River Derwent in the North Yorkshire Moors for some 80 miles (128 km). The idea of a route along the Thames has been discussed previously, and two routes were listed in the publication, each with guide books - the Thames Walk (150 miles, 238 km) and the River Thames Walk (238 km), which is a circular route around the Thames Estuary.

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1 HMSO, 1974.
2 This was one of the routes put forward by the Ramblers Association for designation as a formal long-distance route in its submission to the Countryside Commission in January 1984 - see Rucksack vol 11,6 (op.cit.), p6.
240 km) which followed the river itself and a Thames Valley Heritage Walk of 107 miles (171 km).

Other thematic routes were, in Category II, a Saxon Shore Way, tracing the ancient coastline of Kent for some 140 miles (227 km) devised by the Kent Rights of Way Council, a route running from the Severn to Solent (120 miles, 192 km) and a route linking the Irish Sea with the North Sea.

This last was the 'Coast to Coast Walk' (190 miles, 304 km) devised by A. Wainwright, author of the famous Guides to the Lakeland Fells and A Pennine Way Companion. Wainwright gave some of the background to his selection of a route. He had four main objectives in planning the route: "to avoid towns, to link together national parks, to keep to high ground wherever practicable and to use only rights of way and areas of open access". The overall objective was to cross England from coast to coast, keeping to as direct a route as possible. The aim of writing the book, Wainwright claimed, was to influence and assist others in devising their own routes. Indeed, Wainwright was critical of official long-distance routes, partly because he saw the publicity and attention they enjoyed leading to pressures and attracting a "less desirable element" of walkers.

In fact, observations during field work in 1976 suggested that this route, based entirely on Wainwright's guide, whilst not busy was nonetheless as popular as several of the formal routes with long-distance walkers. The disadvantage of an unofficial route is clear in at least one section of the Coast to Coast Walk, for the route follows surfaced roads for an eight mile (13 km) section with little scenic or other interest despite the presence of several rights of way which turned out to be impassable. An official route could create new improved sections and assist in the clearance of rights of way.

1 A. Wainwright A Coast to Coast Walk Westmorland Gazette n.d. (?1972), pxv.
Another coast to coast route which has attracted attention over the years was Hadrian's Wall, and guides have been published to walking that (73 miles, 117 km) (Category III). However, it has been generally accepted that only the middle section, which largely coincides with the Pennine Way, is of particular attraction to long-distance walkers. An idea based on a historical individual was King Alfred's Way (100 miles, 160 km) (Category III) linking places between Portsmouth and Oxford associated with the Saxon King. Two unofficial routes in Wales were Glyndwr's Way (120 miles, 192 km) (Category III), providing a variation to part of Offa's Dyke Path, and the Cambrian Way (268 miles, 429 km). Routes in the Lake District include the 55 miles (88 km) Allerdale Ramble (Category III) and the 70 miles (112 km) Cumbria Way.

Elsewhere in Category II was the 70 miles (112 km) Wayfarers' Walk through Hampshire and in Category III the nearby Inkpen Way, running for 62 miles (100 km) across the chalk hills of Northern Hampshire and the Salisbury Plain (part of the extended system of routes originally proposed by Tom Stephenson), a Vanguard Way from East Croydon to Seaford, also 62 miles (100 km), and a Lancashire Trail (60 miles 96 km) linking a series of short walks and connecting St. Helens, Wigan, Bolton, Blackburn and Burnley with the Pennine Way.

As well as the individual guidebooks, leaflets and pamphlets, unofficial routes have been described in a growing number of general books on walking produced in the late 1970s and 1980s. Examples are

1. Rambling Complete by Frank Duerden
2. The Long Distance Walkers Handbook by Barbara Blatchford
3. The National Trust Book of Long Walks
4. Walkers' Britain

A great deal of work was done on official and unofficial paths.

2. Long Distance Walkers Association, 1981 (this lists 130 walks).
during the period and the availability of the special schemes of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) (Special Temporary Employment Programme, Community Enterprise Programme and, since 1982, the Community Programme) has been of singular importance. Indeed, these have allowed some of the informal routes to come into existence, particularly those with a local authority interest. In general, where there has been little or no local authority involvement, paths tend not to be waymarked and often rely on a single publication to facilitate their use.

There seems to be no end in sight for new ideas for routes, although clearly a saturation point must be reached. The continued availability of 'free' labour under MSC schemes will enable more routes to be created and new and existing routes to be better managed.

A further element of considerable potential importance is the promotion by the Countryside Commission of Recreational Paths. The first major route to be developed as a Recreational Path was the Calderdale Way, promoted by the local Civic Trust in association with the local authority and formally opened by the then Chairman of the Commission, Lord Winstanley, in October 1978. Financial assistance from the Commission included grant-aiding the guide to the walk.

In September, 1983 the current Chairman of the Commission, who had earlier opened the Weald Way, formally opened another Recreational Path, the Ebor Way, and the Commission's own Countryside Commission News illustrated the double importance of the event. Firstly, the Ebor Way provides "the final link in a chain of long distance paths" which stretches 450 miles (724 km) from Oakham in Leicestershire to Windermere. These long-distance paths include two formal long-distance routes, the Wolds Way, and the Cleveland Way and the unofficial Dales Way and Viking Way. While demand for linked

long-distance paths is uncertain, the linking was of psychological importance to amenity groups and to the local authorities and the Commission. The lumping together of formal and informal routes in the Commission's article is interesting. The second important factor was that it illustrates the importance of Recreational Paths. The Commission has been keen to stimulate such schemes and to become involved in them, and it was at pains to highlight its involvement in the Ebor Way:

"The 112 km[70 miles] path is classed as a recreational route (sic) and was created with the help of Commission grant aid and support... It has been promoted as a walking route for many years but, prompted by the Commission, the job of clearing lengthy patches of undergrowth and other obstructions, waymarking and negotiating with landowners, only started in 1978. The Commission has grant aided the work to the tune of £6,000 (about 50% of costs) and will continue to support the necessary maintenance work."1

6. CONCLUSION

In 1968, when the Countryside Commission came into existence, one long-distance route had been formally opened, the 250 mile (402 km) Pennine Way. By the end of 1982 thirteen routes had been opened (including the five separate parts of the South West Peninsula Path) and it is likely the fourteenth will be completed in 1984. The fourteen represent 1667 miles (2691 km) of pathway, as follows:

1 ibid.
### Long-distance routes in England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Approved Date</th>
<th>Officially Opened Date</th>
<th>Time Lag (years)</th>
<th>Length (Mi.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Pennine Way</td>
<td>6.7.51</td>
<td>24.4.65</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland Way</td>
<td>11.2.65</td>
<td>24.5.69</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pembroke Coast</td>
<td>3.7.53</td>
<td>16.5.70</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offas Dyke Path</td>
<td>27.10.63</td>
<td>10.7.71</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Downs Way</td>
<td>28.3.63</td>
<td>15.7.72</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West Peninsula Coast Path</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cornwall</td>
<td>7.4.52</td>
<td>19.5.73</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Cornwall</td>
<td>3.6.54</td>
<td>19.5.73</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Devon</td>
<td>22.6.59</td>
<td>14.9.74</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset &amp; N. Devon</td>
<td>13.1.61</td>
<td>20.5.78</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorset</td>
<td>4.4.63</td>
<td>14.9.74</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridgeway Path</td>
<td>5.7.72</td>
<td>29.9.73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Downs Way</td>
<td>14.7.69</td>
<td>30.9.78</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolds Way</td>
<td>26.7.77</td>
<td>2.10.82</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peddar's Way &amp; Norfolk Coast</td>
<td>8.10.82</td>
<td>?84</td>
<td>?2</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1667 (2691)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The speed of implementation of routes had increased dramatically and no route took more than ten years to implement during the Commission's life. This was partly because of pressure applied by the Commission on local authorities, partly because of the development of schemes whereby project officers were used, funded by the Commission, to negotiate new rights of way with landowners, and partly because first the 1968 Act and then local government reorganisation allowed larger, usually more efficient units to implement routes. Moreover, the increased length of time taken by the Commission to plan routes, to minimise the risk of time-consuming delays following approval, clearly had an effect on those routes proceeded with.

There were other positive developments - some of them rather academic as it turned out, such as the development of criteria for selecting a line for a route and the refinement of procedures for planning a route.

1 Based on CC Reports.
On the other hand, reports were submitted for only three routes, compared to twelve by the old National Parks Commission. Of the three, the Ridgeway was a straightforward proposal which had been developed for many years (and had been listed in the Hobhouse Report) — although the problems of vehicular use of parts of the Path have taken a fair amount of the Commission's energies. The other two, the Wolds Way and Norfolk Paths, were among the shortest routes to be developed and were both at one time considered by the Commission for development as Recreational Paths rather than long-distance routes.

As has been seen, the Wolds Way proved to be particularly contentious, with the Commission occupying an invidious position between militant ramblers and entrenched landowners. That it persevered with the route is to its credit, but the experience lessened the Commission's enthusiasm for long-distance routes, as did its experience with the other potential route which accounted for much of its attention through the period, the Cambrian Way.

The Commission had little option, eventually, but to bow to opposition to the Cambrian Way from landowners and farmers, a national park authority and some user groups, and because of similar opposition from the landed interests and public authorities it abandoned another potential route, the Two Moors Way, although in this case opposition was mainly to the creation of bridle paths across farmland. In both cases, it attracted the bitter criticism of amenity groups, particularly the Ramblers Association. An idea to extend the South Downs Way petered out, because of lack of demonstrated demand and these were all the routes examined in detail by the Commission — with the exception of the perennial Thames Way. This last idea has a hundred year-old history and still attracts considerable interest. It
has not formally been rejected, but the signs are that it is unlikely to be proceeded with as a long-distance route.

 Opposition to the idea of formal long-distance routes increased through the period. Generally, landowners and farmers seem to have been amenable to the creation of footpath routes throughout their history except when they were being promoted by an aggressive user-group, in which case the different interests tended to become polarised and delays and difficulties occurred. Some user groups, notably the mountaineers, voiced concerns, as they had on and off since the 1930s. The specialist journals produced for outdoorsmen echoed the concerns. An editorial in Climber and Rambler is typical of several such articles:

"LDPs in the hills smack too much of 'instant mountaineering'....Opponents of LDPs, whilst depreciating what they see as an erosion of individual initiative, are more concerned with the erosion of the paths themselves, caused by overuse."

The alleged overuse was highlighted by public authorities, including some of the national park bodies. The Exmoor National Park Plan pointed to "the problems of erosion that have already arisen in other long-distance routes" advising against designating any further routes in the Park and continuing "Informed opinion appears to be changing [concerning long-distance routes] as recreational pressure mounts". A similar view led to opposition to the Cambrian Way by Snowdonia National Park Authority, while, in the Yorkshire Dales, the interim plan stated:

"The National Park Committee would wish to facilitate the enjoyment derived from long-distance walking, an activity generally compatible with the national park purposes. The Committee is, however, aware of the problems which can arise from the over-use of well-publicised routes and is concerned over the promotional effects of naming and formally designating LDRs. The Committee will seek through the creation of additional footpath links to facilitate long-distance walkers and will give priority to removing the various problems which occur along existing

1 Climber & Rambler vol XV,4, p13: 'Long Distance Footpaths are coming under Close Scrutiny'.
official and unofficial long-distance routes but will not, for the
time being, pursue additional formal designation."

Overshadowing the opposition, the period, and particularly the mid-
1970s onwards, saw an unprecedented rise in interest in long-distance
paths and the use in development of unofficial routes. The reasons
for this were numerous - the increase in leisure time and mobility,
the signing and waymarking of footpaths, the availability of
guidebooks and maps, showing rights of way, media interest in such
facilities, publicity afforded by the opening of a series of formal
routes and the establishment of specialist clubs and societies, such
as the Long Distance Walkers Association (with its journal Strider):
these all contributed to the growth.

Long-distance paths of some sort were planned in all the counties
of England and Wales except three. They were of many different types,
ranging from existing rights of way linked together in one guide book
with no development at all of the route on the ground to routes
involving the negotiation of linking sections, with satisfactory
waymarking and management and a fair amount of documentation.

The former were frequently associated with just one individual, the
latter frequently sponsored by a local authority. The informal paths
bridged the gap between the short walks which were available and the
formal long-distance routes. In fact, a few of the longer informal
long-distance paths would seem to be of equal quality to the formal
routes, to be considered by walkers to be in the same category as the
formal paths and to be as well used as the formal routes.

The Ramblers Association continued to be extremely important in
promoting the formal and informal routes. Many of the informal paths
were being developed by members of the local areas of the Association,
giving it a special interest. In addition, there was sometimes

1 Interim National Park Plan, North Yorkshire County Council, see CC
discernible a marked reduction in interest in the Commission's developing a programme for new formal routes such as occurred in articles in Rucksack written by the Association's Secretary, Alan Mattingly, it being implied that limited resources available to the Commission would be better spent on less specialised facilities for walkers. Nevertheless, there have been periodic attempts by the Association to get the Commission to revitalise its programme for formal routes, it being pointed out that the formal routes could be expected to provide the best experiences and facilities for long-distance walkers. Moreover, a point was emphasised which had first been discussed in the 1940s, that a national agency was in the best position to plan routes which may cross more than one county (or, to extend this, the territories of more than one amenity group).

For example, in a lengthy press release in 1976 the Association wrote:

"Both the demand and the scope fully justify us calling upon the Countryside Commission to expand their LDP programme for which there can be no comparable substitute."

In 1983, one of five criticisms published by the Ramblers Association of the five year programme of the Commission concerned the lack of a place for new long-distance routes, and it was maintained that arguments used in the past supporting formal routes were still valid.

In January 1984 it submitted a proposal to the Commission for seven new long-distance routes to be created before 2000, the Two Moors Way, extensions of the Ridgeway to the south-west and north-east (this, the Icknield Way), the Thames Walk, the Ribble Way, the Cotswold Way and an extension to the South Downs Way. It pointed to the fact that the existing routes were "extremely popular" and recognised "a strong public demand for more".

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2 The Times 16th January 1984, with a map depicting the existing and proposed routes. See also Rucksack vol 11, 6, January 1984, ppl66. This focus on 'RA Calls For More Walkers Highways' (headline of the journal) represents the greatest interest in long-distance routes for a considerable time.
Implicit in some of the Ramblers Association's observations on new informal long-distance paths was a criticism of the quality of some schemes and also a concern over the volume of new routes in some areas. "Never did I think I would find myself advocating a moratorium on the establishment of LDPs in national parks" wrote the Association's reviewer of literature on paths, "but at least in the instance of the North York Moors some such measure is long overdue."

This referred to the fact that new routes were continually being devised for the area and the fear was that a saturation point may be reached. In fact much attention was on the 40 mile (60 km) Lyke Wake Walk which attracted thousands of walkers each year and had serious problems of erosion. However, it had been devised (in 1955) to be walked in one 24-hour journey and therefore does not strictly qualify as a long-distance path.

As noted, the Commission's five year plan from 1983 has no place for further formal long-distance routes, and this is a policy consistent with the decision taken following deliberations over Footpath for Recreation in 1975. The decision was to complete routes which were in the pipeline, to concentrate on promoting Recreational Paths and to concentrate on managing existing routes. In fact, in the second half of the 1970s the Commission seemed to be less than enthusiastic about any of these. However, in the 1980s, it has become clear that the Commission is taking these seriously.

Routes in the pipeline in the mid-1970s should be complete in 1984 although for a variety of reasons discussed above only two new routes have been taken to reporting stage since 1975.

1 Rucksack vol 10,6, October 1981.
2 See Bill Cowley Lyke Wake Walk Dalesman, 1975.
The Commission gradually became involved in Recreational Paths. Its policy on formal routes has been akin to the attitudes of the national park authorities referred to above, although it seems to have a more realistic view of the erosion taking place on existing routes, recognising this, from its surveys, to be a localised problem with the long-distance walker playing a relatively small part. Its policy on Recreational Paths came about because it felt that long-distance walkers were relatively well catered for; its experience with Yapp had given no justification for developing its programme for new routes; and it was now able to grant-aid other types of path.

The Commission's unfortunate experiences with the Wolds Way and the Cambrian Way reinforced its view that the growing interest in long-distance walking could perhaps be better catered for by means other than the machinery of the 1949 Act. As its policy for Recreation Paths eventually took effect, and it promoted its ability to grant-aid schemes, so it did become more involved in the whole spectrum of footpaths in the countryside.

Although it has been generally recognised that the quality of formal routes makes them a class apart, nevertheless at the 'lower' end of the family of formal routes and at the 'upper' end of routes which have become Recreational Paths there is some merging. Some of the informal routes had been considered by the Commission and had it continued its rolling programme it is likely some would have become formal long-distance routes. In mid-1982 the Commission published for the first time a booklet entitled Recreational Paths and in it are listed seven paths longer than the three shortest formal routes.

(1) Sussex Border Path 222 miles (356 km), (2) Saxon Shore Way 141 miles (225 km); (3) Viking Way 141 miles (225 km); (4) Harcamlow Way 140 miles (224 km) Glyndwyr's Way 122 miles (195 km); (5) Cotswold Way 101 miles (162 km).

1 This is one of the assumptions being tested in a survey of the provision of access in the countryside for recreation commissioned by the Countryside Commission and the Sports Council, and being carried out by the Tourism and Recreation Research Unit (TRRU).

miles (161 km) and the Dales Way 81 miles (130 km).)

A majority of these and the other 65 paths listed in the publication had been created since the advent of the Commission's policy for developing Recreational Paths and, while the Commission itself generally had relatively little influence in new schemes, the booklet did vindicate its policy, for now a wide range of types of walker were better catered for. In addition an increasing interest in long-distance walking had been created and the demand satisfied.

The booklet Recreational Paths had three criteria for a path to fulfil: that it be named; 6.5 miles (10 km) or more in length; and have a guide book or equivalent. The total length of Paths listed was 2750 miles (4409 km) and the average length 38 miles (61 km). If 25 miles (40m) is taken as the theoretical minimum length for a path to qualify for consideration as a formal long-distance route, no fewer than 34 routes exceed this length. The long-distance walker was therefore being catered for far faster than either Commission had been able to achieve with its programme for long-distance routes. The Commission in its Programme for 1983-88 reported that it intended to increase involvement with Recreational Paths during the period. In 1982/83 the percentage of its total expenditure on grants which was accounted for by footpaths and bridleways under this category had risen from a negligible amount to 1.8% while the policy document reported that the amount of money would increase to 3.4% of the grant expended in 1983/84. Moreover the report added: "given growth of resources we would devote more resources to providing major recreational routes."

1 CC Annual Report 1982-83, tables.
The other part of the Commission's policy relating to long-distance paths which had been stressed in *Footpaths for Recreation*, and owed much to Hookway's experiences on the Pennine Way, was to increase concentration on the management of existing routes. In fact, there was little evidence of this in the second half of the 1970s, reinforcing the view suggested earlier that the Commission had lost interest in long-distance routes. However, in the 1980s the position changed, as the Commission persuaded more local authorities with a responsibility for maintaining long-distance routes to act. The following table shows the estimated amounts spent on long-distance routes by local authorities from the inception of the Countryside Commission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Amount spent on LDRs £000s</th>
<th>Percentage of CC Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968/69</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969/70</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970/71</td>
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<td>6.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982/83</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983/84</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fluctuations in the early years are accounted for by periodic intensity of acquisition of rights of way to complete routes. Although capital costs involved have increased dramatically during the period, in fact latterly a relatively small part of the annual expenditure is accounted for by acquisition costs and a correspondingly larger part of an increasing total reflects management and maintenance of completed routes. In 1982-83, 5.48% of grant available from the Commission went to long-distance routes (which equals the 2.9% of

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Compiled from the Commission's Annual Reports. Where appropriate, figures for spending on LDRs in Wales have been estimated from the various tables and added to the figures given for England.
the Commission's total budget which is shown in the table). The Programme for 1983-88 stresses the importance of concentrating on the management and maintenance of routes and in 1983/84 it is expected that the percentage of the grant which will be expended on long-distance routes will rise to 6.2% - £490,000, or £294 per mile of route (£182/km). (This compares with expenditure by the Commission on the major Recreational Paths listed in the leaflet of the same name in 1982/83 of approximately £50 per mile (£30/km).

It seems likely that a large part of the expenditure on maintenance of routes is being channeled into areas where problems of erosion have arisen primarily because of intensity of use by day-walkers (as opposed to long-distance walkers). However, most of the work being carried out on the paths seems to be being done as sympathetically as possible, and the original desire by proponents of long-distance routes - and, indeed, both Commissions - that paths have as little impact as possible on the landscape is being upheld.

The funding for long-distance routes continues to be at 100%, a figure made more remarkable now standard grants from the Commission are up to 50% rather than 75% as was the case. Towards the middle of the 1980s the conclusion to be drawn on the Commission's involvement with long-distance routes is somewhat different from conclusions drawn at the end of the 1970s when a slump in interest in all aspects of long-distance routes seemed to characterise the situation. While the programme for new routes seems now to be dead this has now to be seen in the context of an effective programme of Recreational Paths being developed throughout the country, which in the eyes of the Commission is satisfying any extra demand there may be for facilities for long-distance walkers far more efficiently and far more cheaply than formal long-distance routes would. Moreover, interest in existing routes has
picked up with the Commission still playing a leading role in their continuing development, in maintenance, management, publicity and overall co-ordination of standards. It has in fact spent over £2.2 million on long-distance routes and it is likely it will be spending over half a million pounds per annum as this decade advances. It reckons that the present formal routes represent an adequate provision of this specialist facility, but that, as the routes are completed on the ground, it has an important part to play in the next phase - the post-implementation management phase.
CHAPTER 11

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LONG-DISTANCE ROUTES IN SCOTLAND

1. INTRODUCTION

Developments up to the 1940s in the amenity movement applied to all Great Britain. In the 1940s, however, when the government became involved in these matters, Scotland was treated separately and unlike England and Wales did not achieve the legislation which, among other things, provided for the establishment of long-distance routes. This difference is seen largely to stem from the fact that pressure from amenity groups and individuals within and outwith Parliament was not as strong in Scotland as it had been in England. This chapter summarises the developments which have taken place in Scotland, particularly following the passage of the Countryside (Scotland) Act in 1967, called by the Expenditure Committee of the House of Commons a "catching up" measure, and the subsequent establishment of a Commission with powers to plan long-distance routes.

The chapter examines suggestions for long-distance routes which have been put forward at different times, the choice of criteria by the Commission for selecting routes and the planning of its first route, the West Highland Way. Thereafter, attention is focussed on the Grampian Way and its eventual abandonment, followed by a change in direction for the Commission from which came a study of potential routes in the south of the country. The Strategic Appraisal of Long-Distance Routes in Southern Scotland and the subsequent study of the Southern Upland Way are described. Finally, developments in the early 1980s are summarised - changes in legislation, the survey of the West Highland Way and the decision of the Commission to pause in its programme for developing long-distance routes to complete those approved and to consolidate its position.

1 HC Reports 1975-76, Sixth Report of the Expenditure Committee op.cit.
2. EARLY INTEREST IN THE COUNTRYSIDE OF SCOTLAND

Scotland played a leading role in the development of attitudes to the countryside during the Nineteenth Century. From the Falls of Clyde to the Highlands, Scotland received considerable attention during the Romantic era and many walks and journeys within the country were described in Victorian times. In addition, organisations were formed to protect and to increase the use of the countryside, as in England, including one of the earliest amenity groups - the Scottish Rights of Way Society.

The Scottish Rights of Way and Recreation Society was formed in 1845 out of the Association for the Protection of Public Rights of Way in Scotland, which had been involved in 1844 in the famous battle for recognition of the right of way through Glen Tilt. As with the Commons Society, the Scottish Rights of Way Society had a membership which was largely professional. Its supporters included Members of Parliament, who were to be instrumental in bringing Access to Mountains Bills before Parliament, the first of which, in 1884, applied only to Scotland. In addition, Rights of Way Bills were brought before six consecutive Sessions of Parliament, culminating in the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1894 which resulted in rights of way in Scotland receiving protection in law for the first time.

The Society continued to battle for specific rights of way, and its later work included signposting paths, particularly in the Pentlands and in the Highlands.

Scotland was represented on the Addison Committee which recommended that a Scottish authority be set up to establish national parks. In addition in the 1930s, the National Trust for Scotland was established (in 1931) by a Private Act of Parliament to work for the preservation and enjoyment of the Scottish countryside; large tracts

of land owned by the Forestry Commission were opened up for public enjoyment; and recreational groups were established in the cities, including local groups of the Ramblers Association and the Holiday Fellowship. However, this interest never became a significant political force and, in particular, the groups of ramblers in Scotland were never to have the same impact as those in England.

Cherry traced the developments in the area of legislation for the countryside in Scotland through the 1940s. While Scotland was omitted from the terms of reference of the Scott Committee, which has been shown to have been so important in laying the foundations from which later legislation was to flow, a short report in May 1943 on the Utilisation of Land in the Rural Areas of Scotland echoed some of the conclusions of the Scott Committee. The impact of the Standing Committee on National Parks in England has been noted, and in 1942 an equivalent organisation was established in Scotland when the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland sponsored a Scottish Council on National Parks, which was to play a leading role. It seems to have been particularly interested in the recommendations regarding footpaths in the Scott Report and it pressed for legislation, which would have incorporated some of the ideas in the Report. However, the Lord Advocate pointed to powers relating to footpaths which were already available to the local authorities in Scotland through the local government acts.

Whereas in England and Wales the Scott Report provided the basis from which ideas on matters to do with the countryside developed from economic ones to those based on the notion of the 'social wage', in Scotland there was less of this transition and the economic aspects were to remain paramount up until the 1960s. The development of tourism in particular was at the forefront. Nevertheless, the pattern

1 Cherry op. cit. Chapter 8.
2 Cmd 6440.
3 Cherry op. cit., p68.
in England and Wales was followed to the extent that there was a survey of potential national parks - the Report of the Scottish National Parks Survey Committee, chaired by Sir Douglas Ramsay, followed by a report by a Committee also chaired by Ramsay on National Parks and Conservation of Nature in Scotland. However, it was just the potential national parks and not the countryside in general which were considered, and no case for the improvement of access in general or the development of long-distance routes on a national scale was made. Just one reference to long-distance paths occurs in the reports. In the latter it was recommended that:

"the [Scottish National Parks] Commission should also be empowered to encourage the payment of grant where necessary for the provision by adjoining local authorities of long distance paths linking national parks or improving access to a national park."  

As suggested previously, it was largely the momentum in England and Wales, built up by the various factions of the amenity movement, which ensured that legislation would come. In Scotland the momentum did not build up to the same degree, partly because there were fewer restrictions in Scotland, but also because of the absence of two factors recognised as being critical in the case of England and Wales: the existence of amenity groups with power and committed individuals, including politicians. Cherry has brought out the fact that there was little enthusiasm to change legislation inside the Scottish Office and, while it could be argued that this had been the case in the respective Ministries in England, the difference was the lack of political will at ministerial level in Scotland in the 1940s and through the 1950s.

In 1960 the Secretary of State for Scotland wrote a memorandum entitled 'Preservation of the Countryside' which sought to get Exchequer grant for conservation and to enhance the amenity of the

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1 Cmd 6631.
2 Cmd 7235.
3 Ibid. Section 65.
countryside. This was to include the signposting of footpaths and the improvement of access in general. A Countryside (Scotland) Bill was drafted in 1961 but the county councils in Scotland objected to what they saw as interference with their functions.

Two years later, the Countryside and Tourism (Amenities) (Scotland) Bill illustrated the importance of the economic side of the consideration of the Scottish countryside. The Bill ran through Committee stage, but was lost, partly because of the objection from the county councils to the proposal to set up a Scottish Tourist Amenities Council.

In 1964 the Labour Party's manifesto, 'Signposts for Scotland' pledged similar legislation to that enjoyed by England and Wales since 1949 and thus one political party became committed to legislative change. Also in 1964 the National Trust for Scotland increased interest in the subject by convening a conference in Inverness on 'The Scottish Countryside'. However, the main impetus was through the establishment of a Scottish Study Group under the Chairmanship of Professor Robert Grieve in preparation for the Countryside in 1970 Conferences. The main Conference took place in November 1965 and Grieve's Study Group Number 9 was of considerable importance. That the Conference played an important role in the establishment of new legislation for the countryside in England and Wales has been noted previously in this study but it was even more important in the case of Scotland.

In July 1965 Secretary of State, William Ross, announced that a Countryside Commission for Scotland would be established, despite continuing opposition from the county councils in Scotland. There was to be no White Paper issued and it seems that it was the power of the pleas for legislation by Grieve and his colleagues, on top of the

1 Cherry op. cit. p145.
2 HC Reports 1963-64, Bill 14.
3 National Trust for Scotland Yearbook, 1966.
commitment by the Labour Party, which led the Government to sponsor a bill for Scotland in advance of the long-promised bill for England and Wales. However, mainly because there was no White Paper, the substance of the bill came largely from the existing legislation in England and Wales, incorporating some of the new ideas which were about to be adopted south of the border, such as Country Parks. On the other hand, the legislation did differ from that in England and Wales in that no survey of rights of ways was called for - there was strong opposition to that from the county councils and also from some of the amenity groups including the Scottish Rights of Way Society which feared an overall reduction in paths if the survey was to take place. Matters relating to provisions for access, the creation of new footpaths and long-distance routes were to be very similar to the 1949 Act - the latter despite the fact that a questioner in the House of Commons had been informed as late as June 1965 that "there were no plans to create long-distance paths" in Scotland.

The time was ripe politically for change, particularly because of the moves afoot internationally to bring planning into countryside recreation to a much greater degree. However, the fact that Scotland was at last to achieve legislation specifically aimed at preserving and enhancing the countryside for recreational use was largely to do with the impact of Grieve and his Committee. Grieve was a Director of the Scottish Rights of Way Society and his enthusiasm for the improvement of recreational opportunities in the countryside countered the opposition which resisted any changes being made to traditional Scots laws. In addition, the opposition of the local planning authorities was overruled largely because Grieve and his colleagues were able to indicate that, despite their existing powers, the local planning authorities had not acted to improve facilities in the

1 HC Reports 1964-65 vol 715 vol 19, 28th June 1965.
countryside or preserve its amenity so that another independent body was needed. Long-distance routes were to be included in the measure because they were generally felt to be 'a good thing'. There is no evidence of much consideration of the facility, but it is significant that the planning of long-distance routes would be one of the few positive and specific tasks of this independent body.

3. THE COUNTRYSIDE (SCOTLAND) ACT

In March 1967 the Countryside (Scotland) Bill was published and the following month it came before the Scottish Grand Committee. As at the beginning of the passage of the 1949 Act, emphasis had been put on the fact that this was a bill to improve public enjoyment of the countryside particularly by young people: "It is a measure which will help bring the land of Scotland nearer to its people."

Part II of the Bill was new to Scotland, and involved access, while Part III dealt with the creation of paths and long-distance routes ("well-precedented in the 1949 Act", according to the government spokesman.) Clauses 39 to 42 and clause 67 were very similar to those relating to long-distance routes in the 1949 Act, with only very minor differences.

That some of the legislation was taken straight from the 1949 Act and that it had not been fully understood or considered in the Scottish context is illustrated by comments made in the introduction to the Bill. In the context of long-distance routes, speaking for the government, Dickson Mabon said, "I hope positive action will be taken by local authorities in co-operation with the Countryside Commission", despite the fact that the Bill gave the Commission complete responsibility for the planning and reporting of long-distance routes.

In fact, during the passage of the Bill there were few references to long-distance routes although a few details were discussed. For

1 HC Reports 1966-67, Bill 221 (22nd March 1967).
2 HC Reports 1966-67 Scottish Grand Committee - Countryside (Scotland) Bill, col 5, 18th April 1967.
example, there was concern over fire risk in relation to the facility and the problem of closing sections of routes over which people had planned in advance to walk was recorded. The difficulties associated with the high rainfall in parts of Scotland were also noted:

"the maintaining of a hill path on a long-distance route can be very expensive operation, and one which needs continual maintenance through the winter...."  

The Earl of Dalkeith noted that long-distance walkers were by and large responsible people - and in fact there was little opposition from landowners to the positive provisions in the Bill. In the seventh session in June, there was discussion on such a basic matter as whose responsibility the creation of few paths would be, and it was noted that the Local Government (Development and Finance) (Scotland) Act of 1964 gave the districts responsibility to create paths. The difficulties experienced in England in creating long-distance routes were noted and a different approach was called for in Scotland in which cooperation would be the keyword and increased opportunities would be realised through the efforts of a persuasive Commission.

Specific discussion on the clauses pertaining to long-distance routes took place in a rushed session later in June. A change followed Baker's proposal that toilet facilities should be specifically included as possible provisions, but the main discussion at this time centred around the necessity to consult landowners along the route. The Minister said that the local authorities would consult all the affected landowners during the implementation of a route but that the Countryside Commission need enter negotiations only if difficulties seemed likely. Otherwise, negotiations might lead to unnecessary work and delay, and the government resisted attempts to make consultation with landowners a statutory provision, noting that the National Farmers Union and the Scottish Landowners Federation did not support such a provision.

1 ibid. col 21.  2 ibid. col 66.  3 ibid. col 331.
not agree with the view that consultations were necessary:

"They are content that at the stage of proposals and estimates, where the Commission is doing this kind of assessment, while they would hope that in the event of obvious problems the owners and occupiers should be consulted, it should not have to consult everyone on every occasion when thinking of making a proposal or drawing up an estimate." 1

However, Mabon did say that the Commission should err towards consultations when in doubt.

Another theme topical in the 1960s was raised. This was the use of disused railway lines, but the Minister would not be drawn into stating whether disused railway lines would be used as part of long-distance routes, although he did say that he thought parts might be.

During the passage of the Bill few specific ideas were put forward for future long-distance routes in Scotland, although the word 'extensive' in the wording of the bill was discussed. Stodart said:

"Quite obviously something like a walk through the Lairg Shru [sic: Lairig Ghru] would be an extensive walk. Would the walk, and a very good one it is, from Gifford to East Lothian over the top of the Lammer Law to Carfra [sic: Carfrae] Mill, where there is an excellent hostelry - a distance of nine miles I think - be the sort of thing that would come into consideration for the consequences of this clause?"

Again, Mabon resisted being drawn into detail:

"On the question of how extensive are the long-distance routes, the answer is very extensive,"

and he cited the English situation, when pressed by Stodart, where routes were 100 miles (160 km) or more. However, he did infer that a route would not necessarily have to be of this length, although he did suggest a minimum of 25 miles (40 km) or so, noting that:

"I would not like to lay down an exact mileage... we do not want to lay down, at least for the present, and when we do, we shall do it administratively, although it may be better to do at our own discretions."

Later he commented that long-distance routes should involve "not just a day but many days walking." 3

1 ibid. col 333. 2 ibid. col 336. 3 ibid. col 338.
In the eighth sitting of the Committee, Stodart again pressed Mabon, this time to give examples of proposed routes. This was in the context of ferries. Mabon commented:

"I do not know if this is the case in England, but in Scotland we have great potential for these long-distance routes. A large part of the Highlands deserves to be opened up."

There was criticism that, as it stood, the Bill limited the grant aid payable to local authorities in providing ferries and the concern was expressed that it would be unfortunate if the local planning authorities in these areas were embarrassed by not having sufficient funds:

"Considerable building could be involved in some parts if the local authority is to run the ferry. It has powers under Subsection 1 to carry out much-needed work - perhaps the erection of a landing stage and a boathouse, and some of these long-distance routes may herald the beginning of a single track road ultimately." 2

Just twenty-five minutes were spent discussing long-distance routes and there was minimal reference to the provision when the Bill was reported or had its third reading. The provision for long-distance routes was the same as in the original bill with the addition of the reference to toilet facilities when the Lords began their consideration of the Bill in July.

In the House of Lords the Duke of Atholl felt that the powers to "create long range footpaths and things of that sort are about right." At Committee stage the details were examined and Atholl put forward an amendment to get self-closing gates on long-distance routes. However, this was dropped as it was felt to be too restrictive a detail. Similarly, Atholl tried to get an amendment to allow picnic places to be made along long-distance routes. Lord Hughes in reply said that this facility was not really appropriate for such a route:

"After all, the Scottish hills are full of natural picnic places and one of the jobs of a long-distance route is the chance that it gives to get away from over-organised welfare provisions." 4

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1 ibid. col 348-9. 2 ibid.
A third amendment put forward by the Duke of Atholl related to the provision of facilities for horses but it was noted that an old Scots Act of 1424, the Innkeepers Act, already covered this.

Once again there were attempts to get a process of formal consultation incorporated into the Bill, but Lord Hughes repeated the argument put forward in the House of Commons that: "We must hold the balance between getting on with the job and consulting many people who might in the event not be concerned."

At the reporting debate in October, the possibility of getting a situation where wardens could be used on rights of way was discussed, but came to nothing. Drafting amendments, following various points put forward by Lord Atholl were incorporated. For example, it was felt that subsection 39 (2) was not wide enough and "without prejudice to this generality" was added to overcome this concern.

There was another attempt to formalise the consultation procedure.

The Bill was returned to the Commons later in October, where more drafting amendments were made to ensure that the Commission would not be prevented from making proposals on facilities it felt would be appropriate for a long-distance route, and two days later, on the 27th October 1967, Royal Assent was received for the Countryside (Scotland) Act.

In Part III of the Act, Sections 39 to 42 and Section 67 dealt with long-distance routes, and they varied little from the 1949 Act.

4. EARLY SUGGESTIONS FOR LONG-DISTANCE ROUTES IN SCOTLAND

There seems to have been relatively little public interest in the new legislation, in contrast to the interest in England after the passing of the 1949 Act, when attention had focussed on the potential new national parks and long-distance routes - or, indeed, the interest

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1 ibid. cols 907-9.
2 Chapter 86.
3 See Appendix, below.
in England after the passage of the Countryside Act in 1968.

There was the opportunity for long-distance routes to become a focus of attention if the pattern south of the border had been followed, because this was one of the few new positive provisions in the legislation. The Act did not provide for National Parks or for surveys of rights of way or the provision for signposting footpaths. Country Parks and Access Areas were included in the legislation but long-distance routes would have been more likely to attract the interest of the public.

There had been suggestions for long-distance paths in Scotland and the Weekend Scotsman the week the Act was passed published a map putting forward six suggested lines for long-distance routes, attributed to Goodwin:

(a) Kirk Yetholm - Melrose - Peebles - Dalkeith

(b) A circuit of the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park extended to Fort William;

(c) Fort William to Inverness;

(d) Inverness to Aviemore, through the Cairngorms to Braemar and Ballater;

(e) Loch Leven to Pitlochry to Aviemore;

(f) Mallaig to Durness.

However, this seems to have stirred little interest and none of the proposals attracted the sort of interest that several potential routes had done in England and Wales after the passage of the 1949 Act. There was certainly no equivalent of the Pennine Way to provide a focus.

Previous suggestions for routes in Scotland had included eight in D.G. Moir's Scottish Hill Tracks in a section actually entitled 'Long Distance Routes'. The following were outlined:

1 The Scotsman 'Weekend Section', 21st October 1967.
(a) Northumberland to Edinburgh (linking with the Pennine Way);
(b) Northumberland to Dunbar (from the Pennine Way via Dere Street);
(c) Stranraer to Dunbar (this became Newton Stewart to Edinburgh in the 1975 edition of the book);
(d) Drymen to Elgin via Dunkeld and Ballater;
(e) Glasgow (Drymen) to Inverness via Braemar;
(f) Glasgow to Skye via Fort William;
(g) Glasgow to Skye via Glen Affric; and
(h) Fort William to Tongue via Ullapool.

Moir noted that "numerous" long-distance routes could be devised by linking the shorter tracks described in his guides, but he also noted that stretches of roads had to be used to link paths along routes. In fact, field work in Southern Scotland in the 1970s by the present author indicated that very long lengths of routes had been surfaced, particularly along the old drove roads. Few of the long-distance routes described in Moir's guides or routes devised linking shorter paths were at all satisfactory as long-distance walking routes by the 1970s because of the extent to which they had been surfaced.

In addition, the media occasionally referred to ideas for long distance paths. Rucksack noted that the Guardian had reported on informal talks which took place between the National Trust for Scotland and the National Parks Commission to extend the Pennine Way 70 miles (112 km) north to Edinburgh, based on Dere Street, although nothing seems to have come of this. The following April, 'A high Level Walk in Southern Scotland' was described in Rucksack and also in 1967, the Guardian suggested in a leading article that Scotland needed a walking route running from coast to coast. On May 29th, 1967, a sizable article described a route which was called 'The

1 Rucksack vol 3,4, October 1966, p10.
Southern Highlander', which ran from Girvan to Dunbar, crossing many of the highest points in the Southern Uplands. In 'Area News' in Rucksack it was reported that the Highlands and Islands Development Board was exploring the possibility of a 'Wade's Way', a walk of 130 miles (208 km) from the Central Cairngorms to Glenelg (west of Inverness). Nothing appears to have come of this.

Several county councils had put forward ideas for 'long distance routes' in various reports. East Lothian's Development Plan (Tourism Development Proposals) summarised ten proposals for 'long-range footpaths' and a coastal path which had been identified in the Development Plan ten years earlier. The Clyde Valley Regional Plan (1946) called for a comprehensive system of 'Walkers Paths' though no specific routes were put forward. In 1968 the Galloway Project - A Study of the Economy of South West Scotland with Particular Reference to its Tourism Potential identified the 'Galloway Trail', a long distance path based on the disused railway line which ran from Glen Luce to Newton Stewart. (Interestingly, this proposal recommended that the path should share facilities with the A75 tourist route.)

However, most proposals put forward by the local authorities for 'long distance routes' were in fact for walks which would be completed within a day. Others put forward linked places rather than following ridges or other natural or historical features as had generally been the case in England and Wales, and few seem to have attracted much support from amenity groups. Several ideas put forward before the passing of the legislation and later were really endurance walks, linking a series of mountain tops, for example, and not practicable for development as formal long-distance routes. Ideas did come from a wide variety of sources, as has been seen, but few seem to have been

developed much beyond the original general idea of a route. In addition, there was no evidence of specific proposals during the passage of the Act through Parliament and when the Countryside Commission for Scotland was established there was a different situation to that facing the National Parks Commission, with no obvious contenders for examination as potential long-distance routes.

5. THE COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND

(a) The Commission

The Countryside (Scotland) Act was passed on 27th October, 1967, and Commissioners were appointed by the Secretary of State the following February. Sir John MacWilliam was appointed as Chairman, and John Foster became Director, a similar post to that he had held in the Peak District (which had given him direct experience of the stages of development of the Pennine Way.)

From the start the Commission attempted to develop a systematic overview of the countryside of Scotland from the points of view of its preservation and enhancement and of increasing its recreational potential. Much of its energies in the early years went into developing a hierarchy of 'landscape resources' culminating in the Park System for Scotland, finally published in 1975. It was also to survey the country to select 'National Scenic Areas' and, partly because of the interests of key members of staff, it concentrated heavily on conservation education and the development of a ranger service.

However, the Commission's first Annual Report indicated frustrations over lack of staff and difficulties over accommodation, and financial restrictions imposed by the government were soon to affect the Commission's work. In addition, the workload increased, as oilfields opened and the associated developments on the mainland began
to affect areas of countryside, as other developments, such as new roads, transmission lines and potential new ski slopes came to the fore, and later, as the various development plans prepared by local authorities had to be reviewed.

So far as matters relating to access were concerned, there were no developments parallel with the interest in landscape or types of park. There was no development of a hierarchy of types of footpaths and other types of access. Furthermore, there was little interest in such matters outside the Commission. The Commission's annual reports show great disappointment over lack of progress in creating new footpaths or developing access agreements over uplands tracts as provided for in the new legislation. Indeed, it was not until 1975 that the first access agreement over an upland area was made. The Commission did try to take initiatives, but with limited resources and no obvious outside interest, it clearly felt that matters of access, including long-distance routes, could not play a dominant role in its activities.

(b) Early Interest In Formal Long-Distance Routes

There were, however, some early sparks of interest in the creation of formal long-distance routes and one of the first of these came from a local authority. Fife County Council proposed the creation of a long-distance route along the line of the former East Fife Railway line from Leven to St Monance, in part as an alternative to the coastal paths. The Commission in its first Annual Report noted:

"The Commission was sympathetic to the idea and undertook to make an examination, if possible, of the whole coastal route during the coming year with a view to seeing whether or not it would be a suitable subject as a long-distance route under Section 39 of the Act."

The Commission's Assistant Director visited the newly-formed Countryside Commission for England and Wales and began to recognise

1 Tom Huxley, who later became Deputy Director.
criteria for developing long-distance routes which had been implicit in the work of the National Parks Commission. As has been seen, these were never formally published by the old Commission but they were outlined in the second Annual Report of the Countryside Commission for Scotland, along with a rather unenthusiastic commitment to formally examine potential long-distance routes:

"When resources permit, we will evaluate possible schemes for the formation of long-distance routes which we will discuss with the local planning authorities concerned. Projects which are accepted by the Secretary of State may qualify for 100% grant towards the costs involved. To qualify as such a route, however, proposals must have national significance, and be of such a length as to offer reasonably continuous trail walking over several days. This suggests a minimal distance of 50 miles (80 km) with few interruptions where built up areas occur. Other factors need to be taken into account, such as the availability of overnight accommodation en route and reasonably convenient access to public transport at both ends." 1

The Commission's staff looked at the proposal for the development of the old railway line in Fife and concluded that it "did not meet the required standards for a long distance route." 2 However, other developments which originated outside the Commission were discussed at the Commission's meeting at the beginning of January 1970.

The first was a survey, commissioned by the Planning and Research Committee of the Commission on the suggestion of Dr. Norman Logan, which was to be done by Dr. Logan on a Clyde Walkway. In fact, much preliminary work had been done by Logan but the Commission refunded Logan's expenses during additional field work in the summer of 1970. He produced a report on a 35 mile (56 km) Walkway in 1971 and the very thorough report divided the route into six sections. Each of these was reported with an introduction, a lengthy description, including matters of local and natural history, as well as views, notes of special features, a list of access links, 'facts and figures' and recommendations for development of the idea of a walkway. Logan

2 CCS(M)(70)3, 23rd January 1970.
3 N. Logan A Clyde Walkway - A Suggested Route for Walkers from Glasgow Green to Forth Valley, CCS 1971.
concluded that, as already over a half of the proposed walkway was claimed as a right of way and much of the rest was owned by public bodies it would be a relatively inexpensive proposal to implement. He suggested that it be done by local authorities in stages, leaving what would be the hardest section to negotiate, from Carrion Bridge to Kirkfieldbank, until last when the rest of the way would be well established. He recommended that as much publicity as possible be given to the proposal, and he commended it for opening up an interesting and attractive corridor in the heart of Scotland's main conurbation. Logan in fact did not refer to the idea as a potential long-distance route but he did see it as part of a national system of walkways, and possibly a link in a walkway from Land's End to John o'Groats. John Foster, the Commission's Director, wrote the foreword to the Report and seemed to be enthusiastic about the idea, commending it to the local authorities for their consideration. However, the Commission never seriously considered developing the idea as a formal long-distance route (it was probably too short) and progress was at best localised through the 1970s and into the 1980s.

The second item considered by the Commission in its review of matters related to long-distance routes at the beginning of 1970 reflected the interest shown in the North-East of Scotland in the potential of disused railways as recreational resources, and the Commission had suggested specific proposals be put forward by the county councils. This was in fact to lead directly to a study on disused railways in Scotland and to proposals for a Grampian Way, which will be discussed later.

The third item was also to have important repercussions on the Commission's programme for long-distance routes in Scotland. This was a survey commissioned by the Scottish Development Department to
investigate a major system of footpaths in the area to the north of Glasgow. The idea behind this was to produce a document which would act as an example for other areas to adopt. It was also to examine possible methods of establishing a more formal system of footpaths and, in the brief, long-distance routes were specifically included as a potential method of creating new paths which should be examined.

It was particularly opportune that the Scottish Development Department (SDD) had decided to carry out such a study, and the coincidence of the idea coming forward and the retirement of a senior Regional Planning Officer at the Department, F.J. Evans, who had a personal interest in footpaths, was to have a major impact on the development of long-distance routes. The Evans Report was to highlight an idea which would be developed as the West Highland Way, which will be examined shortly.

In addition, one of the Commissioners made a presentation at the meeting in January 1970 and spoke on the subject of long-distance routes. A.C. Cromar was a Director of the Scottish Rights of Way Society Limited and was clearly enthusiastic about the idea of Scotland having a system of long-distance routes - unlike some later Directors of the Society. At the meeting of the Commission he indicated areas where he thought that future routes may lie including the banks of Scotland's major rivers, the Clyde, Spey, Tay and Dee. He urged the Commission to publish ideas, arguing that "a skeleton was needed to get a body of long-distance routes" and he recommended that the Commission get as many outside organisations as possible, including local authorities, involved in developing a programme.

The Commission took note of Cromar's report and thanked him for his initiative in the matter, but nothing resulted directly from this, and, indeed, Cromar did not remain a Commissioner for long.

Interestingly, it appears that another Commissioner, Parnell, was examining the possibility of specific long-distance paths in the Lochaber area, but again nothing seems to have come of this. In the context of the importance of individual members of the original National Parks Commission at the beginning of its life, it is interesting to see parallels, although in the case of Scotland, individual Commissioners were not able, or were themselves not sufficiently committed, to exert enough influence to further specific ideas relating to access.

(c) Criteria Developed by the Commission

However, the Commission was not just reacting to outside initiatives or to initiatives from individual members in its consideration of long-distance routes. As noted, it had agreed to examine the proposals for developing the disused railway line in Fife but had rejected that idea because it did not meet criteria it recognised as being fundamental to the nature of long-distance routes. Although these criteria were published in the Commission's Report for 1969, it was not until May 1970 that the Commission examined a paper on the subject.

There had been some criticism that examining specific routes before generalities was "putting the cart before the horse" and a paper put to the Commission in May 1970 provided a comprehensive summary of considerations and criteria for long-distance routes. The legislation was reviewed, and it was highlighted that the Commission itself had "a unique responsibility insofar as it is the only authority empowered to prepare and submit reports on long-distance routes to the Secretary of State; the Commission has the initiative, it does not have to wait for a local authority or other interested party to come forward with suggestions." However, it was noted that, as local authorities would

2 CCS(M)(70)10, 15th May 1970.
implement proposals, a "considerable measure of agreement was needed."

Criteria based on the experience of the National Parks Commission were itemised:

"(a) long-distance routes should have national status and interest and should pass through high quality landscape and scenery;

(b) wherever possible there should be an existing basis for the route - this may be an existing right of way, a forest road or a former drove road;

(c) the full length of a long-distance route should be such that it can sustain several days' walking, although the minimal distance is difficult to specify because people walk at varying speeds. Experience has shown that long-distance routes should not be less than 50 miles [80 km] (the Countryside Commission for England and Wales have not, as yet, approved any long distance routes under 70 miles [112 km] and the Pennine Way is 250 miles [400 km] in length);

(d) Because long-distance routes have to sustain several days' walking there needs to be, en route or within easy reach, adequate accommodation to cater for a wide variety of tastes, from the simple bothy or tented camp site to hostel [sic: probably hotel];

(e) breaks may be allowed in the continuity of the path where it passed through small towns and villages provided the breakages are of such a nature that the feeling of continuity as a whole is not lost;

(f) it is desirable that one or both ends of a long-distance route are reasonably accessible by public transport."

The paper went on to summarise problems:

"Planning creation and management of LDRs presents many problems. Some stem from the interpretation of criteria, others from conflicts of use, acquisition and the need for facilities along their length."

It also examined "problems specific to Scotland", maintaining that the physical geography of the country was "possibly the greatest problem" because of the widespread high quality scenery (presumably meaning that this made it difficult to select routes which would run through outstanding scenery) and because of the difficult topography. Ironically, in the light of future developments over the proposals for a Grampian Way, the paper recognised that because of the climate and topography "ridge and high plateau walks are not to be encouraged.

1 ibid.
lightly." The need for ferries on potential routes along the west coast was noted and the lack of distinct natural axes was felt to make the selection of specific routes difficult. Furthermore, the shortage and scattered nature of accommodation was recognised as a further problem in the Scottish context.

The paper ended cautiously, commenting on the proliferation of problems and the lengthy periods which experience in England and Wales had shown to be elapsing in the selection, planning and implementation of routes. It noted that the Countryside Commission for England and Wales had a separate section of staff to deal with long-distance routes and it concluded by promising a further review paper "as soon as higher priority commitments allow."

The Commission approved the paper and the recommendations for criteria but there is no evidence of enthusiasm for putting more resources into a programme for long-distance routes. The problems encountered south of the border seem to have dominated thinking. Indeed, the feeling seems to have been that the programme in Scotland should develop slowly and that the Commission should continue to encourage the Scottish Rights of Way Society Ltd. and the local authorities to gather as much information on existing rights of way as possible, to make any future work on long-distance routes easier.

Despite the previous encouragement by Cromar and the systematic approach to other aspects of the Commission's activity, no strategy for the development of a system of long-distance routes was proposed, and in fact there was no reference to the important development, the formalisation of criteria, in the Commission's report for 1970. Nevertheless, in giving evidence to the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Scottish Affairs in 1971, McWilliam noted:

"We have done some pioneering work with regard to long-distance routes"2

1 ibid.
(Interestingly, the Commission's Director, John Foster, added that he saw that "it is the Secretary of State's function to hold a public inquiry and perhaps to so designate the route" but this is the only such reference to this method of implementing a long-distance route, in Scotland).

(d) Deliberations in 1972

Meanwhile, the interest in disused railway lines noted above continued and the Commission commissioned E.T. Parham to examine the potential for the recreational use of such lines in Scotland. Although not as extensive as the Appleton study for the Countryside Commission for England and Wales, Parham's report did examine specific lines and assessed their potential as one type of facility in a hierarchy of recreational paths which he recognised:— firstly, long-distance routes; secondly, middle-distance routes; thirdly, short-distance routes; and fourthly, "small picnic sites".

Parham noted that in favour of using disused railway lines as linear recreational routes were that they had "purposeful direction", linking centres of population, and that generally they were very accessible. However, he noted that they tended to follow the easiest physical route, that they were rarely isolated and that they had minimal gradients and only their length could sufficiently challenge a walker physically or psychologically.

He recognised the potential for long-distance cycling routes offered by some of the disused lines, and he suggested that parts of some routes merited further attention as potential walking routes. Those he specifically listed were the old Waverley line (and he noted an extension south to the Pennine Way may be possible), Spean Bridge to Fort Augustus, Dumfries to Glenluce, the Speyside line and the Dingwall to Kyle of Lochalsh line should that become disused. He had

1 Appleton op. cit.
been asked to look in particular at Royal Deeside because much of the original interest from local authorities in the subject had come from the North-East. However, he noted that, in his study of the disused railway line in Deeside, fieldwork on the ground had made "numerous disadvantages" apparent. The Speyside line held better possibilities.

Parham's overall conclusion about disused railway lines in Scotland was that:

"Their linearity will rarely merit experiencing over long distances for walking purposes. There are usually better alternatives....In the case of long distance linear provision....disused railway lines have a limited and dubious role, at least in terms of walking potential."1

However, in the draft of his report in the context of planning for footpaths, Parham stated: "In respect of routes of a long distance nature, it is clearly a responsibility that the Countryside Commission can ill-afford to avoid much longer". In September 1972, therefore, the Commission urgently considered what it should do about a strategy for the provision of long-distance routes in Scotland, prior to its publishing Parham's report. It recognised that:

"the Commission has not pronounced publicly in terms of an overall strategy for Scotland."3

The Commission's paper of September 1972 reviewed the attention that the Commission had given to the provision of long-distance routes, and noted:

"Indeed, the record shows a serious attempt by staff to provide precisely the sort of strategic framework that Mr Parham suggests is required, but which was considered at the time of doubtful value, because no one had looked in detail at what the proposed routes consisted of in terms of their potential for formal designation by the Secretary of State as long distance routes."4

The paper continued:

"The reluctance to make specific recommendations for an overall strategy for Scotland can best be appreciated against the background of methods adopted south of the border, where creation of long distance routes has been essentially a matter of linking together certain existing rights of way, a procedure generally not as yet possible in Scotland, notwithstanding the efforts of the

1 ibid. p18. 2 CCS files.
3 CCS(72)47, 25th September 1972.
4 ibid.
Scottish Rights of Way Society to record paths claimed by them to be rights of way."

This problem had led to the Commission's staff recommending the initiation of "a systematic long-term series of studies" of particular routes, beginning with what was then called the Highland Way, while encouraging the development by the local authorities of a network of undisputed rights of way to facilitate the creation of long-distance routes in the future.

The paper also recommended that the Commission should not publicise an overall strategy for the development of long-distance routes in map form. It did however include a map which showed a possible strategy, consisting of a series of broad arrows, from Edinburgh towards the Pennine Way, from Glasgow north to Inverness, from Dundee northwards and from Perth westwards to the Isle of Skye and from the Great Glen northwards to Sutherland. This map was said to be an example of what could be published if the Commission did decide to change its policy, but the paper concluded that such a publication would serve little purpose.

The existing policy as outlined in the paper was confirmed by the Commission and was explained in the Commission's Fifth Annual Report. The Report expanded on the differences between Scotland and England and Wales, where:

"Present practice regarding the creation of long distance routes focusses in effect, on stringing together indisputable rights of way. This procedure may be reasonably workable so long as the proportion of rights of way is greatly in excess of those stretches of a long distance route over which a public right does not exist. But because there is no legislation in Scotland to require the registration of rights of way ... on many sections rights of way are yet only claimed as such and may be disputed when negotiating long distance routes."2

This problem of a lack of defined rights of way was also one of the reasons put forward in the Report for not publishing a strategy for the development of routes in Scotland, for it was noted:

1 ibid.
"the possible combination of strategies for long distance routes in Scotland, meeting the criteria in our Third [sic, actually, Second] Report are either so numerous or so broad brush as to have no purpose."1

6. THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY

(a) The Origin and Planning of the Route

The Report continued to note that on all sections of a long-distance route not subject to an undisputed right of way, footpath agreements would probably be required, "and it is then that the absence of powers to provide Rangers will most seriously be felt." The Commission was to use this argument in reasoning that the legislation ought to be amended to allow a Ranger service to operate on all rights of way, to the benefit of landowners, and this theme continued through the 1970s. It became topical by the time the Fifth Report was published, for it was noted that, as planning for the West Highland Way was by then advanced, the problems highlighted earlier, of lack of defined rights of way and lack of potential for operating a Ranger service, had already emerged. A year earlier it had noted that the route illustrated well the importance of de facto access, for it indicated that "A West Highland Way of some kind has existed for years."2

The idea of the West Highland Way, originally referred to as the Highland Way, had resulted from the submission of Evans' study of a major system for paths to the north of Glasgow. Evans had endorsed the idea, currently being examined by the Glasgow Group of the Holiday Fellowship, recommending its adoption by the Commission. The Commission's Third Report had referred to the idea of a footpath "which may one day extend to Fort William" and in 1971 it took the decision to adopt this route as a potential long-distance route.

In 1971, a Project Officer was appointed by the Commission to

1 ibid.
examine the detailed plans submitted by the Holiday Fellowship. In fact, she spent some time examining the background of the idea of long-distance routes in general, based largely on the experience of England and Wales. She concluded that "a fairly purposeful line linking places of interest" was required for a long-distance route, but she also raised a large number of considerations for the planning, implementation and management of routes in Scotland and this was to be useful in focussing the attention of the Commission's staff on the practicabilities of establishing a series of long-distance routes in Scotland. The results of the Pennine Way survey were to be particularly influential and the survey was in fact to be summarised in the subsequent report on the West Highland Way.

Just as lines for long-distance routes in England and Wales had been based on existing plans, as they appeared in the Hobhouse Report or as submitted by amenity groups, so the West Highland Way was to follow closely the line put forward by a user group. The Commission gained little in the planning or selection of a specific line for the route - an element of experience the absence of which was to be harmful when the second route was selected for study later in the decade.

Fieldwork began on the West Highland Way in 1971 and, with the coming of a new Lands Officer to the Commission, the technique evolved whereby all landowners were consulted prior to field work taking place - a policy which had been urged during the passage of the Countryside (Scotland) Bill through Parliament. Cooperation was in fact received from all but one landowner, as well as the local authorities and other agencies, particularly the statutory ones.

Just one major change was made to the original line put forward by the Holiday Fellowship. This was the adoption of a low-level line
along the shore of Loch Lomond, primarily at the request of the Forestry Commission. This was seen as being a less challenging line than the original higher line and the amenity groups did express their disappointment; but it was felt by the Commission that this lower line would be easier to establish and manage and would provide a useful recreational asset, in that it would be used by large numbers of short-distance walkers as well as the long-distance ones. The option of adopting the higher line as an alternative was in fact noted as something for future consideration.

The report, circulated in 1973, was some 69 pages in length, considerably more substantial than the equivalent reports being submitted south of the border up to that time. The report examined in great detail various aspects of the route, which it divided into eighteen sections based on 'landscape units' varying from 1.5 (2) to 19 miles (30.8 km). The study considered 'basic data', 'landscape', 'landuse', 'access', 'planning considerations' and the 'status of the route'. It concluded that the development would involve 173 new structures, from signposts to major footbridges, and would cost some £40,000 in capital outlay.

This, in fact, excluded the costs involved in securing rights of way, and the report recommended that access agreements should be sought along the line of the route wherever possible, to enable a ranger service to operate. This approach was to be taken throughout the 1970s in Scotland, although this was not to be the case in England and Wales. There was some opposition to this method of creating a long-distance route from the Ramblers Association, which argued that access agreements did not have the permanence of footpath agreements. There was little debate about this, and the Scottish Development Department seems to have accepted it despite the fact that its

memorandum on Grants available under the Countryside (Scotland) Act refers only to public path agreements and orders in the context of long-distance routes.

(b) Response to the West Highland Way Proposal

A draft report had been circulated to statutory agencies, voluntary groups and others, prior to the report being submitted to the Secretary of State. He gave formal approval to the route in September 1974. There was at that time continuing widespread support for the proposal from user groups, landowning groups and local authorities, and some interest from the media. Indeed, progress seemed to be good at first and there was enthusiasm from most of those directly involved. The Commission's Seventh Report noted that: "We have been encouraged by the enthusiastic reception given to the proposals." It predicted that the route would be opened by 1980, and that some sections would be opened in advance of that.

Just 17 miles (28 km) of new pathways needed to be negotiated along the 92 mile (146 km) route between Milngavie and Fort William. Of the balance, some 50 miles (80 km) of the route were claimed to be existing rights of way, 19 miles (31 km) were along other paths and tracks (principally through land owned by the Forestry Commission) and 6 miles (9 km) were along public roads. As had been the case in England and Wales, the Commission stressed that great care must be taken in the creation of pathways and other facilities to ensure the Way had as little physical impact as possible. Reflecting the Commission's sensitivity to landowners and the problems current in England relating to the Wolds Way, it was at pains in its publicity on the route to stress that sections were still not rights of way and should not be trespassed upon.

However, it was soon apparent that real progress was not

1 SDD Memorandum No 72/1969, Section 11.
3 West Highland Way report op.cit.
forthcoming, mainly because of the hiatus caused by the reorganisation of local government in Scotland. Most of the momentum was lost with changes in authorities and in officials. Three regional councils and five district councils were now involved in implementing the West Highland Way instead of the five old county councils which had been involved in the early development of the plan. The optimism apparent at the approval of the route, which had dispelled much of the Commission's caution recorded in its earlier paper on the subject of long-distance routes, soon faded through 1975 when no progress was seen, financial cutbacks became more serious and problems beset the Commission's programme for long-distance routes with the hostile reception to its second proposal.

7. THE GRAMPIAN WAY

(a) The Origin and planning of the route

In 1970 the Commission had focussed considerable attention on Speyside, appointing an experimental Project Officer under Section 5 of the 1967 Act, primarily to develop a ranger service. In addition, there was the Commission's interest in disused railway lines in the North-East, which had led to the commissioning of the Parham Report. Therefore, when in 1972, with the study of the West Highland Way progressing well, the Commission decided to examine a second line for a long-distance route, its attention focussed on the North-East and a scheme which would link these two areas of interest.

In the Commission's Fourth Annual Report in 1971 it had noted that because of limited resources, it was able to concentrate only on the West Highland Way in that year, "although we are conscious of the need for similar surveys elsewhere, particularly in the Eastern Highlands." It was not until March 1974, following the submission of the report on the West Highland Way to the Secretary of State, that

the Commission formally considered its second route.

The Commission's paper followed on from the review paper of 1972 and repeated that the options available in Scotland for future long-distance routes were very broad. Four examples of possible routes were given - extending the West Highland Way north to Cape Wrath; extending the West Highland Way north-eastwards up the Great Glen to Inverness; extending the Pennine Way either through the Borders to Edinburgh or through the Clyde Valley to Glasgow; and "creating a new long-distance route by linking up existing footpaths and making use of disused railway line opportunities between Blair Atholl and Elgin."

The paper noted that Commission staff were in favour of the last option. The first was rejected because of the particularly difficult terrain which would be involved. The paper recommended deferral of the second because it felt there was less demand for this than any of the other routes - despite the fact that the Scottish Rights of Way Society was particularly interested in this route, highlighting it in its annual reports. However, merit was recognised in the southern route and it was noted that the Glasgow Group of the Holiday Fellowship had done considerable work on 'The Borders Way', which was planned from Kirk Yetholm to Glasgow by way of Lanark. This route would have tied with an earlier interest of the Commission - the Clyde Walkway, but the problems identified by the Commission's staff were that there was "polarisation of opinion between Glasgow and Edinburgh which would probably lead to two routes being proposed, and that a multitude of local authorities would be involved, of which only one had so far shown any interest." In addition, it was felt that all the criteria adopted by the Commission might not be satisfied by what was basically a lowland route. (The latter point was not explained, but presumably meant that some sections of the route might not be of

1 CCS(74)40, 4th March 1974.
2 ibid.
sufficiently high scenic quality.) Furthermore, it was assumed by the Commission's staff that a fair degree of challenge was implicit in the criteria and the paper went on to suggest that the southern option was not suitable at that time because of this:

"Some modification or change in emphasis may be required and it is thought that if this must happen eventually that it is better that the Commission has by that time clearly established the character of long distance footpaths at least in its first two proposals."

On the other hand, the paper supported the route in the North-East, primarily because of "the markedly enthusiastic approach by the north-east counties." It was noted that amendments to the County of Inverness Development Plan concerning the Cairngorms were already referring to a long-distance route between Elgin and Blair Atholl, "as if this proposal already possessed some kind of official sanction." In addition the practical point was made that much of the route was already a right of way, and this was justified as being an asset:

"There is considerable merit in tackling routes in which substantial sections are already recognised as rights of way ... so as to reinforce the power of Part III of the Act on existing situations - rather than to investigate new routes likely to be more difficult to negotiate."

It was felt that the Commission's criteria should be satisfied by this route - "Perhaps the biggest unknowns are the practicability of extending the route south to, say, Dunkeld, and the likelihood of the Secretary of State approving an eastern branch to Glen Corra via Braemar."

The Commission took the decision to study this route despite the obvious weaknesses in the case the paper put forward. The four examples were put forward as just that - examples, but were then examined as if they were the only options available. The reasons for rejecting the second and third routes put forward were weak. The main

1 ibid. 2 ibid.
justification for the one chosen seems to have been the support evident from the local authorities (which in fact were primarily keen to get assistance with the acquisition and development of the disused railway line). It was assumed that it was a good thing to include very long lengths of existing rights of way.

The concept of a network of interlinking long-distance routes seems to have been implicit in the strategic consideration - a concept currently being put forward in England and Wales by Yapp which was to find little support. Despite the examples south of the border and the success of the idea of the West Highland Way which had come from a user group, there was no consultation with amenity groups. Indeed, the two routes supported by user groups were rejected, despite the lack of support for the route selected. Finally, no attention seems to have been given to the nature of a long-distance route, for the route selected could be divided into two parts, very different in character and unlikely to appeal to the same walker. This was despite the fact that the prime reason for creating a long-distance route was to provide new opportunities for walking long distances for a number of days on end, and in this case the extended journeys would presumably involve both sections.

The decision to examine this route was confirmed in the Commission's Seventh Annual Report - which implied that Blair Atholl to Elgin was one of several routes suggested to the Commission, and it went on to stress that great lengths of existing rights of way were involved. (The fact that the Lairig Ghru, a major part of the proposed new route, had been one of the few specific examples of potential long-distance paths mentioned in the passage of the Countryside Act does not seem to have been noticed.)

A Project Officer was appointed and she began field work on the

proposed route, later entitled 'The Grampian Way', at the beginning of 1975. Senior members of staff had largely fixed the line for the route, as the vast majority of it followed two long existing rights of way through the passes and the line of the disused railway line.

A draft report on the route which would run for 91 miles (146 km) was circulated to the three Regional Councils and three district councils as planning authorities, fourteen other statutory bodies, and 27 non-statutory bodies, user groups and landed interests, as well as all the landowners likely to be affected by the route. The format of the report was similar to that produced on the West Highland Way, with the route divided into sections and considered under various headings (in this case, 'basic data', 'landscape', 'land use', 'planning considerations', 'details of route', and 'improvements'). It was again stressed that every effort had been made to follow existing rights of way and the only part of the planned route which would have needed the creation of a major new path was along the 23 miles (37 km) of the disused Speyside Railway. The estimated capital cost of the route, £121,000, mainly accounted for this, and this figure did not include acquisition costs or, elsewhere, any costs involved in securing access agreements. Interestingly, for the first time in Great Britain, some provision was made for accommodation in the report - £20,000 for the conversion of the Ruigh nan Clach, or Lower Geldie Stable, into a bothy.

(b) Justification for the Plan for the Grampian Way

The report was, in fact, issued more quickly than had been expected, and the main reason for this was that criticism of the plan had been growing throughout 1975. The criticism came mainly from the mountaineering interests, which objected to the incorporation of the rights of way through the Cairngorms into a formal long-distance path.

1 CCS The Grampian Way November 1975.
2 ibid. pp41-2.
The Commission in its report was at pains to answer this criticism.

It prefaced the section of the report entitled 'Estimated Costs of the Grampian Way' by stressing that the physical and ecological character of the area through which the route passed must be maintained, and it pointed out in its summary that the southern section "should be tackled by experienced walkers only, and then only in suitable season and weather....". In addition, in a lengthy introduction it defended its plan to create a long-distance route through the Cairngorms.

It noted that an examination of long-distance routes had "never been more than a small part of the Commission's total field of endeavour," and put this in the context of the Commission's objective to improve facilities for the enjoyment of the countryside. This included the development of linear access:

"Associated with this objective, the Commission wants to promote information so as to give guidance to the public seeking advice on such a network of linear access. In certain circumstances, it will be appropriate that this information stresses the hazards of particular footpaths or encourages their use by small groups so as to gain the maximum appreciation of a wilderness experience...."

This consideration justified its involvement in long-distance routes which included rugged and remote sections where the 'wilderness experience' could be had but the experience would be relatively controlled in that the route would have been made as safe as possible.

In the report the Commission went on to explain its reasons for the selection of the Grampian Way (in favour of "a number of alternatives" - including the "Holiday Fellowship Pennine Way link"):

"Two circumstances weighed most heavily in favour of examining the route which subsequently came to be called the Grampian Way. The first was that, over its northern part, the former local authorities were pressing for the Commission to approve it as a long distance route, mainly because at that time there was considerable public concern about a wasting asset in the potential of disused railways. The second reason concerned the southern

1 ibid. p3.
part in that because undisputed rights of way already existed over the Lairig Ghru and through Glen Tilt, difficult negotiations and establishing its legal status in that part would not be required.

The importance of these circumstances is underlined by the fact that implementation of an approved LDR proposal is likely to be a protracted and onerous undertaking, and thus the Commission could not lightly disregard the publicly stated enthusiasm of a group of local authorities in favour of another area where this factor was uncertain, nor, in the circumstances of there being no legal procedure for the registration of rights of way in Scotland — thus giving most other claimed rights of way little more than de facto rather than de jure status, could the Commission lightly overlook the opportunity to include Glen Tilt and the Lairig Ghru as part of a larger LDR proposal."

The significance of having Elgin and Blair Atholl as ends of the route was said to be because these fulfilled one of the Commission's criteria for long-distance routes — they were accessible by public transport. All other criteria were fulfilled with the possible exception on some parts of the route of adequate accommodation — "a lack of which may affect parts of many potential LDRs in Scotland".

The Commission's introduction continued with a plea for interested organisations to reserve their judgement of the proposals until the report had been read and the Secretary of State sought formal views. It noted that some early comment had been based on "inadequate information". It concluded by reasoning that views that such a proposal would have either a positive or a negative impact on the countryside were necessarily speculative until a number of long-distance routes had been created in Scotland and experience gained from these. For its part, the Commission considered that the Crampian Way would be:

"a significant asset as an outdoor recreational provision in Scotland and very much in line with the main purpose of the Countryside (Scotland) Act." 2

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1 ibid. p3.
2 ibid. p5.
Some factions of the mountaineering lobby in Scotland had been against changes in legislation affecting the Scottish countryside from the 1960s and they were particularly concerned with changes relating to access. The West Highland Way had attracted a few criticisms and was to attract more in the 1980s, but these had little impact because that route was very closely associated with amenity groups.

The Grampian Way, on the other hand, was seen as a "planners'route", unsupported by any user group, and encroaching on the terrain of some prominent and vociferous user groups: the Mountaineering Clubs. That the Commission had not adequately realised that this would be a problem does it no credit.

The implementation of the route seems to have dominated the thinking of the Commission and in the procedure it intended to use to develop the route it had learnt one lesson of three decades of experience in the establishment of long-distance routes in England and Wales, that motivating local authorities was of prime importance. It had also anticipated another area of conflict, gaining the co-operation of landowners by consulting all landowners and farmers who might be affected by the route at an early stage and also working closely with their representative organisations.

However, the Commission misjudged some of the qualities needed to produce a satisfactory long-distance route and the importance of working with user groups, something which has been seen in the study to be of prime importance in England and Wales and also in the success of the West Highland Way. It had limited contact with the user groups, dealing mainly with the Scottish Countryside Activities Council (SCAC), a rather loose federation of the user groups in
Scotland. Only SCAC and the Rights of Way Society are acknowledged in the report on the Grampian Way. As the first potential long-distance route in Great Britain not actively supported by an amenity group, the Grampian Way had in fact little chance of success and outsiders were soon to see the irony of a government body pressing for a facility in the countryside which was opposed by a range of user groups, once the debate over the Grampian Way became public.

Co-incident with the circulation of the Commission's report on the Grampian Way was correspondence in The Scotsman. This has parallels with correspondence in the Manchester Guardian at the time the Pennine Way was being mooted. However, on this occasion the correspondence was rather one-sided, and there was no equivalent of Tom Stephenson putting forward an argument in support of the plan for the establishment of the route.

Ironically, it was comments in the Newsletter of the Scottish Branch of the Ramblers Association which prompted the correspondence - and these comments were attributed to William Murray, at that time a member of the Countryside Commission for Scotland. In The Scotsman Murray was quoted as saying: "The best part of the so-called Grampian Way is already a right of way. Let's leave it at that, open to everyone but not deliberately promoted." In fact, the article was ambiguous because Murray was then quoted speaking in favour of long-distance routes in general and of the Grampian Way in particular:

"The Grampian Way is a challenging route ... It penetrates mountains that are dangerous in bad weather. Danger is something we want to retain as a particularly desirable element in hill-walking - so long as it is kept within reasonable bounds." 2

A short article in The Scotsman the following week noted that it had inadvertently attributed these views to Murray, where in fact he had been putting cases both for and against the designation of the Grampian Way in order to allow his membership to make up their minds.

1 The Scotsman 17th November 1975.
2 ibid.
However, it was the negative comments attributed to Murray in the original article which were to set off the correspondence which eventually caused the Commission to abandon its plans, much to Murray's embarrassment.

On November 22nd, 1975, the 'Honorary Editor of the Scottish Mountaineering Club' began the correspondence in a letter headlined 'Absurd Plans for Grampian Way.' His main point was that designation of the Grampian Way as a long-distance route would not improve facilities for the outdoor enthusiast, but:

"In his place there will flow a hideous torrent of ignorant people and 'captive' herds of schoolboys, boy scouts, army cadets and the like. In a very few years this Lowland rabble will have destroyed it."

A few days later a senior member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club wrote to support the initial letter - "It does seem clear to me that no really good purpose would be served by 'improving' at the expense of the tax-payer routes through the hills that have already been successfully used for a very long time."

A sarcastic letter was published two days later, complaining that "these enlightened planners have omitted one indispensable amenity from the list of those they intend to introduce. Bridges, made-up paths, signposts, yes, but what about the public urinals? ... neat concrete erections ... every two or three miles...".

However, shortly before this letter a long letter by a Professor A.E. Anton had defended the Commission in carrying out its statutory duty (although the writer did imply criticism of the inclusion in the legislation controlling the activities of the Commission measures "clearly designed in the England context."). Anton put the proposals for the Grampian Way in perspective, noting the tiny impact the

1 The Scotsman 22nd November 1975, p11.
2 The Scotsman 23rd November 1975, p10.
3 The Scotsman 27th November 1975, p10.
4 The Scotsman 24th November 1975, p6.
designation would be likely to have, and he praised the Commission in its attempts to enable more people to enjoy the countryside.

A more balanced letter from the mountaineering lobby took issue with Anton, drawing attention to the Commission's duty to preserve special areas "of which the Cairngorms is a prime example." The writer, Robert Aitken (who was later to write the official guidebook on the West Highland Way and to carry out a survey of the Way for the Commission), felt in addition that the designation of the Grampian Way as a long-distance route would add nothing:

"The development may be acceptable were the Grampian Way a substantial addition to public access to and the enjoyment of the Scottish countryside. On the contrary, it merely combines two of our longest and most venerable rights of way with the anticlimax of a new extension off to Elgin."

The same day (28th November) a further letter put another balanced view opposing the Commission's proposal. The writer drew attention to safety factors and the detrimental effect of an increase in number of visitors to parts of the Cairngorms. He also opposed outdoor activities "organised by outside agencies."

Hamish Brown entered the debate the same week, with nine arguments against the route, and another writer was critical of Anton's earlier defence of the Countryside Commission. He defended what Anton had called "an elitist view" of existing mountaineers and he accused Anton of adopting a patronising approach to those he thought should benefit from the Commission's activities:

"The new bureaucratic approach, particularly when procured by its lay defenders, can be offensively didactic and paternalistic in its disregard of the long-established interest in the outdoors amongst ordinary folk."

Also at the beginning of December, two mild letters defended the Commission, playing down the likely impact of the planned route and noting the general need for improvements in access to the Scottish countryside. These letters were themselves criticised a few days:

1 The Scotsman 28th November 1975, p12. 2 ibid.
3 The Scotsman 1st December 1975.
4 The Scotsman 3rd December 1975.
5 The Scotsman 5th December 1975, p17.
later — and, as in similar arguments being made against the proposed Cambrian Way in Wales at this time, the Pennine Way was cited as an example of what could happen to the route should it be developed:

"one has only to see the hideous quagmire of certain sections of the Pennine Way to be wary of the supposed benefits of the development and promotion of such closely delineated long distance routes."¹

Finally, at the end of the month (27th December), the Honorary Secretary of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland summarised the widespread criticism of the Commission’s plan (SCAC had itself now come out opposing the plan). He in fact rejected the idea of any formal long-distance routes in Scotland but his main point was that the amenity bodies should be consulted before the Commission embarked on any scheme which may affect them:

"If they [the Commission] find that we the 'users' are opposing them, surely there must be something wrong with their plan."²

Twelve letters had been published (out of some 20 received by The Scotsman. Of 17 opposing the proposal, nine were printed; all the letters in favour of the Commission’s idea were published, although as has been seen none of these three was particularly enthusiastic about the plan for the Grampian Way — each tried to put the subject in perspective.

(d) The Abandonment of the Grampian Way

Formal reaction to the proposal was also generally unfavourable, partly because of the very strong adverse publicity which had followed the circulation of the report. Ironically, the reaction from some of the local planning authorities was particularly hostile. For example, newspapers reported the criticism being made by Grampian Region Council officials of the proposal, with adverse reports being presented to the Council by its Director of Leisure and Recreation, its Chief Executive and the Police. The Perthshire Advertiser headlined its report of the Regional Council’s meeting "Grampian Way Would be a Deathtrap!"⁴ — although in fact the Council did agree to support the concept of the walkway, reserving judgement on the See overleaf for footnotes.
safety aspects of the southern part of the proposed route.

Half of those consulted by the Commission were opposed to, or had reservations about, the plan, including the Nature Conservancy Council and the Scottish Sports Council and the Commission thus had little option but to back down. It issued a press release stating "Commission defer LDR proposal through Cairngorm" although in fact it refuted the main arguments being put forward against the route, and agreed only that it would be better to gain more experience in the management of long-distance routes before going ahead with the route, implying that it was really just deferring further development of its plan. Furthermore, it noted that it was considering the northern section of the route as a long-distance route in its own right.

The Scotsman in a lengthy article noted that the Commission was "bowing to a chorus of opposition". Nevertheless, the Commission still refused, publicly, to concede that the Grampian Way had been a mistake, recording in its Annual Report for 1976 that:

"As a result of observations made in response to the report, it was decided not to proceed with the whole proposal for the time being." 

8. THE PENNINE WAY

One of the immediate results of the decision to complete and circulate the draft report on the Grampian Way sooner than planned was that work had to be found for the Project Officer whose contract had not yet expired. It was decided to consider which direction the Commission should go in the light of the experience with the Grampian Way before embarking on a study of a third potential long-distance route, but in the meantime there was the outstanding matter of the Scottish section of the Pennine Way.

In fact, it had been hoped in 1974, following a meeting between interested parties, that the necessary action could be taken to

Footnotes from page 440:
3 Letter, the Assistant Editor, the Scotsman to present writer, 16th December 1975.
4 Perthshire Advertiser 14th February 1976.
formalise the few miles of the Pennine Way which were within Scotland and the Commission's Seventh Report noted that a report would probably go to the Secretary of State in 1975. This had not transpired because of other pressures on the Commission's staff, but in the early part of 1976 work was begun by the Project Officer on the Pennine Way.

In May, the Commission approved a draft report for circulation to the local authorities involved, and in November the report was submitted to the Secretary of State.

The Commission had reasoned that, because of the importance of the Pennine Way, the section in Scotland should be formally recognised and that formalisation would allow appropriate grant aid to be given to the improvement of facilities along the route. Up to that time, signs and a mapboard which were situated along the Scottish section of the Way had been provided from English funds.

Part of the Pennine Way in Scotland (1.3 miles - 2.1 km) near Chew Green followed a right of way and was wholly in keeping with the rest of the Way. However, the final section (4.3 miles - 6.9 km) was not the ideal, for it had been used in the absence of appropriate mechanisms for negotiating new rights of way and followed an obvious right of way off the hills and then a minor road. Therefore, the involvement of the Commission gave the opportunity to improve the end of the route.

In 1974 representatives of the Commission, Roxburgh County Council, Northumberland National Park, the Pennine Way Council, the Scottish Rights of Way Society, the Ramblers Association and SCAC had met to discuss the route and different alternatives had emerged. One took the route further west than hitherto and ended in Town Yetholm. It was rejected outright, largely because it involved too great a length of metalled road. The second, also further west than the original

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route, had been proposed by Tom Stephenson and supported by both the Ramblers Association and SCAC. It followed ridges until it was very close to Kirk Yetholm itself and, it was claimed, provided a fitting climax to the Pennine Way. However, it was rejected because it was considered too arduous to complete an already hard section. The Ramblers Association continued to favour that route, but did agree to the final decision, which was to follow a line east of the current route for a further three miles (4 km), dropping to the metalled road from Halterburn for just the final mile (1.5 km).

The existing, waymarked, route, found to be slightly different to the official route, would be retained as a bad weather alternative.

The line selected for the main route had been suggested by the Pennine Way Council. Among the reasons for its selection were:

(a) that it gave walkers extended fine views into Scotland;
(b) that it took users away from the confusing number of paths and tracks at the head of the Halterburn Valley; and
(c) that it was a well defined route which could easily stand up to pressure by users and required relatively little work to develop it.

The capital cost of the proposal was just £1,000 and the Secretary of State approved the proposal early in 1977. Necessary work was carried out by Borders Regional Council in the summer of 1977 and a favourable overall response was received from the amenity groups. The section of the route was formally opened in July 1979, and a second edition of the official guide to the Pennine Way by Tom Stephenson was published by the Countryside Commission for England and Wales following the implementation of the improved ending for the route.

1 ibid. p2.
9. THE SPEYSIDE WAY

At the beginning of 1976 the Project Officer was instructed to examine options for the Commission's programme for long-distance routes and a paper was submitted to the Commission in July which briefly reviewed eight possible lines, gathered from a wide variety of sources:

(a) The Borders Way (Kirk Yetholm to Glasgow) - from the Holiday Fellowship (Glasgow Group) - 120 miles (192 km)

(b) The Borders Way (Galashiels to Langholm) - from Tom Wier in The Scots Magazine - 70 miles (112 km)

(c) Girvan to Dunbar - from Oliver Dixon in a letter to the Commission - 165 miles (264 km)

(d) Dere Street and Herring Road - from Borders Regional Council, after Moir - 54 miles (87 km)

(e) The Great Glen Way (Inverness to Fort William) - from the Scottish Rights of Way Society - 64 miles (104 km)

(f) An adaption of the Grampian Way, with a southern alternative (Glenmore to Fort William) - supported by the Nature Conservancy Council and the Scottish Rights of Way Society - 60 miles (96 km)

(g) Another adaption of the Grampian Way, with an alternative south from Glenmore to Dalwhinnie - from an article in The Scotsman - 70 miles (112 km)

(h) The Road to the Isles (Tummel to Morar) - 105 miles (168 km).

As will be noted later, Commission staff were by this time beginning to focus on the south of Scotland as being the likely area for the next long-distance route. However, the paper suggested three options for continuing work in the north-east and so serious consideration was given on what to do in that area. In fact, despite the alternatives proposed by the paper, the Commission considered other options: to do nothing in the north of Scotland for the time being, or to proceed with the northern part of the former Grampian Way with or without additions, such as incorporating part of (f) above.

It decided that there was an expectation that something should be done with the northern part of the Grampian Way, and, despite

1 CCS(76)120, 2nd July 1976.
reservations held by some Commissioners, it was agreed to retain the Project Officer to re-examine the northern end of the route. Field work took place through 1977 on 'The Spey Way' later called The Speyside Way.

In December, 1977, a report was submitted to the Secretary of State for a path 60 miles (96 km) in length - the shortest to date in Great Britain. Over half (32.5 miles - 52 km) followed disused railway lines (10 miles - 16 km - more than the Grampian Way would have done) and of the rest almost all was on existing rights of way, track or minor road. The estimated capital cost of the route was £120,000 of which £87,000 was accounted for by the acquisition of the railway line (a sum not included in the estimates for the Grampian Way).

Although there was not much enthusiasm from amenity groups or others for the route, for it was considered a poor long-distance route, the Speyside Way did have points in its favour. For the first time in a route being planned as a long-distance route there was a lengthy section of disused railway line, adopting what was still seen as an underused resource in the countryside. Also for the first time this was to be a long-distance route based on the course of a river (although little was made of this by the Commission and this factor had not played a significant part in the decision to proceed with this route.) In fact, the plan had extended the line of the Grampian Way to a terminus at Spey Bay and this following of a major river from Glenmore to the sea did have attraction for walkers.

The report was approved by the Secretary of State in 1978 and already by that time Moray District Council had begun negotiations with British Rail for the sections of disused railway line within its area. In 1979 a Project Officer was appointed by the District, funded by the Commission, to negotiate rights of way and oversee

1 CCS(76)M7, 13th July 1976.
2 The Speyside Way A Report on a Proposed Long Distance Route from Spey Bay to Glenmore, Presented to the Secretary of State for Scotland, CCS, Perth, December 1977.
improvements, while the Project Officer appointed by Highland Regional Council for the West Highland Way was given additional responsibilities for the Speyside Way within Highland Region.

Work was relatively swift in Moray and in July 1981, 33 miles (51.2 km) of the Way in Moray were opened at a ceremony which attracted a small amount of publicity. However, problems had arisen in 1978 over the section in Highland Region where a dispute arose over British Rail's title to the disused railway and its right to sell it to the local authority. This dragged on into the 1980s and in 1981 the Commission considered alternatives to the disused railway line, including ways through of Glenlivet and Tomintoul. However, it concluded that such alternatives would provide less rational routes from the walker's point of view and it therefore deferred action on these variations, pressing British Rail, Highland Regional Council and landowners to resolve their difficulties. Had the disused railway been abandoned as the line for the route that would have been the final irony, for the utilisation of the line had been the original raison d'être for the Grampian Way and the Speyside Way.


Work on the Pennine Way and the Speyside Way can perhaps be regarded as developments outwith the mainstream of the programme for long-distance routes in Scotland. The former was useful in that it allied the Commission and the amenity groups once again and it represented progress in the development of long-distance routes in Scotland for, technically, the Pennine Way became the first formal route in the country. The latter represented something of a face-saving exercise so far as the Commission was concerned and meant that its efforts with the Grampian Way were not completely lost. It also

3 ibid. p23.
had merits referred to above which brought the Commission satisfaction, although the difficulties besetting the route in the Highland Region once again seemed to typify problems inherent in implementing long-distance routes in Great Britain.

However, to examine the mainstream of the Commission's programme for long-distance routes we must return to 1975, when it became clear that the Grampian Way was going to attract considerable opposition.

At a meeting in summer, 1975, during a discussion on aims and objectives of the Commission, it was agreed that a paper be prepared on long-distance routes. No time was set for this and it seems that this was probably expected to be presented in 1976. However, because of the opposition attracted by the proposal for the Grampian Way, the Commission's staff felt that the subject should be reviewed sooner rather than later. Therefore, in September 1975 a lengthy paper was presented, in part to clear matters of policy in order to include them in the draft report on the Grampian Way.

The paper reviewed progress with the programme for long-distance routes, reiterating the agreed criteria. It made the point that: "In respect of the criteria, it will be noted that they are couched in general terms, allowing a great deal of flexibility in their application in particular circumstances." It went on to suggest that "it is perhaps what is omitted from the criteria that is equally important", noting that the "significant element of physical challenge", "character of ruggedness" and "penetration of remote countryside" were not specified in the criteria but:

"Nevertheless, staff have come to understand from Commissioners that on the whole these are the sort of factors which should characterise long-distance routes, and that at least some sections of some routes should pass through remote countryside, consistent with the need to ensure that suitable overnight accommodation is available at appropriate locations."
This, of course, justified the attention given by the Commission to the Grampian Way.

The paper also noted that no statement had been made in the past as to why long-distance routes should be promoted by the Commission as "a major activity" (it is interesting that by now the Commission perceived that this was the case) and it was pointed out that recently suggestions had been made "that the Commission may have its priorities wrong and that simply because it has certain powers it need not use them." However, it was claimed that this view came from small groups of people, who were opposed to the Grampian Way and, according to the Commission's staff, "whose motives appear to be fairly narrowly based in their approach."

The latter point about the Commission's priorities was therefore rejected, with staff arguing that, although the demand for long-distance routes was unknown, there were pointers to a fair demand and that "it is preferable to be thinking in terms of six [long-distance routes] rather than two or three." It argued that only when several routes were open would there be experience in quantifying the demand and also that only then would the Commission be in a position to promote the idea of a graded series of walks, "from easy to tough".

However, the supposition that long-distance routes should be of a rugged and mountainous nature was seriously questioned and it was concluded that:

"A type of compromise approach would be to continue giving long-distance routes a higher priority but place greater emphasis on locating them at lower altitudes and in situations where the risk element is minimal."2

Commission staff were nevertheless adamant that some future routes should be "tough and lead through remote countryside." The overall recommendation approved by the Commission was that its general policy and criteria should remain unchanged, but that its attention so far as long distance routes were concerned should shift for the time being to less rugged areas.

1 ibid. P4 2 ibid.
Despite the reaffirmation, this paper was of major importance for out of it came a commitment to examine long-distance routes outwith the Highlands. In fact, the paper went so far as to state that staff believed that a route extending north from the Pennine Way to the Clyde Walkway would be the next selected by the Commission for investigation. However, partly because of the general attack on the Commission in relation to the Grampian Way, it was decided to do some preliminary work to identify options for the future, rather than go straight ahead into the consideration of an obvious candidate. Furthermore, as seen above, work was done on the Pennine Way and the Speyside Way in the interim.

The Commission's paper at the beginning of 1976, following which the decision was made to study the Pennine Way, has been noted previously and the decision was also made to extend the contract of the Project Officer to study further options for long-distance routes in Scotland. The results of this study were presented to the Commission in July 1976, along with a paper which once again reviewed the Commission's policy for long-distance routes in general. At this time the Commission staff seem to be more sensitive to the criticisms which had by that time came from a very wide range of interested bodies. In fact, the conclusions were similar to those made previously, with the wording of the Countryside (Scotland) Act being an obvious constraint to broadening the definition of a long-distance route to take in shorter routes or networks of paths, something which was discussed by the Commission, or even routes with indefinite terminii. The Commission agreed that:

"For the time being greater emphasis should be given to an examination of low-level routes and especially routes which by their creation will add significantly to the total network of walkways available to the public as rights of way."  

1 CCS(76)120, 2nd July 1976 (op.cit.)  
2 Ibid.
The actual review, 'An examination by Miss Catriona Chalmers of some recent Suggestions for Future Long Distance Routes' turned out to be something of an irrelevancy because it was decided to examine the northern part of the Grampian Way. However, the study had had the effect of sustaining the momentum which had built up in the Commission's programme for long-distance routes. Members of staff, particularly the Deputy Director, felt strongly that the criticism regarding the Grampian Way had been largely unfair and to its credit, in a situation where there were considerable demands on the time available to the Commission's staff, the Commission did not shelve the development of what had turned out to be an extremely sensitive and at times a thankless activity. Once again, it was the interest and the enthusiasm of particular individuals which ensured the vigorous continuation of the programme.

The study by the Project Officer contained the eight suggestions noted previously in the section on the Speyside Way. The technique used in the study was to map certain constraints and calculate the percentages of each route covered by these. The constraints were agricultural land, altitude (land over 1400 feet and over 2000 feet), exposure (taken from the Soil Survey) and remoteness (5 km squares over 1500 feet not crossed by public roads were taken as 'remote').

Clearly this method is far too crude to examine what on the ground would be a strip three feet (1 m) wide or so. The suggested route along Dere Street and Herring Road illustrates this well, for no less than 83% of the route was covered by agricultural constraints, whereas much of the base obviously existed and there would be minimal conflict with agriculture where there was a path. Furthermore, the route running from coast to coast, linking as many of the highest hills as possible had only a half of its length covered by constraints of

1 ibid. Appendix 1.
altitude and remoteness, yet a detailed examination of the line shows it to be potentially far more dangerous than the mountainous sections of the Grampian Way. There seems to have been little comment on the study.

A further result of the Commission's deliberations in mid-1976 was that it was agreed to attempt to get the support of the Scottish Sports Council and meetings were held with the Council to discuss the Commission's programme for long-distance routes. The Commission were clearly disturbed at the fact that the Council had not backed it in its proposals for the Grampian Way and that it seemed to be questioning the concept of the provision, insisting that the Commission identify a positive demand before proceeding with planning the facility.

A meeting of Members and senior officials took place in September 1976 and the Sports Council did agree to support the Commission's decision to look for its next route in the south of Scotland. This was noted in the Commission's annual report. However, there were differences apparent, the Council preferring routes close to urban centres. In fact, the impression is given that the Council did not have a clear understanding of what was intended by a formal long-distance route, so far as Parliament had intended it. John Foster, the Director of the Commission, pointed out the constraints in the legislation, and he also countered the Council's concern over lack of proven demand by indicating that even if using long-distance routes was a minority interest, it was a minority of 55 million people in Great Britain and not just a minority of the five million Scots.

Nevertheless, the idea of having links with urban centres had been considered by the Commission — indeed, one of the merits of the West

1 CCS LDR files (F/L5).
2 Ibid.
Highland Way, it had been pointed out, was that it allowed Glaswegians to walk from near to the city centre into the Highlands. The Commission had also written and staff had spoken on the concept of a network of long-distance routes linking various parts of the country. Moreover, it was still expecting that the next route to be examined would be the one linking the Pennine Way with the conurbations of Central Scotland. So the Commission had no difficulty in agreeing with the Council that it should actively consider making routes accessible to large population centres even though it did not necessarily agree with the reasons why.

Nonetheless, the Council followed up the meeting with a letter, commenting on specific suggestions put forward by the Commission (in the review paper previously noted), still expressing concern over the lack of proven demand and recommending that routes should be made to radiate from the urban areas. Indeed, the letter suggested in the context of options in the south of Scotland that a route across the Southern Uplands would not be acceptable as a priority. A route along the Pentlands was given as an example of the sort of route preferred by the Council.

A final result of the Commission's deliberations in mid-1976 had been that it decided that it would to examine potential long-distance routes in the south of Scotland, working in conjunction with the four regional councils - Borders, Strathclyde, Lothian and Dumfries and Galloway, and to appoint a Project Officer to carry this out.

11. SOUTHERN SCOTLAND

(a) Strategic Appraisal of Long Distance Routes in Southern Scotland

The Project Officer was appointed at the end of 1976 and the first part of his contract involved making a strategic appraisal of 1

1 ibid.
2 the present writer.
potential long-distance routes in the south of Scotland. The second part was to plan a specific route.

The strategic appraisal had two distinct parts, a desk study and an exercise co-ordinating ideas from the regions and elsewhere. In the desk study, attempts were made to find precedents for the recognition and selection of linear routes, but the nearest examples which were found were in the fields of the selection of routes for highways and the laying of gas pipelines and it was concluded that the criteria for these had little relevance to long-distance routes, mainly because of the lack of impact and the greater flexibility of a line for a footpath. Similarly, little experience from the planning of long-distance routes elsewhere was relevant, because in England and Wales and the United States routes had always been adopted by a government agency from well-developed ideas put forward by amenity groups or individuals, and these ideas were generally arbitrarily selected, although in fact they very often followed a fairly obvious line, such as a prominent geographical or historical feature.

The previous Project Officer, in her exercise on constraints, had begun by making overlays depicting what she saw as constraints to the creation of long-distance routes. In addition, she had intended to map the opportunities - existing rights of ways, bridleways, tracks through forests and disused railway lines for example. This second stage had not taken place but it was recognised as being more useful. A similar exercise was therefore undertaken using maps depicting rights of ways (as compiled by the Scottish Rights of Way Society), routes from Moir's book, 'long distance routes' identified in documents produced by planning agencies in the past and in other publications and in addition roads with public transport, accommodation, historical features, areas of special scenic attraction
and other factors of interest and relevance to long-distance walkers.

It was recognised that, in the past, the starting point for ideas for long-distance routes had generally been the purpose of a route—the fact that it followed a feature or linked places, for example. A range of generalised lines for routes in the south of Scotland were thus drawn, following ridges, coastlines, major rivers and also following other features such as the Forth and Clyde Canal and linking places of historic interest. The few ideas which had been suggested in the past by amenity groups or individuals, such as the Holiday Fellowship's Borders Way, were also included. All these various lines were then refined with reference to the opportunities and constraints examined and mapped earlier.

At the same time, meetings were held with officials of the regional councils and, after being given an explanation of the background to the study, the Commission's criteria and the proposed programme, the officials of the councils were invited to submit ideas for routes within their own areas. These were then mapped and attempts were made to extend short routes or to link them to create routes likely to fulfil the Commission's criteria. These were then compared with the options which had emerged from the desk exercise and through a process of refinement eleven routes were drawn from all the lines which had been mapped.

Finally, the ideas were refined further following fieldwork and a report was compiled describing the character of the lines proposed. These, it will be noted, were 'corridors of interest' and not, generally, specific lines for a route, although the opportunities for selecting specific lines within the corridors of interest had been examined to assess the viability of the ideas and the base available for the route.
The eleven generalised routes selected were as follows:

(a) Ayr to Galloway (crossing several typical examples of landscape within the South-West);
(b) the Solway to the Clyde Valley;
(c) the Solway to Edinburgh;
(d) a 'Drovers' Way' - a route devised from Falkirk to the Border, following old cattle drovers' roads;
(e) Dere Street and the Herring Road (the Pennine Way to Dunbar);
(f) the 'Borders Way' as proposed by the Holiday Fellowship;
(g) the canal route;
(h) a Southern Upland Way (Portpatrick to St. Abbs);
(i) a Galloway Trail (based on the disused railway line);
(j) a Galloway coastal route;
and (k) 'Scott's Way'

Some crossed the grain of the country, others followed valleys and geographical features while others followed man-made features or linked cultural sites. The last, Scott's Way, linked places associated with Sir Walter Scott, and sampled a wide variety of scenery in the area south-east of Edinburgh. It was particularly interesting as being the first serious proposal for a circular long-distance route in Great Britain.

Each of the routes was examined against eight headings derived from the Commission's criteria for long-distance routes, a knowledge of what makes a long-distance route attractive to the walker and some obvious constraints.

The Considerations were outlined in the subsequent report as follows:

"(a) Scenery - refers to the quality and variety of the scenery along a route. Especially important is the landscape from a walker's point of view, with frequently changing scenes of high quality and interest desirable."
(b) **Natural History** - a varying flora, fauna and geology of the area through which a path passes can be a major attraction to walkers and can add greatly to the experience of a route.

(c) **Climate** - a more reliable or milder climate can make an area especially attractive and can extend the season of use. This heading also takes into account the altitude of routes. Although none of the routes recognised could be considered potentially hazardous to experienced and properly-prepared walkers, routes passing over the moorland areas could be considerably colder than the valley or lowland routes.

(d) **Cultural or Historical Considerations** - a most important attraction of a walk can often be the blending of the natural heritage with the human element, such as the villages, castles, churches and the cultural landscape, together with the less tangible associations of areas with the Romans, the old drovers, or important historical and literary figures.

(e) **Entity** - the various sections of the route should hang together as a coherent whole around a broad theme. It could, for example, be based on a historical route, a prominent topographical feature, or run from coast to coast. In addition, the route should have a roughly comparable standard of walking type, although paradoxically there must be variety.

(f) **Base** - for practical reasons there should be some considerable physical base to a route, such as drove roads, disused railway lines, fishermen's or coastguards' paths, established rights of way, etc.

(g) **Facilities and Accessibility** - this takes into account the amount and variety of accommodation and facilities available along the route for the walker and access to roads and public transport. These considerations will become of major importance at a later stage when a specific line is chosen.

(h) **Constraints** - this considers any physical or land-use constraints which may be encountered within the corridor of search, although these, too, will become of more fundamental importance in the selection of a specific line."

These considerations were used as the basis for matrix analysis of the routes. In fact, two of the headings were subdivided, the one on scenery being divided into 'quality' and 'variety' and the one on 'base' being divided into 'base' and 'walking quality'. There were therefore ten considerations and a score between one and five was given to each route for each heading.

After the scores had been computed a final assessment of all the routes was made and in some cases major problems with, for example,
the lack of base or monotony of scenery of parts of the route were felt to be of over-riding importance.

From this analysis two routes stood out. Most of the others were close together in the scoring with, interestingly, the 'Borders Way', the route proposed by the Holiday Fellowship, coming equal last in the ranking (mainly because of the lack of a suitable base for much of the route.) The two leaders were Scott's Way and the Southern Upland Way.

In considering the Report on the Strategic Appraisal, some Commissioners saw considerable merit in developing 'Scott's Way', but finally the Commission chose to develop the Southern Upland Way which was recommended by its staff. The Commission's early desire to obtain the approval of the Scottish Sports Council had little influence on its decision, for by this time the Commission seems to have regained its self confidence over long-distance routes. However, in deciding on the Southern Upland Way, it did agree to examine the possibility of linking the main long-distance route with the Central Belt of Scotland, and parts of four of the other routes in the Strategic Appraisal were noted for further consideration as 'feeders' to the Southern Upland Way. This in effect meant an extended Clyde Walkway (as part of the route from the Solway to Glasgow), a route along the Pentlands (as part of the route from the Solway to Edinburgh), part of the Drover's Way (linking north-west from the Tweed) and the western part of Scott's Way. It should be noted, however, that no attention had been paid to these by 1983.

The staffs of the Regional Councils concurred with the Commission's decision and general agreement came from most other quarters, including the landowning and farming groups. The Commission was to continue to concentrate on getting the support of the local authorities and the landed interest and, interestingly in the light of

1 CCS(77)94; CCS(77)M5 item 9, May 1977.
the Grampian Way, where the main problem had been the alienation of
the user groups, there was no change in policy regarding liaising with
the amenity groups. SCAC and the Rights of Way Society were sent
copies of the Report but no special attempt was made to sell the idea
to them.

There was surprisingly little comment on the method used in the
Strategic Appraisal, despite its obvious weaknesses. It had been
breaking new ground and some of its assumptions and techniques were
open to question. For example, it was clear that the Project Officer
had a strong bias towards the traditional type of long-distance route,
on the model of the Pennine Way, and the method was weighted heavily
towards the view of the long-distance walker. In fact, this may
account in part for the acceptance of the Commission's decision by the
amenity groups, for the route selected was not a 'planners' route' as
the Grampian Way had been. It would be the first formal long-distance
route in Great Britain linking the east and west coasts and it would
open up new opportunities for exploring the countryside of Southern
Scotland without offending any vested interests. This consideration
was important, for the proposal was likely to contain sections higher
than and as remote and exposed as sections of the Grampian Way.

(b) The Southern Upland Way

The Strategic Appraisal was circulated to interested bodies in
May 1977 and fieldwork took place on the Southern Upland Way in the
summer and autumn of that year. Following the Commission's practice,
the local authorities and the landowning and farming interests were
kept fully informed as was the Forestry Commission, a decision which
subsequently proved to be of considerable importance. Special efforts
were made to work with the representatives of landowners and farmers.
Although there was no precedent for the strategic appraisal, there was precedence for the selection of a specific line for a route from a number of options within a corridor of interest, for usually a number of existing or possible individual paths could be linked together to create an actual long-distance route within the theme or along the geographical feature it was to follow. The selection usually seems to have been done in a fairly arbitrary fashion, although practice was changing in England and Wales, and Ray Woolmore, in his study of the Cambrian Way, had developed the process.

However, to select options for comparison was not as easy in Scotland as in England and Wales, there being no definitive maps showing rights of way north of the border. As the Countryside Commission for Scotland had recognised at an early stage, the creation of long-distance routes in England and Wales was in effect a linking together of existing rights of way, a procedure very much more difficult in Scotland. In fact, tracks shown on old and current Ordnance Survey maps and lines claimed to be rights of way by the Scottish Rights of Way Society could be used, as well as disused railways, minor roads and forest tracks, and these provided the basis for finding specific options for the route.

In planning the route, attempts were made to link villages, where there were facilities and services which would be required by the walker, and to traverse as much outstanding scenery as possible, while keeping to a fairly direct course. An attempt was made to keep to existing tracks wherever possible. In the map study and later during field work, specific lines for the route were selected primarily from the walkers' point of view, modified by considerations of land-use, erosion and management.

As soon as specific options were recognised, all the landowners and
occupiers likely to be affected by the proposal were contacted. This in fact proved a major undertaking, involving studying maps lodged with the District Valuators in the various Regions to identify several hundred individual land-holdings. Permission was sought to carry out fieldwork (whether or not the section being examined was a claimed right of way) and observations were requested on the options for the route, copies of which at a scale of 1:25,000 were given to the landowners and farmers.

In addition, during fieldwork, personal contact was made with a large number of the landowners and farmers, the majority of whom were found to be most cooperative and helpful. Indeed, some assisted in suggesting the best line for the route across their property. An example which resulted in a major change for the route to that originally drawn involved the section in Strathclyde Region. Here, a route had been planned which climbed from Wanlockhead to the top of the Lowther Hills and followed a ridge down to Elvanfoot, with a disused railway line as the bad-weather alternative. However, two problems emerged. One was the crossing of the A74 trunk road. The only satisfactory crossing of the main road between Crawford and Beattock seemed to be Elvanfoot, where a passageway beside the river (the Clyde) crossed under the dual carriageway. On inspection, it was found that this frequently flooded, implying that it would be necessary to cross the road on foot which was dangerous and therefore not acceptable. In addition, there were problems with the ridge route and the disused railway line running through areas managed for grouse shooting. During fieldwork the local factor suggested an alternative route which headed south east instead of north east from Lowther Hill, descending to Daer Reservoir, from where a route was found to Beattock. This line was adopted, thereby avoiding conflict with the
grouse shooting and obviating the need to cross the main road at Elvanfoot.

The various options for the different sections of the route were compared during field work, using considerations similar to those used in the Strategic Appraisal. Observations of landowners and farmers, as well as of officials of the local authorities and others assisted in the process and ultimately one continuous line was selected. In fact, some major changes in the general corridor were made. As well as the section in Strathclyde, a new line was followed in Galloway, incorporating tracks through Glentrool Forest Park instead of the disused railway line from Glenluce to Newton Stewart which had originally been considered but which, it turned out, would have been far less attractive to walkers.

The assistance of the statutory bodies was important. The Forestry Commission played a positive role, for it owned major landholdings along the line of the route and it was necessary for the Project Officer to work very closely with the Commission. Assistance was given, for example, by the Forestry Commission providing detailed maps of the various planting schemes, which identified tracks and rides. The Nature Conservancy Council also proved to be particularly influential. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) had generally been avoided in the planning of the route unless it was clear that the route would have no impact on them. Problems arose, however, over unscheduled areas, particularly nesting sites. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds objected through the Council to a number of sections of the route where, it was claimed, even a few additional walkers would have a major detrimental effect; in a majority of cases modifications were made to the line of the route to avoid these.
The major difficulties which were encountered included scarcity of accommodation in much of the Southern Upland, the crossing of water courses, and the need to use significant lengths of metalled roads: there was often no alternative to these over moorland areas where many of the old drove roads had been unsurfaced until after the Second World War.

There was one disappointment concerning the eastern end of the route. In planning the Way, a balance had been sought at either end of the route. Portpatrick and the first section along the cliffs in the west balanced well with the eastern end of the route, which was planned to follow the cliffs from Pease Bay to a terminus at St. Abbs. Thus the sections along the cliffs and the fishing villages themselves would balance in a way which would be appreciated by long-distance walkers. However, there were found to be problems with the lack of a base for the route along the cliffs in Berwickshire and no expressed demand could be found to strengthen the argument that this section should be incorporated into the route. As the main purpose of the route was to link the two coastlines, it was agreed to terminate the route at Cockburnspath where it reached the North Sea.

Following the fieldwork and consultations a report on the Southern Upland Way was written. It was then some 204 miles (329 km) in length, and for the purposes of the report was divided into fifteen sections, of similar lengths, generally running from village to village. The report covered some 60 pages and each section was described under 'basic data' (distance, height range, the local authorities involved,

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1 The Southern Upland Way - Report on a Proposed Long-Distance Route between Portpatrick and Cockburnspath CCS, July 1978.
availability of services, type of the route - tarred, forestry or farm track, footpath or no path -, status of the route - public road, claimed right of way, and other -, and the relevant Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 map), description of the route (including views), historical and cultural interest, facilities and access (including accommodation, car parking and public transport availability), planning considerations (including SSSIs, NNRs, Areas of Great Landscape Value, Ancient Monuments, links with other walkways, relevant information from plans prepared by local authorities, agricultural considerations and other considerations of land-use, including shooting, water gathering and forestry) and finally the condition of the route and the works required.

Various statistics were compiled, such as total distances along the various types of routeway and the status of the route, and tables were produced showing all the landowners and occupiers likely to be affected by the proposal, and all the local authorities involved. Facilities were also summarised in tabular form. Establishing the Way was estimated to cost £156,000, one third of which was due to fourteen large footbridges required along the route and five bothies. The costing assumed £260 per kilometre for repairs and improvements to path plus the estimated amounts for 302 specific items (stiles, gates, finger posts, mapboards, viewpoint indicators, bridges and bothies). The Report echoed previous reports on long-distance routes in Great Britain by stating that: "In order to preserve the unspoilt nature of much of the walk, and in the interests of economy, the works proposed are kept to a minimum." In addition, the upkeep of the route was estimated at an average £25 per kilometre, or £8,225 in total per annum. All figures were based on 1978 costs.

The Report contained an introduction which was noticeably better-

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1 At the opening ceremony (27/4/84), Michael Ancram, Minister of State at the Scottish Office noted that to date £8,000 had been spent developing the route.
balanced than that in the report on the Grampian Way. It acknowledged that the route was "challenging" and it produced solid backing for its plan without needing to be defensive. It noted:

"Scotland is well endowed with opportunities for cross-country walking and there are publications available giving information about many suitable routes. In practice, many of the paths in the Scottish countryside are ill-defined, few are signposted and some are now impassable. It can be very difficult for a visitor to know where a path is, or be able to follow it, or to know of the opportunities for long distance walking - as is evident by the numerous inquiries received by the Commission. The experience of official long distance routes in England and Wales since the opening of the Pennine Way in 1965 shows them to serve an important function, and the Countryside Commission for Scotland considers that a limited number of long-distance routes, provided as necessary with stiles and footbridges and with some waymarking, will have an important place in the countryside in Scotland.

In producing these plans, the Commission has been mindful of potential conflicts between recreation and other uses of the countryside, and has attempted to minimise any harmful impacts that such a walk could have - although it is felt that these would be minimal in this particular instance. This has been done by close consultation with proprietors, farmers, and landowning and conservation interests, together with the local authorities. At the same time, the needs of the walker and the opportunities available for the enjoyment of the countryside of the south of Scotland have been borne in mind. It is felt that this report represents a most attractive and worthwhile long distance route which will find support from walkers and land interests alike."¹

Three hundred copies of the Report were circulated in August 1978 and the Commission's Annual Report noted that reaction to the proposal was generally favourable adding:

"We believe that this route should provide some fine opportunities for walking in southern Scotland, presenting the physical and logistical challenge of its length and yet at the same time providing a reasonably safe and interesting route for the well-equipped and experienced walker."²

However there were still some rumblings of discontent from a part of the amenity lobby and in Climber and Rambler it was noted that the Southern Upland Way got the "thumbs down" from the Scottish Rights of Way Society. It claimed that "The planners' lobby tried to get a motion of praise over the CCS plan, but it was overwhelmingly defeated." It also claimed that the lesson was: "Users should be

¹ ibid. p4.
consulted before schemes are dreamt up on their behalf", adding, significantly, "We don't want organisation in Scotland." Nonetheless, while there was no great enthusiasm for long-distance routes in Scotland, there was this time little real opposition and, mainly because of the close consultation which had taken place with the local authorities and others during the planning phase, the Commission was able to report to the Secretary of State within six months, with little change to its draft proposals.

In its submission it claimed:

"The Commission is confident that the proposed route would be an important new recreational resource for Scotland. It is felt that people with a wide range of abilities and interests will derive enjoyment from the Southern Upland Way, from those who walk the whole length in one attempt for challenge and adventure to those who walk only sections of the route, perhaps concentrating on studying the wildlife or the historic features which occur along the Way. In preparing proposals for the route, the Commission has benefited from the large number of consultations it has had with individuals and representatives of private and public bodies, and it believes that this teamwork has resulted in a well-balanced plan this is capable of being implemented."

The Secretary of State gave his approval to the proposal in July 1979, and the Commission used its experience in the implementation of the West Highland Way by funding Project Officers for Dumfries and Galloway and Borders Regions to carry out negotiations.

In fact, the Southern Upland Way was a major undertaking, for, at over 200 miles (over 300 km), it was the third longest route proposed for Great Britain and, because of the lack of proven rights of way, it required a massive number of negotiations to be carried out by the planning authorities. Furthermore, there were serious constraints on the financing of the route, for, although grant aid for implementing the proposal was 100%, costs still had to be met from the authorities' capital allocations, which were increasingly severely limited. This was despite the Commission lobbying the Scottish Development

1 Southern Upland Way report op. cit. Introduction.
2 The official length is 212 miles (340Km). See Ken Andrew, The Southern Upland Way vol 1, Western Section, vol 2, Eastern Section (1974) HMSO.
Department for long-distance routes to be made a special case - or a charge on the revenue account of the local authorities.

Nevertheless, there seems to have been general good will and progress was good.

The Commission's annual reports were able to refer to considerable headway being made. It is proposed to officially open the whole of the Southern Upland Way, as Scotland's second fully-open long-distance route, in the Spring of 1984.

12. THE OPENING AND THE SURVEY OF THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY

As noted earlier, creating the West Highland Way came to a virtual standstill in the mid-1970s, mainly because of the lack of will of the new authorities following the reorganisation of local government in Scotland. However, in the latter part of the 1970s, the Commission intervened, organising, for example, quarterly meetings of the planning authorities and funding a Project Officer for Highland Region whose sole responsibilities were for long-distance routes. At the time of the submission of the proposal to the Secretary of State in 1973, the Commission had stated that it hoped to have the route fully open within five years. Given the extreme difficulties in the mid-1970s, difficulties which included severe financial constraints because of the procedure outlined above, as well as a lack of will on behalf of the planning authorities, it is perhaps surprising that progress was such that on 6th October, 1980, Lord Mansfield, Minister of State at the Scottish Office, formally opened the West Highland Way as the first long distance route fully in Scotland.

1 The official opening took place at Loch Lomond on 27th April, 1984, attracting considerable media attention, including national television networks.
The Commission commented that:

"Despite concern in some quarters about the introduction of statutory facilities of this kind, the route has been well-received by walkers and we believe it will prove to be as valuable an asset to the public as comparable back-packing trails in other parts of the world." ¹

In fact, the Commission also conceded that physical work would have to continue along the route, even though it was officially opened, reminiscent of the policy used in England and Wales whereby dates were announced for the opening of a route in advance of its completion to speed up work and to attract publicity. At the same time it announced that it would survey the use of the route during its first season.

Dr Robert Aitken, who, despite his criticism of the Commission's proposals for the Grampian Way, had been invited to write the official guide to the West Highland Way, was commissioned to do the survey. In his guide he had written:

"Substantial stretches of the Way have always been open to the walker as rights of way and have been enjoyed by generations of outdoor enthusiast; but the virtue of the route's official designation and creation has been to link these together into a coherent entity of great character: the total is considerably more than the sum of the parts." ²

He had predicted that the route would become very popular and his prediction was borne out by his field work. This was carried out between July and September 1981, when 427 parties totalling 1100 walkers were interviewed. The method used by Aitken was to cover the whole of the Way in units of three days, using two surveyors, six times throughout the season at two week intervals. The interview in the field was followed by a postal questionnaire. Aitken conceded that it was possible that 1981 was not a typical "baseline" year because of the extra publicity that had followed the opening of the Way, the good summer weather and the impending withdrawal of the steamer on Loch Lomond.

² Aitken op.cit., pl.
Aitken concluded that 1200 to 1700 long distance walkers had walked all or substantial parts of the route during the summer. About half of these walked the route in July, when an estimated 125-175 were on the route at any one time. He felt it was likely that such high numbers also occurred at Easter and in the early summer. Interestingly, he reported few organised parties. Of those walking the whole length of the West Highland Way, in excess of 1000 in the year, he found that one half were Scottish, a third English and a sixth were from overseas. The majority were north-bound and usually took seven to eight days to complete the route, mainly travelling in small groups. Many characteristics were, in fact, very similar to those found in the surveys of the Pennine Way, particularly the prominence of young, single men.

The postal survey found the Way to have been very enjoyable to the majority of walkers, although a significant proportion of walkers dropped out, with one fifth of the parties not completing their intended walk. It was found that the scenic character of the route rather than the element of challenge was the most important reason for walking the West Highland Way.

In his conclusion, Aitken made recommendations for the Commission to assist in its future planning and management of routes. He saw long-distance routes as "functioning systems in which path, users and ancillary features interact". He found that the accommodation part of the system was weak (there was a shortage of most types of accommodation) and suggested that it must be the Commission which takes the initiative:

"The Countryside Commission for Scotland may need to take a more active management role to keep in balance some components of the long-distance footpath systems, such as accommodation."1

1 Ibid. p37.
He also pointed out some practical problems which he saw as being relevant in the planning of future long-distance routes, such as problems inherent in negotiating different terms for access agreements and the need to waymark a route "heavily" in the period following its opening to allow a path to be established, thereafter reducing the number of waymarks. He stressed the need for the setting up of a monitoring system, possible using the Ranger service, to assist with the management of the route.

13 CHANGES IN THE COMMISSION'S PROGRAMME AND IN LEGISLATION

The Commission's Annual Report for 1981 commented thus:

"We hope this information about use of long distance routes will help us in carrying out improvements to the West Highland Way itself and that it will also enable us and the local authorities concerned to develop the other long distance routes in Scotland in ways which make them attractive to the considerable sector of the public who, it is evident, enjoy this form of recreation in Scotland." 2

It was also able to comment that 10,000 copies of the new guide to the West Highland Way had been purchased already and it made special note of the way the route had boosted the tourist trade in the area through which it passed. This last point confirmed the connection noted in Section 2 of this chapter, between amenity matters and economic ones in Scotland, something evident before 1967. (It is worth noting that the links between the Countryside Commission for Scotland and the Scottish Tourist Board have been stronger in Scotland than equivalent links in England and Wales - for example, the two bodies have become involved in major surveys and studies.)

Thus the Commission found in its survey of the West Highland Way, and to a lesser degree with the progress developing the Speyside Way in Moray and the good progress implementing the Southern Upland Way, vindication for pressing ahead with its development of long-distance routes in Scotland, despite all the opposition there had been at the time.

beginning of the second half of the 1970s. Nevertheless, a major decision was made in 1980 and the Commission published in its annual report that:

"We do not plan to initiate any investigations on other long distance routes in the immediate future. Instead, we propose to concentrate all our attention and funds over the next two or three years on developing the three routes which the Secretary of State for Scotland has already approved."

This decision was taken in part because of continuing opposition, particularly from some Commissioners, to a major programme for long-distance routes. But the main reason was that, as had been the case south of the border, the Commission had concluded that it would need to do far more than just its statutory duties to ensure the success of routes, involving the very time-consuming negotiations during the planning process. This had come about as a decision of policy taken by staff to smooth the way in the long run rather than an acceptance of the desire of the politicians for such a procedure, which had been evident during the passage of the Countryside (Scotland) Bill. It would also include a coordinating role for the Commission during the implementation of routes and a major role in the management of routes once they were open in part or in full.

In England and Wales, similar conclusions had begun to be made during the 1950s (although they were never taken as far as in Scotland), and many of the unforeseen problems and much of the need for the extra involvement of the Commissions was blamed on the legislation. Just as in England and Wales there are various references to improvements being sought in the legislation to ease the creation of long-distance routes, so in Scotland the Commission from an early date pressed for changes to the legislation which, inter alia, would facilitate the creation of long-distance routes. However, when it came to specifics in both cases the changes proposed were

minor, mainly concerned with allowing wardens and rangers to operate on the routes. The main reason for the desire to have wardens/rangers was that it was claimed negotiating a route would be made easier if landowners felt they would have the protection of such a service.

As a way round the problem in Scotland, the policy evolved whereby the usual way of negotiating a long-distance route involved the making of access agreements, where the local authority would be empowered to make byelaws allowing rangers to operate. There was an added advantage in this, so far as landowners were concerned, in that there was not the same permanence in an access agreement as in the creation of a right of way. However, there was still the desire that rangers should be able to operate where a right of way was involved, as opposed to an access agreement, and it was hoped that powers to this effect would be incorporated into legislation.

The Commission's main interest in such amending legislation was to provide a statutory base for its 'Parks System for Scotland' but various other "tidying-up" measures were proposed for incorporation. As early as 1972 an official government report had noted in the context of long-distance routes:

"There were said to be certain practical defects in the statutory provisions, mainly concerned with footpath management and wardens, which had to be put right in order to realise the full potential of this provision in the light of the kind of demand which is emerging."1

The Commission worked with the Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) from 1977 to pave the way for changes in legislation. However, it was 1979 before a bill was brought before Parliament, and this was a Private Scottish Member's Bill, introduced into the House of Lords. Lord Hughes' Bill dealt almost wholly with footpaths and the ranger service, and it included provision for rangers to operate on long-distance routes. It reached Committee

stage, but it was lost in the dissolution of Parliament later in the year.

At the end of the same year the Scottish Development Department worked with the Countryside Commission to produce another Countryside (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill, but the Commission was to express disappointment in its annual reports that there was no progress through 1980 despite the passage of equivalent legislation in England and Wales in the Wildlife and Countryside Bill. Eventually, a Private Member's Bill was introduced into the House of Commons by Peter Fraser and the Countryside (Scotland) Amendment Act of 1981 incorporated most of the measures desired by the Commission, including a provision allowing rangers to operate on all parts of a long-distance route.

There was more difficulty in the Scottish context over the legal situation regarding the registration of rights of way. It was in the planning of long-distance routes that the problems inherent in rights of way in Scotland came to the Commission's attention most forcibly (and was a problem which had considerable influence on the decision to adopt the Grampian Way, which incorporated two of the relatively few proven rights of way in Scotland.) At times, the Commission seemed to be favouring statutory registration, as was the case in England and Wales. For example, at a meeting in early 1976 at which exasperation was expressed with the difficulty of establishing the legal status of rights of way in Scotland, in the context of developing long-distance routes, it was agreed that a paper should be prepared: "about the need for amending legislation to secure the registration of rights of way in Scotland." However, this was a topic fraught with difficulties and the paper subsequently produced by officials, in April 1976,

2 CCS(76)M2, 10th February 1976.
recommended that a series of discussions take place before the matter be pursued further.

The Scottish Rights of Way Society, which, as has been seen, filled a particularly influential role in Scotland, was adamantly against statutory registration and in the mid-1970s was particularly vociferous on the topic. For example, at a Conference on Public Access in the Countryside of Scotland held at Battleby (the Commission’s headquarters) in December 1975, the Chairman of the Society had objected to "alien legislation" from England and Wales. The Commission interpreted this to include statutory registration of rights of way (which had not been incorporated into the Countryside (Scotland)Act) and access agreements and long-distance footpaths (which had become part of the law of Scotland). This attitude was confirmed by the Society at its next annual general meeting, despite the fact that earlier in 1975 the Society had criticised the Commission for not giving its duty to provide long-distance routes sufficient priority:

"Your directors feel disappointment at the lack of vigour displayed by the Commission in the fulfilment of this important aspect of their duties." 3

(It should be noted that, at the time, members of the Society were particularly interested in an idea of theirs, the Great Glen Way, a long-distance route they proposed from Fort William to Inverness.)

The negative attitude of the Society, evident at the Conference at Battleby, continued through the 1970s and, in the context of the Southern Upland Way, the annual report for 1978 noted:

"The directors felt with so many rights of way available to the walkers in southern Scotland the formation of a long distance route would be to some extent an artificial creation, and probably unnecessary." 4

although it did in fact agree to assist the Commission because it was carrying out a statutory duty.

1 CCS Access to the Countryside - Report on a One Day Conference ... 1976.
2 CCS(76)47, 1st April 1976, pp2-3.
This example illustrates the problems which beset the Commission in trying to get a system in which the creation of long-distance routes would be much easier. In the event, it took the attitude that the whole length of a new long-distance route (with the exception of sections along public roads) should be negotiated and, while this did make for considerably more work, once implementation was sufficiently well organised, using Project Officers, for example, the procedure could work smoothly, as exemplified by the relatively swift implementation of the Southern Upland Way. The extension of the ranger service brought about by amending legislation did help the situation, but there were no attempts made to make other changes in the law which would assist with the planning or creation of long-distance routes.

14. CONCLUSION

By the late 1970s, the Commission had overcome the difficulties brought about by its proposal for the Grampian Way and had found a relatively successful formula for creating routes, including the negotiation of access agreement, widespread consultations with all landowners and occupiers and their representatives during the planning stage and, following the approval of a route, assisting the planning authorities in the implementation of routes by grant-aiding Project Officers and continuing its active interest in schemes.

While relative to England and Wales there was little interest in the creation of long-distance routes among the general public in Scotland and while the criticism of the provision from the mountaineering interests was not countered by rambling groups pressing for long-distance paths, support for the idea and general interest did grow from the latter part of the 1970s and into the 1980s and an
increasing number of newspaper articles and programmes on radio featured the Commission's proposals in a sympathetic way. This was, as would be expected, particularly the case after the opening of the West Highland Way. Moreover in 1977 the Commission had adopted a thistle as its special symbol for long-distance routes (rejecting the acorn used in England and Wales as being inappropriate) and this drew attention to the existence of formal long-distance routes both in the countryside and in articles in newspapers and journals which featured the symbol.

An example of newspaper coverage of the Commission's programme was an article by Alistair Hetherington in the Guardian. This was the main feature in the newspaper's Travel section and, after describing the West Highland Way in detail, Hetherington went on to note other rights of way available in Scotland, recommending the walk from Blair Atholl to Braemar to Speyside. This was particular ironical, as this was not mentioned as being the route of the ill-fated Grampian Way.

The year before, the 'Centre Page' of the Scotsman had had an article entitled 'Getting Away from It All', summarising the situation in Scotland with respect of long-distance routes and assessing the differences between Scotland and England. The author, Julie Davidson, pointed to the importance of the English rambler in the justification for creating long-distance routes in Scotland: "By and large the market for long distance routes is an imported one." The differences between walkers in England and Scotland she summarised thus:

"Give the English a footpath and a signpost and they will keep right on to the end of the road, ramblers all, plucky innocents abroad in Scotland where the skull-and-crossbones propaganda of the mountains has produced a generation of Scottish hillwalkers who won't move ten yards without a cargo of survival aids and a month's supply of Mars Bars.

There are other differences. The English rambler is sociable and orderly, likes to hike for the grand and healthy life and is much concerned about rights of way and laws of trespass. The

1 The Guardian 2nd June 1979, p13.
Scottish hillwalker is morose and solitary, mistrusts bureaucratised recreation and takes for granted the freedom of the hills. Some of these differences have influenced the strategy behind the new network of long distance walking routes planned and promoted by the Countryside Commission for Scotland; and bred suspicion of them."

In Scotland, the Countryside Commission had weathered the storm brought on by the suspicion. It conceded the Grampian Way (which was an ill-devised scheme) but pressed ahead with its programme for long-distance routes and has decided to pause in the early 1980s to consolidate its position.

The survey of the West Highland Way confirmed the demand for the facility from Scots as well as English walkers - and its usefulness economically as well as as a recreational provision. The success negotiating as large a project as the Southern Upland Way justified the way this route had been tackled, with a procedure maximising consultations (at least with the landed interests and statutory bodies) and seeking to create access agreements, whether or not there was a claimed right of way. This would seem to add to the complexity of creating a long-distance route; yet the success would suggest that the Commission had found the key to developing as smooth a programme as possible. During the passage of the Countryside (Scotland) Bill it had been noted that cooperation was the keyword to helping forward a programme for long-distance routes. The Commission had confirmed that in practice.

Staff had predicted in an earlier Commission paper that six rather than two or three long-distance routes would be created in Scotland and it seems likely that the Commission will continue its programme for long-distance routes later in the 1980s. There is, however, continuing opposition to such development both within and outwith the Commission, and whether any development of the programme will change the character of long-distance routes - through developing networks of

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1 ibid.
2 West Highland Way Survey op.cit, p36. 94% of long-distance walkers were in favour of the creation of more long-distance routes in Scotland.
3 CCS(75)147 op.cit.
interlinking routes, for example, remains to be seen. It is possible, for example, that routes linking the urban areas with the Southern Upland Way may be created, as proposed at the time of reporting the route to the Secretary of State, while there is the possibility of the Speyside Way being extended along the coastline of Moray (this may be necessary to justify calling the route a long-distance route if the problems in Highland Region with the disused railway line, which is supposed to be part of the route, are not satisfactorily overcome). There are, of course, possibilities for new long-distance routes; several were identified in the Strategic Appraisal of the South of Scotland, and, in the Highlands, although opposition from some of the mountaineering interests would be virtually inevitable, widespread support might be found for extending the West Highland Way along the Great Glen, a long distance route along the Glen having been proposed by the Scottish Rights of Way Society in the mid 1970s.

The provision for long-distance routes in Scotland came by accident rather than design and, although the Countryside Commission for Scotland was able to learn from the experience of the National Parks Commission in dealing with the facility in England and Wales, there were major problems in Scotland, not least with the situation regarding rights of way and the resistance of much of the 'establishment' of the Scottish outdoor movement to change. Credit must go to the Commission, and particularly to a few key members of its staff, for perservering and building up a generally successful programme for the development and management of long-distance routes in Scotland.
MAP 2

FORMAL LONG DISTANCE ROUTES
IN GREAT BRITAIN
- 1984 -
CHAPTER TWELVE
CONCLUSION

This study has traced the origins and development of the idea of long-distance paths and their implementation in Great Britain, up to the end of 1983, using evidence from as wide a range of sources as possible. It has found the origins of the idea in the movement which sprang from the Romantic Era and the greater appreciation of the countryside and has followed the development of the idea from the 1930s by the amenity movement, by government in official reports and in Parliament and by the Commissions charged with the planning of long-distance routes.

The study has provided a focus for examining the history of the amenity movement during the past century, for the factors directly relating to long-distance paths are also relevant to other aspects of the movement.

It has seen the two sides of the amenity movement, represented by the campaigns for national parks and for free access respectively; it has examined the important government reports so fundamental to the development of recreational provision and conservation in this century. It has seen the importance of individuals within the amenity movement and the ties with government; and it has examined the eventual passage of legislation for England and Wales concerning national parks and access at the end of the 1940s and legislation relating to the Scottish countryside in the 1960s. It has followed the programmes of the National Parks and Countryside Commissions, assessed their relationships with local authorities and with central government, and has noted the growing pressures on land and changing fashions for appreciation of the countryside. For example, it has
seen the major changes in the mid-1960s and the general change from emphasis by planners and others on grand schemes, epitomised by national parks and long-distance routes, to smaller schemes, concerned with conservation or recreation close to centres of population, the change from resource-based planning to demand-led planning, and it has identified emphasis on the management of facilities as having come late but now being dominant.

The study has suggested that the different characters central to the story, the intricacies of government, the different emphases and some of the main events are central to other parts of the development of the amenity movement as well as to long-distance routes.

In addition to documenting developments and assessing their importance, the study also set out to examine a number of specific aspects of the development of long-distance routes and some of these are further discussed in the conclusion to the study: the cyclical nature of the development of a system of long-distance paths; the attraction of attention disproportionate to the use or physical impact of the facility; the importance of individual people and areas; and the importance of chance in developments. During the study several additional aspects were found to be particularly interesting: the strengths and weaknesses of the legislation enabling the creation of formal long-distance routes; the response to the difficulties translating the idea to reality; and the selection of ideas for routes and the development of criteria.

Dominant all along has been the use of long-distance routes by walkers. Some routes were created as bridleways - the South Downs Way throughout all its length and the Ridgeway for half its length, for example. However, there is little evidence of use or demand for long-distance riding (or cycling, which was provided for in the Countryside
Acts), and problems creating bridleways proved to be even worse than creating footpaths, and this and the lack of demand led to the abandoning of plans for extra long-distance bridleways. The concentration of the study and this conclusion has been on the development of long-distance routes for long-distance walkers.

(a) The cyclical nature of development

The preliminary examination of the history of long-distance paths in various national recreational systems had suggested a cyclical model of development as follows: the idea of the facility, embodied in a specific example, originating from one prominent individual with philanthropic motives; the idea was then adopted by the amenity lobby and a group was formed to foster the idea; other examples were proposed and the facilities and examples were incorporated into the national planning framework for public recreation; an official agency co-ordinated the implementation of the idea in conjunction with the amenity lobby until, finally, it was predicted, a saturation point would be reached and the cycle completed.

This model was tested on the history of long-distance routes in Great Britain during the study. It was found to be a useful way of summarising the history although the stages in the cycle needed a degree of qualification and despite the initial observation only a superficial similarity seemed to exist between developments in the different countries.

The idea of formal long-distance paths in Great Britain came from Tom Stephenson with his publicising of his 'Long Green Trail', the Pennine Way, in the Daily Herald in 1935. The idea was not quite as philanthropic as had been suggested in constructing the original model. There had seemed to be distinct similarities between the
inception of the Appalachian Trail in the U.S.A. proposed by Benton Mackaye in 1921. However, MacKaye's proposal made the Appalachian Trail the focus for various social projects, and, as suggested by the title of his paper, 'The Appalachian Trail - An Experiment in Regional Planning', it was much broader than just the provision of a recreational facility. MacKaye does not seem to have any political axe to grind; Tom Stephenson certainly did, and, as astute observers such as Monkhouse were quick to realise, the idea of the Pennine Way had several important ingredients which were of considerable political significance and Stephenson was out to use the idea to further political ends. This is not to say that the recreational benefits Stephenson stressed were necessarily of secondary importance, but the idea was strongly tied to politics.

A further qualification to the general model proposed initially was that there was not an immediate link between the publishing of the idea of the Pennine Way and its adoption by the amenity movement. Although the idea was publicised in the Daily Herald, which at that time had the largest circulation of any daily newspaper in the world, and, as demonstrated, was proposed at a time when the idea of cross-country paths had grown to become important to both extremes of the amenity movement and others, it had to wait many months before T.A. Leonard intervened, persuading Stephenson to resurrect the idea and shepherding it to its incorporation into the programme of the amenity movement.

Although the voluntary organisation established to promote the idea, the Pennine Way Association, was important, it was Tom Stephenson who continued to be at the fore of the development of the idea of the route. Where in America the equivalent organisation, the Appalachian Trail Conference, played a leading role in the

implementation of the route, this role for the volunteers did not develop in Great Britain because from an early stage pressure was put on central government to adopt the idea. This was despite the fact that in 1938 the volunteers were gearing themselves to implement the Pennine Way, and through the 1950s and later some of the physical part of implementing routes was done by volunteers.

As Tom Stephenson was to dominate the development of the Pennine Way, he was also fundamentally important in extending the idea of long-distance paths to include other routes. Although some specific ideas had come forward, such as the idea of walking along the South Downs, submitted to the Addison Committee, it was Stephenson who put together a package of routes, which was to dominate the actual programme of the development of formal long-distance routes through the 1950s and 1960s. Moreover, it was he who had a special relationship with the government of the day in the mid-1940s and this played a significant part in the adoption of legislation which included provisions for long-distance route, for by the end of the 1940s the idea of formal named routes was fully institutionalised in the national planning legislation. It was Stephenson's influence on the National Parks Commission, the authority empowered to plan long-distance routes, which ensured the continuity of the idea and of the quality and character of the facility to the implementation phase.

The original model summarised the development of long-distance paths, once the idea had been incorporated into legislation, as being the responsibility of central government. However, although the Commissions were closely related to central government, their legal responsibility covered only the planning of routes. The Ministers were involved in approving the routes and could have had overall influence on their implementation, through powers of default, for
example, but this was not to be. Rather, implementation was left to the units of local government and this proved a particularly weak part of the cycle.

Finally, in the original model, it was suggested that the planning of new routes would come to an end when it was recognised that a saturation point had been reached — either that there were no other suitable lines for routes (it was highly unlikely this situation would be reached in Great Britain) or that the demand for the facility was satisfied. This is one interpretation of what has in fact happened over the past few years: with 1667 miles (2691 km) of formal routes, long-distance walkers are well catered for. However, this assumption has not been tested — there was no systematic survey of the demand for access of which long-distance routes were a part until the early 1980s, and the earlier Pennine Way survey did not provide much more than base-line data for future surveys. This present study has suggested that numbers of long-distance walkers, though growing, were small on most routes at most times. This fact, together with the variety and geographical spread of routes, would seem to vindicate the English Commission's view although its decision to bring its programme for formal routes to an end was also partly because of a further factor which perhaps should have been incorporated into the original model: the availability of an alternative facility. This was the Recreational Path, which the Commission saw as much easier and cheaper to provide. The onus was not on the Commission to develop these, and it therefore avoided the problems which had been generated by the Commission's involvement in formal routes in the mid-1970s.

A further factor modifying the original model was that, as routes were opened, management was necessary and the Commission took it upon itself to co-ordinate this. This involved producing guide-books and
providing other information, developing policies for way-marking and signposting, providing a wardening service, carrying out surveys, providing accommodation and carrying out remedial work where there was erosion or other problems of management. Varying Reports were sometimes needed, and these activities in the post-implementation phase, a phase which Hookway and others were keen to see develop, took an increasing part of the Commission's resources, both in manpower and in funding - accounting for 6% of the latter in 1983, and probably exceeding £1/2M p.a. in the middle of the decade. This phase is ongoing, and means the cycle is never completed, although it could be argued that the cycle of development does not in fact include the post-implementation management phase.

Scotland generally does not exhibit the same cycle: rather it had the provision for formal long-distance routes imposed upon it. There was not the same interest from the amenity groups, possibly because no individual had adopted the idea as had been the case in the south, because of the resistance to English ideas and laws, and because of the belief that such a provision was unnecessary in the Scottish countryside. In fact, the West Highland Way does fit into the model, for it was promoted by an amenity group, but generally there was not to be the tying together of the user groups and the official bodies to carry out a programme for developing routes. The experience of the Grampian Way illustrates the dangers inherent in not having this balanced approach.

The general cyclical nature of the development of long-distance routes, which is particularly evident in England and Wales, is an interesting one and aspects of the cycle would seem to be evident in the development of other provisions, such as national parks. This aspect is worthy of further study.
(b) The disproportionate importance of long-distance routes

A further aspect examined by this study was the seemingly disproportionate importance of long-distance routes during their history. The attention they attracted was far in excess of their likely physical impact or use.

At first this was because the provision of cross-country paths was an aim common to both parts of the amenity movement and, like the movement itself, it had its roots firmly in the tradition of the Romantic era. It became central to other important developments, such as the growth of the Youth Hostelling movement in the 1930s, at a time when minor roads, traditionally used for walking tours, were becoming busier with vehicular traffic. For the hardy, named endurance walks gained in popularity.

Official recognition came with support for the provision of cross-country paths from the Addison Committee and, partly because such a facility (unlike free access, for example) would require little if any change to the existing legislation, it received the commendation of the planning ministry, the Ministry of Health. Concurrently, in the 1930s, interest in preserving and developing the sea coast and the National Fitness Campaign drew attention to the desirability of having extended footpaths to open up areas and provide healthy outdoor exercise.

When Tom Stephenson personalised the idea in his novel plan for a Pennine Way, long-distance routes attracted media attention and became even more central to the move towards the provision of legislation on amenity matters. Routes provided attractive focuses of attention, were complementary to full access so far as the access-campaigners were concerned and were a relatively harmless and controlled way of providing additional facilities so far as the landed interests were
concerned.

As the Ramblers Association came to the fore, the creation of long-distance routes, and the Pennine Way in particular, became stated objectives of the organisation, and the Association's prominence in the 1940s was important in influencing the legislation which was eventually passed. Stephenson himself was important in this regard, and his role in bringing the idea of long-distance routes to the fore in the Scott Report and particularly in the deliberations of the Hobhouse Committees has been demonstrated.

The hike of MPs along the Pennine Way was particularly important in the period following the publication of the Hobhouse Reports, and it was no coincidence that long-distance routes figured prominently in the Bill in 1949 and in the general debates in Parliament on the measure. They represented one of the few new recreational provisions in the Bill and their planning a specific function of the National Parks Commission. The considerable importance of both these factors led to their benefitting in the deliberations between the Ministry and the Treasury, and the unique 100% grant-aiding for their creation and maintenance. Stephenson called the provisions for long-distance routes "the crown" of the Act.

In the new National Parks Commission, long-distance routes became the subject of the first sub-committee and occupied much of the Commission's time as work began planning several routes concurrently. Thereafter, as there was a general decline in interest in matters relating to the countryside, long-distance routes remained at the fore of the actions of the Commission, and as routes were eventually open, coinciding with a renaissance in interest in countryside amenity, long-distance routes again attracted widespread attention as particularly attractive ideas.
The facility had involved the National Parks Commission with areas not formally designated as National Parks or AONBs. The new Countryside Commission now had an interest in the whole of the countryside, and interest in long-distance routes did begin to wane so far as the Commission was concerned from before the mid-1970s. Nonetheless, long-distance routes continued to be one of the facilities best known by the public and associated with the Commission. Moreover, the interest of the media, Parliament and the general public increased as the Commission's interest waned.

Throughout the life of both Commissions, long-distance routes became the focus for interesting developments, such as the surveys, the provision of a ferry on the South West Peninsula Path, the walkers bus service in Pembrokeshire, the opposition to the military in several instances, general development issues, for example close to the Cleveland Way and along the Pembroke Path, and the siting of new youth hostels - the majority of new hostels through the period were on or close to long-distance paths.

As well as attracting the interest of the media, routes have continued to be at the fore of the attention of the amenity groups, and from the beginning have been used as a focus for the concerns of the campaigners - the prohibitions associated with the use of moorlands for water catchment, the lack of rights of way in areas (in the Wolds in particular), the use of bridleways by motorised vehicles (in the case of the Ridgeway) and the general state of the management of paths. Disproportionate attention has had a negative side, with the considerable opposition to the Wolds Way by landed interests and then the general opposition to the Cambrian Way.

Approximately £2.2M has been spent by the Countryside Commission for England and Wales up to 1983 and it is likely this will be doubled
in the present decade. Routes still attract the 100% grant aid, which is even more remarkable now the standard ceiling for grant aid is 50%. However, the cost of providing routes has never been critical, although the relative cheapness of providing Recreational Paths is one reason for the demise of the programme for new routes: in 1983/84 the formal routes will cost £294 per mile (£182/km) compared with roughly £50 per mile (£33/km) for Recreational Paths.

In Scotland there has been much less interest and attention, although the media has shown increasing interest in routes and the survey of the West Highland Way indicated its popularity. The Grampian Way also attracted considerable attention, but increasingly it is positive interest in routes as recreational provisions which has attracted the media. As in the south, long-distance routes are one of the facilities most associated with the Commission in the eyes of the public, and it is not surprising that the Public Relations Officer of the Scottish Commission is keen to see a continuing programme for the development of routes.

(c) The importance of individuals

One of the major conclusions of this study has been the importance of individuals in all aspects of the development of long-distance routes, and it is suggested that the ideas, enthusiasm and commitment of individuals are a more important factor in the development of facilities in general than is sometimes allowed for.

The early amenity movement had clear leaders, such as Wordsworth and Lord Eversley, and the importance of prominent individuals has continued in the movement through this century. In the context of cross-country paths, Tom Stephenson was clearly of dominant importance, although it has been shown that success depended on the
support of other individuals. T.A. Leonard was one of these. He had been instrumental in the creation of the CHA and the Holiday Fellowship and in widening interest in walking holidays. He and others, such as Trevelyan, had been responsible for the establishment of the youth hostelling movement in England and Wales. Leonard saved the idea of the Pennine Way from being the subject of one of a regular series of newspaper articles to becoming adopted by the amenity movement and a dominant factor in the movement.

Stephenson's positions of influence were important as his career developed through the 1930s and 1940s as Rambling Correspondent of the Daily Herald, editor of Out of Doors, Press Officer for the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, as member of the Hobhouse Special Committee, as Honorary Secretary of the Ramblers Association and prominent member of other groups within the amenity movement and then as a particularly influential member of the National Parks Commission. He was at the fore of important submissions to the Scott Committee, instigator of the MPs hike along the Pennine Way and was able to influence Silkin. His shepherding of the idea of long-distance routes from the 1930s through to the 1960s was important in developing and retaining the character of routes as they had been originally envisaged.

John Dower's importance in the amenity movement in the middle years of the century has been clearly seen and, although his involvement with long-distance paths was minor, he nevertheless suggested important developments in procedures for their creation and he enabled them to become part of a soundly-reasoned package of countryside reform, the basis of the 1949 Act.

His widow was important as one of the Commissioners who preserved the programme for developing long-distance routes through the
difficult years of the 1950s, as were Francis Ritchie and Brundson Yapp. Silkin's importance as Minister in the latter part of the 1940s has been acknowledged and he and Hugh Dalton kept alive interest in amenity matters in the House of Lords, as Arthur Blenkinsop and a few others did in the Commons.

Nonetheless, from the 1960s there were few individuals in positions of influence who became closely associated with long-distance routes, and this lack coincided with and perhaps explains the decline in the status of the programme for new routes. In the Commission, Cripps, Hookway, occasional Commissioners such as McGuire, and some members of staff, such as Miller, did show particular interest in the facility and because of this long-distance routes did retain some prominence. Hookway, for example, made a well-publicised journey along the Pennine Way and he justified a continuing involvement of the Commission in formal routes because of their special national significance and quality. His influence can now be seen to be bringing about a phase in which considerable attention is being paid to the management of routes, thus continuing the development of the concept.

In Scotland, the lack of development can be associated with a lack of influential individuals taking an interest in the idea. Grieve was an exception to a general rule of relative lack of interest in matters of amenity, and his influence in the achievement of legislation has been noted. With long-distance routes, a few Scottish Commissioners showed an interest, but it was the Commission's staff which ensured the development of a programme, particularly its Deputy Director Director and Lands Officer. It was they who developed criteria, instigated the use of Project Officers and kept going a programme, despite a lack of outside encouragement and despite actual opposition to the idea of formal long-distance routes.
As well as individuals, certain areas attracted considerable attention, influencing events. As the Lake District has been particularly important in the evolution of the national parks movement, so the Peak District attracted considerable importance in the campaign for freer access. The idea of the Pennine Way tied in well with this campaign, and was clearly designed to exert more pressure on the grouse-shooting landowners of the Southern Pennines.

As individual people and areas were important, so the personalisation of specific ideas for long-distance routes was very significant, and the Pennine Way in particular has been able to attract widespread and varied interest in the half century since the inception of the idea. Stephenson's embodiment of so many topical themes in the idea of a Pennine Way, such as its linking national parks, providing for the physical and spiritual well-being of the youth of the country and increasing recreational opportunities in a controlled fashion, but one which was imaginative and exciting, meant the Pennine Way was to take on a character of its own and focus attention on the idea of formal routes.

(d) Chance

Another factor in the history of long-distance routes which seemed significant was chance, often associated with the prominence of individuals. This was largely because of the unplanned and at times unsystematic development of the idea of long-distance routes and particularly the importance of the imagination, enthusiasm and drive of certain individuals which led to some unpredictable developments.

It was a coincidence that Tom Stephenson was to hold a series of positions in the voluntary movement, in the media and in the Ministry at the right time to ensure prominence for the idea of long-distance
routes. The writing of the original article on the Pennine Way - "Wanted - a Long Green Trail" - came about completely by chance, with the coincidence of Stephenson's having been asked to produce an article for publication immediately after receiving a request from America inquiring whether Great Britain had the equivalent of the Appalachian Trail. Leonards' intervention, critical to the development of the idea, also had an element of chance.

It was good fortune that Reith added "preservation of rural amenity" to the terms of reference for the Scott Committee, allowing submissions which brought official recognition to the idea of formal long-distance routes. An examination of the official files of the mid-1940s shows the importance of chance in the chain of events which led to the Dower Study and Hobhouse Reports, and it was chance that enabled Tom Stephenson to be a member of the Hobhouse Special Committee rather than merely an official serving it.

It was unpredictable that long-distance routes would be so prominent in the formulation of the National Parks and Access Bill and that they would emerge so strongly. It was chance that the measure completed its Parliamentary passage in time. It was good fortune that the National Parks Commission decided to plan a range of long-distance routes at once and particularly that it decided it did not need to wait for the publication of the surveys of public rights of way. On the other hand it was chance that Stephenson's term of office on the Commission was not extended, particularly as Duff, who was in agreement with Stephenson's removal, was himself replaced soon after Stephenson, and his successor, Lord Strang, seems certain to have wished to retain Stephenson on the Commission.

The decisions to select particular routes for study by the various Commissions were invariably arbitrary ones, usually based on the
Hobhouse Reports, in the case of England and Wales, in which routes listed originated from a list roughly drawn up by Stephenson for the Southern Federation of the Ramblers Association. In Scotland, the choice of the West Highland Way illustrates the importance of coincidences, for it was a coincidence that the Scottish Development Department decided to study footpaths in the area north of Glasgow at the same time that an able and knowledgeable civil servant was retiring and willing to do the job at the same time as an amenity group was working on an idea for a long-distance route (one of very few instances of detailed work having been done on a potential route in Scotland by an amenity group) at the same time as the Countryside Commission for Scotland was looking for a route to study under its powers under the 1967 Act.

(e) Strengths and weaknesses of the legislation

The development of the idea of formal long-distance routes has proved particularly interesting, from the original idea of the Pennine Way, to the adoption of a range of ideas and the refinement of these which took place in the forum of the various official committees in the 1940s. The formulation of the Bill and its changes during its Parliamentary passage have been examined in detail. What does become clear with hindsight is that in the euphoria of achieving legislation which would result in some of the demands of the amenity movement, it was the concepts and the benefits which attracted most of the attention and not the practicabilities.

With long-distance routes, there had been more thought given during the passage of the Bill to the mechanics of their creation, with procedures for variations subsequent to approval having been incorporated into the measure, for example, but still the potential
problems with the actual implementation of facilities to which Parliament had given wholehearted approval does not seem to have attracted much attention, from MPs or from users. In fact, while there were disappointments and weaknesses in much of the 1949 Act, from the point of view of the campaigners, the part dealing with long-distance routes received widespread acclaim and was called "the perfect machinery". With various safeguards it was difficult to see just what problems there could be.

The National Parks Commission was given the planning of long-distance routes as one of its few executive responsibilities, and it and the two future Countryside Commissions were to play a crucial central co-ordinating role in the development of routes, which flexibility within the legislation allowed. Indeed, during the passage of the Countryside (Scotland) Bill the Government was at pains to ensure as much flexibility as possible was retained in the planning and co-ordinating of the programme. There was, in fact, no clear guidance to the nature of long-distance routes, and this was to be discussed over the years, but it was clear that it was routes akin to those listed in the Hobhouse Reports which were envisaged. The original character, demanded by the amenity lobbyists, was retained and was adopted in Scotland.

The National Parks Commission began by carrying out its part of the procedure rapidly, using outside assistance in preparing its plans. The Pennine Way Association's maps were used for that route, the equivalent of a project officer for the Pembroke Coast Path, the County Council in the case of the sections of the Cornish Coast Path and reports of amenity groups for Offa's Dyke. Thus the Commission was able to decide to study the Pennine Way early in 1950 and be in a position to commence formal consultations in December 1950, reporting
to the Minister six months later, and the Commission's formal role in planning other early routes was also rapid. However, as problems implementing proposals became more and more serious, the Commission spent an increasing length of time in surveying and consulting prior to making its reports, a pattern developed by both Countryside Commissions. In addition, use of outside help was limited from the mid-1950s, with Commission staff including special temporary project officers carrying out detailed work. This was carried out in England and Wales in a rolling programme where two routes were examined simultaneously and this led to the shelving of a large number of proposals: the Ridgeway, for example, first considered seriously at the beginning of the 1950s was not reported until the 1970s.

The Minister's role in approving reports worked well. Gradually the period taken by the Minister increased, as independent consultations with other Government departments and official bodies were carried out. In the case of the Pennine Way it took just fifteen days to approve the Commission's proposal; the report for the North Cornwall Coastal Path took four months to consider; Offa's Dyke was approved in 1955 after a twelve month delay; it took seventeen months in 1959-60 to approve the Somerset and North Devon route and eighteen months, two years later, to approve plans for the Dorset Coast Path. In fact, subsequent proposals were approved in less than a year, with the exception of the Wolds Way which took sixteen months. In Scotland, routes have taken between seven and ten months to approve.

The various Ministers dealt quickly with Varying Reports and the only problem with these was that they took an increasing amount of the Commissions' time to prepare. This led to the suggestion that the statutory report on a route should allow more flexibility - possibly that a corridor rather than a line be submitted, making implementation
easier and relieving the Commissions of the necessity of preparing Varying Reports. However, because the Commissions planned routes in detail the quality of routes was retained and it is uncertain whether any speeding up of the process would have accrued from giving the local authorities more flexibility.

After approval, long-distance routes were to be implemented by the creation of rights of way (or, latterly in Scotland, linear access agreements) where none existed, and this was the responsibility of the local authorities. Numerous problems soon became apparent, and these were listed by Stuart-King and Yapp. It was the unforeseen problems which arose in this phase which were to delay the programme for long-distance routes so dramatically. The problems with implementation are exemplified by the Pennine Way. In 1950 Dalton said he hoped the route would be created that year. When he approved the proposals in 1951 he hoped it would be open by Easter 1952. In July 1952 Macmillan predicted it would be complete in Autumn 1953. It was 1964 before it was formally opened.

This part of the procedure was not unique to long-distance routes - methods of implementation were the standard ones for creating new rights of way. However, within the legislation there were safeguards, with the Minister empowered to expedite the implementation of routes in various ways. These were powers Ministers refused to use, partly because routes were often walkable although not complete rights of way and partly because of a reluctance to use powers to transfer responsibility from a district council to a county council or to impose footpath creation orders until all avenues of negotiations were complete.

The transfer of responsibility did in fact take place, voluntarily, in some instances. There is little evidence that this expedited the

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1 The basic anomaly of bodies without an interest in a long-distance route being charged with its implementation - when frequently they had no desire to see such a provision in their area - has occasionally been pointed out, by the Ramblers Association, for example. That the Commission implement routes was proposed in the 1940s, but was never (continued overleaf).
process, but in England and Wales there were attempts to change the legislation to make the creation of paths on a long-distance route the counties' responsibility.

In fact, it was technically possible under the 1949 Act (and, subsequently, the Transport Act of 1959) for a single order to create a long-distance route. This was suggested by Stephenson in 1951 but was not countenanced by Dalton and there was little prospect of subsequent Conservative Ministers interfering with functions of local authorities. Nevertheless, Cripps proposed a similar procedure in 1977 and it was included in proposals put to the Department of the Environment in 1979 for forthcoming legislation but without success. Yapp recommended in the mid-70s that a formal timetable be set for the creation of routes, but this was not developed either.

It was in part because of the extreme problems encountered in the implementation that little use was made of the provisions inserted into the legislation to allow for the provision of accommodation and other services. A decision was made at the beginning of the programme in England and Wales that the priority was the achieving of walkable rights of way, thereafter the other facilities could be developed. Almost constant economic constraints seem to have lessened the National Parks Commission's ability to plan such facilities. In fact, the facilities which were created along routes were usually funded under the provisions for national parks and not the sections relating to long-distance routes, and similarly the general or experimental powers of the Countryside Commission were used after 1968 for hostels and a ferry service, for example. There was a similar policy in Scotland, based on the feeling that demand ought to be assessed through experience, although some provision for accommodation, in the form of bothies, was included in its reports.

(continued from overleaf)
Almost no use was made of the provision for Traffic Restriction Orders, which had attracted much attention during the passage of the Bill in 1949. The exception was in the case of the Ridgeway, but no Order has been enforced.

The sections which made long-distance routes special, bestowing 100% grant aid on their creation and maintenance, were not as successful as had been predicted. Again, the importance of the grant was symbolic more than practical. A main problem was that the administrative costs accruing to local authorities were not grant-aided, and there were unsuccessful attempts from 1955 to get amending legislation to include this. The problem was eventually overcome by the funding of Project Officers by the Commissions to assist local authorities with implementation, but by this time the problem was not as great as the larger local authorities which took over implementation from the late 1960s were more capable. It was in the 1950s and the early 1960s when the problem was most acute and the National Parks Commission was of the opinion that Ministers could have done a lot more to help than they did.

The finances involved in creating long-distance routes were usually very small and only latterly, with the sharp rise in the cost of land and compensation payable and the escalating costs of managing routes, has the 100% grant aid become particularly significant. Nevertheless it is likely that had local authorities not been fully reimbursed for expenditure on routes there would have been even less inclination to act and thus even slower progress.

In fact, in England and Wales Section 98 of the 1949 Act, which dealt specifically with the funding of long-distance routes, was repealed in 1974, and thereafter it was a decision by the Countryside Commission to keep funding for formal routes at 100%. A separate
section of the 1967 Act still relates to the funding of Scottish routes.

Despite the praise given to the sections of the 1949 Act dealing with long-distance routes, many of the problems relating to the creation of routes were later blamed on the inadequacies of the Act. However, few positive suggestions have emerged as to how it could have been improved and specific suggestions for amending legislation covered minor points. The grant-aiding of administrative costs was one prevalent in the first dozen years of the National Parks Commission, and the other main demand was that wardens should be allowed to operate on long-distance routes. This was not adopted by either Countryside Act, and was eventually achieved in 1981 in the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Countryside (Scotland)(Amendment) Act, although in Scotland the problem of not being able to offer landowners such a service during the negotiation of routes had been overcome by the use of access agreements.

Apart from this and Cripps' extreme proposal there were no substantial recommendations for changing the procedure and it is significant that as late as 1967 the section of the 1949 Act dealing with long-distance routes was transferred almost word for word to the new Scottish legislation.

In Footpaths for Recreation the Commission for England and Wales called the Sections of the 1949 Act dealing with long-distance routes "cumbersome" - and this was part of its reason for turning attention from creating new formal long-distance routes to assisting with Recreational Paths. However, there is no reason why the sections of the Act dealing with routes should not have worked smoothly, efficiently and speedily. The main problems lay outside these sections, in the implementation of routes. The refusal of the
Ministers to use their powers of default is a prime factor which would have made all the difference. Administrative inconveniences, such as the need to get a certificate from the District Valuers for all expenditure over £5 and the need to channel expenditure on long-distance routes through local authorities' restricted capital budgets, could also have been smoothed by government.

That the process became cumbersome for the Commissions was largely because they took upon themselves a mass of extra-statutory tasks, before and after reporting, in an endeavour to speed up the implementation of routes. Had there been more co-operation from the local authorities and had Ministers been more willing to intervene, the experience of the legislation in action could have been very different.

(f) The translation of the idea to reality

It was the idea of formal named long-distance paths which attracted most attention for most of their history. The practicalities of translating ideas to reality attracted little attention until remedial work had to be undertaken by the National Parks Commission to deal with a massive backlog of problems.

There were a few attempts to devise schemes for implementing routes prior to the 1949 Act. Stephenson in his early articles envisaged landowners dedicating new rights of way where there were gaps, while Leonard called for volunteers to work through 1938 to secure wayleaves and waymark the Pennine Way. The Pennine Way Association's submission to the Scott Committee saw six ways to complete the route - by the designation of national parks, the use of access areas, the incorporation of common land, the acquisition of land by the Forestry Commission, the dedication by public-spirited landowners and special
legislation for long-distance paths. The Scott Report pointed to the necessity of a central co-ordinating agency to create long-distance routes, suggesting a Footpath Commission, while the Hobhouse Special Committee recommended that the National Parks Commission be used to plan and grant aid new routes.

Nevertheless, there was little detailed examination of the practicalities of creating routes. Dower urged the Hobhouse Special Committee to pay more attention to the mechanics of their creation, but some fundamental parts of the procedure (the need to vary approved routes, for example) were still being sorted out during the Bill's Parliamentary passage in 1949.

The Hobhouse Special Committee had recommended that the normal procedures it had identified for creating rights of way be used for long-distance routes. Earlier there had been the consideration that formal routes were a special provision and therefore needed special treatment, with a central agency empowered to implement as well as to plan them. Had the Hobhouse Special Committee subscribed to this, progress with implementing routes could have been very different — although it is likely the central agency, which would presumably have been the National Parks Commission, would not have had sufficient resources for the mass of individual negotiations needed and there may have been considerable opposition from local authorities to what they may have seen as interference with their functions. Had the Committee made an estimate of the likely number of individual negotiations likely on each route, a different approach may have been made, and perhaps it would have pressed for the creation of approved routes by the single order, as suggested later by Stephenson and by Cripps.

The fact remains the problems were unforeseen, partly because insufficient thought had been given to the mechanics of implementation
but also partly because the complexity of the problems and the variety of disruptions were impossible to predict. The general optimism and the totally unrealistic prediction of the Ministers in the early 1950s in the context of the Pennine Way indicate that problems were not expected.

When problems did become apparent, interest in countryside amenity was waning in most circles, and the reluctance of Ministers to use their powers of default, indicative of the decline in interest, was critical. The Commission alone took on board the problems, countering criticism of ideas, developing policies for sensitive waymarking, involving itself in extra-statutory negotiations and drastically limiting its programme for new routes to allow for this.

One result of the increased involvement of the Commissions was that they were able to ensure these national routes retained as high a quality as possible in the detail of their design. There were some exceptions to this, such as the routes selected for the final section of the Pennine Way near Bellingham and parts of the Wolds Way, but generally the Commissions steered a course between the demands of the various interests which enabled agreements to be made while retaining the quality and basic characteristics of routes.

The main problem was the length of time being taken to create routes. At the beginning of 1964, 14 years after the first formal moves were made to create the Pennine Way (and 29 years after the idea was published) there was still no complete formal long-distance route in Great Britain. Nevertheless, it was the timing which had been so dramatically underestimated, and the fact remained that routes were being created, and the routes were retaining the characteristics of their original proponents.
The Countryside Commission for England and Wales inherited a large number of routes which were nearing completion and in the early 1970s routes were opened at an average of over one a year. This was mainly because of the work which had been done by the old Commission and by the local authorities in the previous two decades, work which eventually reached fruition. There were improvements as well, as the new Commission's capacity for dealing with long-distance routes increased, as more effective and interested county councils took over implementation and as Project Officers — and in some cases full-time Wardens and Footpath Officers — took on the task of negotiating and clearing routes. The increase in public interest and the interest of the media and Parliament helped the situation.

Conversely, the landed interests were becoming better organised and the mountaineers who opposed formal facilities in the countryside, such as long-distance routes, were becoming more vocal, and this led to real problems with some of the new routes, such as the Cambrian Way and, in Scotland, the Grampian Way.

The Wolds Way illustrated the polarisation which was likely when one group was perceived to be extreme in its views, for both the Ramblers Association and the landowning groups considered their 'opponents' to be so. This was ironical as at last problems creating formal routes were being eased. Hitherto there had been very little opposition to the idea of routes and little to the details of routes. Some landowners had objected to intrusion but it was mainly the delays in working through the procedures of negotiations and implementation which had been the problem. In the 1970s the Countryside Commissions both found organised objections to the ideas of new routes, particularly in mountainous or in intensively-farmed areas. The Commission for England and Wales reacted by recognising a more
efficient way of providing for long-distance walkers, claiming they were already well-supplied with the high-class, formal routes. The Commission in Scotland is pausing in its programme to assess the demand.

While routes were eventually completed, more or less to the satisfaction of the user groups and their original proponents, the curtailing of the early programme for planning routes and the subsequent programmes in which the Commissions dealt with not more than two routes concurrently meant that ideas were shelved, particularly in England and Wales where many ideas for new routes were forthcoming. In fact, by the time the Countryside Commission for England and Wales brought its programme for new routes to a close, the routes in the north east and the Norfolk Paths were the only ones which had not been included in the Hobhouse Report, while, of the routes in that, some, including the Ridgeway and South Downs Way, were shorter than originally proposed and the path along the Thames had been rejected.

It is difficult to assess whether there would have been many more formal routes had problems been fewer and progress swifter. There are parallels with the designation of national parks, where those listed in the Hobhouse Report proved to represent almost all the suitable sites. An analogy with AONBs may be more appropriate, where more areas than those listed as Conservation Areas in the Hobhouse Report have been designated, but where clearly there is a limit to appropriate areas, which is rapidly being approached. The reviewer of books on long-distance paths in Rucksack noted that generally the new informal routes were of a lesser quality than the formal routes. The retention of quality of the formal routes has been achieved because of the limitation of the Commissions' programmes, and had progress been
swifter it may have been that the programme in England and Wales may not have lasted beyond the life of the National Parks Commission. On the other hand, the pressures may have been there to continue the programme and many routes being developed as Recreational Paths may have become formal long-distance routes, with their proponents keen to acquire the 100% grant. The results of a Commission bowing to pressure from a local authority can be seen in the case of the Speyside Way, where the funding of the acquisition of the disused railway line was more important than the quality of the long-distance route, and had this compromise been general the quality and standing of the stock of formal routes may have suffered.

As national parks and AONBs are together on a spectrum of landscape, so long-distance routes and Recreational Paths are close together, with some of each type arguably belonging in the other. However, perhaps because of the history of their development rather than policy decisions, the high quality of long-distance routes has been retained as envisaged in the 1940s. The only difference, it could be said, between the aspirations of those promoting long-distance routes and what actually transpired was twenty years.

(g) The selection of routes and criteria

Until the mid-1970s there was no attempt to justify the selection of routes for study or to develop criteria for deciding specific lines for these. This was because of the prominence of Tom Stephenson in developing ideas for routes. As John Dower compiled his list of potential national parks, which dominated thinking throughout the programme for their designation, so Stephenson compiled lists of routes which were the basis for those published in the Hobhouse Reports, and which dominated the programmes of the subsequent Commissions. However, where John Dower had produced a report
explaining his choices and discussing the nature of national parks, Stephenson had done no such documentation.

In planning a long-distance route there are two fundamental steps - the choice of a corridor of interest and the selection of a specific line. Where a route is based on the crest of a ridge, or more so where it is based on a coastline, the corridor of interest - the geographical expression of the theme for a route - is narrow, and there may be little scope for choice of a specific line for the path. This is not the case with other routes. The Pennine Way, for example, had an infinite variety of specific lines within the broad theme of a journey along the Pennine Chain. However, by the time lists were compiled, Stephenson had already selected specific lines for his routes which were to provide the basis for the Commissions to proceed. With other routes not included in the Hobhouse Reports, another individual or an amenity group had already been through these two stages in planning a route, deciding a corridor and then a line within that. This was the case with the Cleveland Way and the West Highland Way, for example, and the adoption by the Commissions of ideas which had already been substantially developed meant that there was no need to consider systematic procedures or even criteria for selecting routes.

It is, nonetheless, interesting to examine what evidence there is of the thinking behind the choice of lines for routes. In the case of the Pennine Way, Stephenson stressed that variety, physical satisfaction, historical, cultural and scenic interest, a fair degree of directness and the avoidance of roads were the characteristics of the route. In response to the correspondence in the Times, Stephenson maintained that routes must have minimal impact on the countryside but that some waymarking was necessary and these have been important
principles in developing routes.

Parliament put few constraints on the planning of routes, requiring only that they should allow "extended journeys" substantially away from vehicular roads. It implicitly accepted routes as listed in the Hobhouse Reports, which had been based directly on Stephenson's list.

There was development of the idea by the National Parks Commission, although it found it had little capacity to react to ideas other than those from the Hobhouse Report. As happened in Scotland, early decisions of the Commission rejected the idea of making short lengths of disused railways long-distance routes, because such were of insufficient length and scenic quality - although neither Commission was specific as to just what it meant. The idea of the Thames Towpath was rejected because it was felt there was insufficient demand for it as a long-distance route, it was not sufficiently scenic and was too expensive a proposal.

In developing their programmes for long-distance routes, all the Commissions seem to have considered the geographical spread of routes. This explains the willingness at an early stage to adopt a route in the North York Moors which was not one listed by Hobhouse and towards the end of the programme in England and Wales to select the Norfolk Path.

A fundamental characteristic of routes is their continuity. Unlike national parks, where sections inside a park can be left undesignated, by the nature of its use a long-distance route has to have complete integrity to allow journeys to be taken from end to end on rights of way. Thus in several instances short sections which proved particularly difficult to negotiate were to hold up the completion of routes for years.

When Pauline Dower examined procedures for creating rights of way
in an attempt to expedite the process, she went further than anyone before or for a long time afterwards in committing to paper the characteristics of long-distance routes. She identified another fundamental theme - that each route would follow a specific geographical or historical feature. This was important in the context of a network of interconnecting long-distance routes, an idea which has surfaced periodically. Dower identified that a major attraction of a route is its integrity and that the connecting of routes was not necessary.

As Stephenson had planned routes from the point of view of the walker, so this process was implicit in most of the work of the Commissions, particularly in England and Wales. It was accepted that modifications would be made in the light of other factors. This process was specified in the report on the Wolds Way. The ideal line usually chosen contained a large percentage of existing rights of way, but the ideal line between existing rights of way had sometimes to be sacrificed because of problems with water catchment, difficulties bridging rivers, military installations and problems crossing roads. Safety factors also had an impact (in at least one case an existing right of way was abandoned because it was felt unsafe) although generally bad-weather alternative loops were planned to satisfy this consideration.

The Countryside Commission for Scotland examined the experience in the south with long-distance routes and isolated a number of criteria implicit in the development of routes. Routes were of national significance and status, they passed through scenery of high quality, they had a significant portion already on right of way, they would sustain several days walking, would have reasonably convenient accommodation, would have continuity, be accessible to centres of
population and both ends would be accessible to public transport. Routes in Scotland were based on these criteria, which were published.

In England and Wales it was the mid-1970s before criteria used in the planning of routes were formally discussed. The first instance was in the Yapp Report, and he felt the criteria should be that national routes should be in excess of 100 miles (160 km), there should be an expressed or expected demand for the facility, they should provide the walker with variety, which was more important than 'quality', they should avoid fragile surfaces and areas, have minimal interference with agriculture, should have a fair proportion of existing rights of way and be accessible to centres of population.

The other development of criteria was by Ray Woolmore in his study of the Cambrian Way, and his list was similar, although it added - attractiveness for walking, national interest, high quality landscape, special care when encountering historical features, minimising erosion, the paramount consideration of safety and avoidance of conflict with other interests. Some of these reflect the specific project Woolmore was examining.

In fact, little use was made in the south of criteria being developed because the programme to develop new routes was being wound down. Hookway did stress the national importance and the "quality of excellence" of formal long-distance routes in justifying the Commission's continuing substantial involvement in their management. He also proposed a new procedure for planning routes but this was something of an academic exercise because only the Norfolk Path would be taken to reporting stage subsequent to this, and the nature of this route was dictated, by the basic idea - that it follow the ancient Peddars' Way and then the Norfolk Coast within the AONB.

Nonetheless, creators of some of the Recreational Paths have
published their reasons for choosing a specific route: the criteria used. These have been similar to those being identified in the formal forum but because of the nature of Recreational Paths have tended to concentrate on the existence of rights of way and have paid less regard to potential conflicts.

In Scotland the programme for developing routes has tended to be more systematic, partly because the Commission had to take the initiative identifying potential routes and partly because it chose to appraise the experience in the south when it embarked on its programme.

The first route in Scotland did in fact follow a similar pattern to that in the south because the idea of the West Highland Way was given to the Commission with a specific line planned in fair detail by a user-group. However, its policy to consult all landowners and occupiers of land along a potential route developed at this time, contrary to the pattern in the south. Although the landed interests tended to be extremely reasonable with this approach, it did mean rather less attention was given to the planning of a route from the walker's point of view.

The Commission resisted pressure to publish a strategy for a programme for developing long-distance routes, maintaining it would be too generalised to be of use. However, far more thought should have been put into the selection of the second route for study, because the Grampian Way did not hold sufficient attraction to potential users while it offended a large number of other groups and provided an ideal forum for denigrating officialdom. On the other hand, the examination of the Scottish part of the Pennine Way was very balanced, with full involvement of user groups, and the line for the final section was selected after systematic comparison of the options available. The
The methodology for this is examined in detail in Chapter 11. As part of the strategic exercise, various corridors of interest were recognised, based on themes, opportunities and the desires of the local authorities. A number of criteria were developed, weighted heavily in favour of the perception of the walker, and using matrix analysis, the 'best' option was selected.

Similar criteria were then developed to select specific lines within the corridor and through a process of refinement and consultations a final line was chosen to be reported to the Secretary of State.

This was in fact generally the process which had been used to select lines for routes throughout their history, although this was the most formal process and started with an area rather than an idea. It was, however, usually an individual enthusiast or a user group which carried out the process of selecting a specific line for a route, and therefore in practice the Commissions had been only involved in the final stages of refinement of an idea.
It is remarkable that the pattern of long-distance routes achieved in Great Britain by the 1980s so closely resembles the hopes of the original proponents of the idea, despite so many problems and so many changes over the decades, particularly as there was so little in the way of assessing just what a long-distance route was. Ironically, the reason could be said to be because implementation proved so slow, for not only did this lead to more direct influence of the Commissions, all of which recognised their central responsibility for the quality of routes, but it also meant that in England and Wales routes proposed and originally developed by Tom Stephenson and members of user groups and listed in the Hobhouse Reports dominated the programmes and other routes in England and Wales and Scotland came to be based very closely on these original proposals.

(h) Finale

The history of long-distance routes illustrates the important distinction between an idea and its implementation. It highlights the qualities which can give an idea far greater importance than its physical or economic impact or cost is likely to justify. The outstanding importance of individuals in influential places who are prepared to promote the idea (and, associated with this, the importance of chance), the symbolic importance of the idea of a facility which has elements attractive to a variety of interests, and the personalisation of an idea - giving it a name and a clear identity - which can attract widespread interest from the media, government and landed interests as well as user groups; these are examples of such qualities.

Interest in the idea of long-distance routes built up to a climax.
of interest by the second half of the 1940s. The amenity groups had used the idea as a tangible example of the sort of facility they sought in the countryside. Associated with the passage of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Bill, the Government, too, highlighted the idea, giving it far more prominence in the Bill and in debates than its likely importance warranted. It was the strengths and attractiveness of the idea — "bold, simple, graphic" as the Pennine Way was described — its considerable general appeal and lack of opposition, which made it so important.

Contrasting with this, the implementation of routes was a different matter, with considerable apathy, and at times with only the National Parks and later Countryside Commissions holding the programmes together. With the problems which became apparent, there was no glamour in the implementation and consequently little interest.

On the other hand, the completion of routes once again provided a subject of interest to the media, government and general public and long-distance routes again have been attracting widespread attention. The Pennine Way, for example, so prominent from the late 1930s to the early 1950s, rapidly became a household name from the mid-1960s, and long-distance routes became arguably the best-known feature associated with the Commissions.

The difference between the images which had to be put forward at different times provided proponents with a dilemma. On the one hand, when arguing for the creation of long-distance routes, user groups, the government and the Commissions had to argue that the routes would be of major importance, implying that they would attract considerable use. On the other hand, to retain the attractiveness of long-distance walking and the areas through which the routes passed, particularly in the uplands, numbers likely to be using the paths had to be minimised
- the physical and social impact of the routes had to be played down. The balance was not always retained. Opponents of long-distance routes in the 1970s for example drew alarming pictures of hoards of hikers eroding long-distance routes and destroying the solitude and peace of the countryside.

In fact, numbers of long-distance walkers have been small on all routes at most times, and the importance of long-distance walkers has been negligible compared with the impact of day-walkers on some parts of some routes. The Commissions recognised that walking long-distance routes was a small minority interest, justifying their continuing involvement in routes in the quality of the facility they were creating and not in volume of use.

Probably about 120,000 people have walked the full length or a substantial part of one or more formal long-distance routes in the past twenty years. Numbers have increased as hiking has become more popular a pastime once again, as the stock of long-distance routes has increased and as more publicity for and more use of routes have had a cumulative effect. Whilst remedial work has had to be carried out on some parts of some routes, the point has been made that a success of the programmes to develop routes has been that their character has been retained as they were originally envisaged; this is reflected in the fact that descriptions of experiences to be gained by journeying along long-distance routes are today very similar to those written about the Pennine Way in the 1930s and about the variety of proposed routes in the middle of the century. The routes provide a sort of package holiday - walkers can expect a clear right of way through high-quality landscape away from roads, with facilities reasonably close by and a variety of information on the route.

This study has suggested the major importance of long-distance
routes has been in the development of the idea. However, the facility is an extremely important one to its users. It can be considered to maximise the experience gained in the different stages which can be recognised to be part of a holiday - the preparation or expectation, the journeys to and from the area in which the holiday is taken, the actual holiday and the reflection following the holiday. The proliferation of literature on hiking in general and on long-distance routes in particular suggests that much preliminary reading is done by intending long-distance walkers, many of whom carry out a programme of training for many months and spend considerable time tracing the route on maps, from guide books, and planning and booking their accommodation, transport and equipment. This involvement of the individual is a particular attraction of this type of holiday. The experience with this relating to a formal long-distance route has led to many walkers subsequently planning their own long-distance walks, some of which they have publicised and become Recreational Paths. Following the walk along a formal route many walkers have written articles, or books, and many talks are given about journeys along long-distance routes. The large volume of literature also reflects the fact that people particularly enjoy reliving their experience.

For the walk along a long-distance route provides a unique and often profound experience, in seeing attractive areas of the British countryside as a pedestrian, in self-sufficiency, in forming relationships with companions and inhabitants met on route, and in achieving a goal in completing a long, challenging and a special journey.
APPENDIX
THE NATIONAL PARKS AND ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1949
CHAPTER 97, SECTIONS 51-55 AND 98
Dealing with long-distance routes in England and Wales

S.51 General provisions as to long-distance routes

(1) Where it appears to the Commission, as respects any part of England or Wales, that the public should be able to make extensive journeys on foot or on horseback along a particular route being a route for which the whole or the greater part of its length does not pass along roads mainly used by vehicles, the Commission may prepare and submit to the Minister a report under this section.

(2) A report under this section shall contain a map showing the route, defining those parts thereof over which there exists a public right of way, and indicating in each case the nature of that right; and the report shall set out such proposals as the Commission may think fit—
   (a) for the maintenance or improvement of any public path or road used as a public path along which the route passes;
   (b) for the provision and maintenance of such new public paths as may be required for enabling the public to journey along the route;
   (c) for the provision and operation of ferries where they are needed for completing the route; and
   (d) for the provision of accommodation, meals and refreshments along the route.

(3) A report under this section may also include such recommendations as the Commission may think fit for the restriction of traffic on existing highways along which the route passes.

(4) Before preparing a report under this section the Commission shall consult every joint planning board, county council, county borough council and county district council through whose area the route passes; and it shall be the duty of every such board or council to furnish the Commission such information as the Commission may reasonably require for the purposes of the report.

(5) A report under this section shall contain an estimate, in such form as the Minister may require, of the capital outlay likely to be incurred in carrying out any such proposals contained therein as are mentioned in subsection (2) of this section of the annual cost of maintaining any existing public paths or roads used as public paths along which the route passes and any new public paths provided for by the proposals, and of the annual expenditure likely to be incurred by local authorities in connection with the provision and operation of ferries, and the provision of accommodation, meals and refreshments, so far as those matters are provided for by the proposals.

S.52 Approval of proposals relating to a long-distance route

(1) On the submission to the Minister of a report under the last foregoing section, the Minister shall consider any proposals contained
in the report under subsection (2) of that section and may either approve the proposal, with or without modifications, or reject the proposals;

Provided that where the Minister does not propose to approve the proposals as set out in the report he shall, before coming to a determination as to what action to take under this subsection, consult with the Commission and such other authorities and persons as he may think fit.

(2) As soon as may be after the Minister determines under the last foregoing subsection either to approve any proposals, with or without modifications, or to reject them, he shall notify his determination to the Commission and to every joint planning board, county council, county borough council and county district council whose area is traversed by the route to which the report relates.

S. 53 Ferries for purposes of long-distance routes.

(1) Where approved proposals relating to a long-distance route include proposals for the provision and operation of a ferry, the authority who are the highway authority for either or both of the highways to be connected by the ferry -

(a) shall have power to provide and operate the ferry and to carry out such work and do all such things as appear to them expedient for the purpose of operating the ferry.

(b) may with the approval of the Minister agree with any person or body of persons for the provision and operation of the ferry by him or them and for the making by the highway authority of such contributions as may be specified in the agreement.

Provided that nothing in this subsection shall -

(i) be construed as conferring on such an authority any exclusive right to operate a ferry;

(ii) authorise the doing of anything which apart from this subsection would be actionable by any person by virtue of his having an exclusive right to operate a ferry, unless he consents to the doing thereof.

(iii) authorise the doing of anything on land, or as respects water over land, in which any other person has an interest, if apart from this subsection the doing thereof would be actionable at his suit by virtue of that interest and he does not consent to the doing thereof;

and before carrying out any work in the exercise of powers conferred by this subsection, being work on the bank or bed of any waterway, the highway authority shall consult with such authorities having functions relating to the waterway as the Minister may either generally or in any particular case direct.

(2) A highway authority may acquire land compulsorily for the purpose of any of their functions under paragraph (a) of the last foregoing subsection.
(3) The Minister, on the application of any such authority as is hereafter specified, may direct, either generally or as respects the provision and operation of a particular ferry, that all or any of the powers conferred on a highway authority by subsection (1) of this section shall be exercisable by the applicant authority and not by the highway authority.

(4) An application under the last foregoing subsection may be made, in relation to any highway authority, by any county or county district council (not being the highway authority) whose area includes or is included in the area of the highway authority.

S.54 Accommodation, meals and refreshments along long-distance routes

(1) Where approved proposals relating to a long-distance route include proposals for the provision, along any part of the route, of accommodation, meals and refreshments, any local planning authority through whose area, or in the neighbourhood of whose area, that part of the route passes shall have power to make such arrangements under this section as are requisite for giving effect to the last-mentioned proposals.

(2) The arrangements which may be made by an authority under this section are arrangements for securing, at places in their area convenient for persons using the part of the route in question, the provision, whether by the authority or other persons, of accommodation, meals and refreshments (including intoxicating liquor):

Provided that an authority shall not under this section provide accommodation, meals or refreshments except in so far as it appears to them that the facilities therefor are inadequate or unsatisfactory, either generally or as respects any description of accommodation, meals or refreshments, as the case may be.

(3) For the purposes of arrangements under this section a local planning authority may erect such buildings and carry out such work as may appear to them to be necessary or expedient.

(4) The foregoing provisions of this section shall not authorise an authority, on land in which any other person has an interest, without his consent to do anything which apart from this section would be actionable at his suit by virtue of that interest.

(5) A local planning authority may acquire land compulsorily for the purpose of any of their functions under this section.

S.55 Variation of approved proposals

(1) Where proposals relating to a long-distance route have been approved by the Minister under section fifty-two of this Act, the Commission may from time to time prepare and submit to the Minister a report proposing any such variation of the approved proposals as the Commission may think fit.

(2) Where, as respects any proposals approved as aforesaid, it appears
to the Minister, after consultation with the Commission, expedient that the proposals should be varied in any respect and the Commission have not submitted to the Minister a report proposing that variation, the Minister may direct that the proposals shall be so varied.

(3) Subsection (4) of section fifty-one of this Act, and subsections (1) and (2) of section fifty-two thereof, shall with the necessary modifications apply to a report or direction under this section; and subsection (5) of the said section fifty-one shall with the necessary modifications apply to any such report.

(4) Where the Minister approves, with or without modifications, any proposals contained in a report under subsection (1) of this section, or gives a direction under subsection (2) of this section, the proposals for the variation of which the report was made or direction given shall thereafter have effect subject to the provisions of the report or direction; and references in this Act to approved proposals relating to a long-distance route shall be construed accordingly.

S. 98 Power of Minister to defray expenditure on long-distance routes

(1) Subject to such conditions as the Treasury may determine, the Minister may defray expenditure incurred by a local authority in the payment of compensation on the construction, maintenance of improvement of a way, being expenditure incurred for the purposes of approved proposals relating to a long-distance route.

(2) Subject as aforesaid, the Minister may defray or contribute towards expenditure of a local authority incurred under section fifty-three of this Act or incurred in the exercise of their powers of acquiring land, erecting buildings or carrying out work for the purposes of section fifty-four of this Act.

Sections 51 - 55 are still current.

FOR SCOTLAND

THE COUNTRYSIDE (SCOTLAND) ACT 1967 (Chapter 86)

has the following sections pertaining to long-distance routes similar to those in the 1949 Act:

S.39 (equals S.51 of the 1949 Act)
S.40 ( " S.52 " )
S.41 ( " S.53 " )
S.42 ( " S.55 " )
S.68 ( " S.98 " )
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