

# ***The Mass Trespass on Kinder Scout***

## ***50th Anniversary Celebration***

### ***Hayfield***

***24 – 25 April 1982***

### ***Julian Batsleer***

This article is an account of the first national celebration of the Mass Trespass in Hayfield, together with comments and reflections on a few more general aspects of the history of the Trespass and its wider significance. It is presented in five sections and seven appendices:

#### ***Sections***

1. What happened after 1932? p.2
2. Re-opening the debates of the 1930s p.4
3. The social and political context of the 50th anniversary celebration p.6
4. Organising and promoting the anniversary weekend p.7
5. The events of the anniversary weekend p.10

#### ***Appendices***

- A. The 'disappearance' of the Mass Trespass after 1932 p.15
- B. Tom Stephenson's case against there being a Mass Trespass on Kinder Scout p.16
- C. Extracts from a letter: Stephen Morton to Benny Rothman, March 1982 p.19
- D. Extracts from the 50th Anniversary Weekend Programme booklet p.20
- E. Organisations and abbreviations p.23
- F. Some books, articles and websites p.24
- G. My life-long affair with Kinder Scout p.28

## 1. What happened after 1932?

### a. *British Workers Sports Federation*

The BWSF as a group did not put in another appearance on the moors of the High Peak after 1932. For Benny Rothman, a working-class, Jewish member of the Communist Party, struggling against landlords and gamekeepers was not at the top of the political agenda. There were fascists to be fought in Spain, blackshirts to be confronted on the streets of Cheetham Hill and workers to be unionised and represented in Manchester and Salford. Benny and his wife Lily remained keen moorland walkers and took parties out to the hills until well into their retirement. But for over forty years, until he retired in the 1970s, Benny's life-work was as a prominent and influential trade-unionist (AEU) and community activist in Manchester and Salford; indeed, in that role he made a huge difference to the lives and opportunities of countless working-class people in those two northern cities. He also remained a loyal and active member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, locally and nationally.

Apart from a television documentary in the early 1970s, the Mass Trespass was largely airbrushed from the official memories of the outdoor movement and the celebration of post-war access achievements<sup>1</sup>. It survived as a folk memory, not least because of the popularity of Ewan McColl's *Manchester Rambler*. A trespasser in 1932 and a member of the Young Communist League at the same time as Benny Rothman, McColl was a leading folk singer and his political protest songs resonated as part of popular culture during the 1960s and 1970s.

### b. *Access and the National Parks*

Little significant headway was made until after World War Two. The 1945 Labour Government nationalised coal, gas, electricity, mining, steel and railways, all of which had been managed through central government during WW2. Agriculture had also been centrally managed, but neither agriculture nor land were nationalised, notwithstanding the commitments of the 1945 Labour Party Manifesto. The upshot was that, unlike the National Parks in many other countries, the UK's National Parks, set up in 1949, made no change to the formal ownership and occupancy of the land. The underlying rural economy was unchanged, though the Park planning authorities were charged with a set of requirements and obligations in relation to enabling and extending recreational access and preserving the natural beauty of their park.

In principle this was a sophisticated mechanism for managing a range of differing interests, both for residents and commercial and social enterprises, including farming, in the park, and for those visiting for enjoyment and outdoor activities. The National Park system was subsequently elaborated through the creation of special arrangements for AONBs, SSSIs and a network of Country Parks. In practice, although the National Parks resulted in huge benefits in terms of recreational access, a range of problems and weaknesses in the overall National Parks system were beginning to emerge by the late-1970s.

### c. *Mass Leisure and Tourism*

A major social and economic shift of the post-War era was the development of mass consumption generally, and the growth of a much expanded leisure and tourism sector in particular. The rise of car ownership and the axing of rural railways transformed the ways in which most people accessed leisure activities in the countryside. With the idealisation of the post-war nuclear family, leisure-time became more individualised. The need for clubs to arrange transport to the countryside diminished – and eventually the YHA had to accept people arriving at hostels in cars and using their cars during their stay! There was a gradual commercialisation of walking and

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A

climbing, with specialist outdoor shops selling quality boots, cagoules, gaiters, fleece jackets, 'walking trousers', rucksacks and, for the rock climbers, huge arrays of technically advanced gear. The economies of the National Parks had to adjust themselves to mass access and tourism. Indeed, the establishment of the iconic Pennine Way in 1965, as a result of Tom Stephenson's years of campaigning and organising through the Ramblers' Association [RA], had made long-distance walking popular<sup>2</sup> but quite soon led to erosion problems. By the late-1970s, some sections of the Pennine Way were already moving towards their current status as a paved / duck-boarded walkway along the northern watershed.<sup>3</sup>

#### d. *Scientific Agriculture*

The other major trend with a far-reaching impact on the rural economy and wider ecology was the growth of a more intensely scientific and commercially driven agriculture. This was the hey-day of changing patterns of land management as hedgerows were stripped out in favour of larger fields capable of being used more efficiently by newer (and bigger) farm machinery and pesticides. The impact was felt most immediately in lowland rural areas – where the access campaigners were faced with endless footpath closures and exclusions from the countryside. The wilder uplands were not, however, immune to the pressures for major changes in land use<sup>4</sup>. The problems of over-grazing and de-forestation in upland areas were beginning to put in an appearance. Similarly, concerns for biodiversity and ecological damage were emerging gradually into the wider public discourse. The Ecology Party was founded in 1975; at the time 'green issues' were perceived as somewhat incidental in mainstream political debates about the rural social economy of the late-1970s and early-1980s.

#### e. *"The Theft of the Countryside"*

In 1978 Doreen Massey published the first study for many a long year of the structure of landownership from the perspective of social and economic geography. She estimated that roughly 20% of all land, by acreage not value, was in public ownership<sup>5</sup>, but drew attention to a common set of problems across all types of ownership. In his continuation of Massey's work, Brett Christophers dates the start of the process of land privatisation over the last fifty years to a memo written by Michael Heseltine in 1979<sup>6</sup>. More prominently, in 1980, Marion Shoard published *The Theft of the Countryside*<sup>7</sup>, drawing on her background in town and country planning and work with the CPRE and the Agricultural Research Council. Bringing together work on both National Parks and lowland rural areas, this was the first overview of the far-reaching problems that both mass leisure time and scientific agriculture were having on the entire rural landscape and the wider ecology. Marion Shoard was one of the speakers at the public debate on access issues which took place in New Mills Town Hall as part of the 1982 50th Anniversary Celebrations.

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<sup>2</sup> Long Distance Walkers Association was set up in 1974.

<sup>3</sup> Worth noting that the PW was created as a set of negotiated rights of way, not as an open access agreement running along the entirety of the uncultivated Pennine uplands.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Rebanks (2020) pp 91 - 188, which recounts the experiences of his father, who farmed – as an owner-occupier – on the eastern edge of the Lake District during the post-war growth of scientific farming.

<sup>5</sup> Massey and Catalano (1978) p.59

<sup>6</sup> Christophers (2014) p.118

<sup>7</sup> Shoard (1980)

## 2. Re-opening the debates of the 1930s

In 1974 Dave Cook published an article in *Mountain* magazine entitled *The Battle for Kinder Scout*. He was a member of the Climbing Club and one of the UK's leading rock climbers of the modern era of UK rock-climbing ushered in by working-class climbers like Joe Brown and Don Whillans of Manchester in the 1950s. Cook was also a publicly prominent member, and sometime National Organiser, of the Communist Party of Great Britain during its final two decades and he re-published the article in 1977 in the radical journal *Marxism Today*. After more than forty years of public silence on the role of the Mass Trespass in the outdoor and access movement, Cook's article located the Trespass in relation to on-going access problems in the 1970s and concluded:

*Mr. Stephen Morton, secretary of the Sheffield Ramblers' Federation, was quoted as saying: "For many years we have been endeavouring to obtain access to mountains and moorlands by legitimate means. This move, on the part of the Lancashire people, would throw the whole thing back at least twenty years." The opposite was the case. The mass trespass gained the cause of free access to mountains more sympathetic publicity in one day than the Ramblers' Federation had won for it in the previous thirty years.*

*Demonstrations of solidarity with those jailed, and the organization of other trespasses, such as the 'Abbey Brook' march in September of the same year, carried forward the tempo of the movement. Many more battles were necessary before the Access to Mountains Bill was finally put on the Statute Book by Attlee's Labour Government, but it was "The Battle for Kinder Scout" that lifted the movement from the level of private members' lobbying to that of mass politics. Its memory still echoes whenever the right to ramble or climb is threatened<sup>8</sup>.*

Three years later, Howard Hill of Sheffield published one of the first overview histories of the access movement, *Freedom to Roam: The Struggle for Access to Britain's Moors and Mountains*<sup>9</sup>. Hill moved the Mass Trespass from its previous place as an occasional footnote or sideshow and placed it more centrally in the history of access campaigns and movements.

A few months earlier, in the autumn 1979 edition of *Rucksack*, Tom Stephenson, a pivotal figure in the Ramblers' Association since the early-1930s, published his own account of the Kinder Mass Trespass. An expanded version of this article was subsequently published (posthumously) in the edited volume of Stephenson's writings: *Forbidden Britain: The Struggle for Access to Mountain and Moorland*<sup>10</sup>. Notwithstanding the similarity in the sub-titles of Hill's and Stephenson's books, the position on the Mass Trespass held steadfastly by Tom Stephenson ever since 1932, was markedly different from that of Cook or Hill. As he put it succinctly and somewhat startlingly:

*The truth is that there never was a mass trespass*<sup>11</sup>

Interestingly, Stephenson also dismissed as not true the observations (as quoted by Cook) of his fellow life-long RA stalwart from Sheffield, Stephen Morton. Not surprisingly, Stephen Morton and Benny Rothman both felt impelled to reply to Stephenson's article. The winter 1979 edition of *Rucksack* contained a letter from Morton explaining his original comments, retracting them slightly but still asserting that he was uncomfortable with the tactics and potential for violence of mass trespassing. Then, in the summer 1980 edition of *Rucksack*, the correspondence continued with a

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<sup>8</sup> Cook (1974 and 1977)

<sup>9</sup> Hill (1980) As it happens, Howard Hill was a sometime member of the Communist Party in Sheffield and had been active in the Trade Union and Labour Movement in Sheffield since the 1940s. See Carter (2017); <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/156ee54d-9283-38b1-9984-c16645769b42>; <https://grahamstevenson.me.uk/2009/02/13/howard-hill/>.

<sup>10</sup> Stephenson (1989) pp.153 – 164.

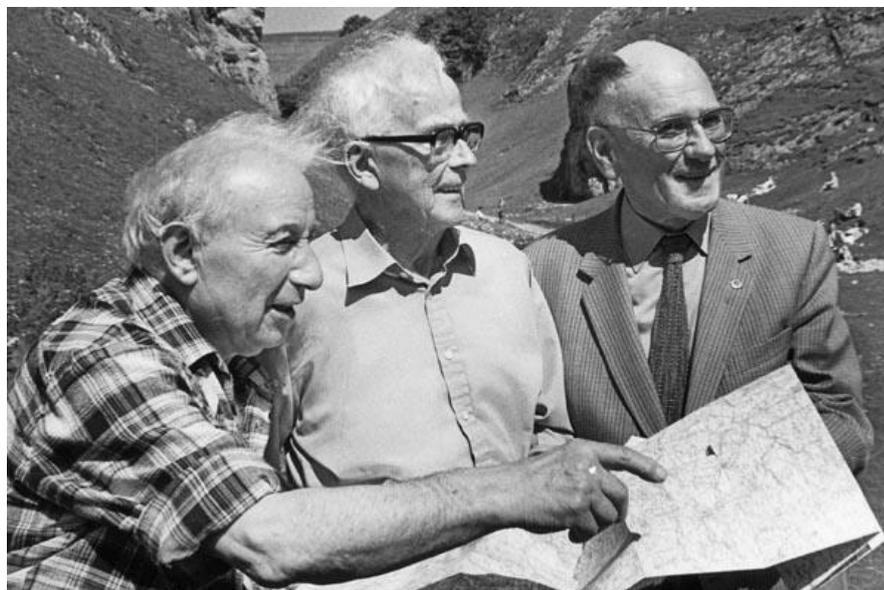
<sup>11</sup> Stephenson (1989) p.153

reply from Stephenson to Morton and a long letter from Benny Rothman – "as a very interested party" – setting out his position on the Mass Trespass<sup>12</sup>.

There are several points about this flurry of public writings and exchanges about the Mass Trespass, almost 50 years on from the event.

1. Tom Stephenson was never reconciled to the notion that the Mass Trespass was a significant event in the access movement. His reasons for the position he held are worth unpacking, however, as they did continue to resonate in subsequent debates and analyses of the tactics and strategies for taking the access movement forwards<sup>13</sup>.
2. Cook was a pioneer in advancing the cause of rock-climbing. He won a campaign to end the Climbers Club's exclusion of women climbers. He also challenged the hegemony of rambling in the outdoor movement and, through the British Mountaineering Council, worked to bring climbing more centrally into that arena and extend the reach of climbing to all classes.
3. The *Rucksack* exchanges ended the long-standing tendency within the RA of seeing the Mass Trespass as an entirely negative / destructive event. The RA had been quintessentially a 'rights of way' campaign. The Mass Trespass brought the discourse of open access and the freedom / right to roam into greater play<sup>14</sup>, as well as surfacing the contested issues of land ownership – private and public.

And, by way of a postscript, it is interesting that Stephenson, Morton and Rothman were all together in 1986 (very shortly before Stephenson and Morton died) at a National Park Rally in Cave Dale<sup>15</sup>. It represents, perhaps, a somewhat belated recognition that Benny Rothman of the Communist Party might be eligible for a change of status from "Prodigal Son / Extremist Maverick" to "Grand Old Man of Access"<sup>16</sup>.



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<sup>12</sup> Photocopies of these articles at WCML PP/ROTHMAN/2/5

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix B for a summary of Stephenson's position.

<sup>14</sup> Worth noting, perhaps, that Tom Stephenson's greatest legacy, The Pennine Way, was a fully negotiated set of rights of way; it was not the inauguration of an era of freedom to roam anywhere on the high Pennine watershed.

<sup>15</sup> Scanned from Rothman (2012) p.60 Reproduced with permission from Willow Publishing.

<sup>16</sup> I can't quite tell what bit of the map they are looking at, but I have often wondered whether Benny was saying something along the lines: " Oh, I see what you mean, Tom. Ashop Head is not on the Kinder Scout plateau."

### **3 The social and political context of the 50th Anniversary Celebration**

The 1932 Mass Trespass took place within the political, economic and cultural turbulence of the Great Depression, the early-1930s Hunger Marches and the National Association of Unemployed Workers campaigns. It saw the collapse of the 1929 Labour-led government, the bitter 1931 split in the Labour Party which led to the expulsions of MacDonald and Snowden and the emergence of the National Government led by Ramsay MacDonald with a small group of Labour Party MPs as the sole opposition; and the ramifications of all those crises for the wider politics of the pre-WW2 years. The contested politics and significance of the Mass Trespass have to be set within that milieu<sup>17</sup>.

As it happens, the early-1980s were no less turbulent than the early-1930s. The election of the first Thatcher government in 1979 did not lead immediately to a more settled social and political atmosphere. Unemployment rose sharply and the government remained widely unpopular for its first few years.

- With the left-wing Tribune MP Michael Foot as the new Labour Party leader, the early-1980s were the years when several major city authorities engaged in new forms of 'municipal socialism': the Greater London Council, Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, Lambeth all came to be dubbed 'loony left councils' by their critics.
- As a result of this perceived leftward shift, in 1981 Roy Jenkins, Shirley Williams, David Owen and Bill Rogers, stalwarts of the Wilson-Callaghan years, quit the Labour Party and set up a new party, the SDP. Other MPs and some members followed them.
- Following the New Cross Fire, 1981 saw major urban unrest (riots) in Brixton, Toxteth, Moss Side, Handsworth, Chapeltown.
- The organised peace movement re-emerged with a revival of CND marches at a time of renewed Cold War tensions. And in 1981, Women for Life on Earth walked from South Wales to Greenham Common where they trespassed on the Common and set up the Greenham Women's Peace Camp and began a long occupation and a series of blockades and trespasses which lasted for several years.
- Left / radical culture flourished – and Red Rope, the Socialist Walking and Climbing Club was set up in 1980, explicitly locating itself within the traditions of Clarion outdoor socialism and Mass Trespass style direct action. It played a significant part in the organisation and promotion of the Anniversary Weekend.<sup>18</sup>
- And, perhaps most noticeably, the 50th Anniversary celebration weekend itself took place in the middle of the defining event of the first Thatcher government, namely the 1982 Falklands War. The celebration weekend was sandwiched between the Task Force leaving Portsmouth on 5 April and the recapture of South Georgia on 26 April and the declaration of the Exclusion Zone on 28 April as the prelude to the sinking of the *Belgrano* on 2 May and the start of major military hostilities. . . . It was not the most propitious of times for securing positive media coverage for promoting and/or reporting on the celebration of the actions of a group of communist-led trespassers in the 1930s!

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<sup>17</sup> See, for instance, Taylor 1997, chapters 4 and 7; Jones (1989) pp. 142 – 148; Thompson (2018) *passim*, and, in particular, pp 187 – 200 "*Privileging the Exceptional: The Historiography of the Kinder Trespass*".

<sup>18</sup> Red Rope's archive is housed with the Working Class Movement Library in Salford, alongside the papers of Benny Rothman and the Clarion movement. There is an accompanying account of the early years of Red Rope: Batsleer J (2020) Red Rope: Some historical / political reminiscences and reflections. Julian Batsleer, then living just north of Enfield at that time, was the first National Secretary of Red Rope.

#### **4 Organising and promoting the Anniversary weekend**

The central organiser and co-ordinator was an energetic, retired Benny Rothman. Being an experienced trade union and political organiser, he deftly wove together a wide range of individuals and groups to do all the work that was necessary to make such an event happen. He managed to involve prominent and established figures in the outdoor movement, alongside an enthusiastic group of young activist climbers and walkers drawn primarily from an array of radical political groups.

What was put together was an event which spoke to the traditions of the outdoor access movement more widely and celebrated achievements such as the Peak District National Park; at the same time it was up-front about the political resonances of the Mass Trespass in both 1932 and 1982. Mixed in with the celebration of the Trespass and access gains generally was a clear campaigning element of "unfinished business"<sup>19</sup>. It is also important to note that, in the conception and planning of the event, Benny Rothman deliberately sought to involve representatives from the organisations which had vilified the trespass in 1932 and had kept their distance from Benny and anything to do with the trespass ever since. So, for instance, Don Lee of Peak and Northern Footpaths Society became a central figure<sup>20</sup>. As were people from the RA – nationally and in Sheffield (see below).

All good political organisers progress their agenda through some sort of committee. Benny excelled himself by eventually having four committees / groups working under the logo:



- The Manchester Committee set up by Benny, whose members included Dennis Gray & Alistair Macdonald (BMC); Tom Waghorn (climber, journalist and friend); Keith Warrender (publisher); Maz Simon (Red Rope member); Don Lee (Access Officer PNFS); M. Levine (1932 trespasser), Alan Bond (treasurer). This was more of a formal figurehead committee than an active organising group, though it helped with accessing key people and support through the network of outdoor organisations.

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<sup>19</sup> It is worth stressing that this was not an event organised by the Ramblers' Association to which Benny Rothman was invited. Major RA figures played a part – but as invitees, not as organisers. The historian David Hey (2011 p.216) asserted that: ". . . little more was heard of Benny Rothman in the campaign for access before 1982, when he was invited to join the 50th anniversary commemorations organized by the Ramblers' Association, whose new generation of members seemed to be unaware that their organization had once bitterly opposed Rothman." He was correct on BR's absence after 1932 and the RA's historic opposition, but quite incorrect about who actually organised the 50th Anniversary event.

<sup>20</sup> Indeed, in terms of footpath battles, Don Lee was something of an extremist: "When you go for a walk, you need three things: your boots, your map and your wire-cutters." I have been on access rambles with Don Lee when we have walked over people's front lawns because that is where the definitive right of way goes. He also did a huge amount of work mapping urban walks and rights of way around Manchester – over ground which has, in many cases, been more recently privatised and handed over to 'developers'.

- The London Committee, whose members included Julian Batsleer (secretary), Kieran Loftus, Brian Muir. All were London-based members of Red Rope<sup>21</sup>, and were joined by an elderly Tona Gillett (1932 jailed trespasser)
- The Sheffield Committee, whose key members were Dick Williams and Jon Cowley who set up SCAM and were endorsed by Stephen Morton.
- The Hayfield Committee. This was, in effect, the regular co-ordinating group which met monthly in Hayfield (The George). It was where things got done and plans were agreed and tasks divvied up. Main members: Benny Rothman, Don Lee, Martin Doughty<sup>22</sup> (New Mills resident and newly elected member of Derbyshire County Council), Julian Batsleer, Kieran Loftus, (both of Red Rope) Dick Williams, Jon Cowley, (both from SCAM) Neil and Gerry Goldsmith (Hayfield and Kinder Mountain Rescue Team).

Initially, over the summer and early autumn of 1981, Benny Rothman, working largely as a "one-man effort", invited "[a] whole number of nationally known militant speakers in the rambling world . . . to speak"<sup>23</sup>. He also set in train plans for the making and siting of a commemorative plaque at the Bowden Bridge Quarry, to be unveiled on 24th April. Similarly, he made arrangements for the publication (Willow Publishing) of his own account of the trespass<sup>24</sup>.

These initial arrangements formed the core of the weekend plans which were elaborated and promoted mainly through the meetings of the Hayfield Group from mid-autumn 1981 onwards.

By virtue of its ready access to print facilities, the Red-Rope London Committee undertook to generate and produce the bulk of the national publicity material – posters, leaflets, badges. It was also decided that the London Committee would oversee much of the national dissemination of that material and be the 'southern England' contact point – hence Julian Batsleer appears alongside Benny Rothman as one of the people to contact about the event. By and large, the London Committee in the pre-internet era, did the bulk of the media publicity via press releases, press handouts etc etc. Using central mailshots and the Red Rope membership's local and regional networks and contacts, we reached most Labour Movement organisations, outdoor and leisure organisations, walking and climbing shops.

The London Committee also organised a couple of promotional events – a not very well attended meeting addressed by Dave Cook and a packed folk evening benefit night in East London, with guest appearances by Benny Rothman and Tona Gillett. Using its own network of regional contacts in most major cities, the London Committee also made some arrangements for shared transport – including coaches and minibuses.

The Hayfield based members did the bulk of local liaison and practical arrangements for a large event in Hayfield and New Mills – including Martin Doughty arranging for the New Mills school hall and canteen to be open for the night of 24 / 25 April for those seeking basic, bunkhouse style accommodation and generally acting as an 'on-the-ground' intermediary. For those seeking guest houses etc, Neil and Gerry Goldsmith did the sorting. They also oversaw the practical on-site

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<sup>21</sup> In autumn 1981, I took a group of London-based Red Rope members across the Kinder Scout plateau from Edale to Bowden Bridge via the original Pennine Way. Most had never been on Kinder before and as we laboured our way across the peat groughs heading for Kinder Gates, a slightly exasperated colleague wondered aloud: "Why on earth were the working class so obsessed with coming up here?"

<sup>22</sup> Martin Doughty would, of course, go on to play major roles as sometime leader of Derbyshire County Council, chair of the Peak Park Planning Board and chair of English Nature, before sadly dying of cancer in 2009. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/mar/09/sir-martin-doughty-obituary>. The Guardian also published my letter in response to Martin's obituary.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2009/mar/18/sir-martin-doughty>

<sup>23</sup> Letter to M Simon 22/9/1981; WCML PP/Rothman/2/5

<sup>24</sup> Rothman (1982) The 1932 Kinder Trespass

arrangements for the rally – toilets, stalls, food etc – the Fell Race and the "Access Walk" led by Don Lee of PNFS. They sorted arrangements, tickets etc for the events at New Mills Town Hall – Saturday evening Folk Concert with Mike Harding and the Oldham Tinkers and Sunday's substantial Forum on the next stages of the Access issues. They also organised the Church Hall in Hayfield for Red Rope to run its own "fringe meeting".

All this was routine behind-the-scenes stuff of event management necessary to mount a hopefully attractive weekend-long programme which would have a wide national appeal. Under the banner heading of "Trespassers Will Be Celebrated" the weekend mixed commemoration of the actions of the trespassers in 1932 along with an acknowledgement of access achieved and, crucially, access still to be fought for.

It was this last aspect of the weekend which was at the heart of the work of the Sheffield Committee. Given his long-standing opposition to the original trespass, it was too big an ask for an elderly Tom Stephenson to be involved. However, there was a clear rapprochement between Benny Rothman and Stephen Morton (see above section 2). So much so, indeed, that Stephen Morton joined the ubiquitous Dave Cook for a meeting in Sheffield in March 1982 about access problems still facing those wanting to walk on the moors around Sheffield. That meeting agreed to hold its own, hastily organised Mass Trespass as a curtain-raiser for the Kinder celebrations – which duly occurred on 28 March 1982. It took place, without the owner's permission, over Bamford Moor; the trespassers included several rock-climbers who did some trespassed routes on Bamford Edge. This proved to be the inaugural trespass of what became the Sheffield Campaign for Access to Moorland – which continued to trespass regularly on the eastern High Peak moors for a further twenty years<sup>25</sup>. Both SCAM and Stephen Morton (and Dave Cook, of course) played active roles in the weekend celebrations in Hayfield<sup>26</sup>.

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It should also be noted that there was opposition to the Anniversary Celebrations<sup>27</sup>. The Manchester Ramblers Federation was less than fulsome in its support. In Hayfield, those whose families could remember the Trespass or whose forebears were gamekeepers and/or worked the land were far from supportive; the chair of the parish council was reported as saying. "Why anyone would wish to remember such a misconceived and violent occasion is beyond my comprehension."

In the same vein, the plaque – which had been put in place some days before the event and whose unveiling was the focus of the first main event at the Bowden Bridge Quarry – was in fact defaced during the night. Fortunately, it was mainly painted over and it was possible to clean it up in time for the 24th April.

As ever, the Mass Trespass and what it represents was a source of controversy. . .

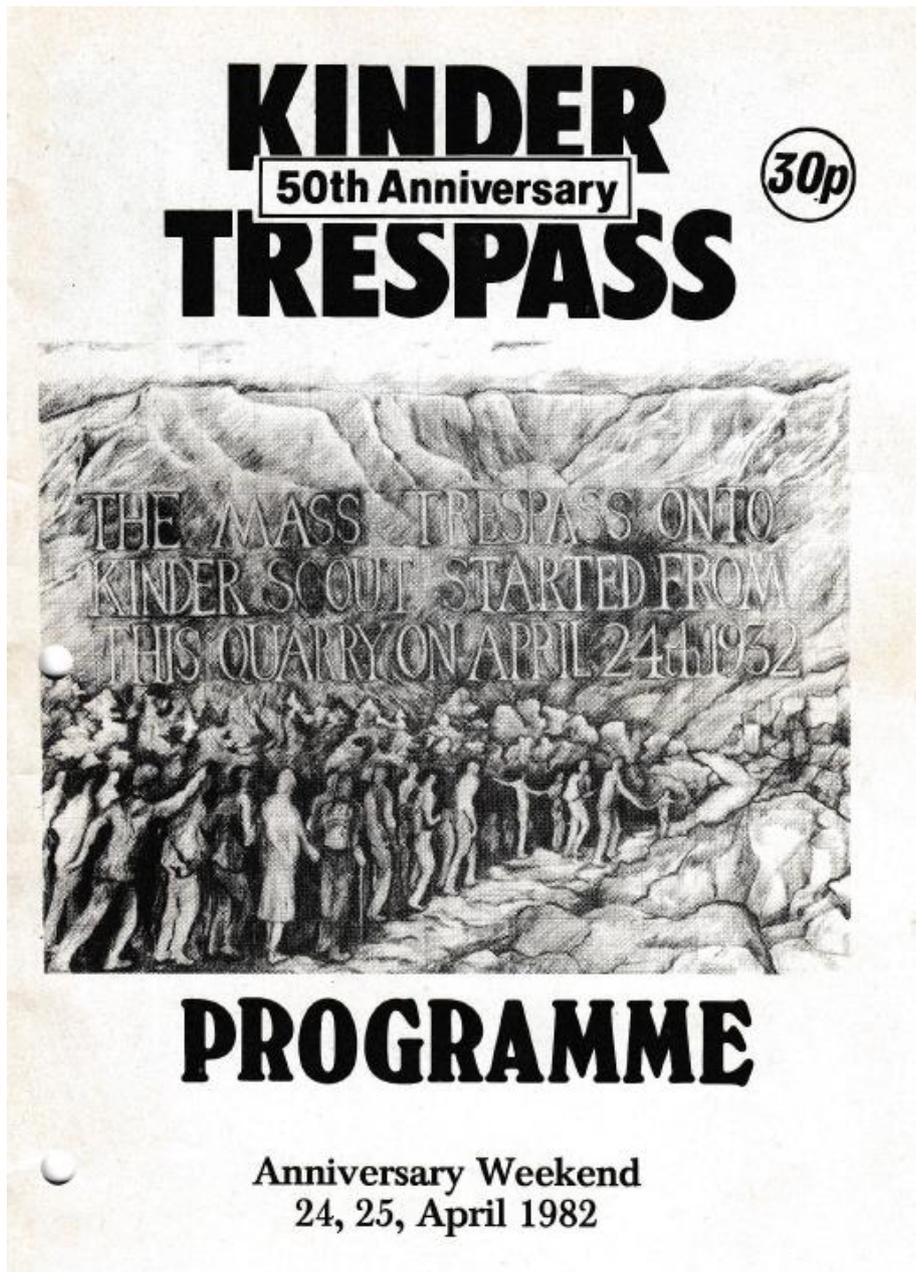
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<sup>25</sup> Sissons (2005)

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix C for an extract from a letter Morton to Rothman before the celebration.

<sup>27</sup> See, for instance, The Guardian 10 April 1982

## 5. The events of the anniversary weekend



This is the front cover of the Programme booklet for the weekend. I have copied the timetable of events from the centrespread of the booklet on the following pages – to save having to type them again. I have also copied into Appendix D transcriptions from the booklet of the messages from Benny Rothman, Alan Mattingly (RA) and Don Lee (PNFS).

I add in the rest of this section some of my own memories of, and reflections on, what took place over the weekend.

**Saturday 24 April 1982**

# PROGR

**Saturday April 24th.**

**12.30 pm. New Mills Brass Band.** Welcome and entertain visitors. In Kinder Road Quarry.

**1.30 pm. 50th Anniversary Meeting.** in Quarry.

**Chairman:** Alan Mattingly. Sec. Nat. Ramblers Association.

**Speaker:** Bernard Rothman. Sec. 1932 Trespass.

**1.50 pm. Unveiling of Memorial Plaque to Mass Trespass.** The ceremony will be carried out by John Beadle Chairman of Peak Park Board.

**2.00 pm. Ramble over original Trespass route.** led by surviving ramblers of 1932 Mass Trespass, meeting up with Sheffield contingent as in 1932.

**6.00 pm. & 8.00 pm. in St. John's Methodist Hall, Hayfield.**

**Slide Show.** Kinder through the seasons (Peak Park)

**Film Show.** "The Battle for Kinder Scout" B. B. C. film, by courtesy of the Peak Park Board. Adm. FREE.

**8.00 pm. In New Mills Town Hall. Folk Concert. "The Oldham Tinkers".** The well known Lancashire folk group. A unique opportunity to see and hear them. Concert organised by **Hayfield Arts Group**.

Refreshments and bar in Town Hall arranged by **New Mills Labour Party**..

Tickets £1.50 each. Obtainable in advance from Marquee, on Hayfield Camp Site.

Shops and cafe in Hayfield, Glossop and New Mills.

**Marquee opens in Camp Site 11.00 am.**

Refreshments, exhibits by National Organisations.

Traders Stands.

## **SUNDAY APRIL, 25TH**

**11.15 am.** Start for Juniors. **11.30 am.** Start for Seniors.

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*Stalls etc.* Probably the most noteworthy stall was the marquee which housed a collection of Labour Movement memorabilia - photographs, pamphlets, books, newspapers etc - relating to the 1930s provided by Ruth and Eddie Frow. They were members of the Communist Party in Manchester of the same generation as Benny Rothman and the collection they put together over a lifetime eventually became the initial core archive and library of the Working Class Movement Library in Salford.

There were also displays by the Kinder Mountain Rescue Team and New Mills CND (of which my father, Canon Albert Batsleer, as a WW2 conscientious objector, lifelong pacifist and Vicar of

New Mills in the early-1980s, was a member). I also have a memory of a stall selling artworks / photographs; as a personal memento of the day we bought a lovely photo of Kinder Reservoir, which has been on our walls ever since. There was probably another stall which sold copies of Benny Rothman's 1982 book, whose publication was noted as part of the ceremonies. There were also stalls selling refreshments – along with the inevitable left-wing paper sellers who turned up in those days at most events with a slightly radical flavour.

The whole area around the quarry was crowded – as photos show – though I have no sense of actual numbers who attended that bit of the weekend. As we assembled, and the Co-op Band entertained us, we were joined at Bowden Bridge by a group from Sheffield who had walked from Edale via Edale Cross carrying their makeshift SCAM banner. Amongst the young people there, the Woodcraft Folk had a noticeable presence.

*Speeches and unveiling the plaque* As a measure of the event's aim of re-locating the trespass as an integral part of the access movement's history, it was important that the event publicly brought together representatives of the Ramblers' Association and the Peak Park. So Alan Mattingly, the RA's national secretary at the time, accepted the invitation to 'chair' the short rally. He duly delivered a commemorative address, in the course of which he conveyed a message of endorsement (which had been set up earlier) from Chris Bonnington, Pete Boardman and Jo Tasker who were at that moment at Everest Base Camp before making an attempt on the North East Ridge Route. Pete Boardman grew up in Stockport, so Kinder was a local haunt of his<sup>28</sup>. In his own speech Benny Rothman located the trespass in the social, political and international circumstances of the 1930s. As part of the rehabilitation of the trespass, it was also significant that the specially commissioned plaque was unveiled by John Beadle, the then Chair of the Peak Park Board.<sup>29</sup>

*Ramble on Kinder* As photos show, it was a fine day and, after the speeches, we all headed off on a celebratory walk up to Kinder Scout. We were led by Benny Rothman and accompanied, as far as their legs would take them, by a group of his fellow 1932 Trespassers, including Tona Gillett. Exercising our rights under the 1955 access agreement, some of us went up William Clough, some headed directly for Sandy Heys, and others contoured across the slope towards Ashop Head. Banners were flown and the 1932 trespassers were joyfully celebrated. No-one was arrested when we got back to Hayfield. Benny Rothman had not incited us to riot or affray; he had simply done what he set out to do exactly fifty years to the day earlier, namely take everyone assembled at the Bowden Bridge Quarry for a late-spring walk on to Kinder.

*Hayfield events* The advertised showings of the Peak Park's slide show and the BBC's documentary were duly presented. Another attraction for those returning from the ramble was Red Rope's fringe meeting in St Matthews Hall: A Walk on the Wild Side, at which Tona Gillett, Dave Cook, and Dick Williams urged those attending to emulate the 1932 trespassers and build a direct action campaign for the access battles ahead.

*Folk Concert New Mills* A full day was rounded off by the Folk Concert in New Mills Town Hall, in which Mike Harding (as a member of the Oldham Tinkers) took up the mantle of Ewan McColl as a folk singer, and his other role as an increasingly prominent outdoor activist and writer. My memory is of a very full hall and a presentation to Benny and Lily Rothman (a photo of the plaque?) before we all sang *The Manchester Rambler*.

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<sup>28</sup> Sadly, about a month later, news came through that Pete and Jo had died during the ascent.

<sup>29</sup> Worth noting, that later in 1982, Benny Rothman became the Chair of the Kinder Advisory Committee, formed when the ownership of Kinder Scout was transferred to the National Trust. Relevant papers with Rothman archive at WCML.

Sunday 25 April 1982

# AMME

**Kinder Downfall Fell Race.** Starting from "Royal Yo", 10 mile Seniors, Shortened Course Juniors.

Fee £1.00 Seniors, 30p Juniors. Entries taken on day finishing in Recreation Ground.

11.35 prompt. (after start of Fell Race).

**Ramble.** Led by Don Lee and Dave Frith.

Assemble Hayfield Bus Station.

Sett Valley Track – Slack Mill – Little Hayfield – Park Hall – Middle Moor – Snake footpath. Return to Hayfield Bus Station.

2.00 pm. Questions and Answers. New Mills Town Hall.

"Access and the National Parks".

**Chairman.** Chris Brasher

**Speakers.** Chris Hall Editor Countryman.

**Don Lee.** Peak & Northern Footpath Society.

**Theo Burrell.** Peak Park Officer.

**H. Elliot.** National Farmers' Union.

**Timothy Clowes.** Landowner in Derbyshire.

### Specialist speakers to answer questions in addition

**Marion Shoard.** Author "The theft of the countryside".

**Dennis Gray.** Sec. British Mountaineering Council.

**Andrew Bennett M.P.** presently drafting "A Walkers Charter."

**Stephen Morton.** Veteran President Sheffield RA. V. Pres. Nat. RA.

**Philip Whitehead M.P.** Pres. Derbyshire RA.

**Colin Speakman.** Countryside Commission Officer.

**Malcolm MacEwen.** Co-author "National Parks Conservation or Cosmetics"

Take part in the Grand Finale, to the weekend celebrations. Tickets 30p each.

9

Unfortunately I did not take part in the Kinder Fell Races, but I gather that they went well.

**Access Ramble** The Sunday access ramble was exactly the sort of thing Don Lee relished in his role as the PNFS's Access Officer. He had discovered that the Peak Park Board and the owners off the Park Hall estate had agreed to close / re-route a path that went through the estate and across the moor to join the Snake Path. Don led a large group of ramblers on the officially designated right of way, to assert our opposition to its being re-routed<sup>30</sup>. As far as I could gather, the re-routing was only a matter of a few hundred yards or so, but I was always an 'open access' man rather than a footpath preservation man! In many respects the SCAM trespass

<sup>30</sup> See Don Lee's detailed explanation in Appendix D

had been more in keeping with the weekend celebrations. But the indefatigable Don Lee kept alive the combative tenacity of the footpath preservationist tradition!

*"Grand Finale":* The Sunday afternoon debate in another full New Mills Town Hall brought together a wide range of speakers, including many significant figures in the access movement, with Chris Brasher in the chair. The presence of Chris Hall (RA National Secretary between Stephenson and Mattingly) and Stephen Morton underscored the aim of building the trespass tradition back into the history and future practice of the countryside access movement.

In many respects, the need to be 'balanced' and to give all invited speakers an opportunity to say their piece meant that the Q&A sessions and subsequent full debate was a bit restricted. Giving the NFU and the CLA a chance to put their case did prompt a few robust comments from 'the landless' who were in the hall. It was interesting, also, to hear the perspectives from Chris Hall and Marion Shoard, both of whom drew on the access problems in lowland England rather than the classic National Park uplands. In view of the directions in which the access debates have moved subsequently, it was prescient to have Marion Shoard raising issues to do with the loss of biodiversity and early 'green' arguments. Perhaps more than any other speaker she was looking forward to the wider issues of land management as a whole which would have to be addressed by those campaigning for greater recreational access over the next fifty years.

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It is a measure of the success of the 50th Anniversary Celebration weekend that the 1932 trespassers have been celebrated in Hayfield in one form or another more or less annually ever since 1982.

The weekend helped to restore The 1932 Mass Trespass on Kinder Scout to its rightful place in the firmament of direct action campaigns in general and, more especially, in the historic and on-going campaigns for the rights and freedoms to roam on moors and mountains.

JB

March 2021

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## **Appendix A: The 'disappearance' of the Mass Trespass after 1932**

The Manchester Ramblers' Federation never sought to reach out to the prodigal son who had, as they saw it, acted entirely contrary to what they believed in as ramblers. Similarly, on the 75th Anniversary of the PNFS in 1968, Frank Head presented an account of the PNFS's historic achievements in its annual report: it included the following section on Kinder Scout:

### **Access to Kinder**

*Another important consequence of the 1949 Act was the gradual freeing of Kinder Scout, Bleaklow and other moorland areas devoted to grouse shooting or water gathering, the whole Access Area now amounting to some 60,000 acres out of a total of some 70,000 in England and Wales. The ancient discontents out of which our Society was born have thus been remedied and we are grateful to all concerned, especially the pre-1949 fighters and propagandists, G. H. B. Ward, Edwin Royce, P. A. Barnes and Tom Stephenson, and to the Access Committee of the Peak Park Planning Board under the chairmanship of our former Secretary, Philip Daley, for the subsequent laborious task of implementation<sup>31</sup>.*

Phil Barnes of the CPRE, had always had misgivings about allowing general access to Kinder: "I am afraid I care for Kinder so much that I am perhaps taking a rather selfish view but, frankly, I would rather stay away from the hills myself and leave them to the tender mercies of the shooter and keeper, than see the delicate beauty of these cloughs vulgarised by picnic parties, as for instance the Conksbury Bridge end of Lathkill, or the Thorpe end of the Dove are today."<sup>32 33</sup>

Tom Stephenson and Phil Daley, were both opponents of the Mass Trespass in the 1930s and major figures in the Ramblers' Association in the post-war period. Tom Stephenson later noted the following exchange they had in the 1980s, based on Daley's experience as member of Peak Park Planning Board:

*Such access as we have gained owes nothing to the mass trespass organised by the British Workers Federation, and I can say categorically and without fear of contradiction, that the "mass trespass" was a positive hindrance and deterrent to the discussion and negotiations to secure the freedom of the hills.<sup>34</sup>*

And even the archivist of the Ramblers' Association in 1980, observed that:

*One reason for its [the Ramblers' Association's] lack of success in gaining adequate legislation regarding access until 1949 may to some extent be explained by the end of the rambling boom in the mid-1930s. This is not to suggest that rambling was no longer a popular recreation, but that other outdoor pursuits such as youth hostelling, camping, cycling etc gained in popularity at the expense of rambling. The militancy of at least some ramblers may also have lost them the support of the more conservative bodies such as the National Trust, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society in the fight for greater access to the countryside<sup>35</sup>.*

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<sup>31</sup> Head (1968) p.6

<sup>32</sup> Douglas (2018) p.108.

<sup>33</sup> See also Anderson (2015) on the reaction of the 'respectable' Manchester Ramblers Federation. The MRF organised a series of voluntary 'warden-guides' across the Peak District from 1933 onwards, in an attempt to control the behaviours of the new, younger hikers - a precursor of later wardens and countryside codes of behaviour.

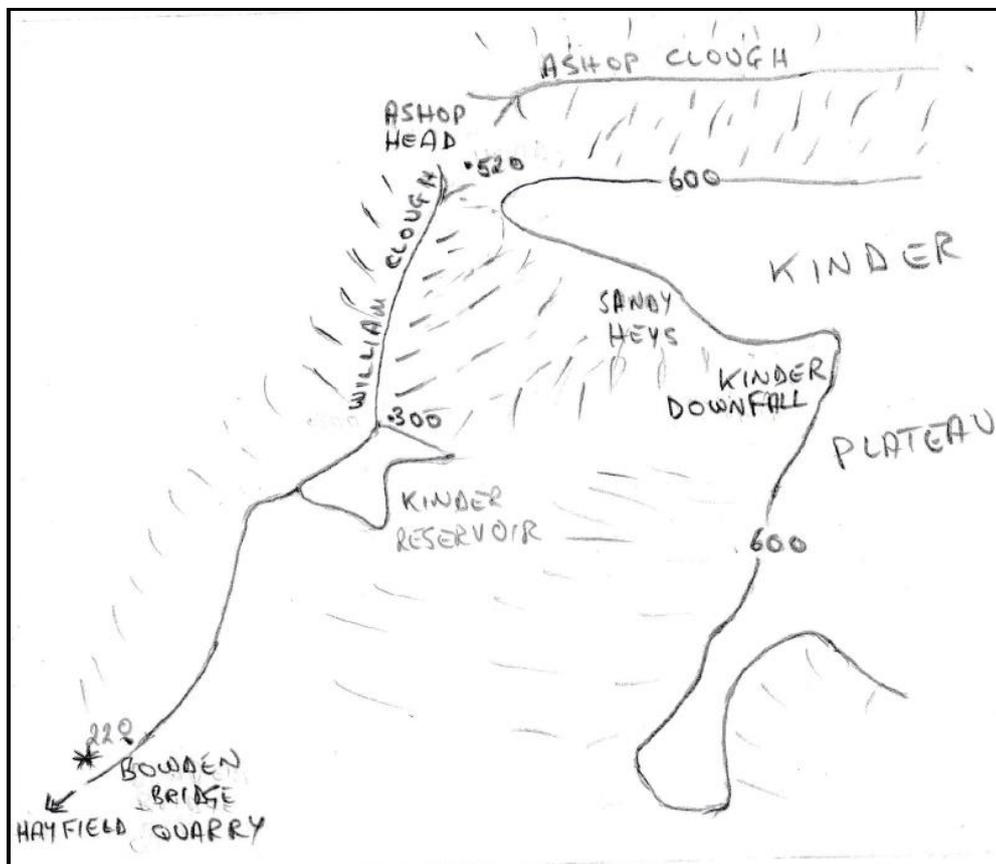
<sup>34</sup> Stephenson (1989) p.163

<sup>35</sup> Bassett (1980) p. ii

## **Appendix B: Tom Stephenson's case against there being a Mass Trespass on Kinder Scout**

What actually happened on 24 April 1932 has been mired in controversy ever since. Without smartphones, recording equipment or anything other than a few photographs and journalists accounts, there is no indubitable record of the sequence of events, who did what and where. The accounts of participants and observers – hikers, gamekeepers, journalists, police – are contradictory, and in a sense there is never going to be a resolution. There will forever be a touch of ambiguity in the icon.

Tom Stephenson's confident assertion that there wasn't a trespass on Kinder Scout at all hinges on the contention that, although the area is generally referred to as either Kinder or Kinder Scout, strictly speaking Kinder Scout is the name only of the actual plateau. It does not refer to the land beyond the plateau edge which slopes down to the rights of way along William Clough to the west and Ashop Clough to the north. The cloughs meet (and cross the Pennine Way) at Ashop Head, which is some way below the sharp corner of the plateau. The basic geography is shown on the following sketch map:



The plateau edge is at 600m - and that contour line is shown on the east of the map. It falls away to Ashop Clough to the North and William Clough to the west. The footpaths in both cloughs are rights of way. The area between the heads of the two cloughs is Ashop Head, at about 520m and 80m below the plateau edge. William Clough is quite a narrow, steep clough, rising from about 300 at the northern tip of Kinder Reservoir.

The trespass started from the meeting at Bowden Bridge Quarry at 220 metres and proceeded to the reservoir. The rough-and-ready plan thereafter was for the trespassers to walk in a long line up the William Clough path – a right of way – and then, at a blast from a whistle, they were to turn

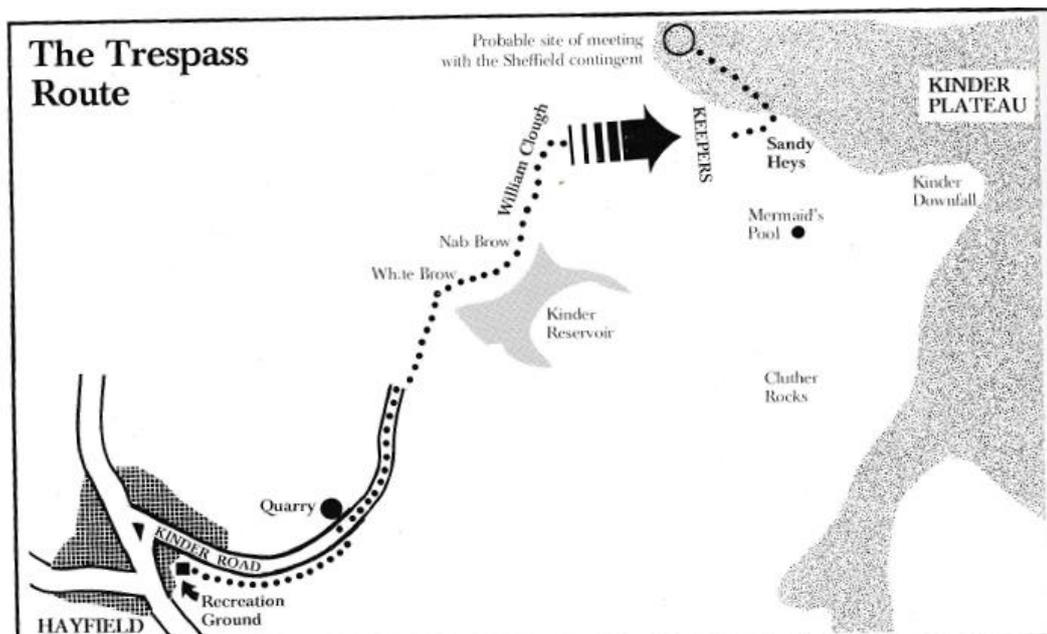
right, climb out of the clough and, in line abreast, walk up the steep slopes to the plateau. Barring their way was a line of gamekeepers strung out somewhere below the plateau edge, likely to come down to meet the trespassers and prevent them from reaching the plateau. The tricky bit would be getting past the gamekeepers. Having reached the plateau, the plan was for everyone to turn left and walk towards Ashop Head before going back down William Clough to Bowden Bridge and Hayfield.

Quite where the line of trespassers moved off the William Clough path and headed up the steep slopes towards the plateau edge is not agreed. Once you are past the obvious direct route up broad ridge climb towards the plateau edge at Sandy Heys, it is not at all easy to climb out of William Clough and on to and across the slope up to the plateau. Keepers would be much more competent than even the fittest of young hikers on that terrain.

It is Tom Stephenson's contention that in effect the keepers were not waiting in a distant line on the plateau edge but were in a line much lower down, just above William Clough. In effect, they prevented the trespassers from doing anything other than walking up William Clough or just straying slightly from it. Moreover, any who did break through or get round behind the line of keepers did not continue to head upwards towards the plateau edge but contoured across the lower slopes to the agreed meeting and re-grouping point of Ashop Head. Ergo . . . there is no indisputable evidence that there actually was a trespass on Kinder Scout on that day and the possibility remains that none of the trespassers put a foot on the plateau itself – and they certainly never made it to the Downfall and the highest point of Kinder Scout in the midst of the peat groughs at Crowden Head.

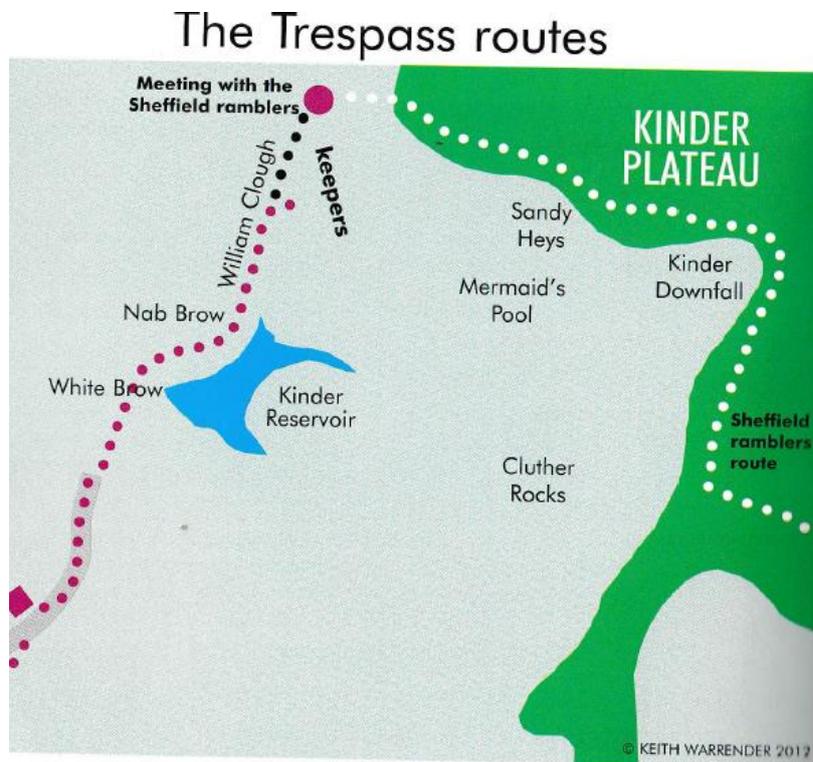
It is worth noting that the map of the trespass route in Rothman's own 1982 account is markedly different from the one given in the updated and extended account published posthumously – and with a different title – on 2012.

In 1982<sup>36</sup> the map shows the entire trespass walking to the mid-point of William Clough and then moving across the slope in the direction of Sandy Heys, passing the keepers and then turning left presumably along the plateau edge towards Ashop Head where they met, for a victory celebration, with another support group of trespassers who had a come up from Edale via Jacob's ladder and trespassed the entire length of the western edge of the plateau.



<sup>36</sup> Rothman (1982) p.32 Reproduced with permission from Willow Publishing

In the 2012 edition, for which the same publisher Keith Warrender undertook further research, the route is shown somewhat differently<sup>37</sup>. The suggestion here is that the trespassers walked a long way up William Clough and then were effectively corralled by the gamekeepers towards Ashop Head, without ever actually making it to the plateau i.e. that maybe Tom Stephenson had a point.



What both maps indicate, Rothman relates and Stephenson ignores completely is the somewhat spectral presence of the Sheffield Ramblers who came up from Edale. Little robust evidence has been put on record about the extent of this support or the route(s) they took – beyond gamekeepers making the not unreasonable observation that no-one came up on them from behind<sup>38</sup>. . .

What is not in dispute, is that shortly after the Manchester trespassers were jailed for various charges relating to riot, affray and grievous bodily harm, there was a trespass on 18 September 1932 at Abbey Brook in the Derwent Valley. This was not a BWSF event but one which originated from within the ILPish / Clarionish Sheffield Ramblers' Federation. These trespassers were also met by substantial keeper opposition and, as on Kinder, there was a bit of pushing and shoving but no serious violence. Although there was a police presence at Abbey Brook, once the trespassers were escorted back to a public right of way, the police, much to the chagrin of the gamekeepers, made no arrests and avoided a repeat of the (show?) trials of the Manchester trespassers.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Rothman (2012) p. 42 Reproduced with permission from Willow Publishing

<sup>38</sup> Keith Warrender of Willow Publishing has done yet more research on what actually happened on the Mass Trespass and is proposing to publish an updated account, probably some time in 2022. (Personal email exchange.)

<sup>39</sup> See Hill (1980) pp. 69 – 73. Hill was a trespasser at Abbey Brook.

**Appendix C: Extracts from a Letter: Stephen Morton to Benny Rothman**  
**5 March 1982<sup>40</sup>**

. . . I have also tabled a fairly strong resolution for the R.A. National Council meeting in Oxford, April 3/4. If you haven't already done so, and as all the conference "bumf" will be being sent to delegates during the next ten days or so, why not send 200 leaflets and a few posters and ask alan [sic] Mattingly to include them with the Council papers ? By the way, who is Julian Batsleer ? and how does he come in ? has the mantle of Philip Poole fallen upon him.?

I would be less than truthful if I said I was happy about all your arrangements [for the Sunday]. I reckon that you have too many speakers, and that view has been expressed by others.

You are likely to be drowned in a sea of complimentary platitudes, and it seems to me that I am the only ACCESS man there. Donald [Lee] is a first class footpath man, but it is not footpaths we are about, except as a convenient jumping off point for moorland tramping. I know most of your speakers and I don't think you will get the "gospel" out of them. . . . If we are about anything in this celebration we are about ACCESS and there should be room for some one to have say 10 minutes to open out the meeting on this subject . . .

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<sup>40</sup> WCML PP/Rothman/2/5 Personal Note: It is a matter of some pride that Stepen Morton wondered whether I had inherited the mantle of Philip Poole, who was the CP leader of the Progressive Rambling Club in 1930s London!

## **Appendix D: Extracts from the 50th Anniversary Programme Booklet**

### **WELCOME TO 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

#### ***A message from Benny Rothman. Secretary of the 1932 Mass Trespass.***

Welcome to the 50th anniversary of the mass trespass onto Kinder Scout.

In 1932 the ramblers who organised and took part in the trespass did not foresee the impact which it would have in the struggle for access. To them it seemed to be a very simple solution to a problem. If enough ramblers took part, no body of gamekeepers could keep them off the forbidden heights.

To the landowners who regarded the moors as "business premises", the trespass loomed as a serious threat to their monopoly of the countryside. It was for that reason that such extraordinary steps were taken against the trespass, with the final imprisonment of 5 ramblers for a total of 17 months, both as a punishment and a warning.

The lessons of the trespass were not lost. In the struggle for access, the mass trespass gave the right background to the negotiations which culminated in National Parks and Countryside Act of 1949. The limitations of this act, and the ever growing number of threats, from all sides, to the countryside and to access make these celebrations most timely. I still believe "That the public should have a legal right of access (subject to certain conditions and exceptions) to all uncultivated land" as recommended by government appointed committees to study the question, and make recommendations (Hobhouse 1947).

I also believe that this ideal should be the primary aim of all outdoor bodies. It can be achieved, and when it is, assisted by doses of mass activity if necessary, the many other problems connected with access could easily be settled.

Surely this is the lesson for us 50 years after!

## **MESSAGE FROM ALAN MATTINGLY.**

The famous Kinder trespass of 1932 has become a symbol of the long campaign for access to the moors and mountains of Britain. Because of the publicity and public sympathy which was attached to those who suffered imprisonment following the event, the trespass stands out as one of the best-remembered episodes in that campaign.

It was a campaign that also saw mass rallies of ramblers in the Winnats; other trespasses and clashes with gamekeepers (some of whom seemed to act as no more than hired thugs); great public meetings and speeches; and finally, the passing into law of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949.

For those who worked hard for the Act – and none worked harder nor to greater effect than Tom Stephenson, the most famous and respected of the Ramblers' Association's leaders – it was a matter of great satisfaction when, a few years later, the Act's provisions were used to gain access to the once forbidden grouse moors of the Dark Peak. Today we can roam at will where once our predecessors were threatened and accosted.

But there is still much to be fought for. In particular, ramblers should never rest content until there is a statutory right of access on foot to all mountain and moorland in this country. Walkers in other European countries enjoy this right – why shouldn't we?

Until that general right of access is secured, we must be vigilant in opposing attempts to keep people off the hills, wherever such attempts occur. At present, the most serious problem is on the Arans, in the Snowdonia National Park. Unless the National Park Committee can negotiate some kind of access agreement with the farmers there in the near future, conflict will be inevitable. It is ridiculous that ramblers should be told to ask for permission to walk on this, one of the finest mountain ranges in Wales. We are prepared to co-operate with the National Park Committee while serious negotiations are taking place, but they can't expect us to wait indefinitely.

There is also a need for a statutory right of access to all common land and a substantial extension of access rights to woodland areas in the lowlands.

Recent surveys have shown that one person in five likes to take a walk in the country once a month or more. The Ramblers' Association invites everyone who fits into that category to support our work in fighting for more access to the countryside. Please become a member of the Association.

Alan Mattingly  
February, 1982

## ***PUBLIC FOOTPATHS – THE FIGHT GOES ON.***

***By Don Lee***

Now that most of the footpath surveys have been completed, definitive maps published, and o.s. maps indicate public rights of way, you could assume that ramblers face few problems in the field.

However such naive assumptions would be wrong, wrong, wrong., in fact all the signs are, that we shall face increasing antagonism and deviousness from the anti-footpath faction, who will be aided and abetted by the disastrous measures of the "Wildlife and Countryside Act" of 1981.

Time of course will tell, but rather than speculate, I would like to give you a particular instance of attempted path grabbing greed, right here in Hayfield, on a definitive right of way, leading up to Kinder access land, now in 1982. Footpath 48, leads from Little Hayfield (o.s. ref. 034881) and follows the approach drive to Park Hall. Just before the Hall (ref. 038 882) the right of way turns right, through a gate and onto the open moor, where it continues steadily upwards via an overgrown gully to join the famous "Snake" path at (O.S. REF. 045881) on Middle Moor. Though this moor is closed when grouse shooting takes place, the public footpaths and that includes F. P. 48 of course stay open.

Last year the Peak and Northern Footpath Society was notified by the Peak Planning Board, that the owner of Park Hall was challenging this path, and wanting to get it off the maps, presumably it was somehow interfering with whatever rights he supposed he had.

Moreover from the tone of the P. P. P. B. letter he had all but convinced them. The Society duly gave notice that it would raise hell and high water, in resisting this most arrogant proposal in every way possible.

Hence, the Sunday ramble on April 25th at the celebrations, will centre on this path. It is a pity in a way that the ramble was not on the "glorious twelfth, though of course this could well happen if the problem continues.

Ponder for a moment. If this sort of highway robbery is being attempted in the heart of the Peak District, what chance does our own local path have? Your remedy – get together a group of people in your locality, check your local paths, and pester your local council, squeezing the pips until they squeak. The Peak and Northern Footpaths Society will always give you advice.

## ***Appendix E: Organisations and abbreviations***

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BMC	British Mountaineering Council
BWSF	British Workers' Sports Federation
CLA	Country Landowners Association – now Country Land and Business Association
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
CP(GB)	Communist Party (of Great Britain)
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England – now CPRE, the countryside charity
ILP	Independent Labour Party
NFU	National Farmers' Union
PNFS	Peak and Northern Footpaths Society
RA	The Ramblers Association – now The Ramblers
SCAM	Sheffield Campaign for Access to Moorland
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
YHA	Youth Hostels Association
WCML	Working Class Movement Library

## **Appendix F: Some books, articles and websites**

I am currently putting together a resource book on the wider political history and significance of the Mass Trespass, past, present and future. It will explore the historical hinterlands of the Trespass since the Diggers trespass in 1649 and the conflicts surrounding the Trespass in the 1930s and subsequently; it will look forward to what the Trespass may tell us about how to tackle the issues of access and land ownership / management in the face of the climate emergency.

The following books, articles and websites are some of those I have consulted and may be of interest to anyone wishing to explore the wider political and cultural resonances of the Mass Trespass. As Benny Rothman, Alan Mattingly (RA) and Don Lee (PNFS) all said in 1982 (see Appendix D above): "The Fight Goes On".

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## **Appendix G: My life-long affair with Kinder Scout**

I have been walking and rock climbing on the High Peak moors and gritstone outcrops ever since I was a boy of eight and my father became the vicar of All Saints church in Old Glossop in 1956. From the vicarage the family could be on Mossy Lea, Shire Hill and Doctor's Gate in a few minutes for our Sunday afternoon walks<sup>41</sup>. A primary school teacher took a group of us lads on a couple of long hikes in the Dark Peak. In 1958 our route was the classic Doctor's Gate – Snake Inn Ramblers' Room (for lunch) – Ashop Clough – William Clough – Hayfield – bus to Glossop; in 1959 it was bus to Carr Meadow – Kinder Reservoir – Sandy Heys – Kinder Downfall – Ashop Head – Chunal – Monks Road – 'The Nab' – Glossop. With friends, I would wander on Bleaklow looking for crashed WW2 planes.

Our baby-sitter when my sister and I were young was a relative of the Knotts, who were the long-term tenants at Farlands House, opposite and above the gated road leading to Kinder Reservoir. We went to visit the Knotts once or twice a year (calling in at Park Hall open air swimming pool on the way there in the summer). The house had no mains electricity or gas, so it was always a bit spooky whenever it was dark and the Knotts carried around ancient paraffin lamps. I used to wander up from Farlands to Kinder Reservoir and contour my way around, looking up at the Downfall. My memory is that Mr Knott was involved in the Co-op Movement, WEA and the Labour Party and knew R H Tawney in the inter-war years. I also remember that Roy Perrott, a journalist with *The Observer*, lived in the Lodge next to Farlands at that time. He published a book on the Aristocracy in 1968.<sup>42</sup>

As a Labour supporting sixth former, I sold my labour power as a grouse-beater on Bleaklow, from which I retain early images of class divisions. "The guns" and their dogs drove up in their Land Rovers from Blackshaw Farm to the various lines of butts around Torside Castle whilst we walked for miles across open moorland to beat a couple of moors for them before lunch; at lunch they sat on little chairs and opened their hampers and their bottles of champagne whilst we crouched on the peat some way off with our cheese butties and bottles of Tizer, before beating another two moors for them. They then got back in their Land Rovers and we trudged down to Blackshaw Farm to receive an exploitative wage (£2?) for our day's hard labour.

I left Glossop in 1966, when my father's vocation took him to the industrial towns of East Derbyshire. An exile from easy access to Kinder and Bleaklow began at University (1967 - 1970), where I studied the History of Ideas and Political Philosophy. My subsequent working life was spent almost entirely as an academic in different branches of adult education. In the early 1970s I was a tutor and research assistant at Nottingham University's Department of Adult Education. This was followed by an eleven-year stint as a WEA Tutor-Organiser living in south-east Hertfordshire from mid-1970s to mid-1980s. A brief dog-leg move through community education in Manchester (where I have lived ever since) ended the southern exile and was the stepping-stone to 25 years as a regional and central academic with the Open University, from which I took early retirement in 2011.

I embarked on my working life as a confident *soixante-huitard* and have been left-leaning politically ever since. The glory and the challenges of adult education arise from working at the interface between the concerns of academe and the concerns of the wider society<sup>43</sup>. In Gramscian

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<sup>41</sup> We sometimes called in to visit the Shepherd family who lived and worked at Mossy Lea Farm, which was an outlier in my father's parish. In an attempt to prevent rock climbers crossing his land to get to the then popular Yellowslacks outcrop, David Shepherd dynamited much of the crag. An extreme way of trying to get round the newly negotiated Peak Park access agreements! Milburn (1980) pp.178-9.

<sup>42</sup> Perrott R (1968) *The Aristocrats: A Portrait of Britain's Nobility and their way of Life Today*. Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London.

<sup>43</sup> There is a 'tradition' of left-leaning academics spending at least some of their working life in adult education -- Raymond Williams at Oxford; E.P.Thompson at Leeds; Richard Hoggart at Hull; Eric Hobsbawm at

terms, one inhabits a co-creative twilight zone between the worlds of the traditional intellectuals and the organic intellectuals. One is actively enabling people from any educational background to access and make their own sense of the issues which pre-occupy academe. One is equally concerned to move that dialogue in the other direction, and reflect back to those in the academic ivory towers the critiques of their pre-occupations which arise from a contested engagement with the 'real world' of lived individual and social experience.

And throughout the whole of this personal and professional journey, Kinder Scout has been an active landmark. Far from receding into a childhood memory, throughout the 1970s I made at least one pilgrimage a year to walk somewhere in the Dark Peak. My father, Canon Albert Batsleer, remained a priest in the Derby Diocese and was always within a half-hour's drive of the Peak District. Indeed he returned to the High Peak in the late 1970s and was the Vicar of New Mills in 1982 (see earlier).

By way of relief from my professional and political life whilst I was with the WEA, I extended my scope as a walker to include rock-climbing and general mountaineering. I became an early member of the newly formed Socialist Walking and Climbing Club, Red Rope<sup>44</sup>; and, being a reliable labour movement hack, I was elected its first National Secretary in 1982. This led to my playing an active role alongside Benny Rothman and others in the organisation and promotion of the weekend celebration in April 1982 of the 50th Anniversary of the Mass Trespass. (see earlier)

During the OU decades my political energies were directed primarily towards my professional life and less towards the usual array of activist commitments. By then I was, however, back in The North and living in Manchester, which meant that regularly walking and climbing in and around the Dark Peak became once again part of my everyday life and routines. Kinder Scout has been visited at least once every year over the last forty years.

Since retiring in 2011, a couple of unexpected retirement projects have given a renewed focus to my life-long affair with Kinder Scout. The first was organising Red Rope's paper archive (1980 - 2005ish) and housing it at WCML, alongside Benny Rothman's papers and their Clarion collection<sup>45</sup>. The second was meeting Phil Chapman, the partner of one of my wife's relatives, at the Peterloo Massacre celebrations in 2019. This led, eventually, to my putting together this document for the Hayfield Kinder Trespass Group's website.

The last time Janet and I were on Kinder Scout was on the weekend after the first national lockdown in 2020. It was a beautiful summer day and we had a hunch it may be a bit crowded, so we set off from Manchester quite early to drive to the car park at Bowden Bridge Quarry and to check that the Trespass Memorial of 1982 had not been completely obscured by the trees and bushes which now grow there. . . .

. . . When we arrived, it was absolutely packed, with walkers everywhere and cars lining much of the road back towards Hayfield. It seemed as if every rambling group in the north west had chosen to come to Kinder to celebrate the end of lockdown, every family and friendship group that had been cooped up and wanted to get out in this bit of open countryside. We went up to the plateau via Edale Cross and Kinder Low and as we walked along to the Downfall, it was difficult to maintain the social distancing we had assiduously observed in our urban walks earlier in the year.

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Birkbeck; Arnold Kettle, Stuart Hall, Doreen Massey at the OU; Ken Coates at Nottingham.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.redrope.org.uk/> An account of the origins and politics of Red Rope is housed with the Red Rope Archive at WCML: *Red Rope: Some historical / political reminiscences and reflections*

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.wcml.org.uk/> Go to catalogue search -> archives and enter Red Rope in the box.

Finding a Covid-safe place to sit for lunch at the Downfall was not easy. And it was the same story all the way along to Sandy Heys and back down to the reservoir and Bowden Bridge.

What was so moving and wonderful about that day's walk was that we were among groups of all ages and ethnicities. Noisy students talking about getting drunk at parties dispelled the idea that moorland walking was falling out of fashion and becoming something for the older generations only; young Asian girls were trying to coax their grannies up to Sandy Heys. The father of a large Polish-speaking family took great care to explain the scenery to his children. We don't understand Polish, but we heard the much-loved names 'Mermaids Pool' and 'Kinder Downfall' as he pointed them out. Those of us in our retirement years with arthritic hips and knees shared our sense that going down from Kinder Scout nowadays was harder than climbing up . . .

Our cars may not have done much to reduce carbon emissions, which is something we must not ignore. We may not have been as socially distanced as we should, but we were out in the open air. It may have been a grim day on the footpath erosion front, but we were exercising our right and freedom to roam and no-one tried to stop us.

Tom Stephenson may have been technically correct that none of those taking part in the 1932 Mass Trespass actually set foot on Kinder Scout (see Appendix B). But all of us on Kinder Scout on that summer day in 2020 were the living embodiment and fulfilment of the 1932 trespassers' vision and aspirations almost 90 years ago for freedom and open access for all.

It was very fitting of Ed Douglas and John Beatty to entitle their beautifully produced 2018 book:

*Kinder Scout: The People's Mountain*<sup>46</sup>.

Julian Batsleer

March 2021

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<sup>46</sup> Douglas (2018)