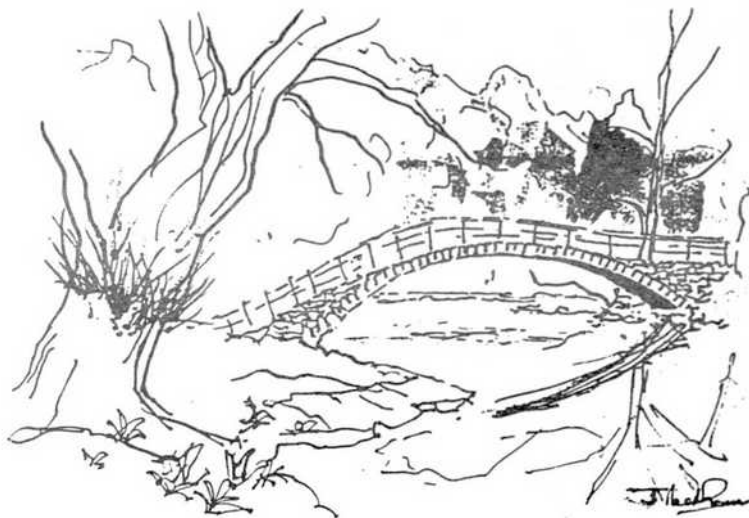


The Cown Edge Way



'ROMAN BRIDGE'

Published by

MANCHESTER AREA RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION

General Secretary

Miss R. Irlam
4 Sunningdale Road
Urmston Manchester

Printed by Swinton Adult Education Centre Manchester



Ramblers' Association

The Ramblers' Association is the national organisation for all who enjoy walking in the countryside.

Nationally the RA acts as a pressure group, lobbying Ministers about issues of concern to walkers, commenting on official reports and proposed new legislation, giving evidence to official committees and briefing sympathetic MPs and peers for debates in Parliament.

Locally the RA keeps a constant watch on rights of way, and examines closely any proposals for closures and diversions. Many RA groups carry out practical work on the paths by organising clearance parties and way-marking projects to make paths easier to follow.

Join the Ramblers' Association and work with 40,000 others to support the national organisation working for all who enjoy walking in the countryside. Membership entitles you to join in the activities of a nearby group as well as many other benefits.

Further details from:-

THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION
1/5 WANDSWORTH RD
LONDON SW8 2LJ



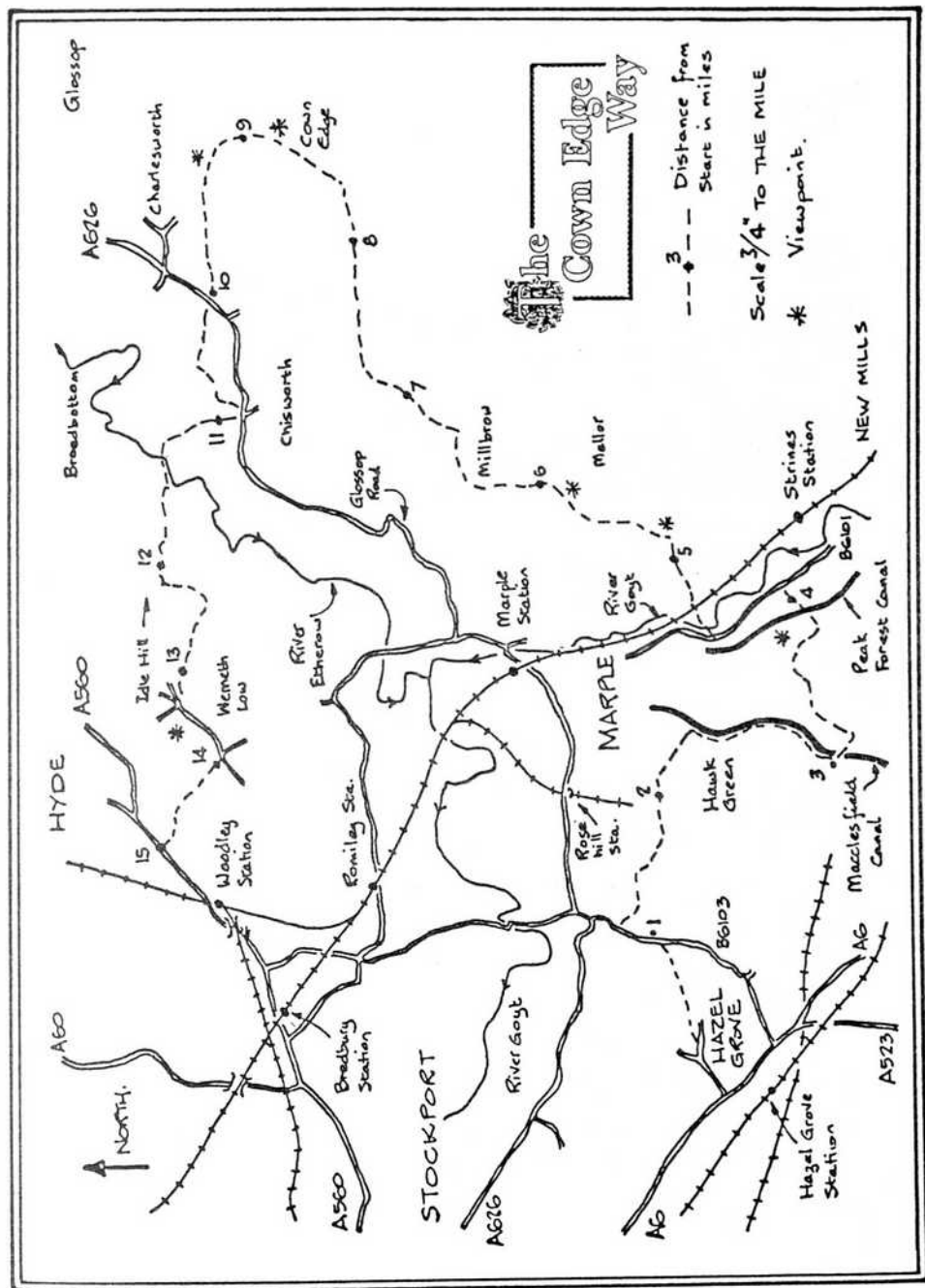
This third edition of The Cown Edge Way
has received financial assistance

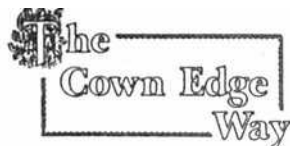
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THE CONCENTRATION OF RESOURCES PROGRAMME

of the

SPORTS COUNCIL





Foreword

As a contribution to European Conservation Year the Rambler's Association (Manchester Area) have signposted and way-marked a series of footpaths from HAZEL GROVE to COWN EDGE and thence to GEE CROSS, forming a continuous route of around 18/19 miles which has been named "THE COWN EDGE WAY".

The aim of the scheme is to allow people to explore the countryside on foot without the need to use map and compass for way-finding, although to follow one's route on a map always gives extra interest to a journey.

Although the route includes some of the most beautiful and varied countryside in this area it is also planned to be accessible from public transport services at a number of points along its length.

Also, motorists wishing to walk part of the route can conveniently leave their vehicles in 'free car parks' at Hazel Grove or Marple and return to them by hourly bus service from Charlesworth after descending Cown Edge.

The Ramblers' Association, Manchester Area, thanks those members who have freely given of their time and talents to enable this third edition of "The Cown Edge Way" to be produced.

We greatly appreciate the drawings of wild flowers by Margaret Brown of Stretford, the views sketched by John Needham of Prestwich, and the sketch maps drawn by John Walton of Chadderton.

This third reprint would not have been possible without the co-operation and assistance of the staff of the Swinton Adult Education Centre, Victoria House, Swinton. We especially wish to thank David Gordon and Bernard Farmer for their technical expertise in typesetting and printing this edition.

Finally, we would like to thank the North West Regional Sports Council for the donation given to the Ramblers' Association toward the cost of the publication. We appreciate the way in which the Sports Council encourages voluntary organisations like the Ramblers' Association to extend their work and horizons.

Myra Gregory
Vice-Chairman 1985

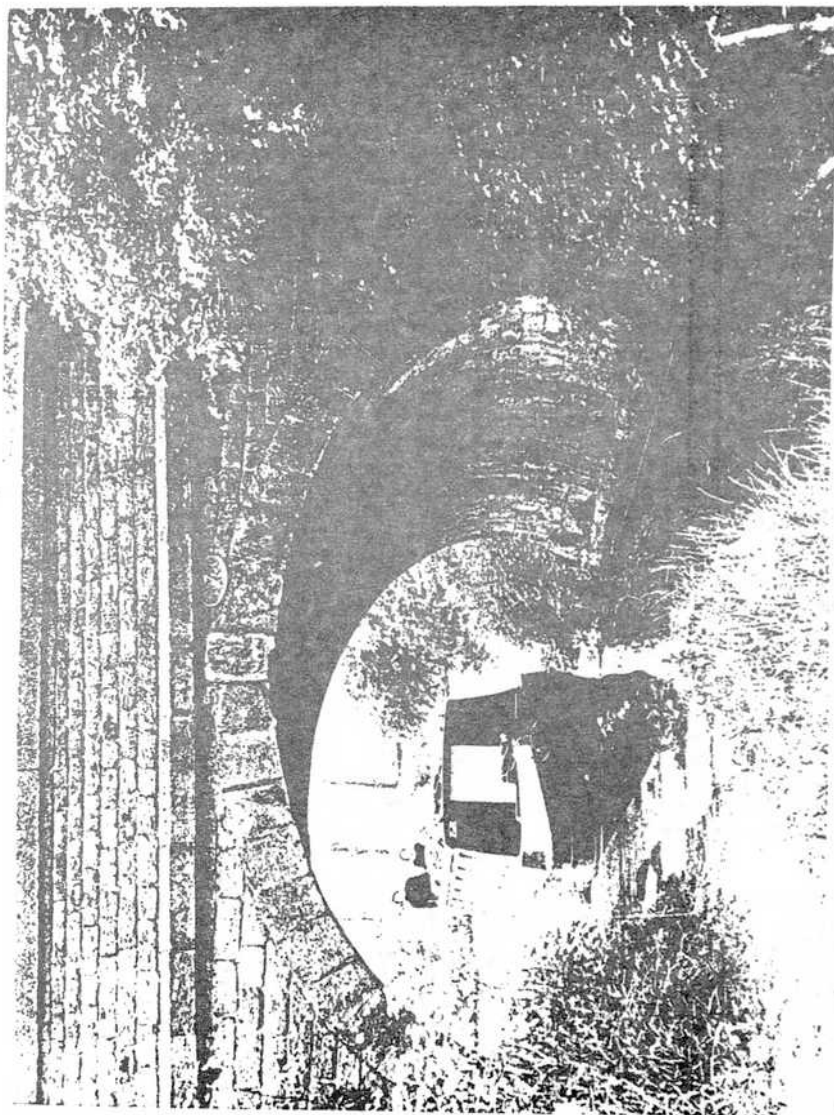
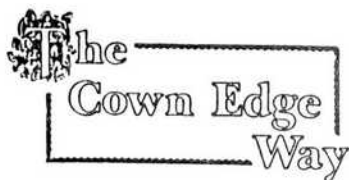


photo A. Carvell

Macclesfield Canal



Background

When National Footpath Week was first heralded in 1970, the Manchester Area of the Ramblers' Association sought a suitable project.

The outcome of many discussions was based on an idea jointly conceived by the late Frank Mason and myself, which was to create a circular, medium distance footpath from and to the outskirts of the Greater Manchester conurbation whilst entering the Peak District National Park at a suitable vantage point. This route was to be capable of being walked in a day, and with adequate public transport at various places along the way, as well as at the terminal points, might also be walked in easy stages.

Other criteria were that the route should be of varied scenic character, not unduly severe in gradient, with panoramic viewpoints, and to be along public rights of way. The idea being approved in principle by the Ramblers' Association Executive Committee, Frank and I, ably supported by the late Dr. Frank Head, began to seek such a route.

The focal point was to be Cown Edge, that huge glaciated crescent shaped feature overlooking the Derbyshire Village of Charlesworth, giving extensive views over Greater Manchester and the surrounding Pennines and lying within the National Park. One terminus was selected at Hazel Grove and the other at Gee Cross, both within easy reach of a railway station and bus services. In particular, the Hazel Grove to Glossop bus service ran reasonably near to the selected route.

The next stage was a map survey, followed by a field survey as well as negotiations with the many Local Authorities involved. We planned to have adequate signposting with way-marking throughout the entire length and this required consultations with local landowners and tenants over whose land the proposed route would pass. Much of the practical field work was carried out by individual teams during the summer of that year, working in pairs. I myself worked with that well known and genial photographer David Glendinning. We spent many long summer evenings tramping the route, establishing the signposts and way-marking; often returning home in the gathering dusk. Memories of those days are indelibly etched in the writer's mind.

Owing to various setbacks we had to accept that the official opening of the route was going to be late and that mid-winter was not the ideal time for the ceremony, even if everything went according to plan. However, after further discussions we decided that as 1970 was to be Conservation Year and our creation was worthy of conserving we would choose Saturday the 26th of September as the day of fruition.

We were fortunate that Tom Normanton, the Member of Parliament representing the greater part of the area concerned, and a strong walker in his younger days, was only too willing to come along to perform the opening ceremony. He was well supported by civic dignitaries from local urban and district councils as well as representatives from other public bodies. The site chosen was on the high ground behind Mellor Church, about the half-way point of the route and with extensive views over the adjacent countryside.

The appointed day dawned bright and sunny, the crowds attended, the speeches were made, thanks were given to all who had assisted, the ribbon was cut and THE COWN EDGE WAY was born.

L.G.Meadowcroft
November 1984



Symbols and Abbreviations

Used In The Sketch Maps

Map Scale

1:25,000

North is to the top of the page

Footpath



Trees



Stream or River

(Arrow indicates direction of flow)



Church



Trig. Point



Road or Track



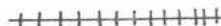
Farm Buildings etc



Built up area



Railway



Direction of walk

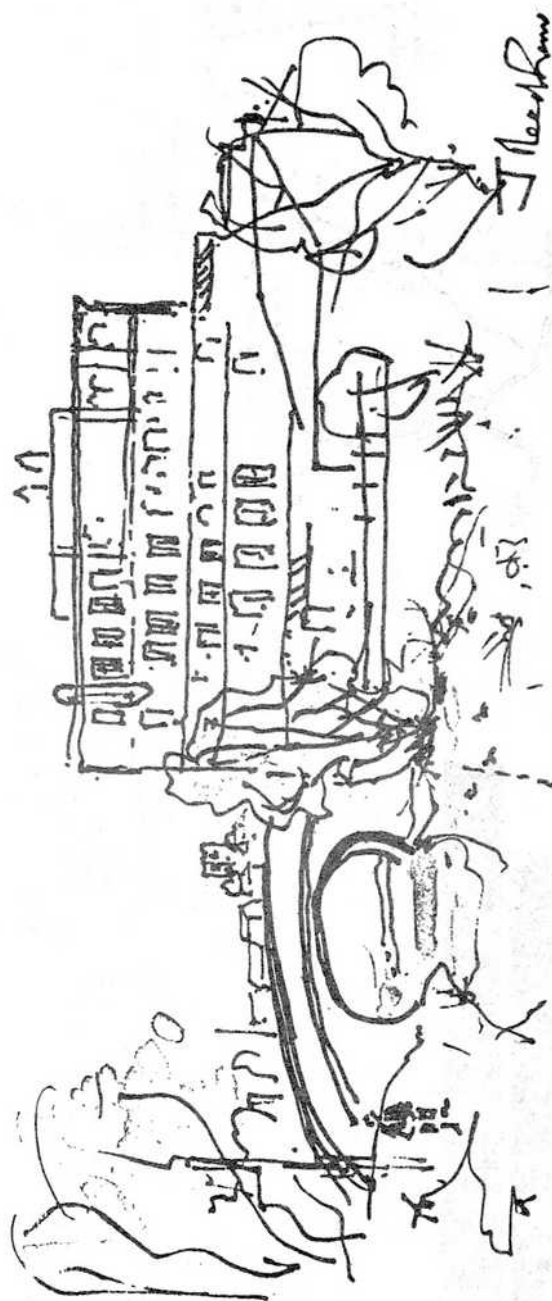


Canals



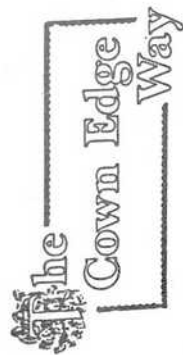
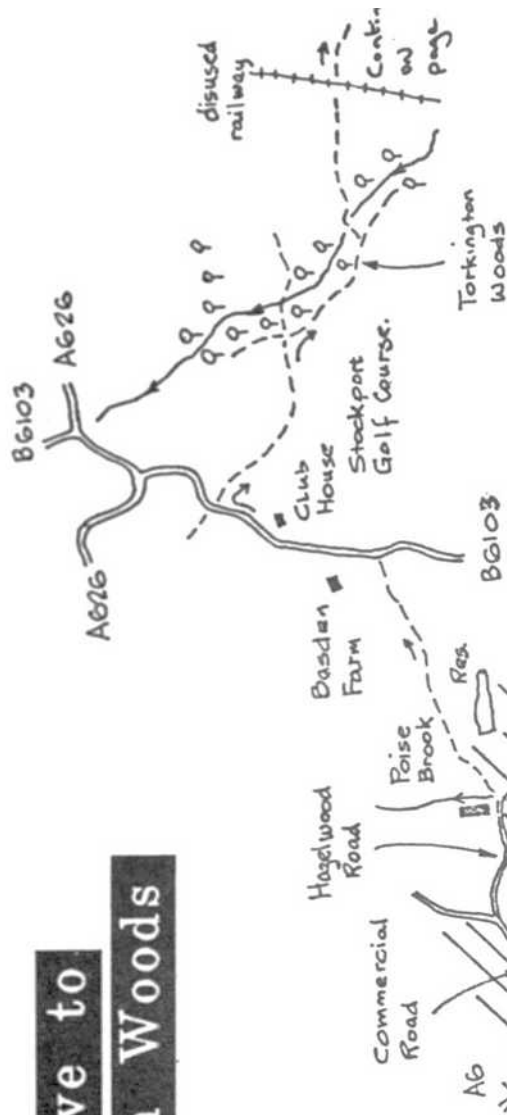
Ordnance Survey Maps

Every effort has been made to check the text for accuracy but the passage of time can bring changes. It is advisable to use the relevant Ordnance Survey Map 1:25,000 Scale (2nd Series). These maps show, in green, the public rights of way and should be used with the sketch maps and text. The map numbers for the Cown Edge Way are SJ 89/99 Manchester and Ashton-Under-Lyne, SJ 98 Stockport and SK 09 Glossop.

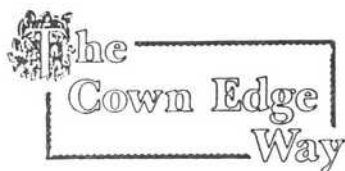


Goyt Mill

Hazel Grove to Torkington Woods



Map 1



Hazel Grove to Torkington Woods

Starting from Hazel Grove, walk or bus along Commercial Road to Hazelwood Road in 'the valley'. Leaving a parade of shops on your right, cross the bridge over Poise Brook and here, by the amber chevroned signpost, the Cown Edge Way commences (Grid Ref. 926875).

THE ROUTE IS INDICATED BY AMBER DISCS AND ARROWS - LOOK OUT FOR THEM.

- HAZEL GROVE: In the year 1560, Richard Bullock leased land from John Torkington for a 'smithy' and the place was known as Bullock Smithy until 1835 when it was re-named Hazel Grove, possibly derived from the hazel tree in Torkington near to Poise Brook

After crossing Poise Brook bear slightly right along the track to pass through a gap in the hedge. Turn right immediately and look for the first amber way-mark at the far end of the field. Cross the Stockport boundary and in a short distance emerge onto Offerton Road and turn left.

- OFFERTON: Entered in Domesday as 'Offretune' - it may have been the name of a ford (Offon or Offo's)

After 500 yards leave the road at signpost to follow the path past and alongside Stockport Golf Course to the next signpost. From here the 'way' leads intriguingly in and out of Torkington Woods until it finally drops to cross the stream, climbing steeply through the woods on the further side to emerge into open fields.

- In the springtime Wood Anemones, Lesser Celandine and Dogs Mercury can be found in Torkington Woods

After a short distance we cross the railway, now unfortunately disused, and Goyt Mill (now minus its chimney) looms ahead.

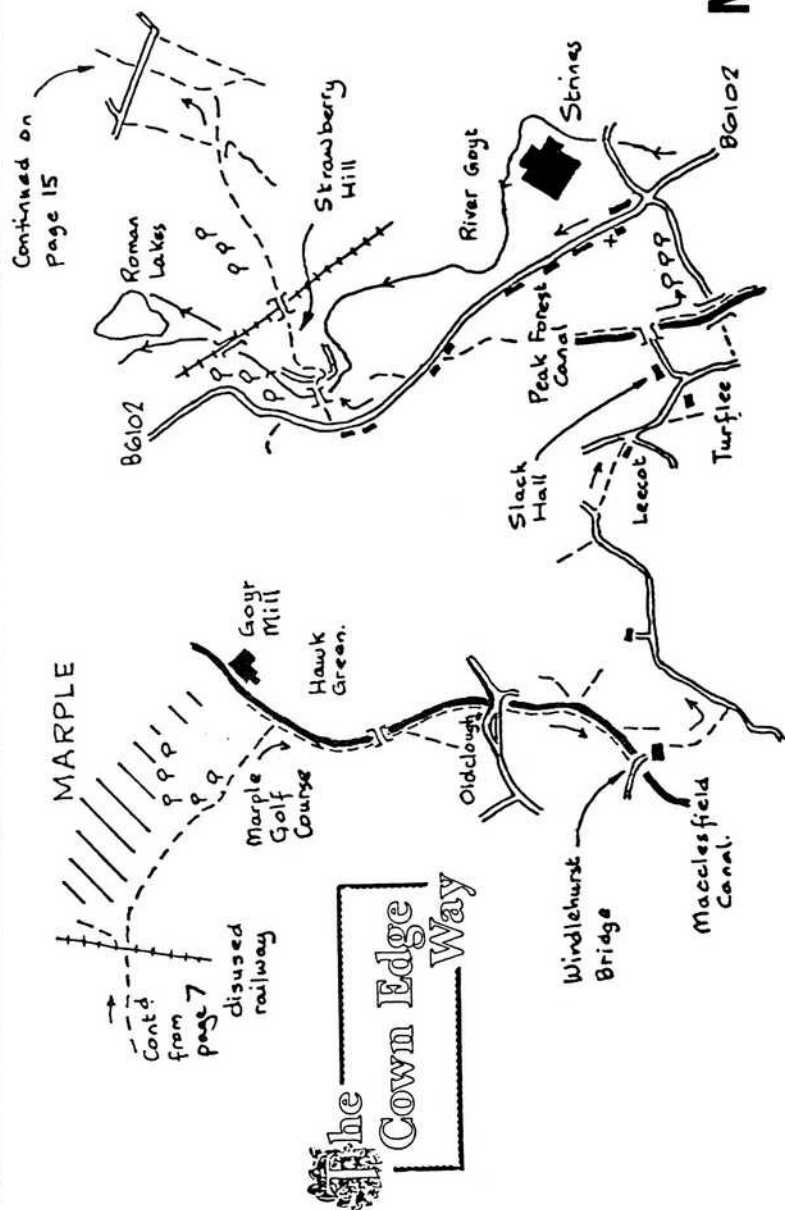
The immediate surroundings are more interesting for here at the right seasons many wild flowers abound; Dog Violets in the dell in spring and Creeping Cinquefoil by the gate in summer. Beyond the railway and through the next field is a huge patch of Thistle.

In late summer when the thistles are in flower watch for butterflies - you may be lucky enough to spot a Painted Lady as well as a Large Tortoiseshell.

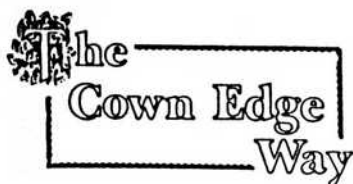


Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)

Marple Golf Course to Mellor Golf Course



Map 2



Marple Golf Course to

Mellor Golf Course

As the path leads across the pleasant green carpet of Marple Golf Course the great bulk of Goyt Mill towers ahead; this factory, sited immediately alongside the Macclesfield Canal, is now sub-let.

● MACCLESFIELD CANAL:

Constructed by Thomas Telford in 1831 for the carriage of coal to Macclesfield, it was not a commercial success. It seems likely to have a more hopeful future with the increasing popularity of pleasure cruising

After crossing the Golf Course the path turns left and then right along the tow path to Windlehurst Bridge where the amber signs show the way across the bridge and along the lane opposite.

As the way passes old farm buildings into the fields the views become wider and more extensive; the massive majesty of Kinder Scout ahead contrasts strikingly with the lush Cheshire Plain behind.

By a sturdy stone stile the road is reached at Turflee. To the left is the hostelry now known as 'The Romper', but which was originally 'The Farmer's Arms'. The way-marked route leads the way to Turflee Farm.

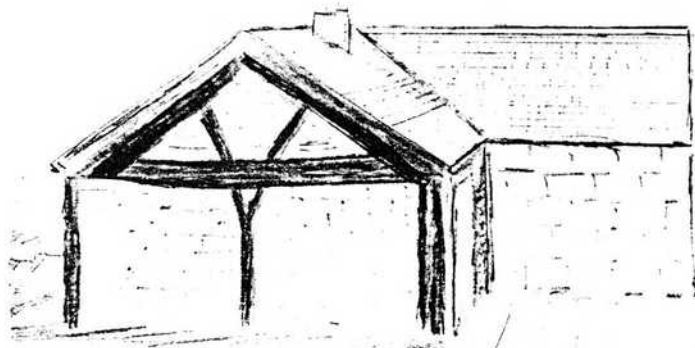


Turflee Farm

At the next signpost a left turn is made past Slack Hall - look out for the Collared Dove in this area - and the track drops down toward the Peak Forest Canal which is crossed by a swing bridge.

A left turn along the towpath for a short distance and then a right turn through a stile to cross the fields provides a magnificent, breathtaking view across the Goyt Valley toward the Derbyshire hills and Kinder Scout.

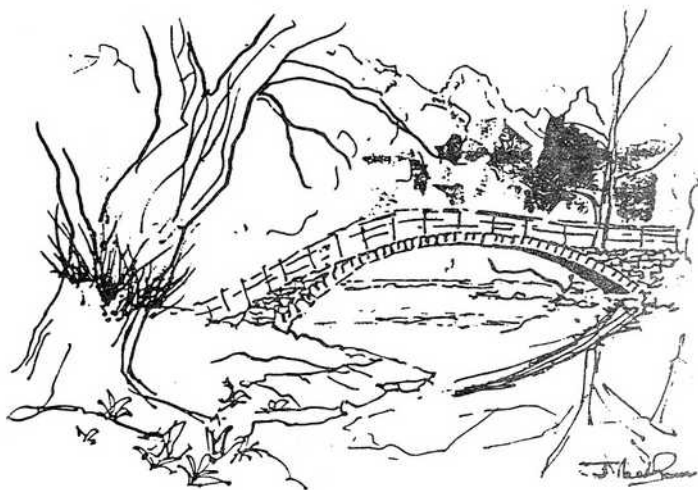
The path leads gently downwards across the field and into a rough lane. On the left will be seen a 'crucks barn', although only the crucks of the front section remain. The interior has been renovated at some time and now seems to be used as a garage for several cars. This structure is to be preserved.



Crucks Barn (from a photograph)

The rough lane passes a group of three lovely old cottages before a left turn is made along Strines Road. Walk along Strines Road until the signpost to Mellor and Cown Edge is reached; turn down the drive on the right, which leads to the River Goyt and Roman Bridge.

- **ROMAN BRIDGE:** The bridge is about 200 years old and was given the title 'Roman' when the Marple railway line was opened about 1860. Originally called Windy Bottom Ridge it had a low turreted parapet which was swept off by a drunken timber-snigger. Later a man was blown off the bridge and drowned, which prompted Samuel Oldknow to erect an iron railing.



Roman Bridge

- **SAMUEL OLDKNOW:** A master weaver of fine muslins, he had built his own great mill at Marple about 1790. The mill was burned down in 1892. He employed many workhouse apprentices who seem to have been better treated than those in many mills at the time; better fed, clothed and housed, and not physically ill-treated. Bottoms Hall near the lake is believed to have been the apprentice house.

Oldknow was also involved in agriculture, coal-mining and lime burning; he put his money into the Peak Forest Canal and various turnpikes as well as providing three quarters of the funds for building Marple Church.

The 'Roman Lakes' were Oldknow's mill lodges

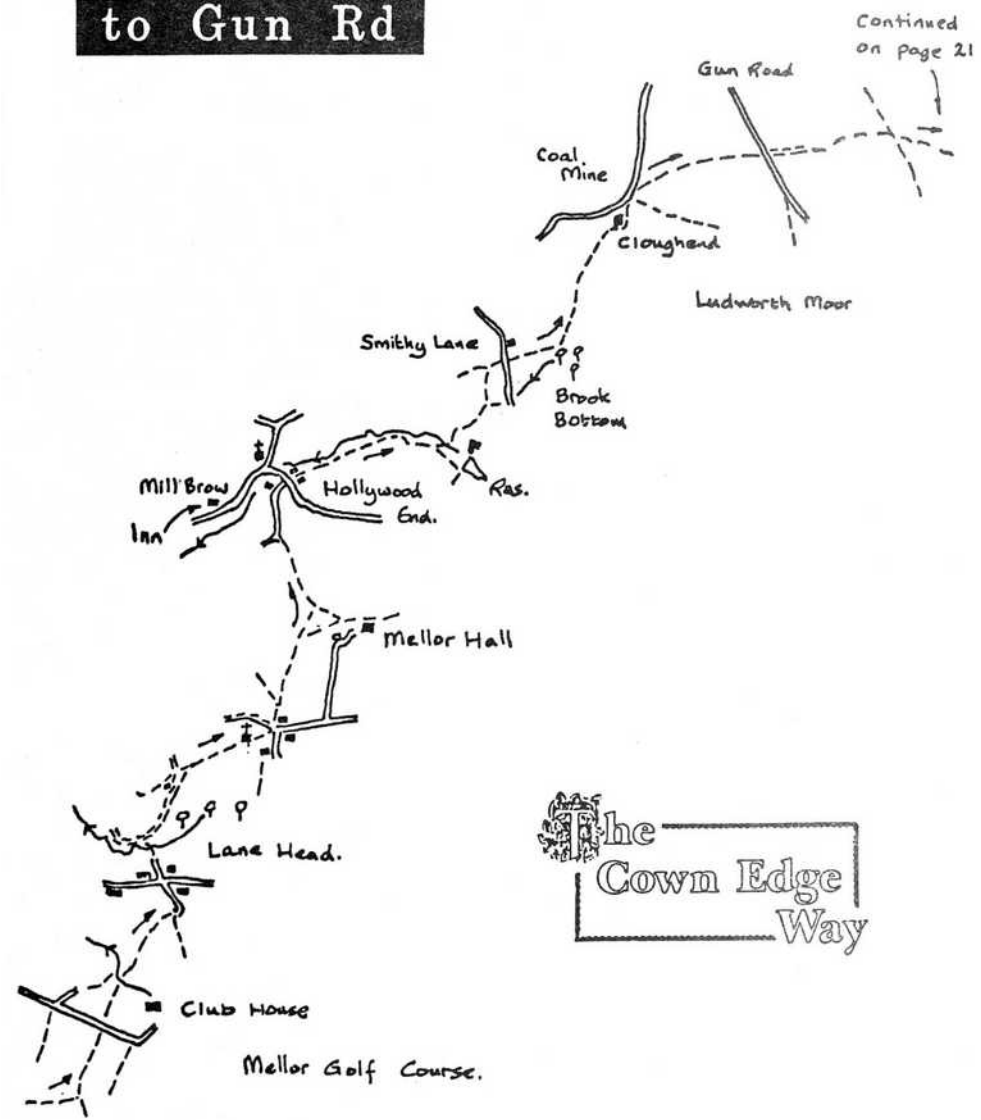
Ramsons grow by the river in spring and later Bittersweet can be found flowering in summer and bearing its bright red berries in autumn

Soon the 'way' leaves the river and leads to the right up Strawberry Hill to cross the railway, on through field and woods to Mellor Golf Course, and thence to not so attractive Linnet Clough Scout Camp.



Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla vulgaris*)

Mellor Golf Course to Gun Rd



Continued from
page 10

Map 3

Mellor Golf Course to Gun Rd

Still in very beautiful country, wooded Linnet Clough is crossed to reach attractive open fields from where a lovely view of Mellor Church, seeming much closer than it really is, presents itself. Passing round the flank of the hill, one can see the remains of an old culvert which supplied extra water for the mill ponds which fed the tandem water wheels of the small candlewick mill that operated in the next clough during the nineteenth century. Old remains of this mill can still be seen.

Crossing Longhurst Lane into a narrow path the 'way' leads down a rough flight of steps to cross a stream.

●

Around here in spring one might find Dog Violet, and in the woods Lesser Celandine and Pink Purslane. Bluebells are of course everpresent at this time of year.



In summer the steps are edged with Harebell and Lady's Mantle; Wild Raspberry and Honeysuckle may be found by the stream; and the woods to the left seem full of Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)

Himalayan Balsam
 (*Impatiens glandulifera*)

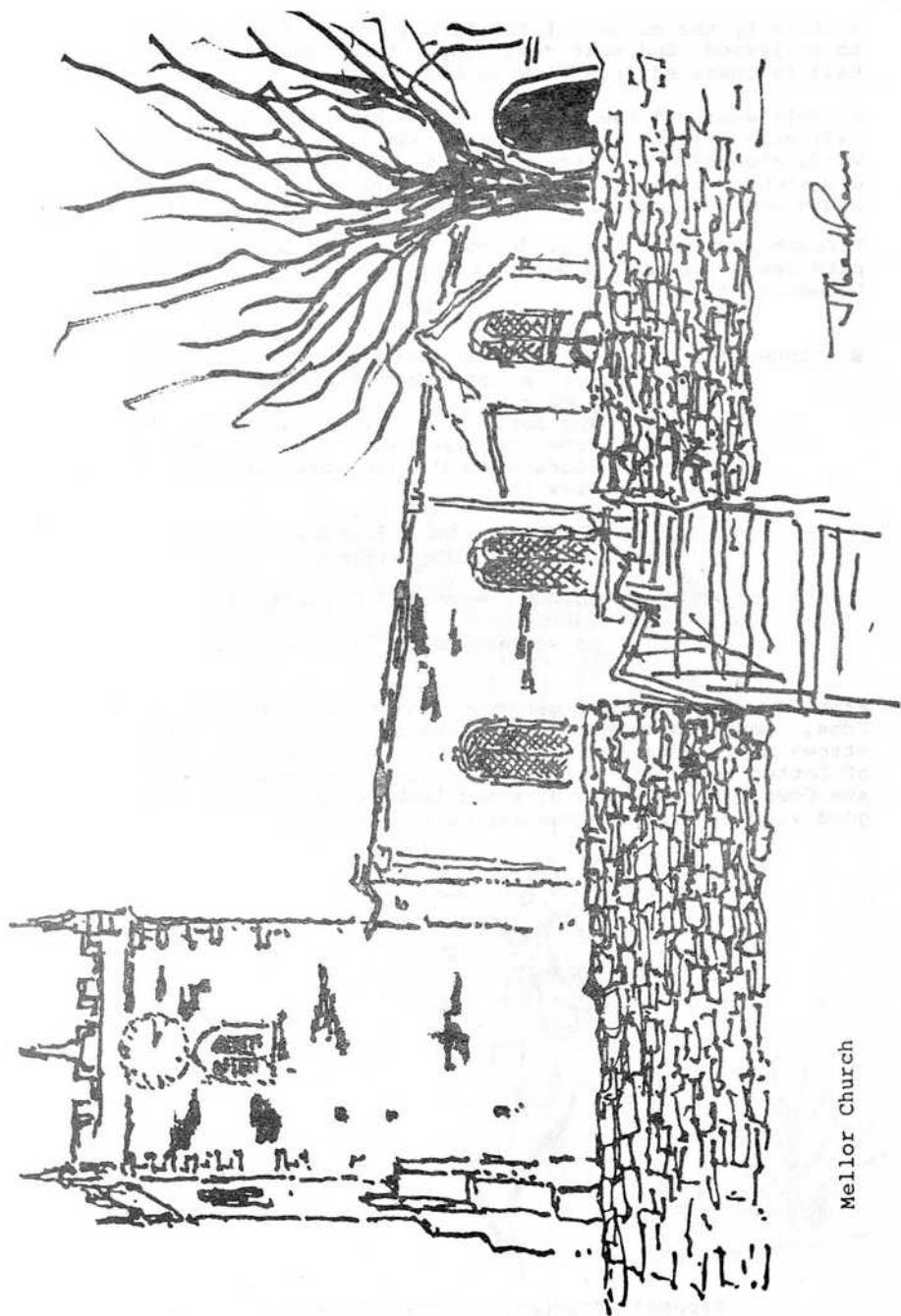


Common Dog Violet
(*Viola riviniana*)

Climbing the other side of the clough, a drive is joined which leads up to Knowle Farm from where a path climbs across the Fields to Mellor Church, beautifully situated and commanding glorious views.

- MELLOR: This is a Celtic Name linked with the Welsh "moelfre" - bare hill
- MELLOR CHURCH: Formerly a chapelry of the Parish of Glossop, it is believed that the first chapel was built here in the reign of Stephen (1135-1154). The nave and chancel were rebuilt in 1829. The tower is partly 15th Century with some earlier portions. A circular font at the west end probably dates from Stephen's time. The pulpit on the north side of the chancel, outside the communion rails, is probably a unique example of an ancient pulpit cut from a solid block of oak - most likely of 14th Century which would make it the oldest in England, and possibly in the whole of Christendom. The earliest pulpits were made entirely of wood

In an old barn near the church gates, and belonging to the church, is a subscription list for the 'new' hearse acquired during last century



Mellor

Mellor Church

A stile by the corner of the barn leads down the fields to Hollywood End near Mill Brow. Unfortunately Mellor Hall is obscured from view on this path.

At Hollywood End the guide post points the way along a half mile of path which is particularly beautiful as it winds alongside the stream through stone stiles and by old stone cottages to cross a footbridge into fields where soon the way marks show the 'way' to Smithy Lane.

Through a gate by the guide post at Smithy Lane a muddy path leads through pleasant country to Cloughend and Ludworth Moor.

● LUDWORTH:

Written in Domesday as 'Lodeworde' but a century later appears as 'Ludeward'.

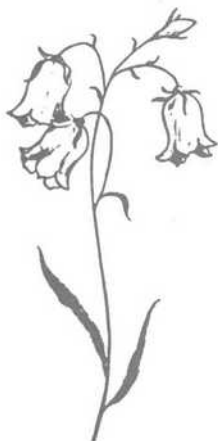
The derivation is thought to be from 'Ludeaurthe' which means 'Luda's Word' but one historian's view is:-

WORTH - an enclosure, probably Anglo-Saxon

LUDDER - an old English name

so we have Ludder's enclosure

From Cloughend another guidepost points the way to Cown Edge, past the one-man coal mine and over the long-strewn moor, interspersed in summer with feathery tops of Cotton Sedge, to the Gun Road. Looking ahead one can see Cown Edge and Cown Nick and looking back there is a good view of Brownlow Tumulus on the Intakes.



Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*)



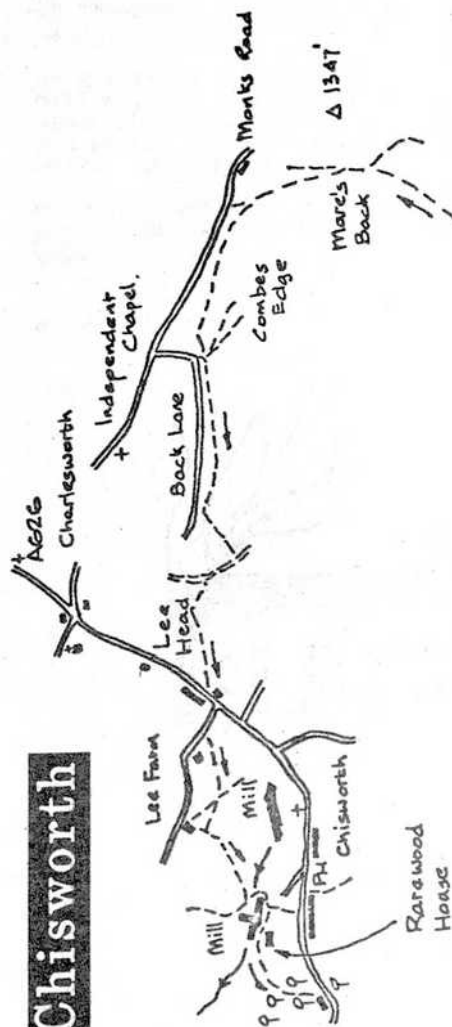
Mellor Church

Th



Th

Gun Rd to Chisworth



Monks Road

Δ 1347

Mare's Back

Rocks Farm

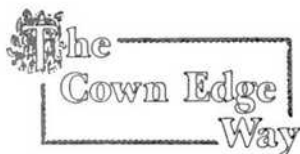
Edge

Gun Road

Continued from page 15

The Cown Edge Way

Map 4



Gun Rd to Chisworth

Across the Gun Road a stoney lane is followed for a short distance to a gate and stile where a sharp right hand turn soon leads to a wall and a left turn to follow the path alongside the wall.

Soon Robin Hood's Picking Rods are reached. The mystery of these stones remains unsolved but some historians suggest that they marked a manorial boundary.

You are now in the PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK.

On approaching Tor Slack a wonderful view unfolds to the north as the gentle climb is made towards Cown Nick and Cown Edge.

Always there is a breeze at this place and on fine days there are glorious views of the hills sheltering the Glossop Valley.

Turning left by the stile by the guidepost at Cown Nick the path crosses a wide stretch of heather to another stile where another left turn leads to Coombe Edge in a hundred yards or so.

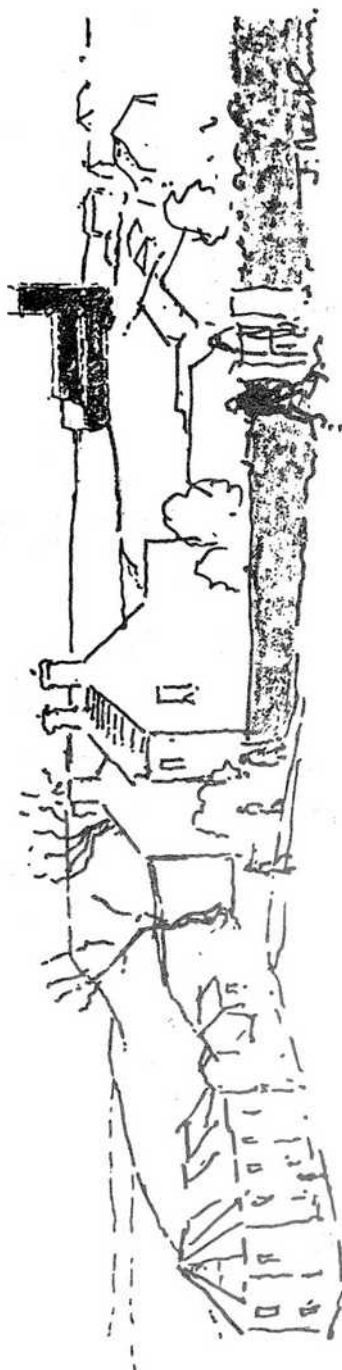
This is a glorious edge - the views are superb.

The path runs roughly parallel to Monk's Road, passing behind the Independent Chapel before finally dropping to Charlesworth Recreation Ground to meet the main Marple-Glossop road at Lee Head.

Turning left the main road is followed for a few yards to Woodseats Lane near Charlesworth Post Office.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| ● CHARLESWORTH/
CHISWORTH: | 'CHARLES'
and 'CHIS' | - old English
names |
| | 'WORTH' | - an enclosure |

The
Cown Edge
Way



Cown Edge from Charlesworth with Mottram Church in background

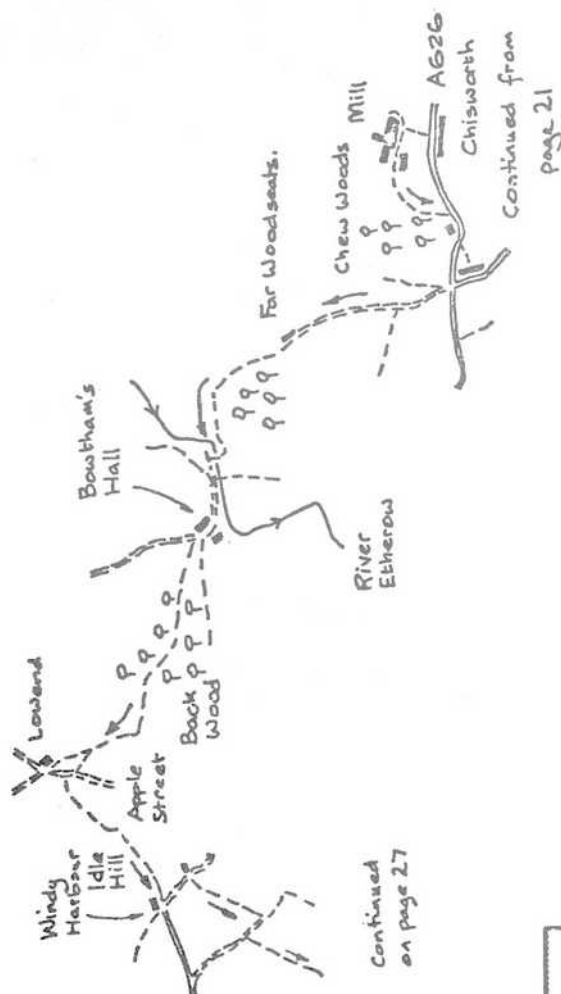
A few yards along Woodseats Lane on the left is a stile onto a footpath leading by the foxhound kennels and across fields to drop gently to a dell behind Kinderlee Mill.

On looking back a fine view of the Coombes horseshoe and St.John's Church is obtained.

Rounding the mill lodge a narrow path leads onto tarmac road again for a short stretch before coming into the trees at Rarewood where in summer the Small Balsalm (*Impatiens Parviflora*) may be found.



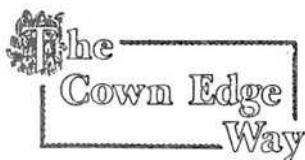
Chisworth to Idle Hill



Continued
on page 27



Map 5



Chisworth to Idle Hill

Leaving the trees a lovely field path leads to Chew Wood. On crossing the stream the 'way' lies ahead amidst oak, birch and rowan trees and passes hollows caused by coal digging during the big coal strikes of the 1920's.

The path ends suddenly on the main road at Chew Hollow and a little road walking is unavoidable as far as Sandy Lane where a turn is made to the right along Far Woodseats Lane. This soon becomes a wonderful green footpath as it passes Far Woodseats Farm and proceeds through such beautiful country that one becomes oblivious of modern civilisation.

This wonderful feeling of isolation may be rudely shattered in summer time by the crowds of people likely to be encountered on the banks of the River Etherow. However, before reaching the river many wild flowers may be seen such as Betony, Scabious, Great Burnit, etc.

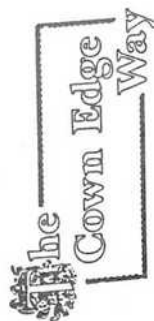
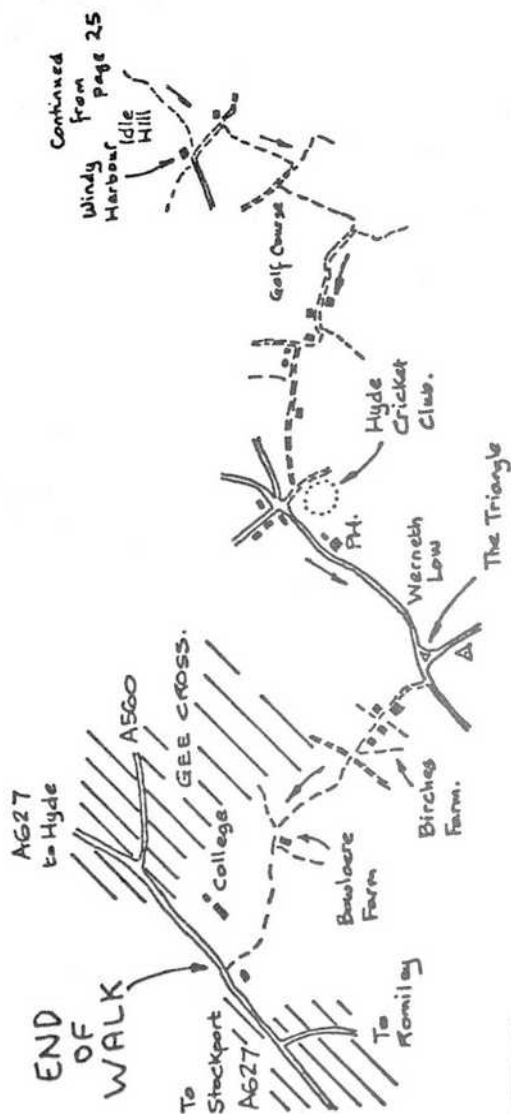
When not crowded this is a pleasant place, otherwise it may be wise to hurry across the iron bridge and head for the lane at the far side of the field.

Along the lane turn left to Bothoms' Hall where in the summer there is a great mass of Himalayan Balsalm, or Policeman's Helmet. Here it is wise to approach the stile carefully, taking avoiding action around the boggy ground.

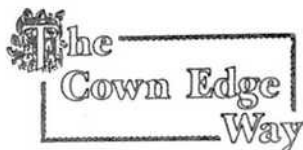
The 'way' now leads by pleasant paths through Back Wood out into open fields and climbs toward Lowend. The views are extensive and provide a fine picture of Mottram Church and Harrop Edge.

On reaching Apple Street a right turn leads quickly on to the path to climb Idle Hill where refreshments may be obtained at Windy Harbour. Here, tea, milk and minerals may be bought and fine views enjoyed while refreshments are consumed.

Idle Hill to Gee Cross



Map 6



Idle Hill to Gee Cross

The 'way' turns sharp left from the original track to descend a short way along the concrete road to a stile on the right which gives access to fields again. For some distance from here the 'way' is a little intricate and it is advisable to follow the amber way-marks with some care, through several stiles, along rough and cobbled lanes, and past some fine old cottages to an interesting lane that goes onto a path past Hyde Cricket Club and leading to Werneth Road.

- WERNETH LOW: There was a settlement here in Anglo Saxon times. It passed to the Earl of Chester at the time of the Norman Conquest and is entered in Domesday as held by him

LOW - A place of burial. There are some 'barrows' on Werneth Low but the period is not known

Werneth Road is the longest stretch of metalled road included in the Cown Edge Way, but it is a very pleasant stretch. It passes the 'Hare & Hounds' and the 'Triangle'.

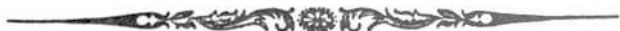
- THE TRIANGLE: This well maintained piece is the result of a combined effort by the Civic Trust and Bredbury & Romiley Urban District Council as part of Operation Springclean 1968. The land was donated by Mr.W.Mansfield of the Hare and Hounds, and the sycamores by Sir William Mather of the Civic Trust

One of the trees was planted by the Queen on her visit to the North in 1968

A few yards beyond the Triangle is the sign for Birches Farm where a lane leads through and across Lord Derby Road - here only a rough track - to a stile and on to a path leading over the fields to Bowlacre Farm. So pleasant are these paths, with fine views all round, it is hard to believe that one is within a short distance of busy industrial towns and main roads.

Passing through Bowlacre Farm yard the path crosses a stream and enters a shaded track which is unexpectedly lovely - a delightful spot in spring time.

Abruptly all the loveliness ends on the busy road by the Woodley boundary (Grid Ref. 945930), but with the compensation that here at hand is your transport home.



For those who wish to walk this route in the opposite direction, alight from transport at Hyde College of Further Education at Pole Bank, Gee Cross, and walk downhill for one tenth of a mile in the direction of Woodley. The stile is then on your left hand side.