Reflection 3
A Politics of Countryside
1800 – 1918

In this reflection, my focus switches from 'land' to 'countryside' and 'landscape'. I explore the hinterlands of the remaining four Mass Trespass motifs: *Urban & Rural Identities*; *Nature & Walking; Recreation & Freedom*; *Accessing Land.* It as a collage of people, ideas, events, groups and movements which set the stage for the cultural politics of countryside in the inter-war period.

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3.1 Urban & Rural Identities [1]

One of the commonest criticisms levelled against the Mass Trespass was that the trespassers were a bunch of young townies who had no appreciation of, or respect for, the English countryside and its special place in the nation's heritage and cultural identity.

Issues of cultural identity are bound up with questions of perception and my reflection on this motif explores the dramatic swings in the perception of the relationship between urban and rural Engand over the course of the 19th century. As industrialisation progressed, concerns about the fundamental character of England's identity were never far from the surface. Was it still an essentially rural / agrarian society or had it become an urban / industrial society? In what ways was England's identity reflected in its landscapes? What were the golden ages people looked back to? What sorts of future identities did they aspire to create and inhabit? Indeed, in the parlance which has emerged since 2019, what were the *culture wars* of the 19th and early-20th centuries around urban and rural identities?

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As a backdrop to this reflection, I provide some basic demographic and economic data. The two tables at the top of the next page are reasonably self-explanatory.[2] The first shows the changing proportion of the growing population of England and Wales living in urban and rural areas, 1801 – 1911. The second shows the changing proportion of national income earned by those working in the agricultural and the industrial sectors over the same century. They are crude measures and more localised details provide more varied pictures. Nevertheless, the tables record important overall shifts that took place over these years; in broad-brush terms, they provide the demographic and economic backdrop for the *urban – rural* ideas and issues I will be exploring here. I will be referring to the data in these tables at various points along the way.

Table 9.1   Urban and rural populations in England and Wales, 1801–1971

	Population (in millions)			Percentage	
	Total	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
1801	8·9	3·1	5·8	34·8	65·2
1811	10·2	3·7	6·4	36·4	63·6
1821	12·0	4·7	7·3	39·2	60·8
1831	13·9	5·9	8·0	42·5	57·5
1841	15·9	7·3	8·6	45·9	54·1
1851	17·9	9·0	8·9	50·2	49·8
1861	20·1	11·0	9·1	54·6	45·4
1871	22·7	14·0	8·7	61·8	38·2
1881	26·0	17·6	8·3	67·9	32·1
1891	29·0	20·9	8·1	72·0	28·0
1901	32·5	25·1	7·5	77·0	23·0
1911	36·1	28·2	7·9	78·1	21·9

Table 1.3   Percentage main industrial distribution of national income (Great Britain) 1801–1901

	Agriculture	Mining, Manufacturing Building	Trade/Transport	Rents
1801	32.5	23.4	17.4	5.2
1811	35.7	20.7	16.6	5.7
1821	29.1	31.9	15.9	6.1
1831	23.3	34.4	17.3	6.4
1841	22.0	34.3	18.4	8.1
1851	20.3	34.3	18.6	8.1
1861	17.7	36.4	19.5	7.5
1871	11.2	38.0	21.9	7.5
1881	10.3	37.6	23.0	8.4
1891	8.6	38.2	22.4	8.0
1901	6.3	40.2	23.3	8.1

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a. The ascendancy of an urban identity 1801 – 1851

In 1804, William Blake published what was to become one of the most resonant statements of the relationship between a rural / agricultural identity and an urban / industrial identity in England. The poem *Jerusalem* appeared in the Preface to his epic: *Milton: A Poem in Two Books.* Quite what it means has been a matter of debate ever since. At its most literal, it appears to suggest that Christ sought, in person, to create an ideal city community within the inhumane environment of the "dark, satanic mills" of the industrial revolution. And even if He didn't make such a visit, we are being exhorted to build our own *Jerusalem* "in England's green and pleasant land."

What is sometimes overlooked is that the *Jerusalem* envisioned by Blake is not itself a rural location. It is not an idealised mixture of Chatsworth, an ancient cathedral city or, for that matter, a replica of the Lake District. It is a specifically urban place, along the lines of the morally uplifting

'Shining City on a Hill' first articulated by the puritan colonists bound for Massachusetts just before they set sail from Southampton in 1630. Blake's vision was of a sanctification of the millscapes, not their destruction. It was not a call to abandon urban centres and return to a state of exclusively rural harmony. In many respects, the dynamism and diversity of eighteenth-century metropolitan / urban life was one of its most distinguishing features . . . Which may be worth bearing in mind when you next sing *Jerusalem*.

Blake was, of course, writing at a time when England was still a predominantly rural and agrarian country. (See Tables above.) Mills and newer townscapes were emerging on to that rural landscape, but it was before the era of railways and heavy engineering. The notion that the 'green and pleasant land' was, and would forever remain, the essential and predominant state of England was in 1800 a truth more or less universally accepted.

Though *Jerusalem* was a vision of a future to be created, there was an element of looking back to an earlier era in Blake's vision of what constituted a 'green and pleasant land'. In his other writings and paintings, the enduring natural world for Blake was not the world of scientific agriculture and enclosed fields and estates. His essentially pastoral vision was, even by 1804, an idealisation redolent of a lost golden age rather than a reflection of a rural present capable of being extended.

By the 1830s, Blake's notion of *Building Jerusalem*[3] had been taken up by Manchester Liberals, free traders, anti-corn law campaigners, industrial entrepreneurs and urban radicals generally who were setting about creating early Victorian cities as new sorts of civic, architectural and proudly urban spaces. The pervasive realities of rural life – deprivation, Swing (food) riots – undermined the cogency of aspirations for a return to a former rural idyll. There was a moment in the mid-19th century when a confident urban middle class, acting as a classic 'bourgeoisie' is supposed to act, devoted vast energies to progressively creating a new urban environment. By dint of what Tristram Hunt terms an energetic 'culture of civic benevolence and philanthropy',[4] the Victoran middle class generated, especially in northern England, a period of 'urbs triumphant' in which, *inter alia,* the development of parks transferred the benefits of a natural countryside into the city – *rus in urbe*. This was an attempt at realising Blake's vision of *Jerusalem*, not as a rural period piece, but as a vibrant urban beacon in the mid-19th century.
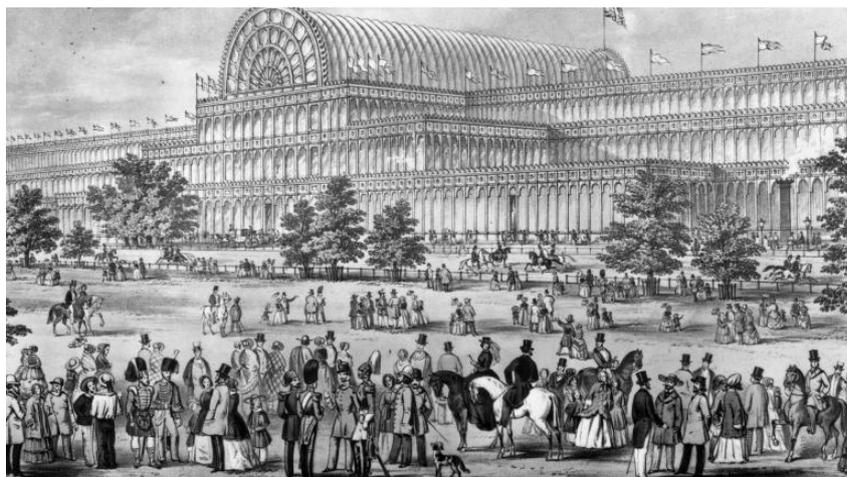
The 1851 Great Exhibition was a confident and assertive symbol of England's emerging identity as an urban / industrial society: the 'workshop of the world'; imperial superpower; trail-blazer for the progressive benefits of global free trade, backed by gunboat diplomacy. A spectacle (circus?) for the lower orders to visit after a train journey and to share in the national pride and identity. It made

all that struggle in factories, mines and fields worthwhile. A fitting way of marking the fact that Chartism had fizzled out in 1848 and England had escaped the evils of continental-style revolution. A similarly fitting way of noting that the 1851 census showed that England was the first country in history where a majority of its inhabitants lived in urban not rural settings. Agriculture's share of national income had declined in roughly the same proportion as industry and manufacturing's share had risen. (See Tables above for 1801 – 1851) England's future identity looked set to be primarily urban rather than rural.[5]

b. Agricultural decline and rural de-population 1851 – 1901/11

Have another look at the Tables for the 1851 – 1911 period. The basic figures are quite startling. A mere sixty years after the Great Exhibition, not only had the population as a whole almost doubled but, at the start of the 20th century almost 80% of the population was living in towns and cities.[6] This was urbanisation of a rapidity and density never before seen. Moreover, within that overall growth, there was an absolute decline in the numbers living in a rural / countryside environment.

The second dramatic shift was the correspondingly steep decline in the share of agriculture in the overall national income of Great Britain. The ramifications of the long Agricultural Depression from the mid-1870s to 1900 were far-reaching.[7] It occasioned a major dislocation and re-shaping of the rural communities in the lowland southern and eastern areas of England – those primarily based on arable farming which could not withstand the competitive pressures from growing volumes of imported grain and other food stuffs in an age of refrigerated shipping. The Depression's impact on the upland, northern and western largely pastoral farming communities was less severe.

By the time Karl Marx died in 1883, he may not unreasonably have thought that he was seeing signs that the era of the "idiocy of rural life" was on its way out altogether in England, to be superceded by an era of ever-expanding productive, industrial urban capitalism. His historicised scheme of things looked to be progressing in its pre-ordained direction, with an urban bourgeoisie inexorably setting up the conditions for its own subsequent overthrow by an industrial proletariat, alongside an increasingly proletarianised agricultural workforce. . .

. . . It did not, of course, happen that way. The upshot of the decline and displacement of the agricultural economy was considerably more contradictory. The ascendancy of a northern-led urban / industrial identity for England faltered. Far from withering away with the economic collapse of agriculture, the culture and ideology of the English countryside and rural identity underwent a remarkable resurgence. A couple of quotes sum up what took place from the late-19th century through to the inter-war years:

> The late nineteenth century English countryside, having to a large degree lost its economic and political significance, became "'empty and available for use as an integrating cultural symbol", and as agriculture declined, the imaginative representation of the countryside as a rural idyll became a dominant theme as the retreat from urban industrialism and materialism, in both a metaphorical and a physical sense, evolved into an identifiable cultural trend.[8]

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> Rural Britain was subsidiary, and knew that it was subsidiary, from the late nineteenth century. But so much of the past of the country, its feelings and its literature, was involved with rural experience, and so many of its ideas of how to live well, from the style of the country-house to the simplicity of the cottage, persisted and even were strengthened, that there is almost an inverse proportion, into the twentieth century,

between the relative importance of the working rural economy and the cultural importance of rural ideas.[9]

The growth of recreational walking and climbing on the part of those living in urban areas was just one aspect of this far-reaching resurgence of the identities and cultures of English ruralism.

c) *Countryside, landscapes and rural idylls 1870 – 1914* [10]

In Reflection 2, I explored ways in which a major strand of late-19th century socialism grew from the rejection of a future society as a radical version of the urban-industrial ascendancy on show at the Great Exhibition. In one form or another, Ruskin, Morris, Carpenter and Blatchford all offered a re-discovery / re-working of what were perceived as more abiding values and virtues of lifestyles rooted in rural environments; on that basis, they constructed their various idylls of a rural socialism.

Early socialists were not alone in their ideological retreat from urbanism and industrialisation, and their re-discovery / construction of idealised rural identities. By the 1880s, Britain was no longer the world's undisputed, leading industrialised nation; within the UK, the centre of economic gravity and dynamism was beginning to move away from northern industrial towns and cities towards the imperial and commercial hub of London. Elements of the London-oriented commercial middle-classes looked to rural landscapes for exemplars of what was best in English life. In response to what they saw as the degeneracy of urban life in general and the Great Wen in particular, they made their own cultural appropriation of what they took to be the underlying and enduring character of rural landscapes of south-east England. Notwithstanding the ravages of the agricultural depression, an idealised, home counties landscape of woods, fields, rolling hills, villages, old market towns and ancient cathedral cities was given meaning as the source of an authentic English identity of order, stability and continuity.

Characteristically English rural 'heritages' were discovered / constructed. For some, the rural idylls and identities to be celebrated, recovered and preserved were the yeomanry and chivalry of the Tudor era, as presented in Edward German's popular 1902 operetta, *Merrie England*. For William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites, the stories and popular heritage inscribed in the southern landscape were rural idylls of a notionally lost medieval village harmony and aesthetic. Bearing in mind that the countryside beyond London visited in Morris's *News from Nowhere* was the Upper Thames valley, it was not completely fanciful to imagine those southern landscapes and townships being inhabited by working people dressed in Walter Crane's medieval peasant smocks celebrating the international fellowship of labour whilst dancing round a maypole! Indeed, if you listened intensely, you may even hear them singing songs from Edward Carpenter's *Chants of Labour*, or folk songs collected by Cecil Sharp.[11] More pragmatically, theories of urban degeneracy coupled with the travails of the imperial army during the Boer War, led some to assert the enduring values of rural England as the natural breeding ground for a more resilient class of fighting men. Others railed against the destruction of the countryside arising from the actions of urban developers and the growth of suburbs around major towns and cities. They also derided the mock-Tudor houses of those who moved to the suburbs – a sort of 'faux-ruralism' displaying a lack of good taste generated as a result of urban living.

I should stress that the pre-WW1 re-discovery of rural heritages and identities and the assertion of their cultural significance was not a 'back to the land' movement. It reflected a certain loss of faith / confidence in the possibility or desirability of urban progress, along with a dose of southern backlash against the perceived brashness of northern Manchester Liberalism and its concomitant industrial working class. For the most part, the values and meanings of the countryside and landscapes which the 'new ruralists' sought to preserve and elaborate were designed to inform and enhance the lives of those who lived in urban areas. After 150 years of industrial transformation, they sought to construct from the landscape a 'traditional' set of rurally-rooted values to inform the future identities of Englishness.

The resurgence of rural idylls was far from being a coherent or unified movement. It was full of cross-currents and contradictions. The various protagonists of rural identities did not sing from the

same countryside hymn sheet. Generalised commitments to the personal and social benefits of engaging with the countryside did not mean that landowners rushed to open their gates to recreational ramblers. They asserted what they saw as their ancient rights and heritage to an exclusive use of their estates for hunting, shooting and fishing. Readers of *Country Life*, first published in 1897, did not find common cause with readers of Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England* columns in the *Clarion* newspaper during the 1890s. The young working class men and women who spent a week in the countryside with the Co-operative Holidays Association had a very different sense of what constituted enjoying the rural landscape from those working class lads and lasses who were members of the Clarion Cycling Clubs. Herbert Spencer and Alfred Russell Wallace were seminal theorists of evolutionary nature; but their respective views on how best to organise one's life and the social order along 'natural lines' were at opposite ends of the political spectrum. The radical rural song *England Arise* written in 1886 by the ethical socialist Edward Carpenter did not sit comfortably alongside A C Benson's 1902 version of rural patriotism *Land of Hope and Glory*. Some sought to recover idealised rural pasts – be it medieval village communities or the Tudor yeomanry. Others sought the creation of more futuristic rural utopias. Some aspired to a pantheism to be found in crags and mountains; others for the rural immediacy and domestic solace of tending one's garden.

Finally, it is worth noting how Blake's *Jerusalem* emerged as an emblem of the new ruralism. It was set to music in 1916 by the pacifist-leaning Hubert Parry towards the end of his life. He was alarmed that it might be used to rouse / reinforce a bellicose patriotism for WW1, so, with the help of Millicent Fawcett, he assigned the performing rights in 1917 to the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies – and it became an anthem to support the cause of votes for women. When the NUWSS dissolved itself in 1928 (job done), the performing rights were assigned to that bastion of rural feminism, the Women's Institute. It entered the public domain in 1968. With the help of Elgar's orchestration of Parry's original composition, *Jerusalem* has resonated ever since as a stridently patriotic assertion of English identity as a rural idyll: a green and pleasant land. . . even though the rentier capitalists have continued to own both the bulk of that land and the mills, factories and commercial enterprises.

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In later sections of this Reflection, I will re-visit ways in which the shifting relationship between urban and rural identities informed the early decades of both the outdoor recreational movement and the access movement. I round off this section with a couple of observations.

Firstly, though the resurgence of ruralism was pervasive, historians have been divided on the extent of its ideological dominance. Martin Wiener[12] made the case that the shift of attention to rural identities in English culture marked the start of Britain's long-term decline as an industrial nation from 1850 to 1980. Others such as Mandler[13] contended that this is a gross overstatement. The late-Victorian and Edwardian turn towards 'ruralism' was, for him, a headline-catching fad on the part of certain sections of the metropolitan elite and their middle-class adherents. Their positions tended to be contradictory; they did little to prevent scientists, entrepreneurs, financiers, administrators, civil servants, economists, local authorities, trade unionists and a loyal working class from keeping the English capitalist show on the road, albeit in the face of growing international competition and the inherent strains of sustaining the Empire. We must not lose sight of those who, at the same time and across all classes, sought to extend and ameliorate the all-pervasive realities of urban life and industrial endeavour and continued to create distinctively new modes of urban community and national identity.

Secondly, an essentially urban cultural pre-occupation with ruralism did not result directly in a systematic attempt to improve the conditions of post-depression rural society. In 1902, Rider Haggard, toured rural England and concluded: "The impression left upon my mind by my extensive wandering is that English agriculture seems to be fighting against the mills of God. Many circumstances combine to threaten it with ruin, although as yet it is not actually ruined." [14] Between 1910 and 1914, the Tory, Liberal and Labour Parties all produced statements / plans for reviving the rural economy, though nothing tangible transpired. What was, nevertheless, in the process of taking shape was a new rural social structure, whose contours became clearer after the intervention of WW1.

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3.2 Nature & Walking

In this section, I offer a collage of ideas from the Enlightenment to the eve of WW1 which have articulated a relationship between walking – and outdoor activity generally – and nature. All have echoes and resonances in the experiences and attitudes of ramblers and climbers involved in the 'outdoor movement' of the late-Victorian and Edwardian era and its subsequent rapid growth during the inter-war years.

a. Rousseau, walking and freedom

The eighteenth-century Swiss-born philosopher and social critic Jean-Jacques Rousseau was one of the walkers whose experience was discussed by Frédéric Gros in his book *Philosophy of Walking.*[15]   Sometimes described as 'The Father of Romanticism', Rousseau is the author of the statement: *L' homme est né libre et partout il est dans les fers.* For Rousseau, the chains which shackled humankind were the entire *mores* and institutions of civilisation.

In his later years, Rousseau very deliberately turned his back on the cosmopolitan society of European reason and enlightenment in which he had been a key figure. Through an increasingly obsessive habit of walking, he sought to return himself to a state of nature, in order to discover within and for himself the primordial experience of being a natural human-being living freely in what he took to be an original natural order – pre-civilisation, pre-property, pre-legal and political systems, even pre-agriculture. Rousseau was viscerally opposed to Lockean notions of property and land ownership; indeed, for Rousseau, the invention of property was – along with agriculture and iron – a foundational point of entry into the civilised order from which he sought to withdraw. A recovery of nature was not, for Rousseau, a return either to some sort of rural idyll of living a harmonious communal life or to some sort of base-line competitive individualism. The most that was feasible for Rousseau, was to strive as far as possible to aspire to a primordial state of hunter-gatherer nature, whilst making an uneasy accommodation with a pared-back civilisation.[16]

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The folk singer Ewan MacColl was perhaps one of the youngest of the 1932 mass trespassers. When he came to write *The Manchester Rambler*, the iconic song inspired by the trespass, the last two lines of the refrain were:

> *I may be a wage-slave on Monday,*
> *But I am a free-man on Sunday.*

I have no idea whether McColl consciously had Rousseau in mind when he came up with these words. I somehow doubt it. But what he undoubtedly did was to present a lyrical and resonant re-assertion of Rousseau's lapidary political utterance, with a touch of marxism in his choice of the term 'wage-slave'.[17] In making this connection between Rousseau and one of the best known accounts of the walking experience of the MassTrespassers, I am not claiming that those on the Trespass were adherents of Rousseau's austere version of early romanticism or his take on the relationship between the natural and the social / political order. Tona Gillett was carrying a copy of a book by Lenin in his pocket, not Rousseau's *Social Contract*. A lot of very turbulent and transformative history took place between Rousseau's pre-revolutionary France and Ewan McColl's and Benny Rothman's England at the height of the inter-war Depression.

What is enduring is the sense that the experience of personal freedom inherent in walking in a natural environment can also be an assertive critique of, and an albeit temporary escape from, the

oppressive relationships and structures of a capitalist social order. Rousseau's experience of walking is some sort of prefiguration of the trespassers' aspiration to achieve a measure of personal and social freedom through moorland walking. . . . Though, for the record, we should note that, for Rousseau, the gamekeepers on Kinder Scout and the landowners who employed them were no less enslaved than the trespassers by the oppressive system of laws and the ideologically constructed and deleterious social order they all inhabited!

b. *Romanticism and landscapes*

The publication in 1798 of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* has been taken as the literary manifesto of an English, Scottish and Welsh strand of Romanticism.[18] Like Rousseau, the Lakeland Poets sought to break away from what they saw as the artificiality of eighteenth-century social and cultural conventions. Like Rousseau, they sought to move beyond the sense of nature as something static and eternally harmonious. Like Rousseau, they walked a lot. But unlike Rousseau, they were not seeking an austere, primordial and essentially interior sense of nature. The nature they sought in their poetry and their walking was infused with a strong sense of affinity with location and landscape.

In this they were building on what had already become an established feature of the Cumbrian landscape. By the mid-eighteenth century the Lake District was already attracting travellers who came with the express purpose of being overawed by mountains, crags and fells. It was a more thrilling and awe-inspiring landscape to look at and be in than the idealised, 'capability browned' and increasingly enclosed landscapes of lowland England.[19] Insofar as there is some sort of visceral relationship between the external forms, shapes and movements of the landscape and one's inner emotions and responses when seeing and walking through that landscape, then Lake District landscapes were deemed to have the capacity to evoke powerful sentiments of awe, terror, wonder, excitement and the sublime.

This was Nature, not as somewhere to seek order or a comfortable sense of communal belonging, but Nature as somewhere more dynamic, less capable of being reduced to human scale. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the walking of Lake District visitors tended to be valley and low-level walking rather than the more energetic and potentially hazardous business of walking on the higher fells; up to tarns maybe rather than on to the higher ridges. Rocks and crags were there to be mined and quarried rather than climbed. Looking at, and being in, a dramatically enveloping landscape was the primary purpose of such outdoor activity.

One can, however, find a few early accounts of a more adventurous approach to Lakeland walking. Lake District fell-walkers will be familiar with the problem of Broad Stand, the low cliffs which look beguilingly scrambleable but create huge risks and problems for non-rock-climbers trying to cross directly between Scafell and Scafell Pike.[20] Vardy (2012) is a fascinating account of Coleridge's near-death experience of descending Broad Stand in 1802 and the use he made of the terror of that experience in a later poem.[21]

Landscape romanticism was not Cumbria-specific. Rebecca Solnit provides an insightful reading of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* which explores the various meanings and emotional resonances of walking in lowland countryside and the reconfigured landscapes of large estates and country parks.[22] Pennine moorlands and wildernesses also had the capacity to evoke a similar emotional rapport as the Lake District fells. Take Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights (*pub 1847*),* with the adopted Heathcliff striding across the moors and disrupting the lives of the Lintons and Earnshaws. Walter Scott was doing the same in his novels for the landscapes of Scotland – and a few bits of Wales and England.

Wordsworth may have sought to extol the virtues of the rural poor and the sensibilities aroused by the landscapes they inhabited. Indeed, he did exactly that when he published the first edition of

A Guide to the District of the Lakes in the North of England in 1810 to educate and inform the early visitors.[23] But he opposed the building of the branch railway line to Windermere, and his sister Dorothy, whose observations found their way into her brother's poetry, felt that "a green field with buttercups would answer all the purposes of the Lancashire operatives."[24] Romanticism for Wordsworth was not 'for the people'; it was not a social or political extension of his youthful radicalism in France during the Revolutionary years.

There was an aura of landscape romanticism across much of the literature on the nature-walking relationship across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, often accompanied in one form or another with assertions or assumptions about the wider relationships between the natural and social orders.[25] And, of course, the railway did arrive in Windermere, Keswick and Coniston – as it did in Edale, Hayfield and Glossop on the edge of the Dark Peak. And the Lancashire operatives began to make their way there. As the nineteenth century progressed, landscape romanticism which began as a set of literary and aesthetic sensibilities diffused into a more pervasive sense of a commonly accessible set of elevating experiences occasioned by being, walking, climbing and generally moving under one's own steam in rural and open landscapes – mountain, moor, park, riverside and fen. And, looking forward, we find landscape romanticism alive and well when Alfred Wainwright first arrived in the Lake District by public transport in 1930. After climbing up Orrest Head on the eastern shore of Windermere, he noted:

> *I was totally transfixed, unable to believe my eyes. I had never seen anything like this. I saw mountain ranges, one after another, the nearer starkly etched, those beyond fading into the blue distance. Rich woodlands, emerald pastures and the shimmering water of the lake below added to a pageant of loveliness, a glorious panorama that held me enthralled. I had seen landscapes of rural beauty in the local art gallery, but here was no painted canvas; this was real. This was truth. God was in his heaven that day and I a humble worshipper.[26]*

c. Naturalist scientists

Taylor[27] makes a compelling case that, for much of the early nineteenth century, many of those walking in the countryside were not urban walkers fleeing cities and towns in search of fresh air and the sublime in rural landscapes, but botanists, geologists, naturalists seeking specimens. Most of them were amateur scientists, though some went on to make their mark as science professionals and academics.

Some were clergymen, collecting plants, butterflies and other flaura and fauna, which they meticulously measured, classified and preserved. Initially they tended to practise their naturalism within the framework of Paley's Natural Theology. Indeed, Charles Darwin, although he opted not to be ordained, began his life as a naturalist in that tradition collecting beetles and breeding pigeons. He encountered Adam Sedgwick and Charles Lyell, the professional geologists who were doing early work, not by being overawed by the rocks of the Lake District and North Wales, but by closely examining their strata and composition – and beginning to realise that the data and evidence opened up the thorny issues of geological time and, given the fossil record, species identity.

Other naturalists scouring the coutryside included growing numbers of urban autodidacts who joined the Botanical Societies, Natural History Societies, Mechanics Institutes and the like in towns and cities. They made careful drawings of what they found and shared them with others in a spirit of rational enquiry and improving science rather than necessarily aiming to demonstrate God's beneficent design of the natural order.[28]

The naturalists tended to be less wistful about things rural. They were part of the forward-looking, confident urban citizens of the early-nineteenth century who saw the natural world as a source of useful knowledge and resource potentiality. They marvelled at nature with its intricacies and its immensity; they were champions of nature without being drawn into wider debates about

whether the natural and social order were in conflict and/or a state of decline and loss. They were also, of course, the outriders for the major ideological battle over Nature in the mid-nineteenth century arising from theories of evolution.

d. Alpinists, mountaineers and trampers

The mid-nineteenth century saw the first flush of upper- and upper-middle class mountaineering in the UK, in which climbing in the Alps was the dominant aspiration and driver. The Alpine Club was established in 1857, with a select group of 'senior clubs' arriving in the following decades.[29] What informed their identities was a complex mixture of assertive masculinity, muscular aestheticism, imperial conquest, a desire for solitude and self-discovery, and a pantheistic love of natural beauty. A leading figure was the author and critic Leslie Stephen; in his book *The Playground of Europe* he sought to explain the allure and meaning of Alpine walking and climbing, within which there was a strong sense of neo-romanticism:

> *The mountains represent the indomitable force of nature…they suggest not sheer misanthropy, as they did to Byron, or an outburst of revolutionary passion, as they did to his teacher Rousseau, but that sense of awe-struck humility which befits such petty creatures as ourselves…If I were to invent a new idolatry…I should prostrate myself, not before beast, or ocean, or sun, but before one of those mighty masses…Their voice is mystic…The loftiest and sweetest strains of Milton or Wordsworth may be more articulate, but they do not lay so forcible a grasp upon my imagination.[30]*

A youthful and handsome George Mallory was to write in 1916:

> *To what part of the artistic sense of man does mountaineering belong? To the part that causes him to be moved by music or painting, or to the part that makes him enjoy a game?' His response was unequivocal: 'Mountaineers of my sort…claim that something sublime is the essence of mountaineering. They can compare the call of the hills to the melody of wonderful music and the comparison is not ridiculous.[31]*

The mountaineers were a self-confident, closely-networked elite. When they were not in the Alps, they met up at a few venues in England and Wales, to climb and walk energetically and then spend their evenings together dining, reading poetry, playing games and generally having the sort of good time together that immensely fit ex-public school men were accustomed to. Their exploits at the Wasdale Head Inn in the Lake District and the Pen-y-Pas Hotel at the head of the Llanberis Pass were legendary, as indeed were their activities on the nearby mountains and crags.

For the most part, what the alpinists and mountaineers got up to socially and on the mountains was way beyond the experience, aspirations and opportunities of most other people who sought to climb or walk in wilder and higher open landscapes in England. There was, however, one aspect of the mountaineers' activities in the Lake District and North Wales which was adopted more widely by the walkers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. To keep themselves fit and build their stamina whilst away from the Alps, the mountaineers set themselves endurance challenges. In the Lake District and North Wales this tended to be climbing large numbers of peaks within, say, a 24-hour period. The classic challenge in North Wales was 'The Welsh 3000s' – all the summits over 3000-feet above sea level. Similar traverses could be set across the Lakeland fells. And if, for some reason, they wished to avoid high ground, then they set themselves enormous distances to walk – an activity which came to be known as "Tramping".

The practice of tramping beyond the contexts of Alpinism and Mountaineering was popularised by Leslie Stephen when he felt too old to climb in the Alps or keep up with the young tigers at Pen-y-Pas. In 1879 he set up a walking group amongst his intellectual chums in London which came to be known as the London Tramps. They walked enormous distances around the countryside of the

home counties – and occasionally across the city itself; their tramping was a combination of long-distance walking and high-powered intellectual conversation.

When he came to write *In Praise of Walking*, Stephen rehearsed, in more accessible form, the aura of romanticism which informed his mountaineering.

> *Walking is among recreations what ploughing and fishing are among industrial labours: it is primitive and simple; it brings us into contact with mother earth and unsophisticated nature; it requires no elaborate apparatus and no extraneous excitement. It is fit even for poets and philosophers, and he who can thoroughly enjoy it must have at least some capacity for worshipping the "Cherub Contemplation" . . .*

> *The true walker is one to whom the pursuit is in itself delightful; who is not indeed priggish enough to be above a certain complacency in the physical prowess required for his pursuit, but to whom the muscular effort of the legs is subsidiary to the "celebration" stimulated by the effort; to the quiet musings and imaginings which arise most spontaneously as he walks, and generate the intellectual harmony which is the natural accompaniment to the monotonous tramp of his feet. . . .*

> *Walking gives a charm to the most commonplace British scenery. A love of walking not only makes any English country tolerable but seems to make the charm inexhaustible. I know only two or three districts minutely, but the more familiar I have become with any one of them the more I have wished to return, to invent some new combination of old strolls or to inspect some hitherto unexplored nook. . . .*

> *To me it was a reminder of the many delicious bits of walking which, even in the neighbourhood of London, await the man who has no superstitious reverence for legal rights. It is indeed surprising how many charming walks can be contrived by a judicious combination of a little trespassing with the rights of way happily preserved over so many commons and footpaths[32]. . . .*

e. A non-romantic perspective on walking in 1912: Arthur Sidgwick

Arthur (Hugh) Sidgwick's *Walking Essays*[33] are an intensely idiosyncratic set of reflections on walking in the home counties countryside. His starting-point is quite explicitly not the primacy of the relationship between the walker and the natural environment / landscape in which they are walking. He critiques Worsdworth at the outset and berates him for not being an attentive or proper walker! Sidgwick's approach to walking is grounded in the physicality, the bodily motions and immediate sensations and experiences of the human activity of walking. From this position he goes on to provide an elaborate set of observations on all sorts of walking-related cultural topics. He confidently expounds on the inadvisability of combining walking and talking; he does not demand solitariness, but cautions against general conversation beyond the immediacy of the experience of the walker. He explores the relationships between walking, music and rhythms. He philosophises about walking and sport, and ends up asserting that walking may have some affinity with athletics, but is definitely not a sport. He also has his own pass at trespassing and rights of way; he maintains that 'rights of way' are officially sanctioned trespass opportunities which perpetually remind the landowners that their land must be shared to some extent. And in the midst of all this he offers us many of his other opinions as a 'modern' young man in 1912.

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3.3 Recreation & Freedom

In the previous section, I used the refrain: *I may be a wage-slave on Monday / But I am a free man on Sunday* from Ewan McColl's *The Manchester Rambler* at the start of my reflections on the relationship between Nature and Walking. That same refrain also points to the relationship between recreation and freedom.

In my reflection on this motif, I will look at the emergence of recreational rambling in the early-19th century and then at ways in which the growth and development of rambling and similar outdoor activities were shaped by more general attitudes towards recreation and leisure-time in pre-WW1 decades. I will end with a few thoughts on the general political and cultural tensions underlying the growth of leisure-time which continued into the inter-war years.

a. The emergence of recreational walking in the countryside

By the end of the 18th century, the Lake District had already established an identity for itself as a special English landscape to visit and savour as a tourist.[34] Wordsworth was able to build on that identity in the various editions of his *Guide to the Lakes*, which sought to instruct the visitors on what to expect in that landscape, how to behave there and interact with it emotionally and culturally. It took several generations, however, for 'visiting the Lake District' by an elite group of tourists to generalise into 'recreational walking in the countryside' for the lower-middle and working classes of Victorian towns. The following way-stages marked that process.

Early footpath preservation societies such as the Manchester Association for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths (founded 1826) along with public health initiatives such as the Select Committee on Public Walks set things in train. The 1833 interim report of the Select Committee observed that:

> *. . . during the [last half century], from the increased value of property and extension of buildings, many inclosures of open spaces in the vicinity of towns have taken place, and little or no provision has been made for public walks or open spaces, fitted to afford means of exercise or amusement to the middle or humbler classes, [and] that any such provision of public walks and open places would much conduce to the comfort, health and content of the classes in question.[35]*

In the wake of that report and the incorporation of cities and towns, the work of the footpath preservation societies progressed under the broad umbrella of civic obligations to provide a measure of recreational space for those living in urban environments. This entailed grappling with issues ranging from who should occupy and walk along footpaths on urban spaces / streets to how to curtail / control the tendency of large groups of people to gather on open spaces and moorland beyond city boundaries for mass meetings.[36] Learning how to structure the spaces and mobilities of life in the newer urban landscapes also entailed defining for urban inhabitants appropriate ways of accessing and walking within surrounding rural landscapes. Creating a sense of the values and *mores* of urban living entailed the parallel construction of appropriate behaviours to which the new urban classes could aspire when they found themselves in rural landscapes –behaviours often at complete odds with the lived experience of those living and working in those surrounding landscapes.[37]

Within those contexts Liberal and Tory paternalists alike began to create *rus in urbe* walks and parkland areas along the lines of Eagley Park in Bolton in 1850 which was celebrated by a local journalist P A Whittle:

> *. . . this is about fifty yards from the mills, and occupies a long slip of land, running along the valley. . . It is now a pleasant spot of land, made for the recreation of the people. The art of man has effected a promenade for the working classes. A notice is posted up,*

desiring that no one will gather the flowers, injure the shrubs, deface the seats or injure the walks.

Whittle went on to note more rhapsodically:

We have always found in our rural walks pleasure, for there it is we are taught botany, geology, dendrology: there is sublimity in every hedgerow . . . the fruitful valley where the gurgling stream is running. These teachings will fill the mind with knowledge, improve the morals, render the heart more pure, make us more intelligent, and cause us to glory in the wonders of creation.[38]

What one catches here is an early assertion of both the strengths and the downsides of Victorian philanthropy. We will explore those ambiguities more fully in due course.

For those with the means, guidebooks to places to walk in the northern countryside began to be published by the mid-19th century. They were somewhat more prosaic than Wordsworth, but they helped create the sense of walking / rambling as a respectable and desirable recreational activity: *Walks around Huddersfield* (1848), *Rambles round Glasgow* (1854) *Rambles by the Ribble* (1864), and, indeed, the wonderfully titled: *Rural Rambles in Cheshire; or walks, rides and drives for Manchester and other people: a guide book to the scenery, antiquities and gentleman's seats within walking distance of the Altrincham and Cheshire Midland Railway* (1862).[39]

The viability of publishing such guide books suggests that, by the mid-19th century, families, friends, church / chapel groups were beginning to walk beyond the immediately accessible urban parks and open spaces. It is reasonable to assume that people in Bury would climb the hill to visit the Peel Tower and those in Todmorden would climb up to take in the view from Stoodley Pike and, in both instances, wander along the adjacent pathways and lanes on to and across the moorlands. The people of Haworth probably walked on to the moors behind the Bronte's parsonage, though whether they were driven there by Heathcliffean romanticism is, perhaps, a moot point.

b. Recreation: 'our instruction' and 'play'

By the 1860s, the basic shapes and rhythms of the urban working day / week were settling down. For the burgeoning urban working and lower-middle classes, time and space was emerging in their lives for a measure of notionally self-directed personal and social activity beyond the relentless requirements of work, repose and the basic routines of social reproduction. This recreational time was reflected in the aspirational slogan: *"Eight hours for work; Eight hours for our instruction; Eight hours for repose"* adopted by the TUC at its inaugural 1868 Congress in Manchester.

It is noteworthy that the TUC opted to define this personally available space / time as an opportunity for 'our instruction', rather than 'recreation', 'leisure' or 'free time to do what we choose for ourselves'. 'Instruction' hardly reflects the array of working-class leisure-time activities, individual and communal, which were beginning to emerge. Playing football, supporting football teams, day-trips to the seaside, wakes weeks, going to entertainments, drinking with one's mates, racing pigeons and greyhounds, singing in choirs, going with the family to the park, simply enjoying a bit of time away from the disciplines of work or, of course, walking in the countryside. In their choice of 'eight hours for our instruction' as an objective, the upright delegates to the first TUC reflected the *zeitgeist* of those dominant norms of the later Victorian years, respectability and self-improvement.[40]

The omnipresent Ruskin, in his customary high-minded way, also had something to say about the new opportunities for recreation, non-work time or, as he put it 'play':

> *A healthy manner of play is necessary . . . to a healthy manner of work . . . [T]he choice of our recreation is, in most cases, left to ourselves, while the nature of our work is as generally fixed by necessity or authority. It may well be doubted whether more distressful consequences may not have resulted from mistaken choice in play than from mistaken direction in labour.*[41]

Considerable influence was brought to bear on the choices which the lower-middle and working classes were expected to make when it came to matters of 'play'. A vast panoply of Victorian religious, philanthropic and educational endeavour sought to instruct the working class in what they should and should not choose to do in their non-working hours and to nurture a sense of personal respectability and individual self-improvement through what came to be termed 'rational recreation'.

Alongside the constraints of high Victorian moralism, the freedom to choose how to spend one's recreational time was also shaped, to a large extent, by the growth of commercial concerns which laid the foundations of paid-for leisure-time activity – holidays, seaside resorts, days out, sport and, indeed, cultural activities such as music halls. Recreation as a matter of consumer choice was a feature of leisure-time by the Edwardian years.

c. Choices in recreational walking: CHA or Clarion?

As Leslie Stephen noted, going for a walk in the countryside is a pretty basic activity, not much more practically or ideologically complicated than going a bit futher afield than a walk in a park on the edge of town. It is remarkable, therefore, that once the lower middle and working classes found their way to the countryside during the last few decades of the Victorian era, they found themselves in the midst of a clamour of advice on how they should do it, what their attitudes towards the countryside should be and what they must and must not do.

They had to contend with the ambiguities and contradictions of the network of organisations which publicly took a lead in the growth of walking as a popular recreational activity for the lower middle and working classes. At the same time as municipal authorities were laying down bye-laws on what was and was not acceptable behaviour in urban parks, the organisations of the early 'outdoor movement' were performing the same regulative function on what was and was not acceptable recreational behaviour for the working class urban dwellers visiting the open countryside.[42] They provided boundaries, often quite subtle, between the characteristics of walking and climbing in the countryside which reflect a world of "improving and respectable recreation" (hurrah!) and those characteristics which reflect a murkier world of fun and mass leisure-time (boo!). A couple of groups which emerged in the 1890s give an indication of the spectrum of options and issues facing those who were considering how and with whom to do a bit of rambling in their free time.

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The Co-operative Holiday Association [CHA] was the outdoor / countryside movement's pre-eminent organisation in the 'rational recreation' firmament.[43] Established in 1893 by the Congregationalist minister from Colne, T A Leonard, the CHA offered all-comers, on a strictly non-class basis, week-long holidays built round a range of activities which provided a sustained engagement with the countryside. The holidays were in basic accommodation, they ate wholesome fare, with everyone undertaking catering on a communal basis. Things were a bit spartan and there were dress codes to ensure that no-one appeared too fancy or over-dressed. During the day everyone engaged in mandatory, graded walks in the surrounding countryside. In the evening they had a series of lectures and discussions facilitated by tutors from National Home Reading Union (an early version of the WEA at the same as the University Extension movement was getting under way.) They considered local history, natural history, relevant literature and made the connections with their experience of the countryside through the programme of daily walks.

The CHA was infused by the new ruralism. It quite deliberately aimed to provide a holiday experience which critiqued urbanism and industrialisation – and holidays at seaside resorts. It did not engage with issues of land ownership and access.[44]

The CHA had developed a network of more than 40 centres by 1914, and many of those attending a CHA holiday subsequently founded their own local CHA rambling groups to carry forward the ruralist visions of the organisation. It even made a few forays into mainland Europe and developed an internationalist orientation, including elements of pacifism. . . . And in 1913 it suffered a major schism when T A Leonard stepped down from the leadership of the organisation and set up the Holiday Fellowship. Explaining his decision he wrote:

> *. . . the Association has drifted into extravagance in its selection of furnishings and fittings. Pile carpets are not hygienic … but the chief objection to them is that they create a higher standard of comfort than the professed simple ways of the CHA warrant; besides helping to create a style that attracts just the class of person the CHA does not cater for, and whose coming is likely to give trouble to the movement…. The policy of 'doing things thoroughly' in an unnecessary sense and persisting in demanding the standard of comfort and convenience of a middle-class house was not in vogue when the General Secretary [i.e. Leonard himself] was mainly responsible for creating the Newlands centre, and the probable continuance of this policy in years to come, will prove an effectual hindrance to the opening of really cheap centres in out of the way places, with all the opportunities they afford for wholesome, natural, fraternal living.[45]*

Not to put too fine a point on it, the CHA had been infiltrated by too many middle-class members seeking more comfortable accommodation and less demanding schedules and opt-outs from the communal housekeeping and shared daily boot-cleaning sessions. The Holiday Fellowship was to return to the more spartan and improving values of the CHA's early years.[46]

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The Clarion Movement[47] emerged from the readership of The Clarion newspaper. We saw earlier that Robert Blatchford's notion of how to extend socialism was "to grow more socialists". The Clarion Movement aimed to do just that, not through attendance at party meetings and lectures on the theory of surplus value, but through the fellowship of a shared social / recreational / cultural life. Although it had a strong "outdoor socialist" dimension in its rambling groups and, above all, its huge network of cycling groups – the Clarion Cycle Club [CCC] – it also had lots of other recreational groups: drama groups, choirs (the Clarion Vocal Union), arts groups, Clarion Field Club (naturalists) as well as a network of club-houses and places where members just met to enjoy one another's company, have lectures and discussions, play games, and even drink alcohol.

If the CHA expressed the higher and more earnest pleasures of a physical and cultural engagement with the countryside and landscape, the Clarion Movement expressed a much more immediate sense of everyday enjoyment – fun even – in shared company when cycling or rambling round the countryside. The socialist edge was more explicitly to the fore within the Clarion Movement; members were expected, not to sell the party newspaper as has been the grim obligation laid on socialists for the last century or so, but to promote ideas of socialism by demonstrating how enjoyable it is to do things together in large and small groups with other socialists. Indeed, as with similar groups which combine socialist politics with a central purpose of sharing some aspect of social life, the Clarion had to grapple with the problem of balancing the demands of political activity and social activity. Though Blatchford's socialism entailed a process of de-industrialisation and the reconstruction of England as an essentially rural society, the reality of the Clarion movement was that it was largely made up of urban working class men and women who were not hell-bent back-to-the-landers, and did not engage in the sort of anti-urbanism of the CHA and many of the individuals and groups across the wider countryside movement.

That said, the reality on the ground was almost certainly much more fluid. Beyond the rigours of its holidays and amongst the rambling clubs it generated, it was likely that the tenor of the local CHA clubs was not so very different from the tenor of the local Clarion groups. The Clarion ran into problems in the years before the War arising from Blatchford's imperialism and militarism and his visceral opposition to all things Germanic. Indeed, the CHA's internationalism was a direct response to what was perceived as a growing jingoism in the Clarion ranks. As with many other socialist organisations, the War split the Clarion, although aspects of it re-grouped in the 1920s and 1930s. CCC for instance remained strong and did a lot of campaigning work for the Labour Party in rural constituencies during the inter-war years[48]. . . . By which time, however, the outdoor movement was becoming a much changed creature.

d. Recreation: freedom and identity

As an activity, rambling was largely untouched by the tentacles of the growing commercial leisure-time opportunities of the period. It was primarily an arena of self-activity, shaped and framed organisationally by a network of civic responsibility, philanthropic endeavour and voluntary association. That network had strong connections with the reforming end of High Liberalism; it was also informed by the emerging array of socialist visions and the resurgence of an over-arching cultural ruralism. It located rambling and walking at the 'rational recreation' and 'self-improvement' end of the spectrum of leisure-time options; they were promoted to the lower-middle and upper-working classes as a respectable way of developing their lives and identities in the new era of 'recreation'.

It is a moot point, however, whether the lower-middle and upper-working classes opted into the full, morally uplifting rambling package. As Ruskin recognised, they had a measure of choice and agency in the matter and could do their own mixing and matching to suit their own interests and inclinations. In the first place, walking was a remarkably simple D-I-Y activity; they could make it up and figure it out for themselves.[49] They had no need or obligation to join a club. If high-minded ruralism and the fellowship of outdoor socialism were not to your taste, then you could simply go for a walk for yourself with a few friends. Secondly, they were not necessarily constrained by the 'official' options presented to them. Their choices were not limited to picking from an exclusive set of acceptable walking and climbing options such as the CHA or Clarion.[50]

Put yourself in the position of a young lower-middle / upper-working class man or woman in east Manchester in 1912 and consider the sorts of recreational choices you may have made. If you were reasonably fit and fancied a bit of an outdoor challenge, you might go one weekend to Greenfield in Saddleworth, have some excitement dodging the gamekeepers and, with the help of what Leslie Stephen called a 'judicious bit of trespassing', indulge in a short tramp across the open moorland above the Chew / Tame Valley. The following weekend, you may relish, with your friends, the prospect of a day excursion to Blackpool for some fun by the seaside. The weekend after that, you would cycle out into Cheshire, making sure you were back in time to go to a dance in the evening. At least once a month you would join the crowds who went to a football match or variety show.

These were perfectly coherent choices about how to spend your recreational time in ways which included some countryside engagement alongside other leisure-time pursuits. Many of the leading lights of the rambling world thought otherwise. You and your friends were creating your own recreational identity in the circumstances in which you found yourselves and from which you made your own choices. Indeed, in many respects, it was the capacity to make such choices through recreation which shaped your sense of personal freedom / autonomy and identity – more than the paid work with which you earned our income.

Beatrice Webb was one of the few early socialists who realised that work was no longer, in itself, the sole determinant of working class identities and politics. She noted the importance of

consumption, not just in terms of food and necessary household purchases, but also things such as books, pigeons, pictures for the walls, opportunities to see plays, ability to get to the seaside, buy a bicycle and a good pair of boots and so forth. Indeed, once one had passed through the cloying earnestness of late-Victorian life, the conspicuous consumption of the Edwardian upper and upper middle classes suggests that Veblen's analysis of leisure[51] may have as much purchase as Marx's analysis of work in helping us make sense of the politics and cultures of recreational walking and climbing.

The conventional explanation for the choice of the lower-middle and upper-working classes living in towns and cities to walk in the countryside is that they sought to 'escape' the oppressive squalor and disease of their working and living environments. This instrumental motivation no doubt has some cogency. But it does rather overlook the element of agency on the part of the new generations of urban, working-class walkers and climbers. If we follow Veblen's line of reasoning, something more self-directed is occurring in the choices of those generations learning how to create and make a space for meaningful recreation in their lives. They observe that the upper classes ostentatiously go to the coast at Biarritz for their holidays to enjoy themselves and get drunk. So they assert their right to go to the coast at Blackpool to enjoy themselves and get drunk. They observe that the upper class ostentatiously spend their leisure-time on moorland and enjoy shooting grouse. So they assert their own right / freedom to wander over moorland in their leisure-time and enjoy leaving the grouse to breed in peace. This was the creation of new leisure-time identities on the basis of asserting an entitlement to a share in the ways of life enjoyed as both natural and normal by the upper classes. From this perspective, tramping on moorland and going on excursions to Blackpool are not activities on opposite sides of an 'improving recreation' boundary; they are equally valid and meaningful forms of recreational activity. As the scope and scale of recreational activity grew, the strict boundaries between the differing sets of values ascribed to them by the late-Victorians became much more fluid.

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3.4 Accessing Land

> *There once were lanes in nature's freedom dropt,*
> *There once were paths that every valley wound -*
> *Inclosure came, and every path was stopt;*
> *Each tyrant fix'd his sign where paths were found,*
> *To hint a trespass now who cross'd the ground.*

John Clare[52]

My seventh Mass Trespass motif is the *sine qua non* for popular walking and climbing. Without access to countryside, the landless masses have nowhere to take part in their chosen pastime. Given the default disposition of the owners of land and estates to assert their rights of exclusion and put up the 'Private No Entry' signs, securing access to land became an inevitable site of contestation within the multi-faceted process of configuring new patterns of mobility and behaviour within lived landscapes, rural and urban, owned on the basis of Lockean property rights. Not surprisingly, terms like 'struggle' and 'battle' are found in the titles of many of the histories of different aspects of accessing land for recreational walking and climbing.[53]

The terms 'access', 'access campaign' or 'access movement' have been in frequent use since the pre-WW1 period. They give an impression of a unity of purpose and a continuity of practice in the activities of those seeking to secure entry to open countryside and uncultivated land for the

purposes of recreational walking and climbing. The realities of 'the struggle for access' have been considerably more messy and complicated; the rhetorical use the single word 'access' has masked substantial divergences in the objectives and methods of those seeking to achieve it.

Similar problems arise in relation to other key words and phrases in the access arena such as 'right of way', 'common land', 'open countryside'. As Taylor observed: *the practice of confusing these separately evolving concepts, with their differing origins and objectives, remains common.*[54] What made sense in relation to walking on the rough pasture of upland moors and mountains had a very different resonance in relation to walking round lowland waste or arable land. The sort of walking and 'countryside experience' sought by a campaign to secure open access over a defined area could be very different from the walking and countryside experience sought by a campaign to secure a right of way along a particular footpath. Seeking to preserve an area of common land for recreational use was not co-terminous with seeking to establish a form of communal / collective ownership or, for that matter, a return to a particular form of imagined medieval or Anglo-Saxon rural community life. For a landowner, a right of way was a use (or easement) established in the title deeds which defined their ownership of the land; for a landless walker, a right of way was taken as an assertion of a more general, post-Enlightenment, democratic human right.[55]

So we are not looking, in the pre-WW1 decades, at the growth of a unified movement or broad coalition campaigning for recreational access to the countryside. Values and aspirations were often contradictory. Nor can we assume that all those who walked in the countryside were necessarily supporters of the various access campaigns and organisations. The former sought recreational enjoyment; the latter sought amendments (through lobbying, legislation, changes to bye-laws, private negotiations / agreements, lawsuits and a few moments of direct action) to aspects of a somewhat arcane corner of the overall system and structure of land ownership and use.

Given that much of the effective action was built around local initiatives, even groups which marched under the same banner found the impact of their efforts weakened by different branches coming to different sorts of local agreements with different landowners. Those seeking access to particular stretches of countryside, riverbank, heath, moorland, crag owned by particular landlords came to their own local access agreements. They would accept the particular terms of a negotiated access agreement (days access permitted, numbers allowed access, arrangements for policing the agreement . . .) rather than engage in either routine acts of trespass or lengthy and costly legal procedures to try and establish rights of common access and / or rights of way. Progress was piecemeal, localised and by no means all tending in the same direction.

We can, nevertheless, discern a few broad strands / approaches to access which were pursued. They formed the base-line experience of, and an organisational framework for access campaigning in the inter-war years, when outdoor recreation grew rapidly in popularity. I explore those strands and approaches in the following sub-sections.

a. A legislative route to access

In 1884, the mountaineer, polymath and sometime Liberal MP James Bryce introduced an Access to Mountains Bill in parliament. It was the first in what became a succession of similarly titled bills introduced by a succession of Liberal and Labour MPs down to 1938. Although they were frequently introduced, the only one ever passed into law was the one presented in 1938 – and that was bitterly denounced by the rambling community as a charter to protect the interests of landlords and potentially criminalise trespassing. The Access Bills did, however, become a banner and a focus for a Fabian-style legislative approach to securing 'open access' to uncultivated land. Many of the rambling clubs which developed an access campaigning arm devoted considerable attention to building support for the various Access Bills as they came along.

As a founding member of the Cairngorm Mountaineering Club in 1887, Bryce's bill reflected what he (and many others before and since) took to be the accepted custom and practice relating

to access to open countryside on Scottish upland estates and mountains. Referred to locally as *stravaging*, it was a pervasive assumption that, under Scottish Law, anyone was entitled to roam at will in upland areas, provided they did no harm to the land they walked on. For Bryce this reflected his experience in the Alps, where he simply walked towards the mountains by whatever way he wished. The persistent failure of the Access Bills reflected not just parliamentary arithmetic at particular times, but a certain ambivalence (opposition even) across the wider outdoor movement about making what was seen as a 'thin end of the wedge' assault on the sacrosanctity of the owners' exclusive right to determine the use of their private property.

For instance, the second mountaineering club in Scotland – the Scottish Mountaineering Council (1889) – had this to say about Bryce's Bill:

> *We did not desire the Club to become a* stravaging *or marauding Club, insisting on going everywhere at every season, with or without leave, and indifferent to the rights and enjoyment of farmers, proprietors, and sportsmen . . . Deer-stalking is a rare and noble sport, identified for centuries with the Highlands . . . [W]e know nothing of the theory which assumes that proprietors form the only class whose rights and wishes as to the disposal of land should be disregarded.*[56]

Similarly, the Manchester Rucksack Club objected to trespassing on the grounds that 'it would be ungracious of the club to countenance anything which (though legally unassailable) might have a tendency to impair friendly relationships with local landonwers.' [57]

The long shadow of Locke fell across the early years of access campaigning. In practice, the position in Scotland remained ambiguous and the issue of trespass there never became as defining as it did in England. Worth noting that there was a tension within the 1896 Winter Hill Trespass in terms of its aims. Huge popular support was mobilised in Bolton for re-opening a route – a right of way – across the moorland. The generalisation of that specific aim into the more contentious issue of open access to roam freely was used as an attempt to undermine local support for the trespass. There was some alarm in the Pennine areas of Lancashire about the 1896 agreement reached between the Darwen municipal authority and the local landowners to allow local people a right of open access to the surrounding moorland for recreational purposes. The SDF and the liberal counsellors argued fiercely over whether this was a rare triumph of working class socialism or radical liberalism; others felt more generally that it was a worrying opening of the floodgates of common ownership.[58]

Although the legislative route to access has remained a prominent feature of access campaigning and organising, it has rarely delivered on its aspirations for general / open access to the countryside. Open access was not built into the 1949 legislation eventually setting up the National Parks, and the 'right to roam' dimensions of the 2000 Countryside and Rights of Way Act have been remarkably circumscribed. It would have satisfied the aspirations of Bryce and the mountaineers, but did little for the vast majority of ramblers.

b. A preservationist route to access

A second strand of access activity was pursued under the general banner of 'preservationism'. I have already noted the emergence of footpath preservations societies (section 3.3a above). In Reflection 2, I noted the founding of the Commons Preservation Society [CPS] in 1865. by J S Mill and similarly reform-minded liberal luminaries.

In its early years the CPS enjoyed widespread support[59] at the reforming end of liberalism. It sat comfortably alongside the Land Tenure Reform Association, and actively opposed most subsequent popular land reform movements such as land nationalisation and georgeist land valuation taxes. It gave itself a nationwide remit and early concerns were to ensure that common land round cities was left unenclosed and that waste land was '*retained in a state of wild natural*

beauty, for the general enjoyment of the community, and encouragement in all classes of healthful rural tastes, and of the higher order of pleasures'.[60] Its *modus operandi* was primarily negotiation with relevant owners and authorities, though in its early years it did indulge in a bit of direct action fence destruction when, for instance, the owner of Berkhamsted Common surrounded it by two miles of railings. In 1899, the CPS amalgamated with the National Footpaths Preservation Society and renamed itself the *Commons, Open Spaces and Footpath Preservation Society.*[61]

Four years before the COSFPS amalgamation, another arrival on the preservation scene was the *National Trust for Places of Historic interest or Natural Beauty* – to give it its full name. Recreational access in terms of walking and climbing was not an objective of the National Trust. It was more concerned with the cultural preservation and making available of places of outstanding natural beauty as places to be, rather than places within which one could primarily engage in walking or rambling. The NT was about the improvement of culture, morals and values, not extending opportunities for outdoor recreational pursuits. Inevitably this gave the Trust a strong orientation towards the issues of national identity and a sense of recovering and preserving an unalterable rural past.

And one year before the National Trust, the Manchester Association for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths brought together many of the hitherto disparate footpath preservation societies north of the Trent and re-established itself in 1894, in an act of proud northern assertiveness, as the *Peak District and Northern Counties Footpath Preservation Society.*[62] Given its reach across the Pennines, the PNFS had a rootedness in the distinctive experience of the land ownership and access issues associated with the serious end of upland walking in moorland landscapes.[63] Although it was agnostic on issues of landownership and open access in general, the PNFS was assiduous and combative in relation to footpath identification and preservation. Whereas the NT and COSPFS prioritised preservation and the conservation of rural spaces and environments, the PNFS was primarily driven by issues of rights of way and the demands of those who walked in the northern countryside. In its early years, the PNFS began to publish useful guidebooks for walkers on the rambler and the law and the roles and values of rambling in northern counties.

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There was a tension running through the activities of the preservationist wing of the 'access' movement. Insofar as preservation entailed retaining the status of commons and other tracts of open countryside as beneficial to the health and identity of England as an essentially rural country and ensuring those lands retained their status as places for everyone to be, they protected and preserved rural space for recreational rambling and walking. There was always a risk, however, that preservation would morph into social conservatism. The fierce opposition of rural preservationists to any extension of suburbs or the developmental use of open land in and around cities to create better housing, schools, urban amenities was more problematic. Given that most ramblers were urban dwellers, not caring for the improvement of the urban environment ran contrary to the non-recreational identities and interests of many of the growing groups of walkers and ramblers. Moreover, the idealisation of the rural landscape on the part of the preservationists tended to put them at odds with the actually existing rural communities and the problems they faced in improving their immediate working and living environments.

By definition, preservationism adopted an essentially backward-looking approach to landscape and countryside. It was inherently opposed to the use of land for the purposes of industrial or urban development. There was a latent and pervasive contradiction in the preservationists' approach: advocacy of not tampering with rural landscapes in the interests of the physical and moral health of the nation in the abstract was often in conflict with the demands / pressures of growing numbers of walkers and ramblers to use the countryside for their own recreational purposes. There was a paradox that greater access risked altering the character of a particular bit of landscape. Campaigning and negotiating for 'rights of way' footpaths often entailed taking responsibility for ensuring that urban ramblers did not wander from those paths or assume that they had a more

general right of open access to the land they were crossing. Similar ambiguities arose in relation to notions of 'common land'. The interests of landowners seeking to retain enclosed common land, the residual commoning rights of the local rural community and the demands of the visiting recreationalists were far from aligned.[64] Given that most preservationist groups and organisations were agnostic on issues of far-reaching reforms in land tenure, the undertow of ambiguity and contradiction in the preservationist route flowed into the 1920s when things picked up with an even greater and more diverse set of demands for recreational access.

c. A ramblers' self-activity route to access

By the time Queen Victoria died a vast array of walking groups, rambling clubs, outdoor organisations were in existence in just about every town and city. Many had emerged from other groups: faith-based, work-place, working-men's clubs and so forth; some were driven by back-to-the land ideals; many had links to socialist politics in one form or another; some were inspired by the moral-cum-rural writings of Carpenter and Walt Whitman; and some indeed were off-shoots from the Primrose League. In 1905, the creation of the London Federation of Rambling Clubs was an indication of the extent to which the walkers themselves in all these groups were beginning to band together in support of their interests. The major countryside preservationist bodies were run by largely self-appointing elites. This collective self-activity on the part of the participants and beneficiaries of access brought a grassroots dimension to the more established – and establishment – arena of the access-cum-preservation organisation.

In the first instance, the London Federation simply outsourced to the COSFPS all the rights of way and access problems their clubs were encountering. Insofar as COSPFS were deemed to be the experts in such matters, the London ramblers simply increased their case-load. That in itself gave rise to tensions and pressures, especially if particular access problems identified by groups of ramblers did not fit closely within the rural preservationist ambit of the COSFPS. It also placed the COSPFS in an invidious position; without the resources to take on complex negotiations and/or litigation involving landowners and relevant bodies, the COSPFPS found itself having to accept less than ideal agreements, involving restrictions which were not always acceptable to the original rambling group. More generally and outside London and the South East, rambling clubs found themselves engaging directly, on their own behalf, with landowners.

This self-campaigning on the part of rambling and the recreational walking groups surfaced both the growing numbers and the growing diversity of those taking up recreational walking as a regular activity. Access was no longer sought solely for either individual walkers / trampers or relatively small groups. Whilst not yet a 'mass movement', and not involving the sorts of numbers engaging in most commerical recreational pastimes, rambling / walking / tramping was a growing activity – and looked set to grow into the future, following the founding of the Scouts and Guides in 1908 / 1910 with their strong programmes of outdoor activities. Accommodating these growing numbers within the existing framework of rights of way and limited access was emerging as a problem across England. The issue of regulating ramblers' behaviours in the countryside was being taken up in the decade before WW1.

And, of course, alongside the Clarion movement, the growing numbers of ramblers and walkers included men and women who were bringing their versions of early socialism into the world of outdoor recreation. The case should not be overstated; but it was a straw in the wind for all those organisations and agencies which were engaged with extending access to land for the recreational purposes and aspirations of the landless.

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The political terrain on which preservationists, ramblers, climbers and access legislators alike had made such headway as they had by 1914 was that of Liberalism – or perhaps, more

accurately, "Lib-Labism". For the most part the various bodies working, lobbying and campaigning for progress on those fronts approached their tasks with growing energy but invariably within the social and political constraints of what was likely to be achievable within such a Lib-Lab ambit. They effectively hitched their standards to those seeking urban land reform, in the hope that movement in that sphere would extend into satisfying the particular rural land-related access needs and aspirations of walkers, climbers and preservationists. The emergence of the Labour Party as an independent parliamentary presence in 1906 was not perceived as a major threat to the future of parliamentary Liberalism. Indeed, insofar as it strengthened the support for the land reforming rhetoric of Lloyd George, many of the grassroots bodies involved in the early access campaigns probably felt that things were moving in their favour.

Absent the Liberal Party as a parliamentary majority party after 1918,[65] however, and the political terrain would look very different for the preservationists, ramblers and access legislators of the inter-war years. They would have to work out how to take things forward in a world of minority Labour Governments and an ascendant Tory Party – and a considerably more extensive and diverse outdoors movement.

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3.5 The Dark Peak: 1870 – 1918

So far, my reflections on the Mass Trespass motifs have explored issues at a general, mainly England-wide level. I want to finish this reflection on the politics of landscape and countryside by focussing on how the various motifs were playing out in the landscapes of the Pennines in general and the Dark Peak in particular. In this way I hope to provide a bridge to the fourth reflection which will explore the politics of the Mass Trespass in the inter-war context of the 1930s.

To mark this shift of focus, I invite you to consider the following extract from the introduction of Byne and Sutton's classic 1966 book on walking and climbing in the High Peak.

. . . Although some of the lordly English who explored the western Alps lived in the north, they do not seem to have taken much account of the hill country on their doorsteps, but preferred to journey to Wales or Lakeland. Mountaineering in the Peak began in a very small and local way before the end of the century and swelled steadily until 1914, but was still very much junior, at least for climbing, to those other centres. It was probably not until around the 1930s that the Peak became numerically by far the most important hill playground in Britain. . . Today [1966] more people walk and climb in the Peak than in all the other hills of Britain put together.

Peakland mountaineering did not share the upper-class origins of the sport elsewhere in Britain, and the district … has been primarily a working-man's playground. While Ogwen and Wasdale remained for a long time in the leisured atmosphere of the traditional climbing families and their friends, there grew up in the Peak an independent tradition of hard walking and hard climbing that owed little to external influences.

Thus there existed for fifty years [1895 – 1945] in Britain two separate mountain traditions; that of the university men, which produced all the literature, and according to which the British hills were a place of quiet interludes between, or training for, the serious business of the Alps and greater ranges: and that of the northern working men who lacked money to explore far afield, to whom British hills were an end in themselves. . . . It took the Second World War with its economic and social upheavals to bring together the two traditions, the mountaineers and the climbers, to their mutual benefit.

> *In a qualitative sense, as the laboratory of technique, the Peak was already the most important group of hills by 1914. This was not recognised at the time and might still be denied today by a few people. However it is a fact that since that time no one has made an important advance in the standard of climbing in Britain who has not come from the northern industrial towns … or has been outcrop trained. There are several reasons for this. The first is the ready weekend and evening accessibility of the crags to these millions. . . This constant use inevitably develops an advanced technique. The other main reason is the character of the hills themselves and of the rock. Gritstone might almost have been designed for the purpose of teaching climbing, though the height of the cliffs nowhere exceeds 200 feet and is rarely greater than seventy feet. It gives massive rounded edges and smooth-faced cracks offering nothing to a nervous grabbing movement. Instead the climber must stand in balance on sloping holds and step upwards exploiting the rock's excellent frictional properties; or learn the art of jamming hands and feet in the cracks, which has been developed further here than anywhere else.[66]*

a. *Revisiting Nature and Walking: Dark Peak Tramping*

It was the activity of tramping which the walkers in the Dark Peak took from Leslie Stephen and the mountaineers. What Byne and Sutton celebrated in the walking chapters of the *High Peak* were the extraordinary tramping routes – at least 20 miles and often twice that length – through and across the Dark Peak moors which the walkers created for themselves over the thirty years or so before the first World War. The Derwent Watershed route; the Four Inns route; the Marsden to Edale (and return) route; these were all tramping with a vengeance across mile after mile of what are sometimes dubbed 'featureless' moorland. Except, of course, that it wasn't featureless for the walkers as they experienced ever-shifting and endlessly subtle variations of gradient, terrain underfoot, skyline shape, stream and rivulet direction. As Melanie Tebbutt put it in her article about walking in the Dark Peak in those years:

> *The appeal of walking in such difficult ground conditions grew with the expansion of the rambling and outdoor movement whose frequently intense physical and emotional relationship with the upland environment was very different from the passive contemplation of scenic views often associated with elite consumption. Although contemplation was not absent, this was more landscape as a 'realm of interaction', less a 'way of seeing' than a way of experiencing. . . The Dark Peak's wild landscape demanded effort, energy, and endurance, all of which were central to late nineteenth-century ideals of manliness.[67]*

Although there was an element of landscape romanticism in moorland tramping in the Dark Peak, it was not the sort of romanticism articulated by Leslie Stephen on the basis of the rural landscapes of southern England. We noted earlier how English identity came to be associated with preserving / recovering / enhancing an essentially 'English' rural landscape. For the most part, that identity tended to be expressed in terms of an idealisation of the countryside of southern England, with its homeliness and its reflection of an equally idealised picture of family life. Wilder, more disturbing landscapes were, at best, given scant recognition in that idealisation of 'the English countryside' or, at worst, deemed threatening to the process of nurturing a 'proper' English countryside.

Much of Tebbutt's analysis of the Dark Peak rambling in the pre-WW1 decades is based on her reading of the papers of one of that era's leading ramblers in Sheffield, G H (Bert) B Ward. He founded the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers [SCR] in 1900 and, from that base, Ward exercised an enormous influence for forty years on the growth and character of walking in the Dark Peak, particularly its eastern moors.

What Tebbutt identified are many of the complexities, cross-currents and tensions which were to be found in those years in the world of Dark Peak rambling. Ward's key phrase – with which he headed every edition of the Sheffield Clarion Rambler Handbook which he produced for over thirty years – was: "A Rambler made is a Man improved." Those who tramped the Dark Peak Moors and opened up gritstone climbing were, indeed, almost all men. Some women were members of the SCR, but rarely on the committee. As far as we know, there were probably no more than a dozen women amongst the trespassers on Kinder Scout in 1932. 'Manly identity' was an inextricable dimension of those years.

But it was, in many respects, a paradoxical masculinity. On the one hand it was an assertion of classic manly behaviours: rugged 'hard man' physical determination; setting out to overcome / conquer one's immediate natural environment; an element of competitiveness; a sense of wild openness being a man's sphere, and enclosed domesticity being a woman's sphere. On the other hand, there was a necessary openness to, and sensitive affinity with the nature of the moorland environment. There was a sense of personal emotional fulfilment which could only be experienced by moving under one's own steam, in whatever weather, through such a distinctive and unrelenting landscape. The same was true of gritstone climbing. On the one hand it called for immense risk and the necessary pain of hand-jamming; but unlike climbing on most other sorts of rockface, it required immense sensitivity to balance, poise and working entirely with the rock as you found it and not against it.

Bert Ward was an autodidact and had a varied earlier life before settling in Sheffield to become the Grand Old Man of Rambling on the east side of the Dark Peak. His sense of nature and walking combined landscape romanticism with a dose of late-Victorian moral earnestness:

> *Rambling is also a culture and a craft . . . an intense love for one's own country, the innermost and the most remote parts of it, the sweetest as well as the wildest, a love for the wind and the rain, the snow and the frost, the hill and the vale, the widest open spaces and the choicest pastoral and arboreal retreats. It is a love for valley and moorside, their history and their lore, which cannot be exhausted, a love which . . . compels a devotion and adoration which is equal to some men's religion.[68]*

He was also a socialist and a member of the Labour Representation Committee at the time he set up the SCR. His socialist formation tended to be Lib-Lab. Although he only lived a few miles from Edward Carpenter in the same Sheffield urban / open countryside edgeland, Ward's conception of nature and socialism was far removed from Carpenter's ethical outdoor-based socialism. Ward worked as a civil servant in Sheffield; he was not anti-urban. Walking in the distinctive landscape of the Dark Peak was not informed, for Ward, by the sort of far-reaching ethically and politically transformative vision of Carpenter of an entirely reconfigured social order based on a simpler, outdoor, rurally rooted alternative life-style.

b. Revisiting Rural & Urban identities

I now return to an issue which has been hinted at earlier, namely the problematic place of some of the northern upland landscapes within the ruralist idealisation of the English countryside.

The London Tramps, members of the southern footpath preservation societies and the London and Home Counties ramblers explored the countryside around London in the pre-WW1 years. They could climb Box Hill and look across to the Southern Downs and the Weald, or they could walk up Coombe Hill and look across the countryside to the west of the Chilterns. What they saw was a landscape of woods, fields, rolling hills, villages and old market towns which seemed to reflect back to them images of an essentially unchanging English rural landscape.

Now take a walk round the edges of the Dark Peak. From the western edge of Kinder one looks across to the mill towns of New Mills, Hayfield and Glossop – over the brow of Mill Hill! – and, beyond that, the cities of Manchester and Salford and the encircling array of industrial towns of the current conurbation, which have immediate Pennine hinterlands and formed part of the then industrial and commercial heartlands of the Mersey Basin stretching to Liverpool. Move over to the sprawling western edges of Black Hill, one can see the mill towns of Stalybridge, Hyde, Mossley, Oldham and, further north, Marsden at the head of the mill towns stretching along the Calder valley to Huddersfield. Move along to the eastern edges of Bleaklow and you can see the mill towns of Holmfirth and Penistone. Move across to Derwent Edge and you can look out to the steel citadels of Stocksbridge and Sheffield and across to Barnsley and the Yorkshire coalfields. And if you move down the eastern line of gritstone outcrops, you end up looking across to the iron foundries and coal towns and villages of North East Derbyshire around Chesterfield and, in the distance, the edges of the Nottinghamshire mining areas.

This is not a landscape conjured up by Blake's *Jerusalem*. It sits very uneasily – if at all – within a primarily southern cultural construction of an essential rural Englishness. Indeed, the only upland area in northern England which had found a special place in that English ruralist idyll was the Lake District, which had been able to build its identity assiduously on a) its distinctive and immediately accessible – albeit essentially miniature – mountain landscape and b) its positioning since Wordsworth's and Ruskin's days in the definitions of landscape romanticism.[69] Between them Walter Scott and Queen Victoria had created a Scottish ruralist identity around the Highlands; and even the Welsh Peaks around the Llanberis and Ogwen passes had been bestowed an honorary landscape cultural identity through the presence of the largely English alpinists.

The Pennines generally, and the Dark Peak in particular, were so closely interwoven with northern industrial and urban townscapes that they were incapable of being comfortably incorporated within a ruralist idyll. Such boundaries as there were between the urban and rural were extremely porous. As Tebbutt noted,[70] as far as the rural Dark Peak and its adjacent urban landscapes are concerned, the identity of the moorland and crag landscape can only be understood in terms relative to the identities of the nearby towns and cities. Those regularly walking and climbing in the Dark Peak from those towns and cities are not 'urban outsiders'. In many instances they were walking directly from their homes on to the moorland. The moors and uplands were in many respects their ancestral lived 'superurbs'.

> *The inhabitants of remote manufacturing villages on the ' wild, semicultivated hills and moors' were known for their lack of deference, 'rugged', and 'occasionally eccentric' individualism, stoicism, and plain speaking. Their qualities contributed to what . . . has [been] described as a 'landscape of dissent' where those defiant of the established order, such as early Methodists and political radicals, met out of sight of the authorities and whose associations with liberty were retained even after politics changed to more formal, less public forms. The Dark Peak's high heath lands, towards the southern end of the Pennine chain and distant from centres of authority and control, shared these 'frontier', free-thinking associations.[71]*

Pride in and fondness for one's local moors was not a deliberate rejection of one's urban identity; it was an integral part of that identity. Walking and climbing in those environments was not a conscious attempt to re-build or re-connect with a lost countryside way of life; it was not necessarily a back-to-the-land rejection of urban or even industrial life. It was a new and more powerful way of extending what had, in many respects, long been an integrated urban-rural identity.

As we have seen in the figure of G H B Ward, this gave rise to a newer form of socialist-oriented landscape romanticism. It may not have been along the lines of Edward Carpenter's vision, but it was in keeping with the structures of feeling found in Carpenter's contemporary D H Lawrence who draws in his own experience of the emotional inter-connectedness of rural and urban life in the

nearby Nottinghamshire pit communities. Similar forms of attachment were found in the textile mill towns, the iron and steel towns, the mining towns and the commerical towns of the north from which it had long been possible to walk directly on to the moors. This had little or nothing to do with some sort of essential English rural identity. It was much more a matter of an everyday sense of sharing in a particularly northern and Pennine cultural landscape which drew jointly on the open ruggedness and attractiveness of the moorland countryside as a place to engage with energetically, alongside a commitment to improving one's life in an urban environment.

This sense of an urban – rural identification was not just with the Dark Peak and South Pennine moors in the abstract; it was rooted more locally and concretely in one's own particular patch of moorland. The people of Bolton laid a historic political and cultural claim to Winter Hill. In the same vein, Bury ramblers were 'at home' on the ridge of moorland between the town and the Ribble Valley; Rochdale ramblers could lay direct claim to the moors above Littleborough; Oldham and Ashton (in Lancashire) along with Hyde (on the other side of the River Tame in Cheshire) could lay direct claim to the moors above Saddleworth (even though they were, of course, then in Yorkshire!); and Sheffield people, pre-eminently, could lay claim to the entire length of moorland on the east of the Derwent Valley and flanking Bleaklow and Kinder. Indeed, given that the Ladybower reservoir was not there until 1948, Sheffielders could walk out of their front doors, tramp across an intervening moor or two and trespass directly on to the Kinder or Bleaklow plateaux.

Somewhat anomalously, Manchester's ramblers, trampers and early rock climbers did not have their own locally dedicated corner of the Dark Peak or Pennine moorland. They had to make their way to the moors by foot, bike or train through the ring of old mill and factory towns on the immediate western edge of the Dark Peak – Hadfield, Glossop, New Mills, Hayfield and Chapel-en-le-Frith. As rambling and tramping grew, there was always a hint that the 'Manchester lads' were 'interlopers' on other people's patches when they made their recreational way towards the uplands of the Dark Peak and its surrounding open countryside.

Overlaying this patchwork quilt of local urban-rural identities which shaped the perceptions and the experiences of the various areas of the Dark Peak countryside were the identities established through the patterns of ownership of the moorland. Although much of the Dark Peak had fallen, ever since the days of John Locke, within the estate of the residual and dominant Derbyshire landowner, the Dukes of Devonshire, with their HQ at Chatsworth House a bit lower down the Derwent valley, the area as a whole was owned by a consortium of landowners – as was discovered when it came to negotiating access issues. As well as their own particular boundaries marked by occasional walls, they collectively sought to define the Dark Peak, not as open space or wasteland with a somewhat edgy historical relationship with the surrounding urban communities, but as commercially managed 'farmland' used for the profitable business of the rearing and recreational slaughter of grouse by the upper classes, along with a bit of sheep grazing. The Water Boards had also established, by the early 1900s, a dominant role in the management of the upland end of the Mersey Basin – the gullies, springs, brooks, streams and rivers which, after passing through many dams and reservoirs, came together just below St Mary's church and the old market in Stockport.

By 1914, the various strands of the access movement had inserted themselves into this complex pattern of urban-cum-rural identities. Those closest to the Liberal and early Labour Parties tended to work on the assumption that, for the Dark Peak (and southern pennines generally), some version of Bryce's original Access Bill was what was required. On the face of it an upland grouse moor and a Scottish deer-hunting estate were similar sorts of landscape and legislating for general access made more sense than arguing for lots of specific pathways over such terrain. So the access legislators kept on presenting access bills and failing to find parliamentary support right up to the eve of war.

As far as the preservationists were concerned, the NT's northern interests were primarily with the Lake District of Canon Rawnsley; radical moorlands were not their bag in those early years.

Similarly, although the Dark Peak was classic 'open space' and one could trace the extinction of commoning rights at many points in the enclosure process, it was rather too complicated an ask for the COSFPS. In practice, therefore, the Manchester-based PNFS carried forward the respectable / responsible end of the preservationist agenda for the Dark Peak.

As far as the rambling interest was concerned, Ward's Sheffield Clarion Ramblers inexorably took the lead for the grass roots tramping interests when it came to Kinder- and Bleaklow-specific campaigns. Indeed, between them, the SCR and PNFS managed to hold together the historic East – West rivalries which potentially divided the Dark Peak between the opposing forces of Lancastrians and Yorkists – and, more specifically in the identity-rich world of commercial recreation in the Edwardian era, Manchester United –v– Sheffield Wednesday. They also straddled the latent but ever-present political, cultural and campaigning tensions and cross-currents between the preservationists and the ramblers.

By 1914, the moorland Dark Peak and its associated network of conjoined northern towns and cities presented, not some sort of binary urban-rural opposition, but a rich, complex and subtle ecology of interconnected urban and rural interests and aspirations – social, political, cultural and environmental. It was this very specific urban-cum-rural landscape which formed the terrain on which the outdoor movement flourished in the Dark Peak in the inter-war years.

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Before then, alas, the lights went out over Europe in 1914. The European powers stumbled into the first continent-wide war since the Napoleonic era, which, by virtue of their imperial and colonial reach soon generalised into a multi-faceted global conflict; four years of manly tramping, fighting, surviving and dying across countless battlefields on all continents.

The moors remained silent. Rumour has it that the Dark Peak grouse later dubbed those four years "The Great Peace".

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Endnotes

[1] The *Urban - Rural* relationship was explored by Raymond Williams in his 1973 classic: *The Country and the City*. Wiener (1981 / 2004) offered a somewhat contentious account of the relationship between urban / entrepreneurial oriented culture and rural / countryside oriented culture. Mandler (1992 & 1997) presented a critical commentary on Wiener's account of the relationship between 'Englishness' and 'the countryside' from the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries. The issue has been re-visited more recently in Readman's 2018 *Storied Ground: Landscape and the Shaping of English National Identity*. On the same terrain, issues of landscape, class and identity in England were explored in Darby (2000). The *Urban – Rural* relationship was central to Alun Howkins' (1991 & 2003) defining studies of the English countryside and rural society during the 19th and 20th centuries. The ramifications of the *Urban – Rural* relationship for socialist politics in the early- and mid-twentieth century is at the heart of Claire Griffiths' (2007) study of the inter-war Labour Party and the Countryside. The economics of the relationship arises in studies of land ownership and management: Massey (1978), Cragoe and Readman (2010) and Christophers (2018).

[2] The first is from: Lawton R. (1973) Rural Depopulation in Nineteenth Century England. In: Mills D.R. (eds) English Rural Communities. Palgrave, London. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-15516-3_10 . The second from Howkins (1991) p.9.

[3] The Title of Hunt's (2004) book on the Victorian City

[4] Hunt (2004) p. 175. Hunt charts the rise of the Victorian Cities quite brilliantly. Well worth a read. Hunt is a considerably better historian than he was a Labour MP.

[5] See Readman (2018) Cap 5 pp 194 – 248. This makes the case for Manchester as a 19th century urban landscape capable of reflecting a wider national identity.

[6] To indicate just how remarkable this was, it is worth noting that West Germany – a similarly industrialised nation – did not achieve that level of urbanization until the 1960s.

[7] See Howkins (1991).

[8] Snape (2004) p.7 He is re-stating the general case made by Wiener (2004)

[9] Williams (2016) p.248

[10] There is a good overview of the 'discovery of rural England' in the article of that title by Howkins in Colls and Dodd (2014) pp. 86 – 112.

[11] Re-discovering English folk songs was the music world's cultural contribution to the countryside movement. The Folk Song Society was founded in 1894.

[12] Wiener (2004)

[13] Mandler (1992 and 1997)

[14] Howkins (1991) p.199.

[15] Gros (2014) pp 65 – 81

[16] Listen to Runciman (2021). He draws on Rousseau's Discourse on Inequality (1754) rather than the better known Social Contract (1762).

[17] Tom Stephenson, longstanding opponent of the Mass Trespass and pivotal figure in the early years of the Ramblers' Association, averred that 'Perhaps the best thing to stem from the episode [i.e. Mass Trespass] was *The Manchester Rambler*' Stephenson (1989) p. 163

[18] See Williams (2016) Caps 13 & 14

[19] Indeeed, so over-powering was the vision of the fells, that many lowland visitors simply could not look at it and comprehend what they saw. It did not have the immediately structured picturesque qualities of Gainsborough. To help them make sense of it, they brought with them Claude Glasses which they used as a frame through which to look at the landscape and make it comprehensible and less ostensibly formless and senseless. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude_glass

[20] Walkers getting into difficulties (occasionally fatal) on Broad Stand still result in several call-outs each year for the Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team.

[21] Vardy (2012)

[22] Solnit (2014) pp 97 – 106

[23] Wordsworth (1835)

[24] Quoted in Taylor (1997, p. 20)

[25] In her examination of landscape and identity, Darby (2000) refers to the romantic period as a "a vortex of identity construction" p.74

[26] Wainwright (1993) p. 23

[27] Taylor (1997) pp 91 - 118

[28] Worth noting, that Darwin's theory of evolution derived primarily from the empirical evidence accumulated over several decades by carefully observing and recording minute variations of natural species across time and space.(See the last paragraphs of the first edition of *The Origin of Species* (1859)) Darwin was the supreme nineteenth-century Naturalist.

[29] Cairngorm Club (1887); Scottish Mountaineering Club (1889); Yorkshire Ramblers Club (1892); Climbers' Club 1898, Rucksack Club (1902) – based in Manchester; Fell and Rock Climbing Club (1906) – Lake District and the only one to admit women. The women only Pinnacle Club was set up in 1921.

[30] Stephen (1871) 181, 197. Interestingly, Stephen never thought through the ramifications of the title of his book. a) There was an arrogance in treating the Alps as a playground; it was a worked landscape, not least for their hosts and guides. b) He foreshadowed some of the thinking about the meaning of rock-climbing a century later; in many respects, climbing is a form of extreme play, as is hinted in the title of Wilson's (2008) anthology: *The Games Climbers Play*.

[31] Quoted in Thompson (2018) p.65

[32] Extracts from Stephen (1902)

[33] The author is Arthur Hugh Sidgwick 1882 - 1917, the son of the Oxford classicist Arthur Sidgwick. A H Sidwick worked briefly for the Board of Education before joining the army. He died at Ypres in 1917.

[34] See Readman (2018) pp 92 – 153 and Darby (2000) pp 147 – 183.

[35] Westminster Review 1834 Vol 20 p.496

[36] Navickas (2016) passim

[37] Darby (2000) pp 103 – 147

[38] Taylor (1997) pp. 31 – 32

[39] All refs in Taylor (1997) pp. 86 – 88

[40] Sameul Smiles' *Self Help* was published in 1859. It was a Victorian best-seller and an accessible and popular staement of what was entailed in 'self improvement'.

[41] Quoted in Taylor (1997) p.192

[42] Darby (2000) pp 103 – 181

[43] See Snape (2004), Taylor (1997) Chapter 6, pp 190 – 225

[44] Even though T A Leonard had spent some time as a member of the SDF, the politics of respectability took precedence over the politics of class conflict.

[45] Quoted in Snape (2004) p.15 Note that T A Leonard went on to be something of an *éminence grise* in the outdoor rambling world until the 1930s. He played key roles in the growth of the RA, the YHA and the WTA.

[46] Though re-branded, the CHA and the HF both continue to this day to offer walking holidays mixed with fraternal living and discussion groups. Both retain a strong internationalist orientation, though the socialism is a bit more muted and green.

[47] See some background information at: https://www.wcml.org.uk/our-collections/creativity-and-culture/leisure/clarion-movement/

[48] Griffiths (2007)

[49] Interestingly this was also the case for rock-clmbing. Miners from Cumbria didn't need the Alpine Club members at Wasdale Head Inn to teach them how to wander up Ennerdale and work out how to climb their way up Pillar Rock. A generation later, Jo Brown and Don Willans worked it out for themselves in the Peak District and North Wales, without all the rigmarole of muscular aestheticism, pantheism and imperial conquest. As David Craig put it, we climb rocks '[b]ecause its natural – because we can' Craig (1987) p. 13

[50] Taylor (1997) and Thompson (2018) both make the crucial point that it is not feasible to take the positions of the organised end of the rambling and climbing world as representative of the attitudes and approaches of all those who rambled and climbed without in any way being members of clubs and groups.

[51] Veblen (1994) The starting-point for Veblen's 1899 analysis of the economics of leisure-time is the notion of 'conspicuous consumption' by the upper classes in the course of their leisure-time activities.

[52] From *The Village Minstrel*. Quoted in O'Rourke (2020)

[53] Cook D (1977), Hill H (1980), Lowerson J (1980,) Ramblers' Assocociation (1984), Rothman, B et al (2012), Shoard M (1997), Stephenson T (1989).

[54] Taylor (1997) p 120. See generally pp. 119 – 150 for access campaigns during the pre-WW1 decades.

[55] There is a good overview of the differing usages / meanings of key terms at different times in the early chapters of Shoard (1999) *A Right to Roam*.

[56] Quoted in Taylor (1997) p. 127

[57] Thompson (2018) p. 92

[58] Taylor pp.135 – 138

[59] William Morris, James Bryce, Octavia Hill, Canon Rawnsley . . .

[60] Quoted in Winch (2002) p.12

[61] It was re-branded in 1982 as The *Open Spaces Society.*

[62] It eventually became the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society and I will use the current acronym PNFS.

[63] The northern counties which were beyond the PNFS's reach were Cumberland and Westmorland. In 1883 the Lake District Defense Society had been formed to extend the work of the Lake Poets in setting the Lake District on the road to becoming a definingly English landscape with its own distinctive approaches to balancing preservation and access. See Readman (2018) pp. 92 – 152

[64] See, for instance, OSS (2021) Whose Landscapes?

[65] With the notional exception of the 1918 - 1923 coalition government arising from Lloyd George's 'coupon election' of 1918.

[66] Byne and Sutton (1966) pp. 29 – 31 See also two articles on the same issues by Dave Cook in Wilson (2006): *True Grit* pp.120 – 123 and *The Mountaineer and Society* pp.373 – 381.

[67] Tebbutt (2006) *Rambling and Manly Identity in Derbyshire's Dark Peak, 1880s–1920s* p.1126

[68] Sheffield Clarion Club Handbook 1934-5, quoted in Hill (1980) p. 32

[69] See Readman (2018) chapter 3. Also, worth noting, Readman explitily selects the Manchester landscape as the only deliberately constructed urban landscape within his 'storied grounds', set alongside the Lake District, the New Forest and the Cliffs of Dover as being definitively 'English'.

[70] Tebbutt (2006) pp.1133 – 1136

[71] Tebbutt (2006) p.1134