

Extracts from The Hobhouse Report

Report of the Special Committee 1947 "Footpaths and Access to the Countryside"

Cmd. 7207.

"Under our terms of reference we are concerned with all public rights of way except those for vehicles, i e. public roads or carriageways. We are not of course concerned with private rights of way, such as a path used by owners over their own land or easements over adjoining land, which the public have no right to use."

"Rights of way are as follows:-

(i) Footpaths, which afford a right of way for pedestrians only. Footpaths running alongside public roads form part of such roads, and are not dealt with in this report. Nor are we concerned with any alternative to these 'road footpaths', such as footpaths on the field side of a road boundary, or any other deviation of such footpaths from the road, which Highway authorities or the Ministry of Transport may contemplate. It should however, be noted that a right of way for pedestrians may lie along the line of a private road; with such we are concerned.

(ii) Bridleways, which afford a right of passage for riding animals, as well as for pedestrians. Bridleways, although no longer used for their original purpose of serving pack transport or travellers on horseback, have recently become more important through the greater popularity of riding for recreation.

(iii) Driftways, which afford a right for cattle, as well as for riding animals and pedestrians. Cattle includes all animals capable of being driven. Driftways are now of less importance for their original purpose than formerly, although for walkers and riders they may be of considerable value, being usually unmetalled and not legally open to motor cars."