

Copy for publication in next months Newsletter to reach the Editorial Committee c/o Birches, the Post Box inside the Post Office or email us at eldwicknews@aol.com. Deadline for copy is 1st April 2008.

THE SHIPLEY GLEN ROAD DEBATE of 1904/5

Bradford Corporation had intended to purchase Baildon Moor from Col.W.W.Maude as a celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. However, the protracted negotiations with the gentleman from Rylston near Skipton, led to the purchase not being completed until 1900 – with conditions attached. The land around Prod Lane and the Glen tramway in Baildon was still owned by Col.Maude and Titus Salt Co Ltd and had great potential value. A condition of the sale of the Moor to Bradford was that the Corporation would undertake to build a road from Green Lane near Baildon Bridge, up through Walker Wood and Midgeley Wood to Shipley Glen, or pay Col. Maude £2000 in compensation. Also a road had to be built as a junction from Glovershaw Lane at Lobley Gate, east across the Glen to "the well-known Refreshment House at Glen Gate", now the Old Glen House.

Col. Maude obviously had it in mind to open up the land for building purposes once the Corporation had built the roads which would cost him nothing. It was said, "At all events, it is pretty certain that, within a few years of the establishment of road communications across the Glen to Shipley Railway Station, all farm land on the east end of the Glen, from Prod Gate Baildon to the new Lodepit Bridge at Eldwick will be covered with villa residences". The plans drawn up to show intended routes even included a small fork which would link the new road to Lodepit Bridge and Saltaire Road into Eldwick.

Whilst the Corporation would pay for the roads to be constructed, it would be Baildon District Council who would be so much in pocket by the rates payable on any new villas that were built along them. Further, it was argued, if the full scheme was adopted, with a road from Eldwick through to Baildon Bridge, the ongoing maintenance and repair bills for the Corporation and ratepayers would be considerable.

"The Corporation will have to pay dearly for damage done to the road by the coal carts, milk carts, butchers' carts, broughams and landaus, and other vehicular traffic, brought by the erection of these 'eligible villa residences fronting Shipley Glen', as one can imagine them being described in the builders' advertisements, and the charm of seclusion will be gone from the Glen forever, with much of its natural beauty." However, if only the Eldwick to Prod Lane road was built, it would be a dead end carrying little

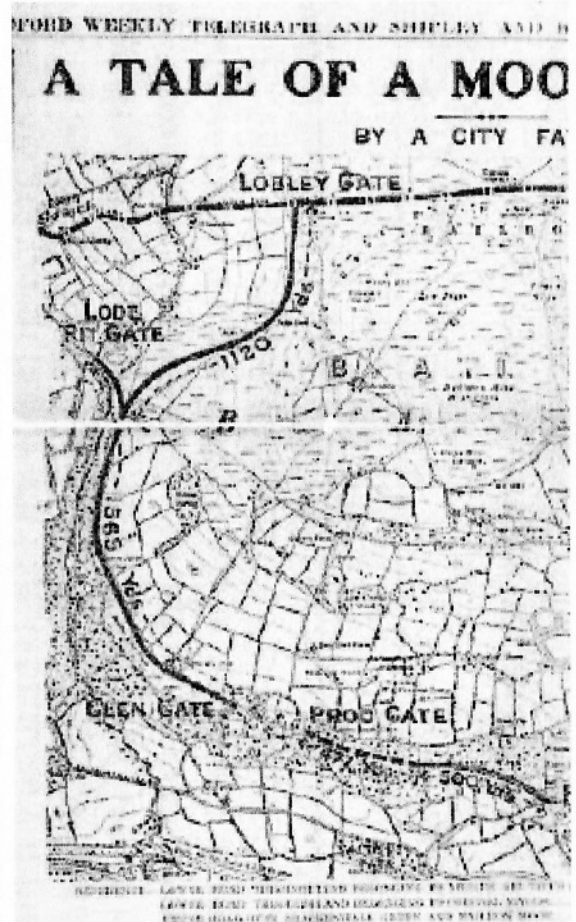
traffic, hence, "repair costs would be trifling".

Moreover, the total cost of the full scheme was estimated at £14,000, or, alternatively only £9000, which was the cost of road from Eldwick, plus £2000 payable to Col. Maude for not building the lower road. After all, the £5000 difference was equivalent to a full penny in the pound on the rates of Bradford people, and, "why should the Corporation go out of its way to hasten the 'spoiliation' of Shipley Glen, spending ratepayers' money without the prospect of ever getting a halfpenny in return?"

"Surely, the course which ordinary common sense would dictate would be to pay the forfeit demanded, and let the landowners who stand to gain by it, make the road themselves. The other road will serve as a memorial of a shortsighted and stupid bargain, and, if it also acts as a warning to the promoters of future extension schemes to walk more warily, it will not have been made quite in vain."

The scheme was adopted in October 1904 with an amendment not to build the lower road through the woods. In Council there had been no environmental concerns but two months later the Scientific Group objected to a plan for the unemployed to construct pathways along each side of the stream through the Glen. They said it could not happen, "now that another part was being cockneyed by the making of a road." The archaeology group also complained that the new road would obliterate the Stone Circle on the Glen.

Construction work began in late 1904 and by January 1905 it was reported that the road was sufficiently advanced for an opinion to be formed as to its ultimate impact on the Glen. A straightened road and wall had replaced the somewhat circuitous old track with its weatherworn wall and had been built higher up into the fields but would still mean the charm of the Glen had gone forever. In April 1905 at Easter time the road was open and visitors to Shipley Glen in the holidays had their first chance to walk along it. There was some criticism of the height of the new wall along the eastern edge but delight that walkers could alight from trams



at Baildon Bridge, walk up Green Lane to reach the Glen Tramway, then walk on the new road to Eldwick and beyond.

Unemployment was rife in 1904/5 so it was claimed in August 1905 that the long section from Lobley Gate to Prod Gate had only cost £2000, not the £7000 estimated, as the workforce used had been drawn from the unemployed. Why then could not the lower road be constructed at a cheap price, also meaning no £2000 penalty fee need be paid to Colonel Maude? Happily, this was rejected so the woodland survives to this day and makes a pleasant route to and from the Glen for all to enjoy.

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PLANNING

08/00233/FUL Construction of two storey extension to rear of existing property at 6 Landsmoor Grove.

08/00923/FUL Construction of balustrade to provide amenity space to rear of property at 46 Otley Road

08/00925/FUL Construction of dwelling at 46 Otley Road.

NEWSLETTER ON LINE

The Eldwick newsletter can now be viewed on line. If you log on to the Eldwick Memorial Club, Birches website:

www.thebirchesclub.co.uk