

*Davenport Park Roads Committee.*

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*April, 1916.*

# DAVENPORT PARK ROADS COMMITTEE.

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*If you'd but seen these roads before they were made  
You'd lift up your hands and bless General Wade.*

—(OLD COUPLET).

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**I**F the more recent owners and residents in Davenport Park could perform the somewhat difficult task referred to in the first line of the above couplet, they too might well feel inclined to lift up their hands in thankfulness for their roads as they now are. But as many of these later comers can have but little idea of the condition of things existing in the Park a few years ago, and of what has been done to bring about the present very different condition, the Committee think that a few particulars on these points would not be uninteresting.

The Davenport Park Area, previous to the year 1901, was included in the township of Bramhall, but in that year it was incorporated, together with adjacent portions of Bramhall, with the Borough of Stockport—a preferential rate being granted to the added areas for a period of ten years.

At that time, nearly all the houses in the Park were on the northern side of Park Road, and on the southern side of Clifton Road—the centre, or island plot, being, with the exception of three or four houses in Devonshire Road, and one in Clifton Road, then unbuilt upon. This centre plot, with its greenery, its fine avenue of noble trees, and its grassy banks—ablaze in the springtime with broom and gorse—was then a very pleasant and agreeable feature of the Park. But of those noble trees only two or three now remain, the exigencies of building having required the destruction of all the others, to the lasting regret of such as remember them. Following the incorporation, building in the Park rapidly proceeded, and by the year 1906 the greater number of the present houses had been erected. But with the development of building operations the roads, such as they were, steadily deteriorated, the continual heavy cart traffic ploughing up and reducing the unset surfaces to a mass of mud. In wet weather this was ankle deep, and to cross a road at any point became an undertaking of some recklessness. Devonshire Road, in particular, being then only in the rough, was simply a morass from end to end, and its state may be the better imagined when it is recalled that on one occasion a lady paying an evening visit to a house there, arrived minus one of her shoes, this having stuck in the mire en route, and in the prevailing darkness, being lost!

Various owners from time to time, made attempts to deal with their own frontages, but in the absence of any combined effort, the results were hopeless.

The condition of the roads ultimately became so intolerable that the Highways Committee of the Corporation took the matter up, and notified each owner that if some satisfactory scheme of re-making and draining the roads was not carried out within a given time, the Corporation would proceed to pave and sewer them, flag the footpaths, and apportion the cost. The owners, therefore, recognising that in

all probability this would end in the roads becoming public, and in the private character of the Park being thus destroyed, held a meeting in August, 1906, at which a Committee was appointed to formulate and submit a scheme for consideration. A scheme, which included the entire re-making of the roads with hard foundation material, finished with a thick cindered surface, was subsequently adopted, each owner undertaking to pay his proportionate share of the cost, together with an annual rate or levy for upkeep. The Committee being empowered to carry out the scheme, the work was duly proceeded with, and the three roads were completed in 1907 at a total cost of £800--the Committee thenceforward continuing as a permanent body. The new roads were highly appreciated, and for a time all went well with them. But it was eventually found that the cindered surface was not satisfactory, cutting up badly with the traffic, and in dry weather becoming exceedingly dusty. To remedy this the owners therefore decided to have the roads scraped, re-formed, and finished with a macadamized surface, the cost to be apportioned as before.

The Committee carried out this work in 1911 at a total cost of £441, a man being then engaged to act as regular Park-keeper six days a-week, his duties being to keep out unauthorised traffic, and to attend to the general upkeep of the roads under the Committee's directions.

The work thus done in 1911 has proved eminently satisfactory, no further capital expenditure having since been necessary, and with systematic repairs and attention the roads still remain in sound condition.

In 1915 the Committee had to deal with proposals made by the G.P.O., relative to an extended telephone system in the Park, and the matter proved to be one of some difficulty. The Committee strongly objected to any plan which included continuous overhead wires, and had many discussions and interviews with the G.P.O. Engineers before agreeing upon a scheme.

Eventually a scheme was approved which provided for the removal of all the then existing tall poles with their masses of wires, the laying of an underground cable round the Park, and the erection of short neat poles to which subscribers would be connected direct.

The rights of owners were secured by an agreement on the part of the G.P.O. to pay a nominal rent to the Committee for the use of the footpaths, and by an undertaking to remove all poles, wires, and cables, if required, on receipt of three months' notice. The work was promptly carried out by the G.P.O. Engineers, to the satisfaction of the Committee, and facilities now exist for the connecting up without difficulty, of all future new subscribers.

The principal matter to be dealt with by the Committee in the near future is that of the footpaths, which, in bad weather, are in a very unsatisfactory condition.

As the annual revenue will not provide for the required outlay, the Committee hope that the proposal for a special effort (to which a majority of the owners have already given their consent) may receive more unanimous support, and thus enable this much-needed improvement to be proceeded with.