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## LEARNING BY TRESPASS: WALKING AND READING AND MAKING COMMONS IN THE PEAK DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT

In this article, we consider a two-week workshop conducted with the European Architecture Student Assembly (EASA) in August 2023 to reflect on how creative practices might be drawn on to both learn about and learn the art of paying attention to the commons. We do so specifically in relation to land rights in Sheffield and the Peak District in England where the workshop was held. Following Linebaugh, we approach commons not as a thing but rather as (made by) a set of practices. We are also guided by Stengers who urges us to 'learn the art of paying attention to' the commons. We draw these provocations together to consider what we did during the workshop — walking(+trespassing), reading(+mapping), making(+repairing) — approaching these activities as practices of commoning. We also reflect on a set of creative responses made by participants to document the workshop (pamphlets, videos, and sound pieces). We consider how the activities and responses offered a way to learn about the topic of commons and land

rights and how we fostered a particular bodily and emotional attunement to our experiences that we refer to as learning the art of paying attention to. We further explore how making the creative responses not only documented the workshop but was a key part of learning. The process enabled an opening up of critical questions, imaginaries and speculation and, in this, was also a generative practice of commoning. We argue that, faced with the erosion of the commons, if we can learn to pay attention, these practices can teach us that there are potentials for making otherwise.

## INTRODUCTION

This article considers a two-week workshop conducted with the European Architecture Student Assembly (EASA) in 2023 to reflect on how creative practices might be drawn on to both *learn about* and *learn the art of paying attention to* the commons.<sup>1</sup> We do this specifically in relation to land rights in Sheffield and the Peak District in England where the workshop was held. The first week of the workshop consisted of a series of activities such as reading various texts related to the topic of the commons and access; going on a guided walk with Terry Howard, a land-rights activist; repairing bridleways with members of Ride Sheffield; hiking across the Peak District; camping; swimming; and trespassing. During the activities, we (tutors and participants) documented what we did by way of field-notes, photos, sketches, videos, and sound recordings to capture practices of commoning and how the commons (or instances of its erosion) was grasped, experienced, and felt. In the second week, we returned to the EASA studio in Sheffield. These notations became content for making a series of creative responses — pamphlets, as well as short films and sound pieces.

The starting points for the workshop were threefold: first, to learn about common land literally by engaging with the specifics of this area's long history of access

movements and campaigns;<sup>2</sup> second, we took heed of the historian Peter Linebaugh's call to treat 'the commons' not as a thing that exists *a priori* but as an action, process, or way of being by considering the kinds of practices involved in commoning;<sup>3</sup> and third, that as the philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers contends, we must learn the 'art of paying attention' to the commons, to common causes, in order to undo 'the sinister diagnosis of the "tragedy of the commons"'.<sup>4</sup> We consider how in this particular setting of Sheffield and the Peak District, as we *learnt about* the commons, there was also potential for us to *learn the art of paying attention to*. Note the use of learn about / learn the art of paying attention to. In the article we employ them as a couplet, separated and brought together by a '/'. This serves to remind the reader that as we *learnt about* the topic of the commons and land rights, we were also trying to *learn the art of paying attention to* the commons. At the same time, returning to Linebaugh, we were attempting to make the commons through our practices or, rather, we were commoning; where the commons is both the practice and the consequence of practices. In the course of the workshop and as we write this reflection, these different aspects of learning and making were entangled, with each overlapping and informing the other in an ongoing co-constitutive relationship.

Both during the workshop and in this article, we approach the commons not as a noun but rather as a creative practice, made and unmade through activity. Unmade through acts of enclosure, privatisation or fencing, or when landowners deliberately block access. Made through sharing knowledge about and caring for an environment which supports a multitude of lives, or as we argue, walking and trespassing.<sup>5</sup> We also propose that, as a practice, the commons has an experiential register to which we can become sensitised, a key part in learning the art of paying attention. Guided by Stengers' provocation, we ask: how shall we do this? How might we learn the art of paying attention? And

1 Participants in the workshop are listed as co-authors of this paper as a commitment to extending commoning to the ways that we produce research.

2 Keith Warrender, *Forbidden Kinder: The 1932 Mass Trespass Re-Visited* (Willow Publishing, 2022); Howard Hill, *Freedom to Roam* (Moorland Publishing, 1980).

3 Peter Linebaugh, *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons for All* (University of California Press, 2008), doi:10.1525/9780520932708.

4 Isabelle Stengers, *In Catastrophic Times: Resisting the Coming Barbarism*, trans. by Andrew Goffey (Open Humanities Press, 2015), p.87.

5 Patrick Bresnahan, 'The More-than-Human Commons: From Commons to Commoning', in *Space, Power and the Commons: The Struggle for Alternative Futures*, ed. by Samuel Kirwan, Leila Dawney, and Julian Brigstocke (Routledge, 2015), pp. 105–24.



Photograph of campsite lecture given by Rondel

what do art, design, or other forms of creative practice offer here? In response we argue that our commoning activities, an attunement to their bodily and emotional resonances, and a close reading of the methods we used to record and respond to the workshop, offer productive ways of learning about / learning the art of paying attention to the particular histories and geographies of Sheffield and its surrounds.

Learning, in Stengers' view, has a very particular meaning. It is a transformative event that challenges established views and is triggered by an 'encounter'.<sup>6</sup> This 'encounter' is always situated, embedded within a context that makes it possible. Contrary to learning conceived as the consumption of information, learning for Stengers is a demanding task that requires crafting situations to provoke thinking. In other words, 'thinking' is not restricted to cognitive processes, but also to aesthetic ones where being affected by a situation leads to a capacity to feel and respond in bodily and

6 Hans Schildermans, 'Learning after Progress? Isabelle Stengers, Artificial Learning, and the Future as Problem', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 57.6 (2024), pp. 1044–58, doi:10.1093/jopedu/qhad059.

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Translating [Creative] Practice



Workshop participant's show the questions posed during a 'walking seminar', one of the workshop activities



*Walking &  
Thinking*



*Ormbunke | Fern*

*Ljung | Heather*

*Resa till Kinder Scout, 3:e augusti, 2023.*

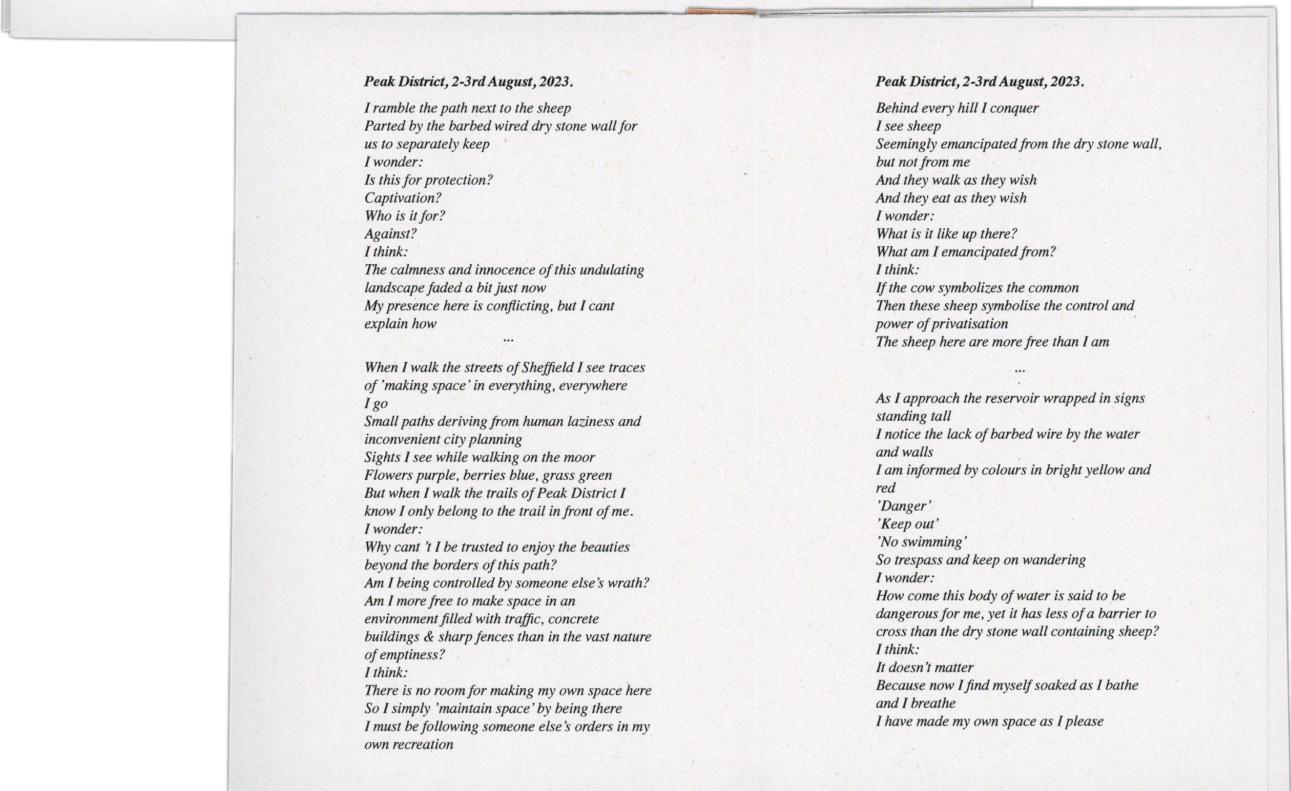
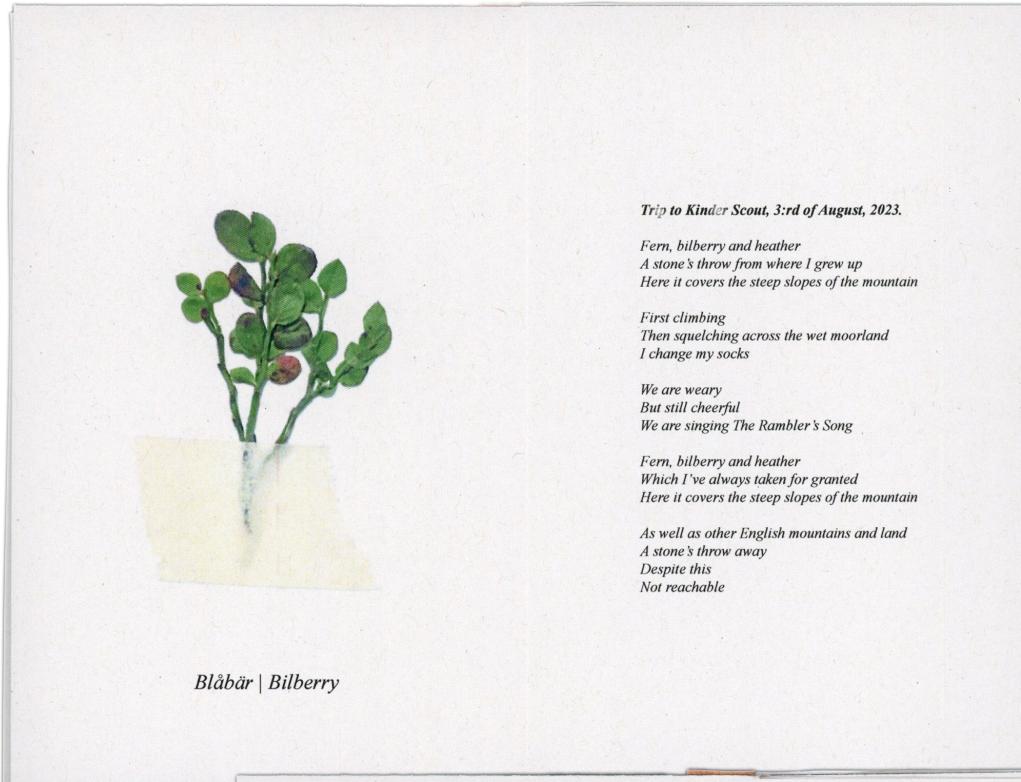
*Ormbunke, blåbär och ljung  
Ett stenkast bort från där jag växte upp  
Här klär de bergets branta sluttning*

*Först klättra  
Sen kläfsa över hedens blöta mark  
Jag byter strumpor*

*Vi är trötta  
Men ändå muntra  
och vi sjunger på The Rambler's Song*

*Ormbunke, blåbär och ljung  
Som jag alltid tagit för givet  
Här klär de bergets branta sluttning*

*Men också andra engelska berg och marker  
Ett stenkast bort  
Trots detta  
Utom räckhåll*





Photographs of guided tour given by access activist Terry Howard

emotional ways.<sup>7</sup> For Stengers, learning depends on the creation of artifices — staged events that have technical and material constraints, that enable new ways of relating to a situation. In the EASA project we devised and staged a series of ‘artificial’ pedagogical and ‘research events’.<sup>8</sup> For example, we employed a ‘walking seminar’ format that encouraged participants to pose a question that arose from the texts, walks, and activities to the larger group which we used to pair up and discuss while walking up a very steep hill. Or we deliberately strayed from the clearly signposted

public footpath to try and find another way across a field using a map of ‘lost’ footpaths. We also invited (and set up the means for) participants to design and make a response to both record and ruminate on the ‘events’. In our view, this was not only a method of documenting what we did but the enabled the process of making to also become an ‘encounter’ for learning.

Approaching the notion of the commons as a verb, we began the workshop with the intention of walking, reading, and making in Sheffield and the Peak

<sup>7</sup> Melanie Sehgal, ‘Aesthetic Concerns, Philosophical Fabulations: The Importance of a “New Aesthetic Paradigm”, *SubStance*, 47.1 (2018), pp. 112–29.

<sup>8</sup> Our understanding of research events is instructed by Mike Michael, and in turn Mariam Fraser. As Michael puts it, ‘events’ can be grasped in two broadly different ways: (1) “compositional” [...] comprised of heterogeneous elements (e.g. human and nonhuman, micro and macro, conscious and unconscious, and so on) that combine together. In this process of combination, the constitutive elements can retain their identities – in other words, they can be-together, cohabit within the event of their combination.’ (2) ‘That the elements brought together within an event co-become in the process of their combination. They mutually affect one another, and their identities are transformed in the process.’ Mike

Michael, *The Research Event: Towards Prospective Methodologies in Sociology* (Routledge, 2021); Mike Michael, *Actor-Network Theory: Trials, Trails and Translations* (Sage Publishing, 2016); Mariam Fraser, ‘Facts, Ethics and Event’, in *Deleuzian Intersections: Science, Technology, Anthropology*, ed. by Casper Bruun Jensen and Kjetil Rödje (Berghahn Books, 2009).

District. Throughout the workshop, we collected verbs, other commoning practices which provided possibilities for learning about / learning the art of paying attention to the commons. As we will see when we turn to the creative material produced during the workshop, these included trespassing, mapping, and repairing, but also talking, questioning, debating, climbing, becoming out of breath, posing, rearranging, warning, logging, thinking, seeing, feeling, belonging, accessing, hiking, roaming, campaigning, maintaining, resisting, scrambling, moving, dividing, providing, disturbing, swimming, conflicting, discouraging, sharing, following, caring, sonifying...

In the following sections, we reflect on how we used the different practices to become sensitive to the commons (as well as to the lack of commons) by explicitly focusing on our bodily and affective experiences. We discuss what we did during the workshop by drawing on three categories of practice that organise this article: *walking(+trespassing)*; *reading(+mapping)*; and *making(+repairing)*. As well as thinking through the activities in which we engaged, we look to the creative responses made by the participants and tutors which offered a means of learning about / learning the art of paying attention to the commons. What is more, in this particular workshop and in this particular geographic setting, we approach our practices as a form of commoning. We contend that the creative responses are equally generative. They open up critical questions, imaginaries, and speculation and so are equally a practice of commoning. Rather than using a traditional format with images accompanied by figure captions, we have chosen to weave images with text to situate our thinking with the visual material and to highlight that the creative responses were not only documentation of the activities, but rather as a central part of the learning and the commoning.

Before we begin, it is important to note that the workshop activities, processes of learning, and creative practices described in this article were not discreetly bounded. They happened simultaneously with each informing and responding to the others. It is also important to acknowledge that the members of the group were able-bodied, able to walk for many miles whilst carrying camping equipment, to climb over fences and walls and dig bridleways.<sup>9</sup> We — the tutors and the EASA participants who applied to participate from across and beyond Europe, including England, Wales, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Lithuania, Australia, Spain, Latvia, Belgium, Armenia — were also largely white, the ‘somatic norm’ in such outdoor spaces in the UK.<sup>10</sup> We represented the sort of people one might expect to see hiking in the English countryside.<sup>11</sup> And, although we were not questioned by anyone in our moments of trespassing, it is no stretch to imagine that our whiteness might have acted as a talisman to more serious confrontation whereas the notion of carrying out trespass might have been very different (or impossible) for people from the global majority.

## WALKING(+TRESPASSING)

During the two weeks, we spent a lot of time walking: we walked through Sheffield, on a guided walk with Terry, as well as walking between the workshop venue and the nightclub where the participants were living for the two-week duration, and to and from the train station to go on our excursions; we walked along bridleways in the Peak District that we also repaired; and we hiked with camping equipment from Hope to Win Hill and Mam Tor and across Kinder Scout.<sup>12</sup>

Walking has the potential to offer, what Stengers terms, learning ‘encounters’. Writing on ‘stepping outside the conventional classroom’ and walking with students in Manchester, Daniel Gutiérrez Ujaque and Felipe Saravia precisely contend that ‘the city is an open

9 Tom Breen and others, ‘Whose Right to Roam? Contesting Access to England’s Countryside’, *The Journal of Transport History*, 44.2 (2023), pp. 276–307, doi:10.1177/00225266231174766.

10 Nirmal Puwar, *Space Invaders : Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place* (Bloomsbury, 2004), doi:10.5040/9781474215565.

11 See the groups Black Girl Hikes, Muslim Hikers, and Peak Queer Adventures who are working to combat stereotypes around who belongs in the British countryside by providing a safe space for their members to hike.

12 During EASA, the participants lived communally. They slept on camping mats in a large open-plan nightclub repurposed for the two weeks; each national team took it in turn to prepare and cook meals and to take cleaning duties. The tutors chose to stay in our own accommodation.



classroom, an educational resource that surrounds us and speaks to us if we know how to listen'.<sup>13</sup> The Peak District too. We sat down and read about the Kinder Scout Mass Trespass, the privatisation of space in the UK, land cleared for grouse hunting, the erosion of access, the infrastructures of (non) access, and the practices of care and maintenance of outdoor spaces.<sup>14</sup> Walking enlivened how we learnt about them, making the issues more tangible and immediate to us. Moreover, returning to Stengers, meaningful learning encounters are not only cognitive but should also be aesthetic (visceral, affective) as we also learn the art of paying attention. Walking offers this: '[i]t induces a mobile, grounded perspective and foregrounds corporeal, sensual, affective matters [...] Moments of encounter forged between feet and the ground remind us of the emotional and embodied textures of our lives and bring to attention the sensuality of social life'.<sup>15</sup> And more than personal responses, attending to these embodied, sensorial, and emotional registers enables us to interrogate a particular place. Tuning into our peripatetic experiences and visceral responses can prompt critical questions of how a space operates and in whose interest.<sup>16</sup>

As an example of this, in the pamphlet *Walking and Thinking*, the authors produced a series of texts and poems in which they contrasted the experience of walking in different places, urban and rural. They consider why it is that in Sheffield city centre, they found themselves crossing between concrete, grass, desire lines, and so on, whereas in the English countryside they are made to walk on a single, often narrow, predetermined footpath. Hailing from Sweden and with a different set of expectations around land access, accustomed to rights to access the countryside and the 'freedom to roam', they ask 'why can't I be trusted to enjoy the beauties beyond the borders of this path? Am I being controlled by someone else's wrath?' This reflection documents different ways of walking in different locations, but it further prompts us to reflect

on where and how we walk, and why. Compared to their national experience, the restrictive English footpath is telling of how the commons have been eroded through a set of enclosing practices and the particularly draconian access laws in the UK as footfall synchronises with prescribed paths. It focuses our critical attention on an act we likely do every day, foregrounding walking as an embodied and emplaced and highly contextual practice that can reveal how spaces work and shed light on spatialised power dynamics.

Walking also became a space for discussion and debate on issues of access. While out hiking in the Peak District, some participants described an experience of anxiety at walking beyond 'Private Property' signs. These emotional reactions reveal deep-seated constructions of public and private space, notions that we in the UK are taught to treat with unquestioning reverence. The Scandinavian participants experienced no such worries; for many, it seemed odd that we wouldn't just walk across a field to take the most convenient route. Several of the pamphlets respond to these embodied and affective experiences of trespass. *Walking and Feeling* captures what can happen to our bodies when we walk across a boundary we shouldn't, including feelings of excitement and triumph. The materiality of access or the lack thereof is documented in drawings of stiles, paths, walls and signs. With line sketches of fences in juxtaposition with open landscapes and bilberry bushes, the pamphlet *Walking and Ownership* documents how the signs engendered stress for some people, pondering on how the signs themselves appear to 'have an innate respect for private property in them'; a response which was difficult to comprehend for some participants coming from a non-UK cultural context.

In *Walking and Logging*, feelings of trepidation and risk are highlighted. A bell curve plots anxiety levels at the moment of trespass, visually illustrating the heightened emotional registers and the return to

13 Daniel Gutiérrez-Ujaque and Felipe Saravia, 'Unlocking Urban Secrets: Learning Through the Exploration of Our Cityscapes', *THE Campus Learn, Share, Connect*, 2023 <<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/unlocking-urban-secrets-learning-through-exploration-our-cityscapes>> [accessed 14 August 2024]; Pohanna Pyne Feinberg, 'Towards a Walking-Based Pedagogy', *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 14.1 (2016), pp. 147–65, doi:10.25071/1916-4467.40312; Ellyn Lyle, Jodi Marie Latremouille, and David Jardine, 'Now Has Always Been the Time', *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 18.2 (2021), pp. 1–5, doi:10.25071/1916-4467.40732.

14 Anita Strasser, '(In)visible Mountain Infrastructures', *Street Signs | CUCR*, 2023 <<https://streetsigns.online/IN-VISIBLE-MOUNTAIN-INFRASTRUCTURES-By-Anita-Strasser>> [accessed 1

August 2023].

15 Charlotte Bates and Alex Rhys-Taylor, 'Finding Our Feet', in *Walking Through Social Research* (Routledge, 2017), p.21.

16 Louise Rondel and Laura Henneke, 'Walking the (Infrastructure) Line: Mobile and Embodied Explorations of Infrastructures and Their Impact on the Urban Landscape', *Sociological Research Online*, 30.1 (2024), pp. 325–38, doi:10.1177/13607804241247713.; Abbi Flint, 'Poetry, Paths, and Peatlands: Integrating Poetic Inquiry within Landscape Heritage Research', *Landscape Research*, 49.1 (2024), pp. 4–18, doi:10.1080/01426397.2023.2237432.



Photograph of no swimming sign at Kinder Reservoir

feeling ‘fine’ once we rejoined the official footpath. By documenting these reactions, our relationships with particular spaces and the histories that shape them are put into relief. Tuning into our aesthetic experiences in this way, walking (and in particular, trespassing) provided an ‘encounter’ to both learn about *and* learn the art of paying attention to these particular histories and geographies. A close reading of our visceral and affective responses draws attention to the privatisation of space and the erosion of access, to the commons, and precisely how it has been unmade.

## READING(+MAPPING)

Interwoven with our walking and trespassing practices, we read. We took inspiration from the Clarion Ramblers, a socialist walking group founded in 1900, who would advertise walks and rambles (and trespasses) alongside local history and lore in a series of annually produced handbooks. Having acquired a set of these before the workshop began, we were struck by the ways (in the words of our guide Terry) ‘poetry was enforced’, meaning a poem or text was assigned to rambles and would be read aloud by the walk’s participants at some point chosen by the walk leader. This idea of ‘poetry enforced’ led us to consider what reading texts, poetry, and other creative responses *in situ* might offer this project,<sup>17</sup> and how it might sensitise us to the commons in new and inventive ways.<sup>18</sup> Like the Clarion Ramblers, reading was (somewhat) enforced as we created ‘encounters’ to engage with literature and theory on topics including enclosure and commons,<sup>19</sup> repair and maintenance,<sup>20</sup> mapping, infrastructures and access,<sup>21</sup> before and during our walks. This was a way to expand our comprehension of the processes and places we were experiencing. Reading while being situated in this landscape was also akin to Sara Ahmed’s feminist and antiracist citational practices, recognising the ‘trail of where we have been and who helped us along the way’.<sup>22</sup> In other words, reading offered a way of understanding of who had gone before us, the paths they have walked, and what underpins our commoning practices. What is more, reading these whilst in the landscape was not only concerned with the consumption of information but with thickening our experiences.<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, the contents of the articles and book chapters that we read were given texture by our embodied and emotional responses. Reading about enclosure, or the swathes of land reserved for grouse hunting, or that in England we can only access 8% of the land, were made all the more salient when the next ‘encounter’

17 In a longer form forthcoming journal article (which this article could be read alongside), we introduce the aesthetic figure of the *trespasser* which we suggest provides important ways to understand the (un)commons aesthetically.

doi:10.22269/130701.

18 Peter Linebaugh, ‘Enclosures from the Bottom Up’, *Radical History Review*, 2010.108 (2010), pp. 11–27.

22 Sara Ahmed, ‘Feminist Shelters’, *Feministkilljoys*, 2015 <<https://feministkilljoys.com/2015/12/30/feminist-shelters/>> [accessed 9 August 2024].

19 Leila Dawney, ‘Commoning: The Production of Common Worlds’, *Lo Squaderno*, 30 (2013), pp. 33–35.

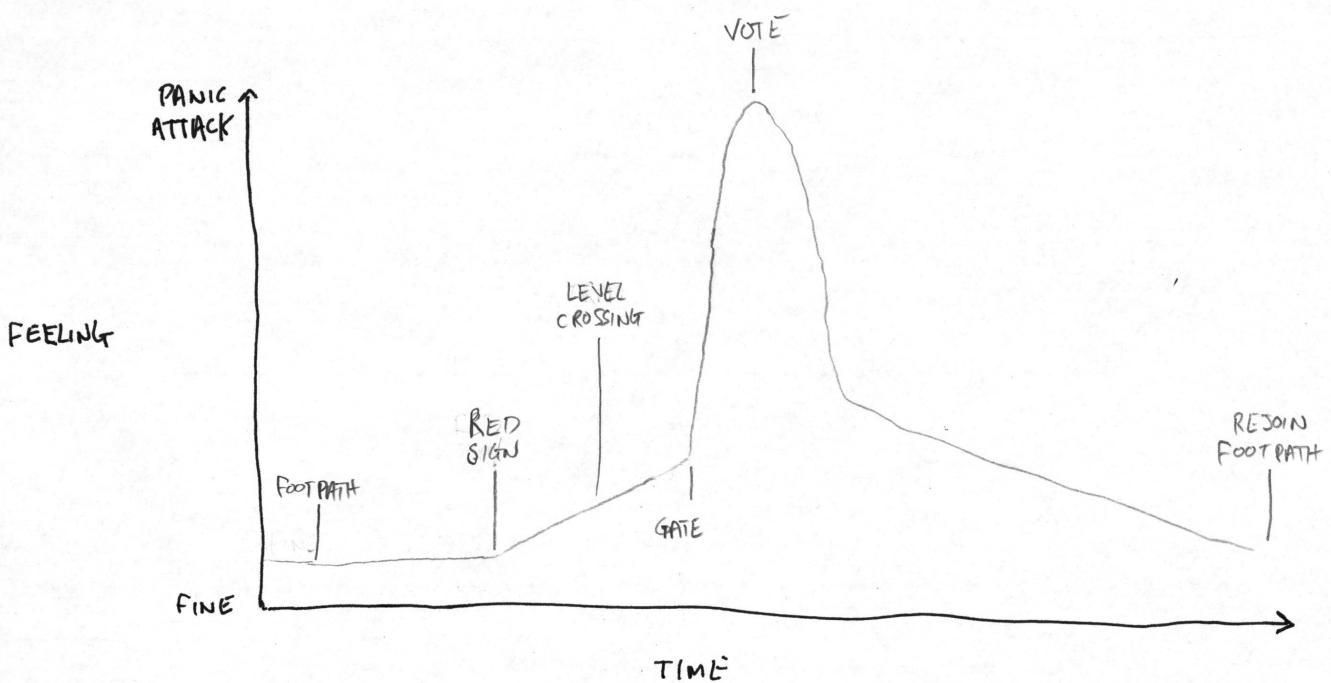
23 We adopt the term ‘thickening’ from Puig de la Bellacasa; in her words, ‘to approach tensions without succumbing to easy oppositions’. Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care, Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017), p.24. We also nod towards Clifford Geertz’s notion of thick description to pay attention to the practices that we undertook as an ethnographer might. Clifford Geertz, ‘Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture’, in *The Interpretation of Culture* (Basic Books, 1973).

20 Leila Dawney and Linda Brothwell, ‘Conversations on Benches’, in *Ecological Reparation* (Bristol University Press, 2023), pp. 242–57.

21 Strasser, ‘(In)visible Mountain Infrastructures’; Shannon Mattern, ‘Infrastructural Tourism’, *Places Journal*, 2013,



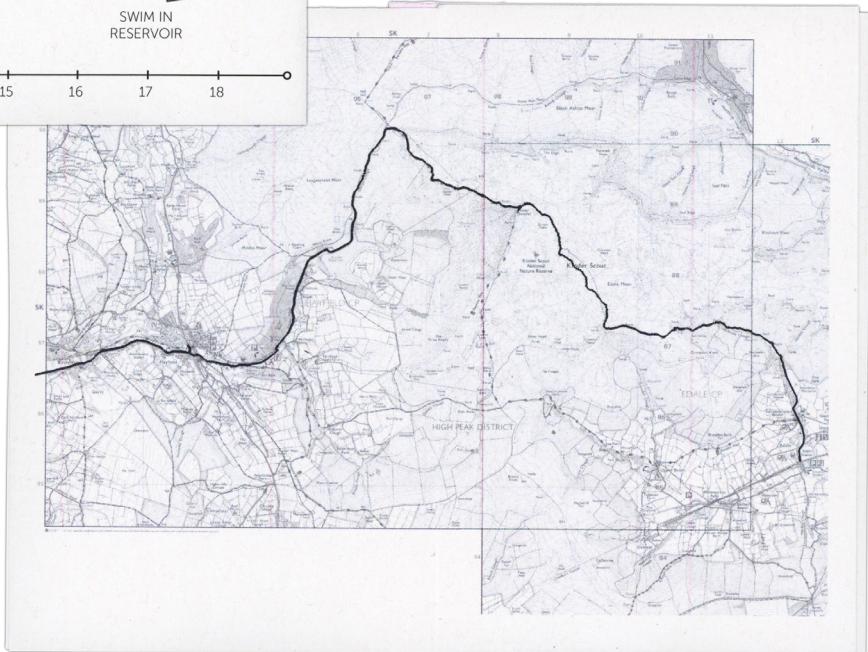
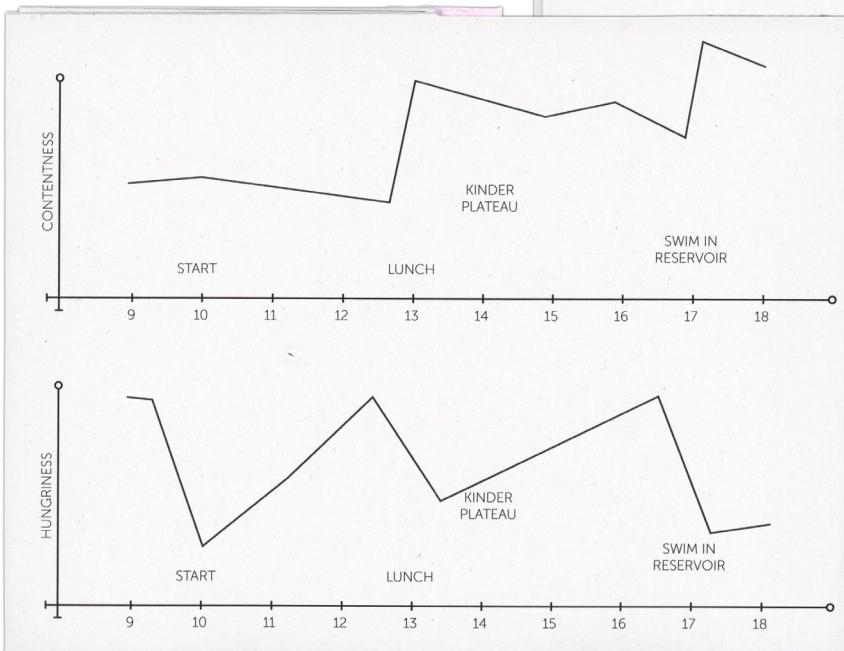
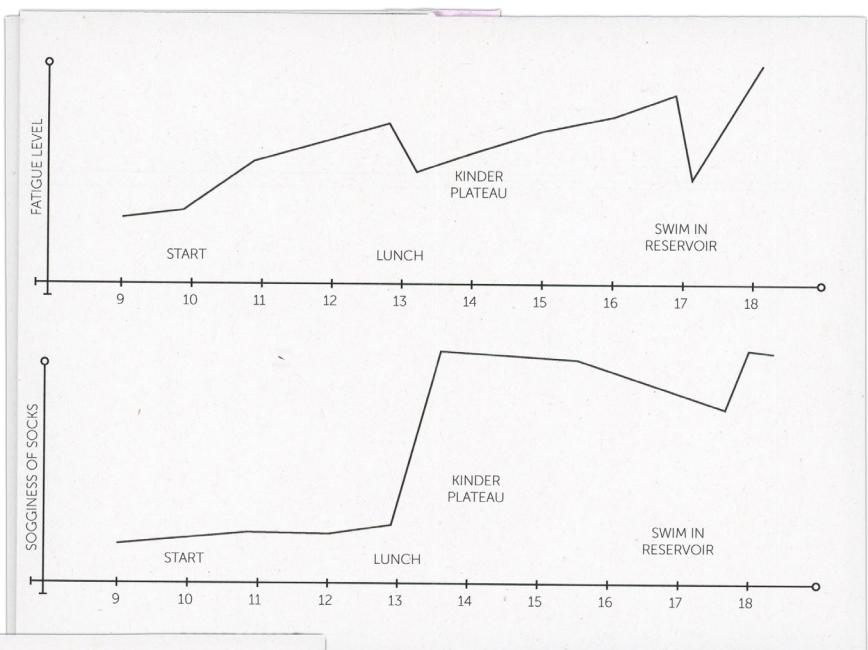
### TRESPASS BELL JAR CURVE

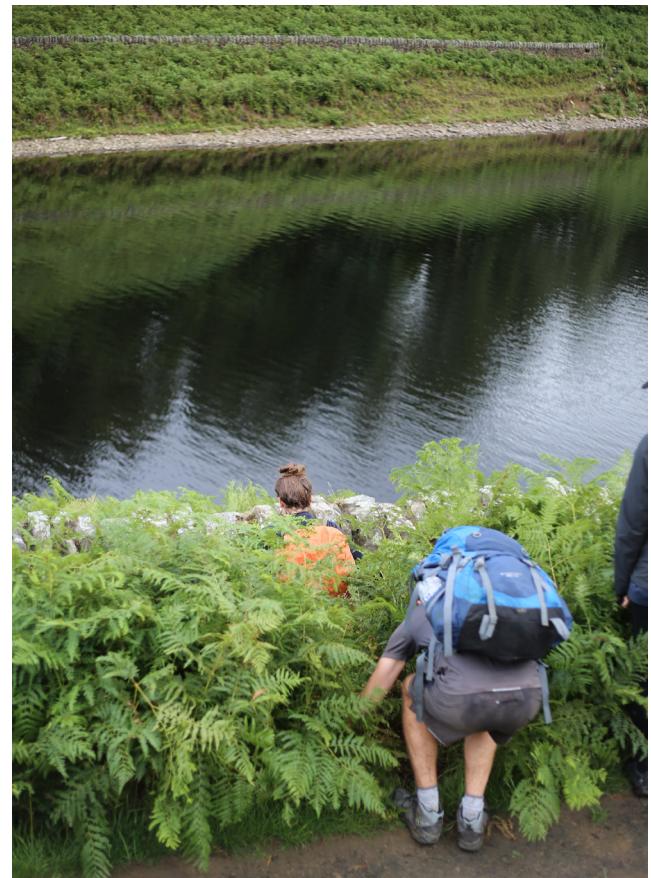


Drawing of the *Trespasser's Feeling Belljar Curve*, and photographs of walking on an 'expired' footpath

## WALKING & LOGGING

EDALE TO HAYFIELD  
VIA KINDER SCOUT &  
KINDER RESERVOIR





# WALKING & RESISTING

## 6 Step Guide to Tresspassing

### 1. FIND PRIVATE LAND



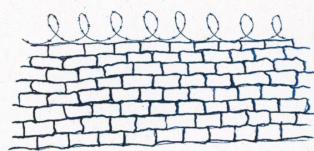
After reading this you will know how to practise tresspassing and your right to roam.

### 5. TAKE YOUR FIRST STEP TO FREEDOM

### 2. OBSERVE FOR THE ANGRY LANDOWNERS (or goats)



### 3. LOOK FOR OBSTACLES TO CLIMB OVER



involved voting on whether to stick to the prescribed path or take a shortcut down a private track.<sup>24</sup> The majority voted to take the shortcut causing anxiety to peak for some as we crossed the private field and was only relieved once we rejoined the marked public footpath, laying bare and making palpable the privation of access that we had read about over breakfast.

As well as texts, we read maps. Hiking from Hope to Edale across Kinder Scout and into Hayfield necessitated a lot of map reading. We read paper and online versions of Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and compasses to navigate and we were delighted to find Ordnance Survey Triangulation Stations on the route, embodying the OS data within the landscape. We also read maps of public footpaths at risk of being lost — 41,000 miles of paths in England — because they haven't been legally recorded. This led us to engage with mapping practices ourselves to bring these at-risk footpaths into use by taking photos as evidence that these paths exist and that people are still walking them. With an image of us with our arms stretched out holding hands along an at-risk footpath, *Walking and Access* attests to the labour of making maps and the tenacity required to prevent footpaths being 'lost'. The corporeal efforts of our mapping practices alerted us to pay attention to the dedicated practices that make access to space and that can unmake it.

Beyond texts and maps, walking also helped us to 'read' the landscape. We became sensitised to small clues: a trodden path across a field indicating the 'correct' footpath; the desire lines that people have created as shortcuts; the foreboding private property signs (foreboding for those from the UK at least; more of a curiosity for those from other places). The EASA participants' creative responses highlight the non-visual ways in which we read spaces.

For example, *Walking and Sonifying* sought to translate data from the walks into other sonic experiences by developing custom software that would 'play' the data points associated with the walk for a listener. This 'sonification' of the walk made audible the barriers we had encountered, including the gates, fences, walls, and so on that were crossed, as well as the topography and type of surface walked on.

The pamphlet making also enabled us to think speculatively and to read the landscape from a different perspective by prompting us to consider the ways in which the more-than-human dwell in these spaces and their experiences of the commons.<sup>25</sup> The text *Walking and Thinking* contrasts the human experience of the countryside with those of the sheep that we walked amongst, considering the different forms of access granted to 'livestock', who in the pamphlet author's eyes were free to roam, and humans. In this we find a description of an 'uncommons' with the animals and non-humans with whom we co-inhabit the Peak District, owing to the ways humans and animals see, read, and understand different border architectures like signs, barbed wire, and dry stone walls.<sup>26</sup> Learning to read the landscape in this fine-grained way and then re-reading it through a set of creative and imaginative practices, we learnt about the histories and geographies of this place whilst also learning to pay attention to the making (and unmaking) of the commons.

## MAKING(+REPAIRING)

In addition to walking and reading, we made and repaired. We had read about different practices of care and maintenance in shared spaces — litter picking from rivers,<sup>27</sup> maintaining infrastructures required for mountaineers,<sup>28</sup> and repairing benches<sup>29</sup> — before spending time repairing sections of bridleway used by walkers, cyclists, and horse riders. These '[s]mall acts of care and repair for public objects acknowledge

24 'The Right to Roam Is the Right to Reconnect', Right to Roam, n.d. <<https://www.righttoroam.org.uk>> [accessed 9 August 2024].

25 'More-than-human' is a term coined by geographer Sarah Whatmore to argue for the hybridity of humans and non-humans and their co-fabrication of the socio-material. Sarah Whatmore, 'Materialist Returns: Practising Cultural Geography in and for a More-than-Human World', *Cultural Geographies*, 13.4 (2006), pp. 600–09.

26 Mario Blaser and Marisol de la Cadena, 'The Uncommons: An Introduction', *Anthropologica*, 59.2 (2017), pp. 185–93. For Blaser and de la Cadena, the term 'uncommons' highlights the co-existence of

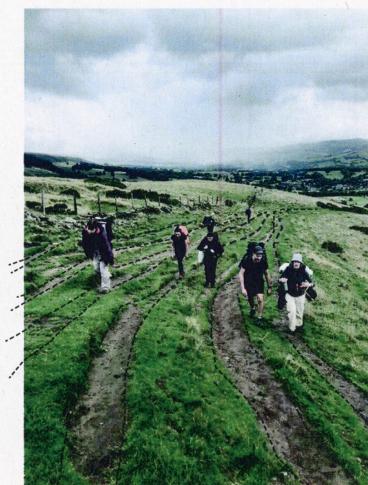
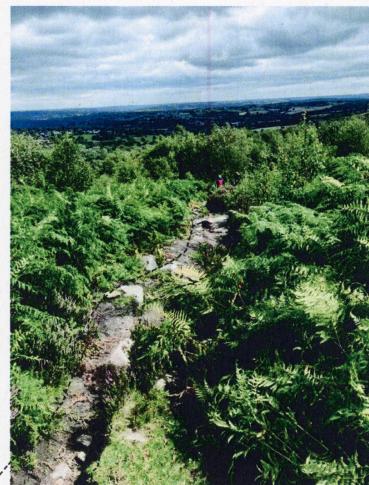
multiple and possibly conflicting ways of being and understanding within the commons. This includes a potential for diverse and divergent relationships between humans and non-humans in a shared environment.

27 Louise Rondel and Emma Jackson, 'Wading into Research: Thinking with and in the River Quaggy', *The Sociological Review Magazine*, 2022, doi:10.51428/tsr.kprh9367.

28 Strasser, '(In)visible Mountain Infrastructures'.

29 Dawney and Brothwell, 'Conversations on Benches', pp. 242–57.

**WALKING &  
C A R I N G**



**WALKING  
AND  
*FEELING***

EASA COMMONS  
2023

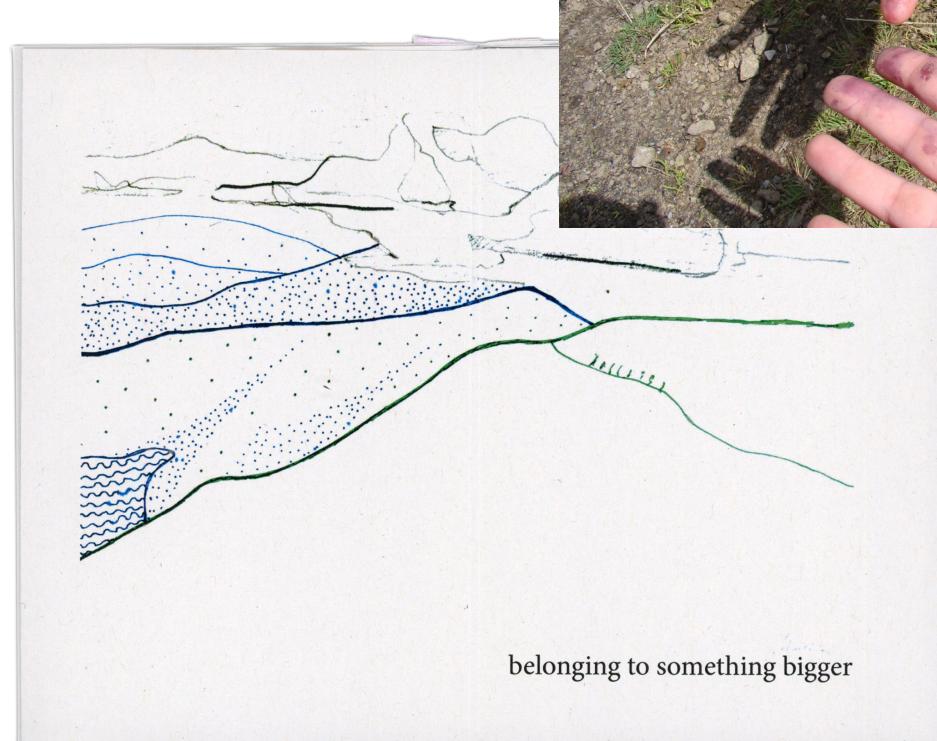
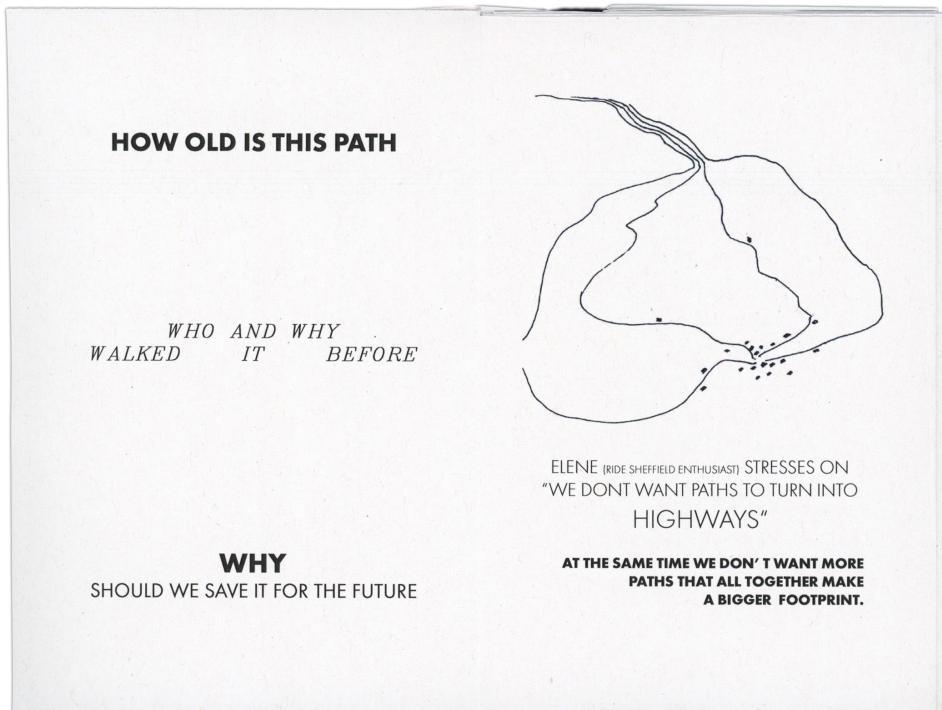
Maria Helgesson

BODILY  
EXPERIENCE

TEN THOUSANDS OF  
STEPS.

ONE STEP AFTER  
THE OTHER.

IT IS A CHOREOGRAPHY.



## Walking and Re-Arrangement

Re-arrangements  
Trodden  
Private Land Gravel  
Contracted Faux  
Commons  
Scramble  
Trespass

access  
the  
Moving change  
sandstone to  
routes around  
and keeping it hidden for  
a rugged perception.  
The re-arrangement of soils to  
reduce path erosion.

A sign of often  
someone providing  
dividing access for  
the path, the next person

Re-arrangements

Trodden

Imported gravel  
for the  
convenience  
and movement  
of stuff on a  
piece of land.  
Not used to  
go long  
stretches.

Only intended for  
the use of the landowner.

Taking outsider  
soils and  
geology to  
create a  
constrained and  
finished article.

Large boulders,  
tend to last  
a long time

but eventually require repair.

Private Land Gravel

Contracted Faux



Barbed wire  
behind a dry stone wall.

Grass is even,  
suggesting no clear route,

but what am I disturbing  
by crossing this empty field?

Trespass

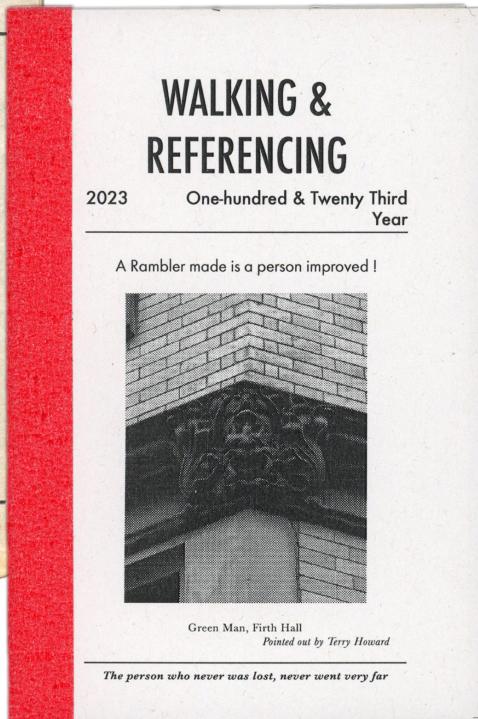
A compass  
and natural formations  
form  
a  
route  
across  
this  
plateau  
punctuated by pools  
of tributaries and bogs.

A climb up.  
Rocks re-arranged  
by waterways  
in a storm.

The agency of water  
carves it  
out of the landscape.

Commons

Scramble



But pay attention to the warnings of danger  
The trains run either way on this line  
As you snake up, over and around you will find a gate  
This is the old footpath  
But it isn't on your map  
Take a deep breath  
beware the barbed wire,  
open the gate,  
and take it in turns to swagger through  
The trespass is short  
and perhaps rather pointless  
There was a perfectly good footbridge

'Walking focuses not on the boundary lines of ownership that break the land into pieces but on the paths that function as a kind of circulatory system connecting the whole organism. Walking is, in this way, the antithesis of owning. It postulates a mobile, empty-handed, shareable experience of the land. Nomads have often been disturbing to nationalism because their roving blurs and perforates the boundaries that define nations; walking does the same thing on the smaller scale of private property.'

'Certainly one of the pleasures of walking in England is this sense of cohabitation right-of-way paths create—of crossing stiles into sheep fields and skirting the edges of crops on land that is both utilitarian and aesthetic. British rights-of-way are not impressive compared to those of other European countries—Denmark, Holland, Sweden, Spain—where citizens retain much wider rights of access to open space. But rights-of-way do preserve an alternate vision of the land in which ownership doesn't necessarily convey absolute rights and paths are as significant a principle as boundaries. Nearly 90 percent of Britain is privately owned, so gaining access to the countryside means gaining access to private land, while in the United States a lot of land remains public—if not always conveniently located for Sunday strolls. Thus the

Sierra Club  
fight again-  
are to keep  
enterprise  
Solin  
Granta

#### Thursday, August 3rd, 2023

**Route:** Edale, Grindsbrook, Grindsbrook Clough, Kinder Scout, Kinder Downfall, Sandy Heys, William Clough, Kinder Reservoir, Kinder Road, Hayfield. Return motor bus fare 2/- Return train fare, 12/10.

**Leader:** Louise Rondell  
A lovely swim

We wake up with warm porridge,  
Not cold overnight oats  
On the blue tarp to plot and plan, and listen  
Focus on the infrastructure  
What makes this possible?  
What makes this impossible?  
This is not a guided tour, but an exploration  
Others call infrastructure invisible until it breaks down,  
but we don't agree

Geographers Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin identify infrastructures as "the largest and most sophisticated technological artifacts ever devised by humans"; and sociologists Susan Leigh Star and Geoffrey Bowker remind us that infrastructures also extend to intellectual and institutional operations, including measurement standards, naming conventions, classification systems, technical protocols and bureaucratic forms. Star and



A breakfast lecture

Ronksley Lane, Rivelin Reservoir embankment, Allen Sike, Lodge Moor and Fulwood. 15 miles. Return fare, 5d.

**Leader:** Miss B. J. Furniss.

Even here on earth, not altogether fade,  
The good and vile! Men, in their words and deeds,  
Live on the hand and heart in earth are laid;  
For thoughts are things, and written thoughts are  
seeds—  
Our very dust buds forth in flowers or weeds.  
Then let me write for immortality,  
One honest song, uncramp'd by forms or creeds,  
That men unborn may read my times and me,  
Taught by my living words, when I shall cease to be.  
"Spencerian," by Ebenezer Elliott (1781-1849),  
Poetical Works. William Tait, Princes St., Edinburgh,  
1840.

Elliott did "write one honest song" "for immortality" and, if all else were lost, his great hymn "When Wilt Thou Save Thy People" is known throughout Great Britain, if not in the U.S.A. and every Dominion.

**Sunday, February 19th, 1950.**

Meet at Beauchief Post Office, 930 a.m. Return by Beauchief car.

**Route:** Ryecroft Glen, Dore Townend, Whitelow Lane, Dore-Hathersage B.R. to Green Drive, Bridle Bridge, Carl Wark, Winyards (Wind Gates) Nick, High Lee Lane, top, Millstone Cottages (lunch), Hathersage Booths, Leach House, Leadmill Bridge, Hazleford and Leam Halls, Sheriff Wood, Grindleford Bridge, Hay Wood, White's Moor, Longshaw Park Drive, Wooden Pole, Totley Moss B.R., Totley Bents, Totley Brook Rd., and Beauchief. 16 miles. Return fare, 5d. **Leader:** Miss V. Roper.

How weak, how vain is human pride!  
Dares man upon himself confide?  
The wretch who glories in his gain,  
Amasses heaps on heaps in vain.  
Why lose we life in anxious cares,  
To lay in hounds for future years?  
Can those (when tortur'd by desire)  
Cure a sick head or purchase ease?  
Can those prolong one gasp of breath,  
Or calm the troubled hour of death?  
What's beauty? Call ye that your own?  
A flow'r that fades as soon as blown.  
What's man in all his boast of sway?  
Perhaps the tyrant of a day.  
Alike the laws of life take place  
Through ev'ry branch of human race.  
The monarch of lone regal line,  
Was he not as frail as each of mine.  
Can he your health into his veins,  
Or cool the fever's restless pains?  
Can he (worn down in nature's course)  
New brace his feeble nerves with force?  
Can he (how vain is mortal pow'r)  
Stretch life beyond the destin'd hour?  
Consider man; weigh well thy frame;  
The king, the beggar is the same.  
Dust form'd us all. Each breathes his day;  
Then sinks into his native clay.

From "Fables by the late Mr. (John) Gay" (1685-1732), printed for W. Strahan, etc., London, 1769. First part published in 1727—others posthumously.

**Sunday, February 26th, 1950.**

Meet by Abbey Hotel, Woodseats, 9-30 a.m. Return from Abbey Lane by car.

**Route:** Graven Park, Fish Ponds, Jordanthorpe, Hazlebarrow Farm, Troway, Blackamoor, Unstone, Monk Wood, Keepers' Bridge, Barlow (lunch), Peakley Hill, Cowley, Stubley, Barnes Farm, Lower Bradway, Beauchief Park and Abbey. 16 miles. Return fare, 5d. **Leader:** Mrs. V. Reed.

Plantation. Return fare, 2/-

**Leader:** Henry Norman and Elaine Barber

The trail is a braid,

Tightly knit

This is not a garden

But we use garden tools

The gritstone drains,

The leaves do not

Do not avoid the puddle

To keep the braid bound

The drain is the shape of a Y

A funnel for run off

The shovel stays flat

The Brambles go back in the hedge

The Bracken goes in piles

To suppress the ground weeds

Beware the circle of death

And be nice, say hi

**Wednesday, August 2nd, 2023**

**Train:** 10:14 a.m. to Hope

**Route:** Hope, Lose Hill, Wards piece, Brockett Booth, Back Tor, Barker Bank, Hollins Cross, Mam tor, Cold Side, Greenland, Edale. 10 km. Camping in Edale, 12/- Bring swim clothes.

**Leader:** Liam Healy and Sarah Pennington

Follow the road to Castleton

and look right, down a gravel track

Ignore the perfectly good footbridge.

and the green line that crosses it

Look instead for the rotten one in a pile,

next to abandoned caravans

Ignore the red sign



Workshop participants lined up along a no-longer recognised footpath

the stuff of collective life that has been lost; they reclaim things in the name of a public and actively remake public life'.<sup>30</sup> Attuning to what it feels like when 'the stuff of collective life' is there (and when it is absent) and moreover recognising the corporeal labour that is involved in making, caring for, and maintaining these things can alert us to the dedicated and tenacious work required to bring the commons into being and to resist its slow erosion.

We also made our creative responses to the week of walking and trespassing, reading and mapping, making and repairing, using the documentation taken whilst in Sheffield and the Peak District to craft a set of pamphlets, a short film, and a sound piece. In the last part of the fortnight, we worked together on a coat that was designed to be worn out walking as a 'packhorse library' to store and transport the pamphlets.<sup>31</sup> Each pamphlet was slotted in its own pocket to be easily accessible for anybody who might like to peruse. The UK's libraries (that is public libraries, not the British Library nor university nor other private

libraries) 'are committed to the principle of openness', albeit increasingly under threat by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government's programme of austerity from 2010 which has seen cuts to local authority spending resulting in the closure of public libraries across the country.<sup>32</sup> Ostensibly libraries allow every citizen to enter, read, use computers, sit in the warm, use a toilet, and access key services. For those who cannot get to libraries, there are mobile libraries which are also having their service heavily reduced by austerity measures. Public libraries and public mobile libraries embody access to knowledge for all. The packhorse library coat, which was made to be worn when walking through Sheffield, and then eventually out hiking in the Peak District emulates this principle, with the potential to offer another form of commoning.

We engaged in practices of making (the commons) in less obvious ways too. Indeed, walking (and trespassing) can be a productive force. As a form of protest and resistance, walking has a long history of *making access*. In 1932, the mass 'trespassers' on Kinder Scout

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.243.

<sup>31</sup> Eliza McGraw, 'Horse-Riding Librarians Were the Great Depression's Bookmobiles', *Smithsonian Magazine*, 2017 <<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/horse-riding-librarians-were-great-depression-bookmobiles-180963786/>> [accessed 9 August 2024].

<sup>32</sup> Katherine Robinson, 'Everyday Multiculturalism in the Public Library: Taking Knitting Together Seriously', *Sociology*, 54.3 (2020), pp. 556–72, doi:10.1177/0038038519899352; Shannon Mattern, 'Library as Infrastructure', *Places Journal*, 2014, doi:10.22269/140609; Melike Peterson, 'Libraries as Felt Spaces: Atmospheres, Public Space and Feelings of Dis/Comfort', *Emotion, Space and Society*, 49.2 (2023), doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2023.100986; Katherine Robinson and Ruth Sheldon, 'Witnessing Loss in the Everyday: Community Buildings in Austerity Britain', *The Sociological Review*, 67.1 (2019), pp. 111–25, doi:10.1177/0038026118797828.



walked because they had been told they could not. In this action, the trespassers travelled from Sheffield and Manchester to walk across Kinder Scout and reclaim a space that had been reserved for the elite pastime of grouse shooting. In 1951, as a legacy of the Trespass, the Peak District became the UK's first National Park and we are able to walk there today. Nearly a century later, still facing the encroaching privatisation of space and the enclosure of common land, members of the Loiterers Resistance Movement (2016) in Manchester walk to take up space and assert the right to roam.<sup>33</sup> Part of our guide Terry's work with the Ramblers involves providing evidence in planning permission disputes related to having footpaths added to the definitive map.<sup>34</sup> He also guides walking groups and scythes footpaths — because the local council had not — so that other people can walk along them. These are practices of maintaining some common space by resisting the loss of yet another right-of-way and ensuring others can access the spaces in both legal and practical terms, in perpetuity. Walking a path, as we did across Kinder Scout, is also

a way of making a path. Following in the footsteps of the 1932 mass trespassers, as we walked, we left a trace for the next person and in this way played a part in making sure it remains open for them.

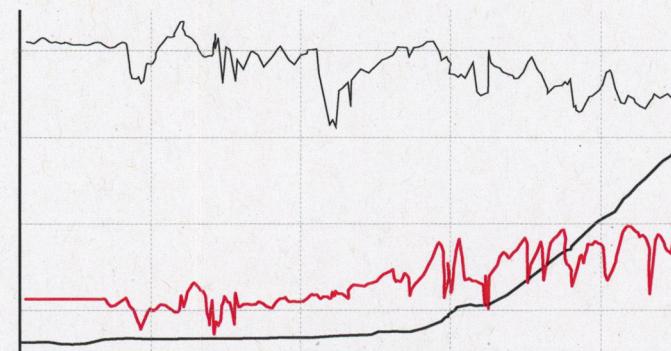
*Walking and Re-Arrangement* gets to grips typographically with the hapticity of paths and how their different textures are made by and reciprocally make different practices and forms of mobility. For instance, 'Private Land Gravel' is (made) for 'convenience and movement [...] only intended for the use of the landowner', while 'Trodden' shows how the path has been divided through human or non-human action, 'often providing access for the next person'. In *Walking and Feeling*, the activity of taking 'ten thousands of steps' is described as 'one step after the other; it's a choreography', making us understand that we 'belong to something bigger'.

33 'About The LRM', The LRM, n.d. <<http://thelrm.org/>> [accessed 14 August 2024].

34 'Don't Lose Your Way', Ramblers, n.d. <<https://dontloseyourway.ramblers.org.uk/>> [accessed 9 August 2024].

Walk 3  
EASA 2023

## Walking & Sonifying 3



Bridge



Gate



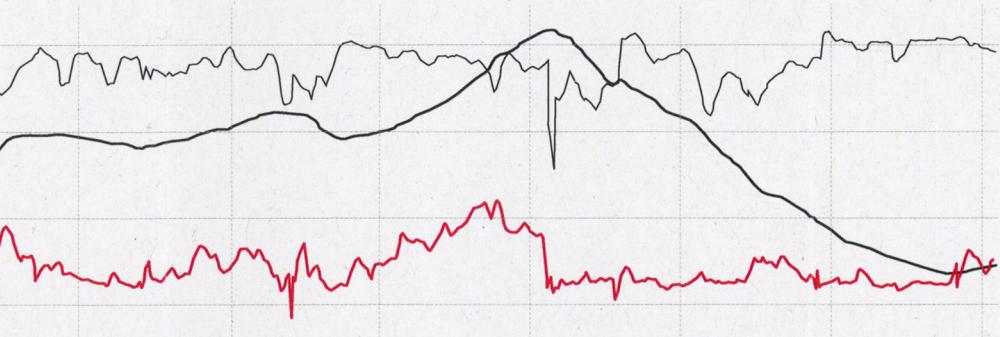
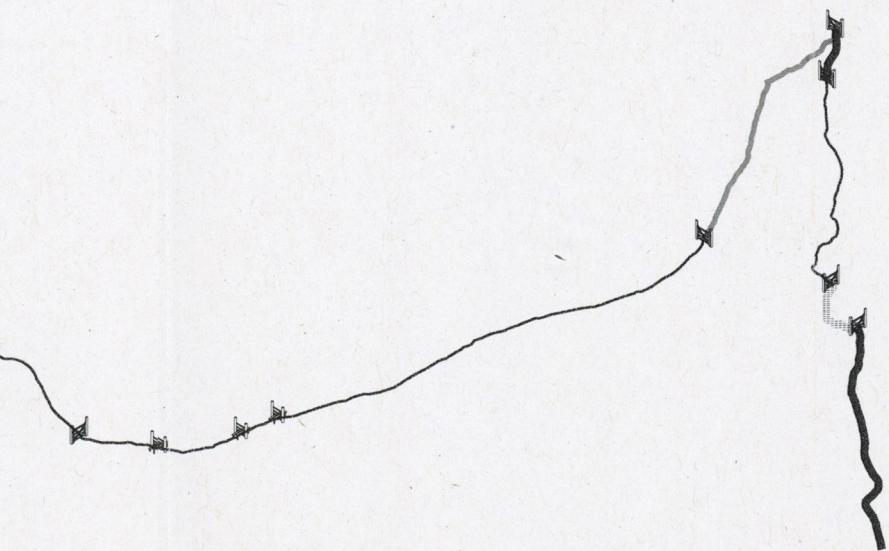
Stile



Cattle Gate



Bitumen



— Paving   — Car Track   — Track   — Grass   — Gravel   — Steps   — Graded Path

In this framing, walking is conceived as a generative and generous act, enabling others to follow. As Rebecca Solnit describes, 'walking is, in this way, the antithesis of owning. It postulates a mobile, empty-handed, shareable experience of the land'.<sup>35</sup>

As a generative practice, not only did we walk but we trespassed. We crossed the 'Private Property' sign, walking where we 'should not' in an attempt to experience and momentarily contest the imposition of fences and the enclosing of particular spaces for particular people; in doing so, potentially making new paths.

Arriving at the reservoir after a long hike across Kinder Scout, some of us chose to trespass again, this time to swim, whilst others watched from the banks.<sup>36</sup> This gave rise to a particular set of visceral experiences different to on the trails: flexibility and strength were required to clamber over the wall; the ferns on the other side were rough and dense, scratching our skin as we pushed a path through them down to the water's edge; we undressed with hurriedness but swam with slowness, savouring the welcome coolness and calmness of the water (although with an undercurrent of worry about the 'submerged objects' about which the 'No Swimming' sign warned us and which are almost legendary in British imaginaries of reservoirs). Like walking, cultivating a close awareness of the deeply embodied and emotional registers of the swim-trespass can illuminate (British) histories of privatisation and paucity in access to water. What is more, this instance of trespass was shown to be a practice which enables the creation of new spaces and new feelings about spaces. We were joined by a passerby, a local man who had walked here many times but had never thought to swim. He scaled the wall with ease, stripped to his shorts and jumped into the water with a splash. For a fleeting moment, this passerby was recruited into resisting the reservoir's inaccessibility, joyfully.

Writing a '6 step guide to trespassing', *Walking and Resisting* instructs that we:

1. Find private land;
2. Observe for the angry landowners (or goats);
3. Look for obstacles to climb over;
4. You are good to go;
5. Take your first step to freedom;
6. Enjoy (Pick some berries and some mushrooms).

Access to the water was made by this instance of trespass. It was also passed on as a stranger became caught up in the affective encounter. The joy we felt was bound up in the transgression and in the sensory pleasures of being in water but also in the momentary transformation as the enclosed reservoir became a space for swimming, splashing, and warming ourselves in the sun. But this does not mean that we should necessarily walk (or trespass) somewhere just because we can. As *Walking and Caring* alerts us to, we should also question 'how old is this path?' we walk and 'why should we save it for the future?' How might the landscape and its more-than-human inhabitants be impacted by this pathmaking?

In this project, we began to understand walking (and trespassing) as multiple: learning a way of attuning to the landscape, to theory and history, and to what and who is privileged there; as well as generative means of protesting, resisting, creating, commoning.

Whilst documenting and reflecting on what we did, processes of making and repairing also enabled us to be playful and proved to be generative. On one of the walking days a participant found a badly faded, broken, and discarded sign on one of the trails prompting us to consider how we might go about repairing these objects and to speculate on what these might look or read like, if the texts and readings we had engaged with while walking could be 'collaged' to do this repair work. In *Walking and Warning* and *Walking and Warning II*, the authors reconstitute recognisable 'forbidding'

35 Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (Granta, 2014), p. 80.

36 We do not wish to undermine the very real risks present with swimming in outdoor, cold bodies of water. Campaign groups such as the Outdoor Swimming Society advocate for increased access for swimming and with this increased education and accurate information about the risks. 'Right To Swim: The OSS Manifesto', The Outdoor Swimming Society, n.d. <<https://www.outdoorswimsociety.com/inland-access-the-oss-manifesto/>>; 'Survive', The Outdoor Swimming Society, n.d. <<https://www.outdoorswimsociety.com/category/survive/>>.



## Cultivate Response-ability for Kinder Scout

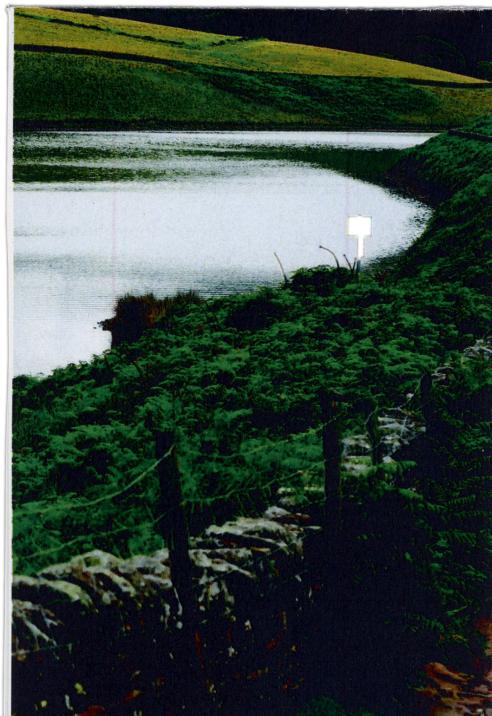
National Nature Reserve

Kinder Scout is cultivating vital response-ability, which requires much more from us. It requires the risk of being for some worlds (the moorland plants) rather than others (the sheep) and helping to compose those worlds with others (publics). In this case a fence has been erected to keep grazing sheep off the moorland plants to allow them to establish.

Help us to stay with the trouble of protecting the Kinder plateau:

- Please close gates behind you
- Report any sightings of sheep / livestock on the Kinder plateau
- Report any damage to the fence, or any of the access points

Call Tom Harman on 01433 670366  
Email: [peakdistrict@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:peakdistrict@nationaltrust.org.uk)  
(Please supply a grid reference, if possible)



Outdoor Swimming Society 2023

"Walking focuses not on the boundary lines of ownership that breaks the land into pieces but on the paths that function as a kind of circulatory system connecting the whole organism. Walking is, in this way, the antithesis of owning."

Solnit. *Wanderlust: a History of Walking; The Peak District and Beyond*. 2014.



'Repaired' signage and *Walking & Warning* pamphlet



*Pack-horse library coat* designed to store and distribute pamphlets

signs. ‘DANGER! Deep water’ comes to include the message: ‘this sign aims to discourage swimmers but is meaningless from a legal perspective’. ‘NO ACCESS’ becomes ‘Celebrate Access. Respect. Enjoy. Protect’. The practices of creating these collaged signs prompt reflection on how warning signs offer a blunt form of delegation, curtailing a more nuanced encounter with the landscape. They encourage speculation and questions about the worlds we are making.

Making and repairing (where making is conceived in a multitude of ways) — and what we make and what we repair — put into relief the commons not as something that pre-exists but rather as something that is enacted and maintained (and can be unmade) through our actions. As we engage in practices which make the commons — as we common — we are offered opportunities to learn about / learn the art of paying attention to. This learning, in turn, feeds back into commoning in order to resist ‘the sinister diagnosis of the “tragedy of the commons”’.<sup>37</sup>

## ATTENTION! TRESPASSERS!

In this article we have revisited a two-week workshop held in Sheffield and the Peak District on the theme of the commons with architecture students from across Europe as part of EASA. Our aim has been to explore what creative practices might offer in engaging with the commons, how it is made, its erosion, and possibilities for making it anew. We started from three initial provocations: firstly, that we wanted to learn about the commons and histories and geographies of access to land in this specific setting; secondly, that we understood commons not as a thing that pre-exists but as a set of practices; thirdly, that as well as *learning about*, we wanted to, following Stengers’ instruction, ‘*learn the art of paying attention to*’. Responding to these we argued that the activities — or, in Stengers’ terms, the ‘encounters’ — in which we engaged and the process

of becoming explicitly sensitised to our embodied and affective responses have offered a productive means of learning. By walking(+trespassing), reading(+mapping), making(+repairing) amongst other practices, we have come to learn more about the commons and begun to learn the art of paying attention. Moreover, we have argued that these activities were themselves creative — walking makes paths, mapping makes maps, repairing makes public life, trespassing makes access. In this particular context, these became practices of commoning, of making the commons.

What is more, the pamphlets, films, and sound pieces the participants produced not only documented what we did and what we learnt; they were also generative. They opened up critical questions, imaginaries, and speculation. All of these forms of creative practice play their role in the entangled processes of commoning and learning, learning and commoning. These are essential processes if we are to resist ideological and practical threats to the commons.

Splicing together footage filmed throughout the workshop, the film *Go Again* shows a scene where Terry is heard explaining the 1932 Kinder Scout Mass Trespass as the camera pans along a line of hikers and then up across the verdant landscape to the grey sky. This response to what we did and what we learnt in those two weeks reminds us that, as the histories and landscape of the Peak District have taught us, the commons does not exist *a priori* but rather it is made and so needs to be maintained. Produced through a set of practices, it is equally vulnerable to being unmade. Learning about / learning the art of paying attention has shown us that, faced with the creeping erosion of the commons and pronouncements of ‘tragedy’, there are potentials for making otherwise.

<sup>37</sup> Stengers, *In Catastrophic Times*, p. 87.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to the EASA Commons '23 organisers, in particular Lucia Medina Uriarte and Joe Ridealgh who worked tirelessly to organise an exciting and stimulating two weeks as well as making sure everybody was cared for and fed. We would like to thank Terry Howard for his guidance through the workshop and since, and Henry Norman and Elaine Barber from Ride Sheffield for speaking to us about maintenance and repair of trails. Many thanks to all of those who participated in the workshop and brought thoughtful discussion and vast amounts of energy and enthusiasm, it has been a pleasure to work with you all. Thank you also to the two anonymous reviewers for your careful reading of the article and your helpful feedback. The workshop was made possible with funding from the AHRC [Grant no: AH/X005372/1].

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

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The co-authors of this piece are the participants and tutors of Walking and Reading, a two-week workshop held during the European Architecture Student Assembly summer residency in Sheffield in 2023 on the topic of commons. Over the two weeks, we walked and read (and trespassed, mapped, made and repaired) together, exploring land rights, the erosion of the commons, embodied and visceral experiences of public and private spaces, rambling songs and the packhorse library. The tutors — Louise, Liam, Sarah and Tobie — have worked together and continue to work together on projects around rivers, privately-owned public spaces, walking and data centres.

