“Scaling the Depths”

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Scaling the depths - a wet walk

David Andrews

The story of the underwater right-of-way in August Sheetlines,¹ brought to mind a memory from 1966. At that time I was a young OS surveyor engaged upon the resurvey of Scarborough at 1:1250 scale. The local surveyors were sent a proof copy of the proposed revised edition of the North York Moors one-inch tourist map for comments. The previous, (‘A’), edition of the map, (figure 1), did not include public rights of way.

Fig 1. North York Moors one-inch Tourist map, A// edition, copyright date 1963

When we inspected the proof of the ‘B’ edition we very quickly noticed that the proposed revised map had public footpaths crossing the waters of the reservoir just south of the village of Scaling Dam, (figure 2).

We immediately notified OS HQ in Southampton, convinced that this must be a mistake. The amazing response was that it was not a mistake. The draughtsmen had noticed this at compilation stage, and had raised the issue with North Yorkshire County Council. NYCC’s reply had been that the footpaths were still legally public rights-of-way and OS was obliged to show them as NYCC were the authority for the routes and status of rights-of-way, and OS had to accept their authority in the matter and show them on the OS maps. Therefore the map would have to be printed with the footpaths crossing the water.

The map went to print and distribution. So much I know as fact from my own experience and knowledge.

The remainder of this article is based upon rumour, which is that there was a public outcry once the map went on sale. OS told the complainers, “it’s not our problem, NYCC are the authority for rights-of-way, tell them”.

¹ ‘Washed out’, Sheetlines 103, 52.
NYCC then became so fed up, (or probably embarrassed), with the public complaints that they rapidly amended the definitive map to delete the offending footpaths and asked OS to reprint the map without the footpaths. OS took the line, “we told you about this at proof stage and you said you were not amending the Definitive map. If you want our map reprinted you will have to pay for the reprint, and withdrawal of the existing stock”.

Whether that actually happened I don’t know, but the next edition, still copyright date 1966, appeared with the offending footpaths removed, (figure 3). Whether NYCC had to pay for the reprint and stock withdrawal I don’t know. What I do know is that very few copies of the “B” edition seem to be around, and I have five in my collection. My grandchildren’s inheritance