Walter Arthur Smith (1852-1934)

Important People of Scottish Access · https://scotways.com/ken/walter-arthur-smith/



Beinn the ScotWays Bear showing a 175th Anniversary medal, Walter's ice axe and three copies of Hill Paths in Scotland

Walter Arthur Smith was an Edinburgh actuary whose major claim to fame for ScotWays is that he led the signposting deputation to the Cairngorms in 1885, triggering the legal battle for Jock's Road which the Society pursued right to the House of Lords. This fostered a decade of hectic activity in asserting rights of way and more general rights of access. The report of the Cairngorm's Signposting Deputation to the Society's Directors formed the basis of our 175th Anniversary Challenge.

Walter A Smith wrote our first guidebook "The Pentland Hills: Their Paths and Passes" which was published in 1885. The map it contained was drawn specially by John George Bartholomew; as well as routes, this showed both the locations of some of the Society's earliest signposts. He is the author of "Hill Paths In Scotland", published in 1924, which is the forerunner of Donald G Moir's two-part Scottish Hill Tracks, now in its sixth edition.

In 1889, he was an original member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and became the Chairman of the Scottish Rights of Way & Recreation Society in 1923 until 1931.