

SIGNPOST

Newsletter of the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

Number 21

July 2006



Chairman's Report

Our AGM (picture above) was held recently with an outstanding turnout of over 90 members. The location- Stockport- and venue and facilities- The Britannia Hotel- were all warmly endorsed . More bus routes than had been realized run close by and we will ensure these are made known for our Half year meeting. All the business on the Agenda was enacted and all nominated persons were voted into office. In my report to the meeting I referred specifically to:-

Membership -had risen to 1110 (end of March), an all time high, but the challenge would be to retain and then build on this level post AGM when hundreds of renewals would be due. In fact we are, as I write, already back up to 1065 and if the still substantial number of annual and other members outstanding were to kindly renew we would be sailing! Please, if you approve of what we are doing to safeguard and improve our footpath heritage, give us your support.

Bridge funding -for PNFS this is proving to be the *Year of the Bridge*. In updating my comments to the meeting this is the current status:-

Kirklees Way -agreed to fund 3 bridges in (idyllic) Morton Woods.

Rainow -agreed to fund a bridge over an, at times, impassable stream.

Doncaster -strong likelihood we will fund fully, or in part, a 10m span on FP Moss 9.

Poynton -agreed to fund a replacement bridge on FP Poynton 3.

Sheffield -agreed to fund a simple structure on Bradfield 18A.

Grindon -agreed to fund a bridge over the Hoo Brook.

Upper Derwent Valley -early stages of a proposal to fund a bridge on Open Access land to assist a footpath develop.

The total monies committed total £4000. In each instance the bridge will have anti-slip on its deck, pass to the ownership and responsibility of the Highway Authority and carry our "Join Us" and "Funded By" plaques.

Footpath Matters -I referred here to the avoidance of confusion and benefits in consistency in having **Roy Spoors** being now overall responsible for all footpath matters -Diversions/Faults/Obstructions and that Roy makes a first class contribution to the Society.

Our Walks -These are coming along very nicely in terms of numbers participating, leaders volunteering (again many thanks) and the variety of walks. The meeting identified the need for shorter (6 mile or so) walks as well as the 10 milers and I am very pleased to report that **Clarke Rogerson** has kicked us off with a splendid start in

leading short walks from his *Walk! The South Pennines* book (walk programme details p11).

Financial -We continue to have our total assets grow despite some fairly vigorous investment in our charitable aims and this is quite simply because of legacies received of late. In such fortunate circumstances we would be remiss in coming to the membership with a proposition to increase subscriptions even though these have remained unchanged for years. However we anticipate that this year our total assets may well reduce in which situation there would be a subscription increase proposed at next years AGM.

Succession Planning -In my experience Chairmen are at their most effective best for 3 -absolute maximum -4 years and then its time for new blood to come in and reinvigorate the organization. I am now starting my 3rd year as your Chairman. Roy holds a similar albeit stricter view with regard to his position as Vice-Chairman. And for good measure **Fred Ogden** has served notice that this will be his last year as Signpost Officer (Admin) and **Ernest Sutton** as Membership Secretary has considerable health problems. So the major challenge in 2006 is for your Officers to identify and develop up and coming talent so that when the time is nigh there can be a seamless transfer of management responsibility. The show must go on, because we all care passionately about footpaths. They matter significantly to the nation's physical, mental and spiritual well-being and deserve all the protection they can possibly get.

Kind regards. **David Bratt**

Advance Notice of Agents'/Inspectors' Conference 2006

A date in the diary for all Agents and Inspectors is **Wednesday 15th**

November 2006. That is when the latest Agents'/Inspectors' Conference will be held at the Britannia Hotel, Stockport; same venue as the recent, successful AGM.

The Society is moving into a new, exciting era and our Agents/Inspectors are essential to our future success. We do need to find modern and efficient ways of working so that our Society is relevant for the future and can cope with our ever increasing workload.

We have, therefore, decided to give over the whole conference to the theme of "New Ways of Working". This will be stimulating for everyone and there will be opportunities for feeding back views to your officers. So please put that date in your diaries now.

Roy Spoors.

New Website Design Moves on Apace

The new design for the Society's website is coming along on schedule. It was presented at our recent AGM and the feedback so far has been very positive. The design is meant to give the Society a more modern site with more information available for access by anyone interested.

Some key innovations are:-

- opportunities for 'Friends of PNFS'

- easier email contact for footpath and signpost faults
- use of "Google Earth" to show walks and locations
- start of building up a catalogue of walks guides that can be downloaded free of charge
- photo album of interesting photographs both old and new

When it is ready the new site will simply replace the existing one, so keep on checking the site.

Roy Spoors.

Ernest Sutton writes..

A thank you and an apology from the Membership Secretary.

My wife **Josie**, who helps me so much in this job, joins me in saying a very sincere thank you to all those members who have responded so quickly in renewing their Memberships. We feel sure that this year we have been busier than ever. At the same time I wish to apologise for the delay in acknowledging the receipt of subscriptions, due mainly to the inrush.. It gives us so much pleasure to know that there is such an interest and support for the Society.

When I was asked by **Leslie Meadowcroft** if I would take on this job, following in the footsteps of **Ted Whittaker** I felt, and still feel, proud to be associated with a Society that has such a great tradition, and it has given me a great deal of pleasure to know that I have been able to play a

part in maintaining it. Once again, my very sincere thanks to those who have responded, whether they are in Annual, 5 year, 10 year Memberships, or the representatives of the Affiliated Societies who play their part, and a gentle reminder to those who have not yet responded.

RUCKSACK BADGES. Publicity is a very good method of furthering our aims to increase our membership and the wearing of one of our Rucksack Badges certainly does help. I will be pleased to dispatch one of these on receipt of the sum of £2.00.

-oo-

STOLEN SIGNPOST. Signpost No 23, Peep o'Day, Hayfield. This signpost was originally installed in 1906 and was reported missing in the 1990's. We replaced it in 2004 with a sign dedicated by the family of the late **Elsie MacNeeny** of Romiley.

Imagine my horror a few weeks ago when I was notified that the new sign was missing. A site visit confirmed that the plate had been removed but the post was still intact, with the dedication plaque and the 'Join us' plate also untouched.

I reported this to the Police and we will replace the sign. Can I ask members to keep their eyes open and report any damaged signs and posts to Taylor House so that appropriate action can be taken?

Fred Ogden
Signpost Officer

Tubular Posts

The size and shape of the Society's signs have evolved over many years. However, a radical change was introduced in the 1970's when circular metal posts with small destination plates were used. Many of these signposts, known as tubular posts, are now in a very poor condition and need replacement. During an annual footpath inspection at Kettleshulme I came across one of these posts in a dilapidated condition and duly reported it to **Keith Wykes**. I made the mistake of saying I would be happy to help with its replacement... Well, very soon **Keith** and **David Bratt** had persuaded me there was a worthwhile project here to replace all our tubular post and signs with the traditional wooden posts and plates.

Working through the reams of information at Taylor House, I have identified about 24 signs which may have tubular posts. These are systematically being visited and details recorded. To date, eight replacement signs have been finalised and ordered.

Bill Johnson is assembling them in Taylor House and in due course they will be 'planted' on site with the help of **Ted Wolfe** and his team.

I am endeavouring to obtain written permission from the landowners for the replacement signs (in the good old days this did not seem to be necessary!). So far I have had a very encouraging response. Further site visits are planned.

Neil Collie



Tubular post

A collapsing path—the Society's position

When the Chairman put out an appeal for ideas for new projects for the Society he got a swift response from member **Rex Walsh**. Could we repair or re-route footpath Prestbury 20, which had collapsed in part into the meandering River Bollin? After careful thought, we came to the conclusion that there was no action we could take. A glance at the map will show the serpentine course of the Bollin between its sandy banks which are, unfortunately, by their very nature, prone to undermining and disintegration. Resiting the path close to the river is only asking for a repeat performance. But here we come up against a more difficult problem. A footpath, in law, follows a fixed line which cannot be altered without the agreed procedure with the Local Authority and the landowner. On investigation, we find that the L.A. are on the ball and have posted notices advising the public of a diversion of the footpath away from the river and across a nearby

field. We feel that this is the best solution and, in any case, our Constitution makes no provision for the re-building or re-siting of paths. Sorry, Rex. But have you (or anyone else) got any other ideas for projects?



The problem at Prestbury 20

New Inspectors

Two new inspectors were appointed at the last Officers' Meeting. They are: **Ann Papageorgiou**, who has taken over Mellor from **Wally Smith**, and **Emma Bowden**, who now looks after Tameside. Welcome ladies!

People

Jim Wild, long-serving inspector for Disley and a dedicated worker at Taylor House (now retired) celebrated his 60th Wedding Anniversary in May with **Mrs Wild**.

Congratulations to you both.



The bridge at Poynton before representation by the Society to Cheshire County Council...

..then successfully cleared for several weeks (right)

Stop press: obstructed again but Cheshire CC, more than a little prodded by us, give assurance it will be quickly cleared and permanently.



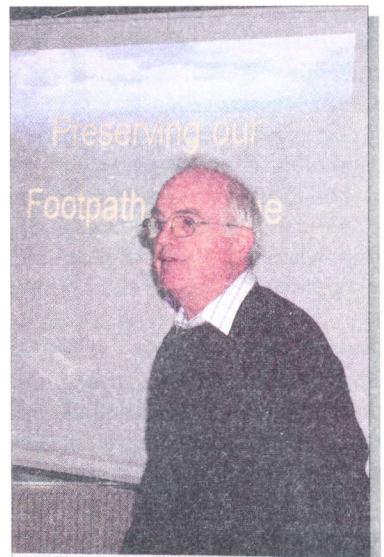
A new kind of obstruction. Rollers across a path at Culcheth –now removed after a gentle word with the farmer!



Eric Povall (foreground)– President of North and Mid-Cheshire RA joins the March walk led by **Judith Holman** around the boundaries of Lyme Park



Lunch break at Taxal Church. The April walk from Whaley Bridge (Report page 10)
Leader **David Morton**.



Peter Rhodes giving the Society's new Presentation at the AGM

THE TOWN END TO BOLTON-LE-SANDS PATH: INSTALMENT 3: THE INQUIRY AND THE VERDICT

In January and March I described the prelude to the two days' public inquiry to decide if this path should become Definitive.

More than 70 people attended it; at least 60 seemed to support the Order. Non-supporters were the objector and her husband, who live in Oxfordshire, their 2 lawyers and 5 unsmiling neutral LCC employees.

I opened by describing the supporters' case. I said that the locals had first learned that the Path was threatened when LCC removed the footpath sign, in obedience to a demand by the objector. Had she been less impatient, the Path would probably have been closed without an inquiry.

Legal rules, which would occupy at least two 'Signposts', required evidence of public use of the Path from 1948 to 1968; when the objector's parents temporarily blocked it.

The stars of the inquiry were the numerous witnesses - many elderly - who told how they had used the Path to walk to school, the village centre, guides, friends' houses etc. This they did with aplomb - presenting a warm and colourful social history of Town End.

The objector's counsel said that if a

public path existed, its route was not the Order Path's. We held our breath when one of our witnesses agreed that there was an opening in the towpath wall at the end of this second route. "It's a duck hole" he said.

The objector's evidence can most charitably be described as 'controversial' but as it all related to post-1968 events I did not cross examine. Her counsel asserted that as the occupants of the cottage, the garden of which the Order Path ran through, were everybody's friends, users had implied permission to walk the Path and if they had this permission their evidence was of nil legal significance.

In his decision letter, the Inspector rejected this argument. He said the user evidence was "cogent, clear and consistent". He proposes to confirm the Order with two minor (and desirable) alterations. It should get full confirmation in June.

After that, two other matters require sorting out:

1. Why did the Planning Inspectorate seemingly infringe the 1981 Act by trying to reach a verdict via written representations without consulting 'on record' supporters - and thereby come close to deciding not to confirm the Order ?
2. Why in 2003 did LCC's Environmental Director try so hard to have closed a path which benefited

the social environment of Town End and helped to reduce car usage on local journeys ?.

Does LCC's Environmental Director actually disdain the environment ? Will any reader who can throw light on this enigma please contact me.

Adrian Littleton

SIGNPOST MAINTENANCE- A NEVER ENDING TASK

Firstly let me introduce myself, my name is **Edward Wolfe**, but I only ever answer, if called, to the name **Ted**. I have recently been asked, coerced, imposed upon, I'm not quite sure which, to take over the duties of signpost maintenance officer from **Keith Wyke**, who has had to relinquish the post due to personal circumstances. I would like to offer my personal thanks, to add to those shown at the recent AGM, to Keith, in all the hard and sometimes difficult work he has put in over the past few years, in keeping our signposts well maintained, I just hope I am able to carry on or even improve on the standards that have been set.

The purpose of this article is to make all our members, but in particular our inspectors, very aware of my need to be kept informed of the condition, and indeed the existence of, as many of our signposts as possible. To replace a missing or damaged signpost cost's the society approximately £200 per sign, and as we have something approaching

300 signs out there, it obviously makes both practical and economic sense to "keep on top" of maintenance as much as possible. I am therefore asking for as much help and information as is possible, from both our inspectors and ordinary members, in reporting the position and status of any of our signs, even if no maintenance action is required. This is because the society needs to know of the existence of as many of our signs as possible, as the heading suggests, "A Never Ending Task" as signs get damaged on a regular basis due to such things as, farm machinery, animals, vandals, theft, and just plain old wear and tear. I would like to suggest that any member seeing a sign requiring attention to report it either to Taylor House (via David Morton) or myself. In the case of inspectors, I would like to suggest an "annual survey" of signs located in their own parishes. These "survey's" can of course be carried out whilst the inspector/member is out enjoying their walking, thus no special effort is required.

Finally, if there are any members out there who would like to assist on the practical side of signpost maintenance, please don't hesitate to put your name forward, as all assistance will be most gratefully accepted. So it only remains for me to wish you all, happy walking, and happy signpost spotting.

E (Ted) Wolfe

Whaley Bridge "Eleven Signposts" Walk of Wednesday 26th April, 2006 (S=signpost F=fingerpost)

The walk began in fine weather from Whaley Station with about 10 or 12 of us. We walked along Reservoir Rd. to Todd Brook Sailing Club and found the RoW up the hill to Start Lane and S184 (badly in need of a scrub – now clean), F207 and S080. After pausing to look at the Dipping Stone, we followed the green lane around Whaley Moor to S182, then south to S134 near Hole House. Passing the unusual hardwood F214 and the former candle-wicks mill (name forgotten) at Todd Brook, we circled northeast of Kettleshulme, past the understated S145 and climbed over Taxal Moor, dropping past S173 to a comfy spot for lunch in Taxal Church's graveyard (picture page 7), which we shared with a Ramblers group and which sports a new W.C. block-which cost around £14000 and was **not** PNFS funded!

After lunch we followed the east bank of the Goyt, past S237 to Fernilee, then uphill to Wythen Lache (derivation?). From there we followed a very pleasant lane northeast, past S263 and an unusual stainless steel cattle trough, skirting Ladder Hill and dropping down to Tunstead Farm and Cadster House, with the superlative S268 peeping coyly from the trees. A brief romp through Whaley Bridge's industrial zone, led us via a section of disused rail track to a fitting finale at that oasis of calm, sanity and real ale "The Shepherd's Arms".

David Morton

Hadfield to Greenfield Walk of Wednesday 31st May 2006

This was the first linear walk in the PNFS walks programme history. We left Hadfield for a short distance along the Longdendale Trail then dropping down to Bottoms Reservoir and into Tintwistle and the Arnfield Reservoir.

It was then to the hills by Arnfield Farm and up to Arnfield Low Moor to the PNFS signpost (very unusual, a 6 inch section post). We then crossed Boar Flat above Ogden Clough to cross the Ogden Brook for our lunch stop. It was then up over Ormes Moor to Chew Hurdles and another most unusual PNFS signpost dedicated to the memory of **Doris Brookfield** (no plate had ever been fitted). The views looking across the Chew valley were quite spectacular as we made our way along the ridge to Chew Reservoir. Chew Reservoir, completed in 1914, stands at 1600 ft above sea level, and is the highest man-made reservoir in England. We then walked down Chew valley to join The Oldham Way overlooking Dovestone Reservoir to Intake Lane, this section follows the line of the tram track constructed to build the Chew reservoir. It was then down into Greenfield to catch the train back to Manchester

The walk was 9.75 miles in excellent sunny weather.

Vince Joyce.

PNFS Short Walk Programme July to October 2006

A series of walks from the book *Walk! the South Pennines* will be led by the author **Clarke Rogerson**. For people travelling from within the GMPTA area the Rail Ranger ticket (free to concessionary pass holders) is recommended. Bring lunch. Any queries please call 0161 749 8412.

Wednesday 5th July

Smithy Bridge Circular (Walk 2) 5.3 miles. Negligible ascent
Man Victoria 10.54 hrs. Walk starts Smithy Bridge Station 11.15 hrs.

Wednesday 9th August

Greenfield Circular (Walk 13) 6.25 miles, 700 feet ascent
Man Victoria 10.27 hrs. Walk starts Greenfield Station 10.50 hrs.

Wednesday 13th September

Piethorne Valley Circular (Walk 8) 6.25 miles, 1100 feet ascent,
Man Victoria 10.30 hrs. Walk starts Newhey Station 10.55 hrs.

Wednesday 11th October

Mills Hill to Newhey (Walk 17) 6.9 miles 980 feet ascent
Man Victoria 10.33. Walk starts at Mills Hill Station 10.45 hrs. **Note:** this is a linear walk but return by train from Newhey to Mills Hill is possible.



Members of the CHA Manchester Ramblers at the dedication of SP 307

LONGER WALKS PROGRAMME JULY -DECEMBER 2006

INCLUDED

All travel times detailed will need checking prior to travel.

WED JULY 26th Chapel-en-le-Frith .

Man Picc 09.37. Walk 10 miles undulating starts from Chapel station at 10.30 am. Please bring lunch. Leader **Paula Mead** 0161 224 2708

WED AUG 30th Chelford Station.

Man Picc approx. 09.45. Walk 10 miles farmland starts from Chelford station at 10.15am. Please bring lunch. Leader **Peter Bowler** 01625 432 426

WED SEP 27th Bollington.

Stockport Bus Station 09.10 to Spinners Arms 09.55. Buses also from Macclesfield at xx.05 and xx.35. Walk starts from Pool Bank CP at 10.30. 9 miles moderate. Lunch -own or pub options. Leader **Ted Wolfe** 01625 267 964

WED OCT 25th Stockport .

Meet at Taylor House for coffee at 10.00. Can access via Nr 914 bus from Stockport bus station or use Taylor House car park. Walk 10 miles undulating starts at 10.30am. Please bring lunch. Leader **Brian Morrison** 0161 483 8957

WED NOV 29th Buxton

Man Picc 09.37. Walk 10 miles hilly starts from Buxton station at 10.30am, Please bring lunch. Leader **David Stearne** 01928 735809

WED DEC 27th Cheadle Hulme

Man Picc approx 09.50. Walk 10 miles starts at 10.15 from CH station. Please bring lunch. Leader **Jeff Lewis** 0161 766 4683

Leaflet Distribution

A plea for people to act as stockist of new members leaflets in Libraries, Visitor Centres etc. **June Mabon** will supply them in bulk. Please contact Taylor House if you can help.

Annual Report 2005 Errata

p2 Andrew Bennett should no longer be shown as MP.
p18 Bradford is an MDC.
p23 Kirklees is an MC.
p27 Wakefield is an MDC.

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