

SIGNPOST

Newsletter of the
Peak and Northern Footpaths Society



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Mike Barnes (Webmaster)

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Membership Renewal 2015 to 2016

Bill Buckley (Membership Secretary)

Membership subscriptions are due within one month of each AGM, so all members who have not yet renewed this year (2015) should now do so as soon as possible at the appropriate rate (see below).

A renewal form is enclosed with this issue of 'Signpost', or can be downloaded from our website, but unless any of your details have changed in the last 12 months you only need send us a signed cheque payable to 'Peak & Northern Footpaths Society' with your postcode on the reverse.

Members paying the subscription for an affiliated organisation using a personal cheque should include the name of the organisation. 5 and 10-year members whose membership expires this year will also be notified separately. Members who pay by direct debit or standing order should ignore this note. Your subscriptions will be processed automatically as usual.

Subscription Rates

Individual	£15.00
Affiliated organisation	£22.50
Household	£25.50
<i>(for 2 or more people living at the same address)</i>	

*Cover: An awkward stile in New Mills
Photographed by John Harker*

Replacing Stiles with Kissing Gates...



...still a good idea!

The article by Terry Norris in the last issue about replacing stiles with kissing gates certainly created a lot of interest. I received more correspondence on this than on any previous item; it was discussed robustly at the AGM; and the Management Committee has devoted a lot of time to it. The views of correspondents range from: leaving well enough alone since climbing stiles is an essential part of the joy of walking; to replacing stiles with cattle grids since even gates are a nuisance. But the general consensus is that there are places where it would be quite inappropriate to replace a stile and other places where a single gate could enable access to many miles of footpaths, and that each case should be dealt with on its own merit.

Two other very important factors must be considered. Firstly, the Equalities Act of 2010 requires that Highway Authorities make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disadvantaged people can enjoy using public rights of way. To this end the Society will always insist that any structures on new or diverted paths will be as unrestrictive as possible. Secondly, those structures are legally the responsibility of the owner of the land on which they stand and by replacing them at its own expense the Society would be subsidising the landowner. This does not preclude an individual member paying for a new gate or leaving a legacy for that specific purpose, as in the Cotswold Society's 'adopt a gate' scheme.

Courts and Inquiries Officer Rhoda Barnett has drafted a policy, which is presented here along with the general background and some of the issues still to be resolved. This policy will be discussed at the forthcoming Half Year Meeting, and in the meantime you can communicate your thoughts to Rhoda by email –

rhodabarnett@tiscali.co.uk

– or by writing to her at Taylor House

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The background

Highway, Planning and Access Authorities have obligations under the Equality Act 2010; these relate to anyone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Such impairments include mobility difficulty, poor sight, learning difficulties, manual dexterity etc, and such activities include walking.

Specifically, the Act requires Highway, Planning and Access Authorities, in carrying out their functions, to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that it is not impossible or unreasonably difficult for people with disabilities to benefit from those functions as others would do, or they must show that there are good reasons for not so doing. They must also advance equality of opportunity even if it means treating some people more favourably than others.

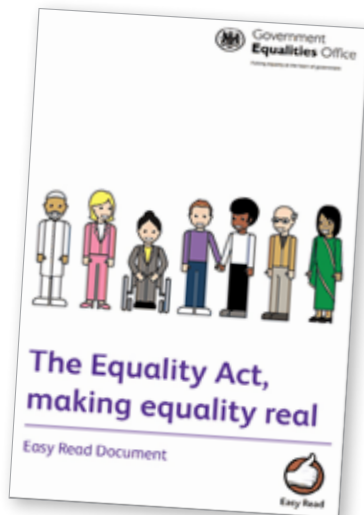
One of the functions of Highway Authorities is to assert and protect the right of the public to use and enjoy highways. The Equality Act 2010 applies to this function.

Structures may be legally installed on rights of way to control the movement of stock; to safeguard people using the way; at locations where the public accepted the presence of a structure on the way when the way was dedicated to the public (i.e. a historic limitation to the public's right to use the way); or if a creation agreement or order specifies the installation of a structure. Structures may also be installed to enforce a Public Spaces Protection Order or a Traffic Regulation Order. Such structures include stiles, gates, bollards, rails, chicanes and cattle-grids.

For the less mobile, the difficulties caused by gates and stiles can be a significant deterrent to using public rights of way, so that such people are unable to gain the benefits of enjoyment and improved health and well-being which are available to more mobile people. This also applies to other users such as carers with young children in push chairs.

Defra guidance to Authorities is that if a structure is essential, it should be the least restrictive to users of the way that is consistent with the landowner's requirements.

When the installation of a structure is included in an agreement or order, or is authorised by the Authority, its standard and design should be specified. This can be a British Standard including the version of this standard e.g. BS 5709:2006, or a locally adopted standard, e.g. one which complies with the Equality Act 2010 provisions and has been agreed by users and landowners and included in a Rights of Way Improvement Plan or other official document. The installation of structures to enable access for walkers to designated open access land is less prescribed, but the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 apply to all the functions of all local authorities.



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1. The Society will oppose any action of an Authority which does not comply with its Equality Act 2010 obligations and Defra advice. Specifically:
 - *objections will be made to creation and diversion orders which specify the installation of a structure on the new route which is not the least restrictive option; stiles are only acceptable if the order-making authority documents a compelling reason for their use; gates are only acceptable if they are necessary for stock control or for the safety of users, otherwise there should be gaps*
 - *objections will be made to creation and diversion orders which do not specify the standard of a structure.*
2. The replacement of existing stiles with gates to BS 5709:2006 or a locally adopted standard will be supported and encouraged, except where this is unreasonable. Circumstances where it might be unreasonable include when:
 - *a stile is of great historical or aesthetic significance*
 - *none of the remainder of the path is accessible to walkers with impairments on account of its gradient, surface or width, and this could not reasonably be improved*
 - *the genuine operational needs of landowners preclude installation of a gate.*

The fact that there may be other stiles on the path is not on its own sufficient reason for one stile not to be replaced by a gate.
3. The Society may contribute to the expense of replacing a stile on a public right of way with a gate if this is considered to be furthering its constitutional object 'erecting commemorative structures'. The Highway Authority will be required to enter into an agreement with the landowner made under s147ZA Highways Act 1980, to specify such matters as the standard, design, location and maintenance of the gate.
4. Authorities may be asked to demonstrate that they have considered their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in judgements which they have made.
5. Highway Authorities will be asked if they have followed Defra guidance to publish a policy for meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to public rights of way, in particular as to how they will deal with structures. If they have not, they will be asked for their reasons for not doing so and encouraged to adopt such a policy; further action will be taken as appropriate.
6. Highway Authorities will be encouraged to comply with s320 Highways Act 1980 and to follow Defra guidance to specify clearly and to document any authorisation which they give for the installation of a structure on a public right of way. This authorisation should include provisions for the modification of the structure if and when the need for it has changed, including removal if the need for the structure has ceased. If necessary, a copy of this authorisation will be requested.
7. If members of the Society become aware of a structure allowing access on to or within open access land which does not meet BS 5709:2006, or an adopted local standard, the relevant Access Authority may be asked to justify its approval of the installation of the structure.

Issues

Is it sensible to provide a gate if the remainder of the path is inaccessible to walkers with impairments on account of its gradient, surface etc, where this could not be reasonably improved?

Would replacing one stile on a path with a gate and leaving other stiles really improve the access for the disabled? Perhaps we should follow the LDNP's 'Miles without Stiles' initiative where they improve every structure on a route to make it accessible to all.

Would members accept us gifting structures paid for with members' money to landowners?

This might be seen as analogous to the Society paying for a bridge, but bridges belong to the Highway Authority and are specifically mentioned in the constitution. To pay for other structures would need an amendment to the constitution by adding 'gates and stiles' to section 4 (1) (d).

If we retained ownership of the gates rather than gifting them to the landowner we would have to consider the problems of maintenance and legal liability.

Dave Brown



Signpost Report June 2015

David Morton

Since January, when we installed Signposts **470, 481, 483** and **484**, we have installed seventeen new signposts and, between April to June, carried out maintenance on seven, reposted one, re-installed one, repainted ten and partly repainted another ten as follows:

February	486 and 487 at Cotebank, Chinley 490 and 491 at Under Whitle, Sheen
March	475, 476, 477 and 479 at Limb Valley, Sheffield
May	478, 480 and 485 at Limb Valley, Sheffield 488 at Aiggin Stone, Blackstone Edge, Littleborough, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Pennine Way Association and their former president. 493 at Wolfscote Dale, Hartington 499 below Big Stone, Cracken Edge, Chinley, paid for by Dave Brown our Secretary and his wife Judy for their 30th wedding anniversary
June	494, 495 and 496 on the Peak Forest Canal towpath at the expense of the Towpath Action Group.

Photos of these new signs and details of their locations can be seen on
www.peakandnorthern.org.uk Signposts Gallery.

Re-painting by Mike and Pete resumed when the weather warmed up in April and has included **81, 141, 149**, then **118, 122, 191, 220** and **225** in May and **281** and **289** in June.

In April I refurbished the main plate on **110** near Little Hayfield. The oversized, plastic letter N at the end of LanterN, which had long mystified me, concealed a bullet hole, now filled!

Later I made an overdue visit to check, titivate and partly paint some of the cluster of signs on Darwen and Turton Moors. An additional memorial plaque (see photo) was fitted to **239** at Summer Close, in honour of member Jack Ogden, who liaised with Manchester and District Rambling Club for the Blind from the 1950s and who annually repainted **F8** at Bullshaw Farm, Little Hayfield, travelling by bus from Gorton. I met and talked with him before he died in 2014.

In May I responded to a dramatic 'Signpost Down!' alert and refixed **217** (Limestone Way, Tideswell) to its concrete stump using stainless steel threaded rod.

In June we repainted and reposted **297**, which commemorates the 30th anniversary (in 2005) of the 'Longdendale and Glossopdale Footpaths Preservation Society'. I'm glad I don't have to paint all those letters!

Once again, my thanks to all of those who have helped me, especially Pete Ash and Mike Hoare, Ted Wolfe and John Hodgson.

Several of the signposts listed above are available to any walker or affiliated group for commemorative plaques, in return for a donation to PNFS of £300.

I can be contacted most evenings on **0161-283-7824**.





View of Kinder from Bigstone, Cracken Edge taken by Dave Brown on the PNFS May short walk



Jack Ogden Dedication

This photograph shows the new dedication plate, on S239 at Summer Close, to Jack Ogden, with the original braille plate for Reg Wilson of the Manchester and District Rambling Club for the Blind. The plate is unique amongst our signposts though S120 at Rowarth is also dedicated to him but not in braille.

I (the editor) have attempted to find the history of the Manchester and District Rambling Club for the Blind with little success. They were affiliated to the Society from 1945 until 1995 so were evidently a thriving organisation.

The only reference to the Club to be found on the internet is in the history of the Swan Inn in Kettleshulme. In 1962 the Ramblers Association objected to the renewal of the Swan's licence on the grounds that the licensee had refused to serve, amongst others, a party from the Club.

If any member can shed any light on this Club I would be grateful to be enlightened.



The Ramblers' Big Pathwatch

Gavin Miller (Chairman)



Some – perhaps many – of you, bearing in mind your interest in walking and the countryside, will also be members of Ramblers and you may well have seen or heard of The Big Pathwatch. This is an initiative by Ramblers (as the Ramblers Association now wishes to be known) to walk every right of way in England and Wales over the course of a few months this summer and autumn and to report the findings.

Now, some of you may feel that within the Peak and Northern area, this is what we already do. And if you are a Footpath Inspector, you may feel that with your experience and training you do that job better than a Rambler might.

If you will bear with me, I will try to persuade you that we have no reason to resent this initiative by Ramblers and instead should regard them as allies in the constant battle to keep footpaths open and in good condition.

First, for those who have not seen the details, these are the main features of The Big Pathwatch:

1. It starts on 13 July. It is not clear when it ends, but it was originally stated to last 3 months and the results are due to be published in March 2016.
2. The aim is to get a complete picture of the network of paths in England and Wales – both identifying problems and celebrating positives.
3. Ramblers say they will get any reported problems 'fixed'. It appears faults will be reported to the appropriate local authorities fortnightly but there will be no feedback to members individually.
4. It is based on a smartphone app but reports can be submitted online from a computer.
5. Volunteers select their own 1km Ordnance Survey squares (but not, it seems, until 13 July) and walk and report on all the paths therein. You can have up to 10 such squares at one time and have a month to report on them. Presumably, but this is not yet clear, once these squares have been reported, you can have another 10 and so on.
6. Existing Ramblers volunteers are being asked to promote and co-ordinate the scheme in their areas.

While the methodology of this scheme is different from ours, the only major difference from the PNFS approach is the celebration of the positives, such as 'a beautiful view or amazing wildlife'. We tend to concentrate on problems and threats to footpaths. But, given that Ramblers will want to make the case for increased commitment to footpaths and to entice more people to use them, who could quibble with the inclusion of the positives in the snapshot of the nation's rights of way which will emerge?

(continues)

The Ramblers' Big Pathwatch



*Terry Norris contemplates
a 'stile' on Compton FP71*

If, as may happen, local authorities receive reports of path problems from both Ramblers and ourselves, can it do any harm? The more complaints they receive, the more likely you may think they will be to take action.

I believe therefore that we should look on this initiative by Ramblers as complementary to our own work and support it where we can. How can we do this? Well... by taking part.

If you are already an Inspector you may wish to register for the 'squares' which represent the parish you already inspect. Then when you walk the squares and report to Ramblers you can easily report any problems you encounter through your normal PNFS channel. It may be that you are an Inspector for several parishes and that you need more than 10 squares. It may be possible to adopt more squares once you have reported on the original 10.

Speaking for myself as an Inspector for several parishes, I shall regard The Big Pathwatch as a prompt to cover all the ROWs in my area in a time-frame shorter than I might otherwise have got round to, and will report any faults to the relevant authorities and to PNFS headquarters.

Of course, you may wish to cover a completely different area from your normal patch, or you may be off for a few days walking somewhere and want to report on the paths you walk.

If the area is within PNFS territory, please do also report any problems through PNFS as well as to Pathwatch.

Or you may not be a PNFS Inspector at all at present. If you decide to get involved in The Big Pathwatch, please do report any faults you find in our area to PNFS. And hopefully the experience might persuade you that you too could do that job for PNFS. There are many parishes in our territory without an inspector.

**You can register and find out more about
The Big Pathwatch at:**

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/join-the-big-pathwatch.aspx>

Friends of the Peak District Boundary Walk

Friends of the Peak District are putting together a route for a long-distance walk around the boundary of the Peak District. The idea is to encourage visitors to enjoy the beauty of the Peak District, publicise the work of the Friends, attract more members and maybe earn some money. Once the route is sorted they would like to add it to the LDWA route book, establish it as a national trail and even publish it in book form.

Since some of the best walks and attractions are within the Park rather than on the boundary the route will not stick slavishly to the boundary. The complete route will be about 190 miles in ten stages, with suitable accommodation near the start points and with refreshment stops along the way. The proposed route is listed at the end of this article and we are looking for people to walk the route and give some feedback in the following areas:

- a) Footpaths, accessibility, signposting
- b) Suggestions of better routes
- c) Detailed, written route descriptions
- d) Any interesting features to look out for (e.g. archaeological, ecological, industrial heritage etc); interesting stories or folklore about the area; places nearby that are worth a visit; places to eat, drink and sleep.

If you want to help, could you please answer a few questions about what you can do and send the answers to Julie Gough at www.friendsofthepeak.org.uk or tel: **0114 279 2655** or by post to **37 Stafford Road Sheffield, South Yorkshire S2 2SF:**

- 1) How many miles would you like to cover? You don't need to walk whole sections.
- 2) In how many sections would you like to walk?
- 3) Which area of the Peak District boundary would you like to walk? Please be specific.
- 4) How flexible on areas are you?
- 5) Do you have your own car or will you use public transport?
- 6) When would you be available to walk between now and the end of September?
- 7) Do you have any mapping software which can upload GPX files?
- 8) Which type of feedback (as in a to d above) would you like to provide.
- 9) May we share your email address with other boundary walk volunteers?

The proposed route

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Section 1: | Buxton to Hayfield, 20.6 miles, midpoint Peak Forest. |
| Section 2: | Hayfield to Saddleworth (Greenfield), 20.2 miles, midpoint Glossop (Snake Pass). |
| Section 3: | Saddleworth to Holme, 17.6 miles, midpoint Marsden (Binn Moor). |
| Section 4: | Holme to Low Bradfield, 20 miles, midpoint Langsett. |
| Section 5: | Low Bradfield to Millthorpe (nr Dronfield), 16.4 miles, midpoint Ringinglow. |
| Section 6 : | Millthorpe to Winster, 18.6 miles, midpoint Hob's House (nr Chatsworth House). |
| Section 7: | Winster to Thorpe, 18.7 miles, midpoint Roystone Rocks nr Parwich. |
| Section 8: | Thorpe to Upper Hulme, 16 miles, midpoint Waterfall (nr Waterhouses). |
| Section 9: | Upper Hulme to Bollington, 19.8 miles, midpoint Wildboardclough. |
| Section 10: | Bollington to Buxton, 18.4 miles, midpoint Goyt Valley (Fernilee). |

Total Distance = 186.3 miles

Short Walks Programme

Wednesday July 8

Leader: Rosemary Fox (0161 969 3423)
Marsden Circular via Standedge & Pule Hill
8 miles, ascent 1300 ft
Manchester Victoria 10:57
Walk starts Marsden station 11:30

Wednesday August 12

Leader Martin Riley (01706 848408)
Oldham circular
About 8 miles
Tram from Manchester Market St. Metro
Walk starts Oldham Mumps Metro 10:30

Wednesday September 9

Leader John Fisher (01625 439298)
Poynton to Disley via Lyme Park
6.5 miles
Manchester Piccadilly 10:46
Walk starts Poynton station 11:10

Wednesday October 14

Leader Ian Mackenzie (01663 742920)
New Mills to Hayfield via Rowarth
6 miles
Return by bus to New Mills Central for
train to Piccadilly
Manchester Piccadilly 10:49
Walk starts New Mills Central station 11:15

Wednesday November 11

Leader Eileen Leonard (01625 874183)
Ashton West to Park Bridge via Daisy Nook
6 miles
Tram from Piccadilly 10:25
Walk starts Ashton West Metro Station 11:00

Any suggestions for the future
short walk programme, please contact
johnfisher560@btinternet.com

Longer Walks Programme

Wednesday July 29

Leader Gavin Miller (01565 634510)
Irwell Vale to Darwen
11 miles, 2000 ft ascent
Manchester Piccadilly Metro 09:31 or
Manchester Victoria Metro 09:39 to Bury, then
walk to East Lancs Railway Bolton St, then
10:20 steam train to Irwell Vale (£7.50 or £6.80
concession). All other travel covered by a Man-
chester Wayfarer.
Walk starts Irwell Vale station at 10:45

Wednesday August 26

Leader: Vince Joyce (01942 603 626)
Disley circular
10 miles. 1800 ft ascent
Manchester Piccadilly 09:49
Walk starts Disley station 10:20

Wednesday September 30

Leader: Bill Minshall (07771 985 846)
Kidsgrove to Crewe linear
11 miles, undulating
Manchester Piccadilly 09:46
Walk starts Kidsgrove station 10:30

Wednesday Oct 28

Leader: Peter Gunn (0161 291 9372)
Romiley to Hadfield linear
12 miles, 1500 ft ascent
Manchester Piccadilly 09:49
Walk starts Romiley station 10:15



The Peak and Northern Footpaths Society
Taylor House, 23 Turncroft Lane, Offerton, Stockport, SK1 4AB
Reg Charity No 212219

0161 480 3565

mail@pnfs.org.uk



Signpost is edited and published for the Society by David C Brown
01663 733236 dcb.pnfs0@gmail.com

Design and Print by Lymetrees

Tel/Text 07984 059150

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the Society's policy