

SIGNPOST

The newsletter of the PEAK & Northern Footpaths Society

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From the Chairman

TAKE COVER

To reassure potential walk leaders: I can positively state that leaders of our monthly Wednesday walks are insured by the Society against the risk of Civil Liability. This brings us in line with the leaders from the Ramblers Association and ensures that, should anyone sue a leader for neglect or irresponsibility, he or she would be covered against such claims.

For example, a farmer might take action if a member of a walk left a gate open and let his cows out or if a member's dog had worried sheep. Alternatively, a walker might sue if he were injured and felt the leader was to blame.

It's sad that a group of friends out for a ramble should have to think of these possibilities, but we live in litigious times, more's the pity and it seems that there has to be someone to blame if anything goes wrong.

It is IMPORTANT to realise, however, that the cover is for LEADERS ONLY. It is not an accident insurance for members, who are still expected to take out whatever level of cover against injury they feel necessary.

We are pleased to report that the **Cheshire Building Society** has agreed to sponsor the costs of **Signpost** for another year.

MANY THANKS CBS!



Having got that out of the way, this is a good opportunity to publicise THE NEXT FEW WEDNESDAY WALKS:

Wed 30th Jan: New Mills to Glossop, Leader Janet Cuff;
9:30 train from Piccadilly

Wed 27th Feb: Middlewood to Prestbury, Leader Jeff Lewis;
9:37 train from Piccadilly

Wed 27th Mar: Rippenden circular, Leader undecided;
9:48 bus from Rochdale Bus Station

Wed 24th Apr: Bromley Cross to Blackrod. Leader Geoff Daubeny; 10:00 train from Victoria or 9:35 from Piccadilly connects at Salford Crescent.

Ring Jeff Lewis on 0161 766 4683 for more details.

WELCOME BACK, KEITH

The gloomy news reported in the Autumn Newsletter of the illness which had laid low our Treasurer, Keith Wykes, has been dispelled by his complete recovery. He is now fully back in harness and will be VERY PLEASED TO WELCOME YOUR ANNUAL SUBS. Go on - make his day.

MAKE A DATE

Saturday 27th April 2002 at Freemasons' Hall, Bridge St, Manchester when we will be voting on the new, reorganised Constitution at an EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING, followed by the normal ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

There will then be an interlude when members and friends can go on a guided walkabout in the city in order to work up an appetite for the ANNUAL DINNER which will follow at 6:30pm.

This, our most important gathering of the year, when the Society's future conduct is decided, needs your support, your input. Please do try to attend. We want it to be lively and truly representative of members' opinions.

Society News on the Web

The Society has launched its own web site called

www.peakandnorthern.org.uk.

This offers an additional means of publicising the Society and its work to supplement our publicity leaflet, the newspaper articles and word of mouth advertisements. The new web site will reach every corner of the eight counties in which the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society has a presence and beyond.

Visitors to the web site will be able to find out the latest news about issues that are important to the Society on the "Hot Topics" page, they can print a membership application form in the comfort and convenience of their own homes or send an e-mail to Taylor House to alert the Society to a footpath problem or just to let us know what they think about our work.

The full colour web site contains the Society's logo on every page and has a clear explanation of the Society's aims and objectives. There are some lovely pictures of

familiar signposts and details of our own monthly led walks.

Links are provided to Affiliated Society websites as well as to useful footpath and walking organisations and to a web site from which you can view or print maps for your own use. If you are on the web yourself or have an 'eager beaver' grandson or daughter who can show you the ropes, then visit the Society's web site, browse through its pages and let us know what you think.

Photographs (prints or slides) with a caption and items of interest to walkers in any of our eight counties will be welcome to add to the illustrations we show in the web site. Please send them by post addressed to "The PNFS Webmaster" at the Taylor House address. The Society undertakes to return originals to the sender unless it is indicated that they need not be returned.

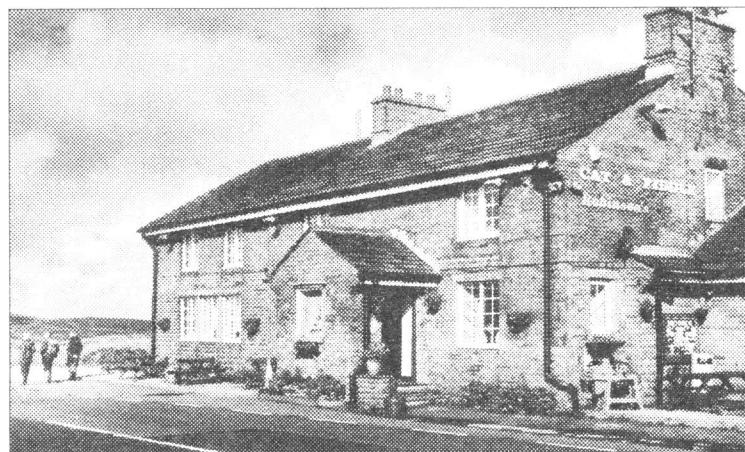
Virgin Territory

The A537 pulls steeply away from the railway station in Macclesfield and neatly holds its height above Wildboarclough and Danebower. There is a bit of a push to reach the summit on Axe Edge Moor, then, with lengthening stride, it drops into the leafy gentility of Buxton's spas and arias. It must be one of the finest stretches of moorland road in the country.

A non-motorist can travel this courtesy of Virgin Trains who have arranged a comfortable bus to connect with their West Line service and convey their customers to Buxton, Bakewell and beyond. If the motive is to provide the deprived denizens of Milton Keynes with the opportunity of replenishing their

stocks of Sparkling Water and Derbyshire Tarts, it does not seem a huge success. It does however give the walker the chance of being dropped at the Cat and Fiddle which in turn allows him to follow a combination of bridleways, footpaths and canal towpaths back to Macc station.

There are four reasons for such a course. The first that as the Cat and Fiddle is some 1000 feet higher than Macclesfield the forces of gravity are, in the main, on the side of the walker. Second (and I admit that this is a matter of taste), it gives the opportunity of a through route from A to B which can be more satisfying than



walking in circles. The opportunity does not occur if the original means of transport is a car. Third and connected, it provides the chance to leave the car at home and make a gesture to helping the environment. I have always considered it ironic that people who rush to the hills and empty spaces to recharge their physical and emotional batteries do most to pollute those very areas. The final plea is that it might help sustain public transport. Current events suggest that "petrol for all" may not be a long term proposition and if communal travel becomes a necessity it would be a pity if the whole of our infra-structure had been allowed to fall into neglect.

So how do you get back to Macc? The ways are many and various, but given the current restrictions in the Rainow area it would seem best to keep south of the main road. The simplest route is via Wilboarclough, Shutlingsloe, Macclesfield Forest and the Langley reservoirs. As the itinerary suggests, this offers a variety of terrain and scenery and it is (as you would expect) very well signposted.

The route leaves the Cat and follows the broad moorland track and if you have timed it right in a southerly direction. After a kilometre leave it for a path that offers an excellent opportunity for lunch.

leads (at times literally) into Cumberland Brook. Join a track which passing above a pleasant wooded gorge, finally drops into the valley at Clough House. The footpath through the farmyard picks up the right of way that connects Wildboarclough and Langley.

This now well established path leads across the moor skirting Shutlingsloe to the north. However, the opportunity to reach the summit should not be missed as the hill is sufficiently separate that it offers excellent views in all directions and particularly to the south and west.

Either way Macclesfield Forest is reached and the steep walks are descended in the direction of Trentabank Reservoir where a road can be joined which takes you to Langley. It is considerably better to follow the signs for the Gritstone Trail which takes you along the south side of Ridgegate Reservoir. When the dam is reached the Leathers Smithy is in view

Rejoin or continue along the Gritstone Trail past Bottoms Reservoir until it (the Trail not the reservoir) starts to ascend Teggs Nose. Leave it at this point and enter the village along the attractive Holehouse Lane. Walk through the village until, shortly after Langley Hall, field paths lead to the Hollins and the boundaries of Macclesfield Golf Course (a former Club Captain drove a golf ball from Clubhouse to the Cat and Fiddle in 62 strokes). Soon the outskirts of Macclesfield are reached and the streets falling into the town quickly reach the canal. Turning right onto the towpath the walk concludes most felicitously at the Puss in Boots where the appropriate debriefing can take place. You are now back on the A537 and a stroll down the hill brings you to the railway and bus stations.

If this seems rather unambitious, the walk can be extended by two convolutions. The first ignores the turning to Cumberland Brook and continues to the A54. Descend past a ventilation shaft that serviced Dane Colliery and follow the river to Three Shires Head (there is a higher and drier route through the quarries). A track leads back to the A54 but at Cutthorn farm

cross fields and the main road into Wildboarclough. The second and longer crosses the bridge at Three Shires Head and takes a track that skirts Turn Edge. At the apex, paths lead down fields to the road between Allgreave and Nash. Take the track to Manor Farm and pass through it to reach the Youth Hostel at Gradbach. Here the river is crossed and a packhorse way climbs steeply back to the road at the Eagle and Child (no longer a pub) and continues, at times deteriorating into a footpath, into Wildboarclough.

Both alternatives finish in the vicinity of the Crag Inn where lunch can be taken and the route to Shutlingsloe rejoined. An inexperienced length of string would judge the distances to be 13k, 16k, and 20k respectively. The experienced walker will, of course, know better.

Graham Wilson

Editor's note: Graham Wilson is a PNFS footpath Inspector and author of 'Macc and the Art of Long Distance Walking' which was reviewed in the last newsletter.

MID-WEEK WALK (OCTOBER) led by Roy Standring.

Twenty-nine walkers - twenty-eight people and one eager dog - turned up at Disley station for our circular walk.

The start round the back of the Church and up onto Green Lane was already new ground for some of the party. Crossing Mudhurst Lane I decided that, in view of the quite cold breeze and flurries of light rain, we should not take the high escarpment path above Rocks Farm towards Black Hill but rather the lower path by the farm, where we made a coffee stop, and on over the usual wet morass to the Moorside Hotel. This also slightly reduced the length of what might have been an overlong route.

Our route turned east towards Hawkhurst and Whaley Bridge then, after the lunch break, north-east to Stoneheads. The weather had improved for us and in the

clear air we had fine distant views to the south and east. Field paths, tracks and a road took us by Ringstone and Yeardsley Hall down to Furness Vale and a hundred yards of the thundering A6. Then left and up by more field paths, with good, firm going, to the north-west and Moor wood Farm. We were able to ignore the NO ENTRY signs here as I had already cleared access with the owner. Thence to Seven Springs, down the cobbly path to the A6 again and across it to the Peak Forest canal, along that for a stretch and up by the Dandycock into Disley for train or car, after a walk of five hours and about nine miles. The dog looked ready to do it all again! Some of the party expressed pleasure at the variety the route had offered, and at walking paths new to them - always gratifying to a leader - but Jim Wild, our Disley inspector who was with us, trod not a yard he did not know already.

-oo-

From the Archives - 80 years ago

During a recent coffee break at Taylor House an album of photographs of the Society's activities from 80 years ago was re-examined.

The following is the transcript from the front of the package holding this album:-

Peak District and Northern Counties Footpath Preservation Society -1921

Harold E. Wild, signpost supervisor, advised James Watts, that a signpost erected in Ashop Clough at the junction of his private path with the Snake – Hatfield Right of Way, would help reduce trespass on his land.

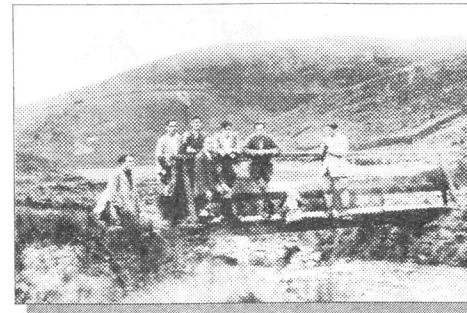
James Watts agreed and also offered to loan a pick and spade, to be collected from Marriott his Head Gamekeeper at Upper House Kinder. Also the new signpost would be deposited in the cabin near the Snake Path, for the Society's convenience.

A working party was arranged of:-

Harold E. Wild
Duke Mitchell
Percy Campbell
Eric Hunter
Tom Bryan
Fred Heardman
Donald Berwick
Harry Brown.

The party erected the post on Saturday, then spent the night at Gamekeeper Ellis Upper Ashop Farm. On Sunday the party walked over Kinder by various routes to return the pick and spade to Upper House.

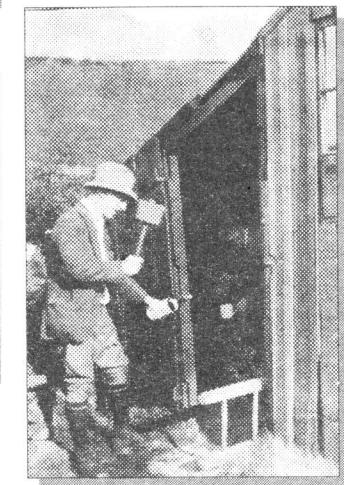
The pick and spade were a passport for Kinder.



**The working
party of 1921
photographed
on Kinder**

A visit to a Shooting Cabin Little Don 1921

**Eric Hunter
Fred Heardman**

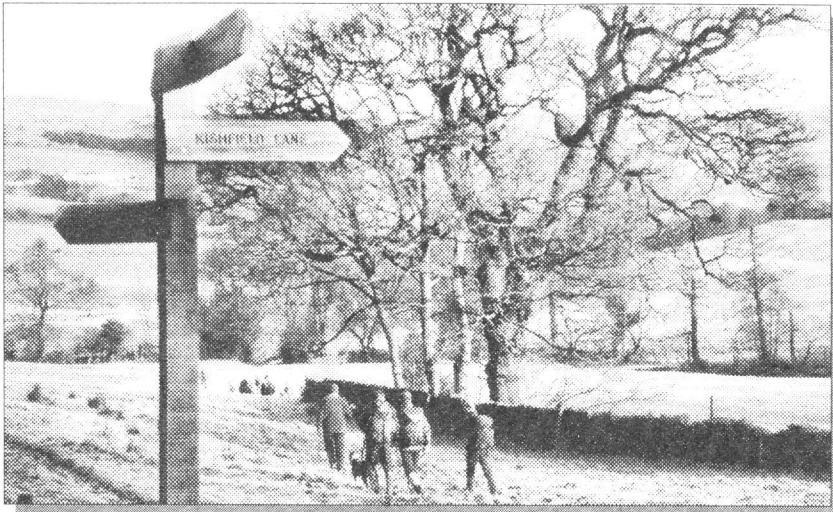


And 80 years later...



**Bill Johnson
The Society's Signpost
Officer
photographed recently
at Taylor House using
his woodworking skills
on a new signpost.**

**There is no reason to
believe it is the same
mallet!**



The new signpost in place in Kettlewell

SEVENTY YEARS ON

Worthy of note, but unfortunately clashing with our AGM on the same day, is the 70th ANNIVERSARY OF THE MASS TRESPASS on to Kinder Scout, 1932, the event which more than any other opened up the hills and dales to ordinary men and women.

The Peak Park Authority are arranging a series of events in celebration, starting with a 5 mile walk from Rowarth (where the conspirators first met) to Hayfield, where the trespass began and where the festivities will be held. There will be more walks from Hayfield afterwards.

Incidentally, the man who owned most of Kinder Scout at that time was James Watts (of S & J Watts, cotton merchants, whose elaborate building is now the Britannia Hotel, Manchester). James is mentioned on page 8 of this newsletter. He lived at Abney Hall, Cheadle and, when shooting, at Farlands, Hayfield.

Footpaths Practitioners' Conference

This conference will be held on **Friday 21st June 2002** at Quarry Bank Mill, Styall in the valley of the much-meandering River Bollin.

The Society wants to thank Inspectors and other active members of the Society for their work by giving them a good day out — and in the process impart knowledge about important topics and developments, exchange ideas and enable HQ boffins to meet field workers who have hitherto been signatures on faults reports and voices on telephones.

The conference will occupy much of one day. Its topics will include:-

- ⇒ Reporting and processing of faults;
- ⇒ Creation of public rights of way;
- ⇒ Access rights under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW);
- ⇒ An out-of-doors exercise on assessment of diversions;
- ⇒ An open forum on other matters of general interest.

The Society will pay for members' food, refreshments and meet claims for travelling expenses. Car parking will be free. Each non-member guest will be charged £7 for food and refreshments.

If you would like to come please complete the form at the

bottom of this page by **11th February** please. Please return it to me or e-mail the details to Taylor House. If demand exceeds supply, not every application to attend will be successful.

Adrian Littleton - Secretary

Volunteer Wanted

The Society urgently requires a Volunteer to manage our IT resources at Taylor House.

Knowledge of networking and software management is required.

I/we should like to attend the Footpath Practitioners' Conference.

Name(s) _____ Tel No: _____

Address _____

I/we will bring as a non-member guest _____