

SIGNPOST

The newsletter of the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

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From the Chairman

Our new, improved AGM has come and gone, leaving us with some valuable lessons. The change of day to Saturday proved successful in that the turnout was considerably increased. Combining the meeting with an excellent lunch and doing away with the evening Annual Dinner also seemed to meet with approval and the afternoon free-for-all discussion session stimulated a valuable, wide-ranging expression of members' thoughts. We will be repeating the procedure next year hoping to build on the attendance now that we have an arrangement which seems better to suit what the membership wants.

As for the Meeting itself, the motion before the EGM to straighten out our constitution to put us right with the Charities Commission, was carried. There were no nominations for the post of President, General Secretary or Signpost Officer, all of which remain vacant. Eric Kime and I agreed, under protest, to continue as Vice Chairman and Chairman for one more year. If we had stuck to our original intention and not stood for re-election the result would have been a body blow for the Society which would have been left with only one Trustee -an impossible situation. We now have 12 months to find two willing replacements and the training course to equip them to take over.

Keith Wykes (the third Trustee) was re-elected as Hon Treasurer,

Harry Scott comes in as Officer responsible for recruitment in addition to his job as Courts & Inquiries Officer. Fred Ogden and Ernie Sutton were re-elected as Signpost Officer (Admin) and Membership Secretary respectively.

Downplaying Downsizing

The Meeting was informed of the Officers' decision to abandon the suggestion that the Society reduce its area of operations in favour of the third alternative, that of initiating a campaign of recruitment, particularly in the outlying areas where our membership is thin on the ground. This is where Harry Scott comes in, needing all the support we can give him.

The debate on the subject caused much soul-searching and ran for almost a year. I am grateful to all those concerned members who took the trouble to write or phone in with their comments. Further discussion took place at two Council meetings before the Officers, although realising that the underlying problem will not go away, decided to drop the concept of downsizing and go for recruitment, starting with a trial campaign in Staffordshire.

Adrian Littleton's detailed researches into the distribution of our membership deserve our grateful thanks. Now it's over to Harry.

Derek Seddon

OPENING OF THE DERWENT VALLEY HERITAGE WAY

This new 55 mile linear walk along the Derwent Valley runs, in convenient sections of 6 or 7 miles from Ladybower Reservoir to the confluence with the River Trent at Shardlow. The architects of the route emphasise their hope that walkers will use public transport to connect with their starting/finishing points. Full details of the route, transport and accommodation can be had

from The Tourist Information Centre, The Pavillon, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire DE4 3NR. Tel: 01629 55082.

On April 3rd the Duke of Devonshire did the honours, officially opening the walk from the section of it which goes through his estate at Chatsworth. Praise was showered on the prime mover, Ranger Rik Jillings, who had been assisted in some of the way-marking by our man in Matlock, Maurice Dearden.

The PNFS was represented at the opening by Maurice, plus Jack Burling (Sheffield), Alan Mutter (Matlock), Ian Ray (Cheadle Hulme) and Derek Seddon (Taylor House).



The Duke of Devonshire (left) congratulates Dr Brian Waters, Chairman, Derwent Valley Trust (holding board) at the opening ceremony. Rik Jillings is on the far right.



Members of the PNFS team meet the Town Crier of Belper (who opened the proceedings) and his partner. Jack Burling is in the centre with Ian Ray and Maurice Deakin.

Mid-week Walks: Reports

January: Chelford Circular

Despite dire predictions from the weather forecasters, 27 dedicated walkers turned up on 29 January at Chelford rail station for a 7-8 mile circular ramble. In the event their dedication was rewarded as it turned out to be a perfect day for walking: crisp, sunny and clear. And the snowdrops were out – what more could we want?

Inevitably, because of the excessive recent rain mud was much in evidence. However, this only presented a significant problem at one point – around a farm gate, much churned up by cattle – and our party managed to negotiate this with supreme adroitness and good humour. All except me, that is, who ended up sitting down in it! Fortunately, baby wipes and tissues were freely on offer to clean me up and we proceeded on our way with no damage done.

Our route took us through Cheshire fields and on

Cheshire lanes, with views at times towards Shutlingsloe and Croker Hill. At one point, we skirted the grounds of Colshaw Hall, recently bought by the owner of Irlams Haulage for £5.5m. Not only was the walking pleasant, it also had an educational content as far as Cheshire farming practices were concerned, as we saw some unusual black sheep, some free range pigs, a potato washing plant in action and, last but not least, a large barn full of young kid goats, who afforded us much entertainment with their playful antics.

We encountered 2 rights of way problems: one where sheep netting had been erected along the line of the path and another where the cross-field path had been ploughed out and not reinstated. Being fit and agile, our party coped with the sheep fencing with relative ease, and we avoided the ploughed out path by taking a nearby alternative. They were problems that should not have arisen, however, and I shall be reporting them to the Peak and Northern.

Janet Cuff

February: Poynton to Prestbury

There were 28 of us, though one lady dropped out part way. Our route out of Poynton took us via the north of the village then over the golf course and the fields round Newtown, thence through the Coppice to the canal, which we followed, with a diversion round to Stypson Pool, then on to near Tytherington. From there, via paths and another golf course into Prestbury.

2 things to report:

(a) at GR 932841, where a right of way in a SE direction leaves the embankment of the former railway along which the E-W path runs, there is no obvious or waymarked way down. You can see footmarks where people have descended, but I think something more obvious would help.

b) By Stypson pool, bushes were obscuring a FP sign. I suppose I should have brought some secateurs (the Mid-Cheshire Society has a standing request on its programme for people to bring them)

A couple of people with pedometers said we had overshot the 9 miles I estimated but it was good weather and

they all claimed to have enjoyed it.

Jeff Lewis

March: Littleborough Circular

Marjorie Freeman was unable to lead the walk as scheduled and Brian Meldrum kindly deputised for her. I understand that about 28 people attended. There were no footpath problems. For the record, he counted just three stiles en route, all of which were in order.

Jeff Lewis

April: Darwen to Chorley

29 people out. Rain was forecast but resulted in only a slight shower. There were no problems with rights of way. We went through 6 parishes: Darwen, Tockholes, Withnell, Wheelton, Heapey and Chorley Borough, with a stop at Hollinshead Hall for lunch while a small biplane performed aerobatics for our entertainment.

Geoff Daubeny.

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FORTHCOMING PNFS MID-WEEK WALKS:

Wed. June 25th Rushton Spencer Circular, Leader Harry Scott Tel:01543 274805. 0852 bus No X1 from Picadilly Bus Stn

Wed. July 30th Taddington to Bakewell. Leader Geoff Daubeny Tel:0161 431 0097. 0925 Transpeak bus from Chorlton St.

Wed. August 27th Goostrey to Chelford, Leader Tim Carlisle 1005 train from Piccadilly. Book Peak Wayfarer

Wed. September 24th Edale circular, Leader Ken Hankey 10.43 train from Piccadilly. More information from Jeff Lewis on 0161 766 4683.

OR TRY THESE FOR SIZE

ROOTHERHAM WALKING FESTIVAL 5th to 25th JULY

What do you know about Rotherham? It's that Yorkshire town in the middle of England within reach of the Peak, the Yorkshire Dales and Sherwood Forest. It has 200 miles of footpaths through rolling countryside within its borders and the **ROOTHERHAM WALKING FESTIVAL** provides a great opportunity to explore them. There's a daily programme of guided walks ranging from one to 25 miles with a range of attractions from a Bronze Age dyle to a modern brewery or wildlife watching to the new Magna Science Adventure Centre. Most are free, but some of the attractions have a charge. Ring the information line on 01709 835904 for full details of walks and accommodation.

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DEATH OF A VETERAN

In March, the Manchester Metro News reported the death in a road accident of Jimmy Jones who, at the age of 85 was thought to be the last survivor of the Kinder Scout Mass Trespass in 1932. A sad and sudden end to a life-long campaigner for walkers' rights and a past member of the PNFS. A week later, the *News* published a correction. The oldest survivor of the trespass still survives. Mrs Edith Stringer who is 81, of Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester, was taken at the age of 11 by her brother and sister and remembers

being terrified by the notices warning trespassers of prosecution.

NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS...

We are pleased to record that an application to run a series of training sessions for would-be helicopter pilots from a farm on Cobden Edge, Mellor, near the bridleway on Pole Lane, has been withdrawn following objections in which the PNFS joined.

High hopes are expressed for the development of undersea turbines set in rows in channels of high tide movement such as the Pentland Firth, near Orkney and off Alderney in the Channel Isles. The new technology promises to provide a much greater and more reliable souce of power than wind generators as the tides are predictable and constant. It's early days but there is yet hope we may be able to keep our hills free and undecorated by windmills in the foreseeable future.

CHERNOBYL CHILDREN'S PROJECT (UK) **ЧЕРНОБИЛЬСКАЯ ДЕТСКАЯ БЕЛАРУСИ**

Clare Mortin, one of our Taylor House volunteers, has told us about the Chernobyl Children's Project (UK) which raises funds to bring sick children affected by the Chernobyl disaster, to the UK for a holiday, staying with local families. Clare works for the Buxton & Longnor Group. Here's a chance to put in a day's Peak District walking with an extra bonus for a good cause.

HILLS AND DALES SPONSORED WALKS **SATURDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER 2003** **12 MILES OR 22 MILES IN 10 HOURS**

**Starting from Nab End Farm Hollinsclough nr. Longnor
GR 076662**

Entry Cost: £6 (£8 on the day) Free if £10 sponsorship raised

**Limited to 250 walkers/runners
Includes refreshments en route and meal at finish**

**Further information from K Bailey Tel: 01782 815386
Or www.nabendfarm.co.uk**

QUO VADIS?

WE'VE WAITED 1,883 YEARS FOR THIS - HADRIAN'S WALL PATH OPENS

Britain's most expensive footpath, at a cost of £6 million and a further £7m to follow for maintenance is ready for ramblers to walk from sea to sea (Irish to North). Some of the country traversed has never before been a right of way and it has taken almost 20 years of negotiation to achieve this access. The wall was built in 120AD. Many of the parts as yet unexcavated have been covered in turf to protect them, but there is much to see. It is recommended that you take a week to cover its 84 miles.

NEW GUIDE BOOKS

The Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society has just published four new Guide Books which we can recommend. Pocketable paperbacks with full information on the route covered, plus historical notes and descriptions of items of interest, they are well worth the £1 charge for each.

They are:

South Cheshire Way -Eastwards

(Grindley Brook to Mow Cop)
55Km
South Cheshire Way -
Westwards (Mow Cop to
Grindley Brook) 55Km

The Eddisbury Way (Frodsham
to Higher Burwardsley) 26.5Km

The Eddisbury Way (Higher
Burwardsley to Frodsham)
26.5Km

Details about the above and the
other publications by the Mid-
Cheshire Society are available
on 01606 883815.

One Over The Eight (Part 2)

*In the last issue of Signpost we
printed the first part of an
abridged, adapted version of a
chapter from Graham Wilson's
book Climbing Down. The
second part follows...*

By now you should be approaching the Ryles Arms, unassailed, it is to be hoped, by wolf or lynx or - assuming global warming has not advanced too exponentially - packs of marauding polar bears. This is a pleasant enough place, though now more restaurant than pub, and it should not be long before you wish to regain the Gritstone



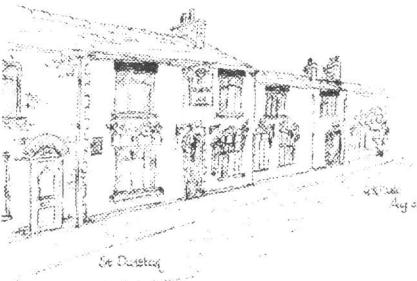
Way and tackle the mauvais pas of the circuit - the assault of Croker Hill. Descend past a farm and Croker House and join the old Leek Road, which in turn leads to the Fools Nook and the Macclesfield Canal. Follow the towpath until you reach bridge no. 44, which you cross for the



next port of call. Sutton Hall and the township of Sutton Downes go back a long way. Although it is not mentioned in the Domesday Book, it was probably included under the entry for Macclesfield and has had its moments. Sir Richard Sutton was one of the founders of Brasenose College, Oxford, and Raphael Hollinshed, the

chronicler whose works lie at the heart of Shakespeare's History Plays, lived within the township. Leave the Hall by a footpath that leads to Lane-Ends and the Lamb Inn and then the road to Langley. The journey from Sutton to the St Dunstan at Langley via the Church House has a curious ecumenical flavour. Sutton Hall was a retreat for persecuted Catholics and Langley, though a Wesleyan stronghold, named its pub after an Anglican Archbishop. The Church House, no doubt, swept up any remaining religious waifs and strays. It would not be wise to get carried away with this idea and make the Lamb over-sacrificial. Although the worst is behind, the remainder is uphill and the path is stony, for there is no real alternative to the road. But it is pleasant enough and at least knows where it is going as it gently strains towards its summit and our final resting place.

Continue along the road from the St Dunstan until a left turn into Holehouse Lane allows the Gritstone Trail to be joined once more just below Teggs Nose. Leave it at the point where a path leads down to a stream, then climbs steeply towards Ridgegate reservoir



and thence the Leathers Smithy.

These convolutions can simply be avoided by keeping to the road. When you walk through Langley there is a sense that this is a village which exists as a thriving community. A row of small but attractive cottages that are occupied during the week, a frequent bus service into Macclesfield and pockets of local industry support this feeling. Sadly this is not always the way. Many similar locations have been taken over by 'weekenders' who drive up house prices and compound the problem by selfishly using the amenities of their local hypermarket rather than those of the village shop. The result-collapse of real village life- is inevitable. So, the Sutton Eight is, perhaps, less an arbitrary collection of pubs and more a benchmark of how things are. When it becomes the Sutton Three, it may be too late.

To return to the Hanging Gate,

simply reverse your steps (more obvious in this direction) and rejoin the Gritstone Trail. A better alternative would be to connect with the path that leads into Macclesfield Forest and climb the forest tracks to the boundary wall above Nessit Hill. There used to be a concessionary path that skirted High Moor and joined the walled track that leads to the pub. However this concession has been withdrawn and a sign erected, which suggests that the area has been designated by some nebulous European Commission as an area of particular scientific interest. As the terrain would clearly fall into the category of open access, one wonders whether all owners of moorland set aside for the destruction of partially flighted birds will discover the existence of threatened rare sedges that have to be safeguarded for the benefit of future generations. Nevertheless, it is worth continuing by one route or another if only to enjoy, weather permitting- a well earned drink in the beer garden with its splendid views of much of your travail.



The Sutton Eight

Climbing Down by Graham Wilson is published in hardback by Millrace (Tel:01663 765080 2a Leafield Rd Disley SK12 2JF. The drawings are by Gerry Dale whose maps illustrate the book. Copies of Climbing Down are available from bookshops at £13.95, or direct from the publishers at £10.00 p&p free. Please state you are a member of PNFS when ordering.

Is there a
GENERAL SECRETARY

out there, waiting for the call? Well, now's the time.

The PNFS is in desperate and urgent need of a
GENERAL SECRETARY.

We are looking for someone, male or female, with managerial and computer skills, perhaps approaching retirement and looking for a stimulating way to occupy their time.

To be
GENERAL SECRETARY

you would need to be within reasonable reach of Stockport and prepared to spend perhaps two days a week on the Society's business. You would be responsible for the general running and administration of the Peak & Northern, the formulation of its footpath policies, liaison with local authorities and with affiliated societies. Much of the detailed work is already handled by dedicated, competent volunteers and the job of the

GENERAL SECRETARY

would be one of overseeing and co-ordinating their efforts.

Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be paid.

For a discussion about the post and further information, please ring Derek Seddon, Chairman, at Taylor House on 0161 480 3565 or at home on 0161 428 6137

FIRE ON THE MOORS

The fires on Kinder and Bleaklow this spring caused the Fire Service and the Rangers from both the Peak Park and the National Trust some concern. At a recent meeting of the Kinder advisory committee we were shown pictures of the devastation caused. Huge areas of land have been destroyed whilst others have been severely disturbed. An expensive fence erected on Bleaklow to keep sheep off until the land regenerates, has been destroyed and will have to be re-erected. It could take years for the vegetation to grow back. The animals and birds have also suffered.

We questioned the Rangers as to the cause of these fires. Whilst they were loath to give reasons they did indicate that one person had been questioned about a fire on the outskirts of Stalybridge. Cigarette lighters were found at two locations and firelighters at another. The Peak Park Ranger commented that the fires were not far from rights of way and in particular, the Pennine Way. It is very difficult fighting fires on these high moors, where water is often some distance away. The helicopter used had quite a flight to pick up water from a pool near the Snake Pass. A pipe was laid from near the bottom of William Clough on to Kinder. This entailed more than half a dozen pumps to raise the water more than a thousand feet. The pipe was up and working in a remarkably short time but I think we shall have to get used to the fact that pools will have to be created in more accessible places in the future. The fire brigade and the wardens are getting more expert in dealing with these fires and I have only praise for their efforts

Norman Edwards, Vice President