

SIGNPOST

**Newsletter of the Peak and Northern
Footpaths Society**

Number 16

April 2005



Sykehouse footpath 24 showing damage by 4x4s

Chairman's Report

It's been a pretty progressive and eventful quarter since my last report to you. Our Officers have endorsed a policy that we will, where appropriate, be prepared to fund specific bridge projects for the benefit of the walking population at large. Consequently in a very productive liaison meeting with Cheshire PROW personnel we offered to fund three bridges, two will be at Wincle the other at Mobberley. The total capital cost will be £2000 including the provision of anti-slip decks. PNFS will have no future financial liability for maintenance etc. The bridges will have plaques fitted to record both our involvement and to encourage people to join the Society. The responsibility for the provision of bridges is, of course, not ours but the Highway Authority's but we are demonstrating that we don't just complain about deficiencies in the Footpath system but are prepared to put our money where our mouth is. As we meet with other Authorities we will carefully consider similar gestures. Our charitable status requires such initiatives and our Constitution specifically allows them.

We were delighted to welcome **Pauline Pinkstone** and **Margaret Seal**, both as PNFS members and representatives of the Affiliated Derbyshire FPS. They motored up from the deep south of our territory to check out our typical Monday morning working beehive and were much impressed with us as we were with their enthusiasm.

Membership wise we are edging to 1000 and it was particularly rewarding for me to give my first illustrated talk (excellent slides and notes courtesy of President Derek.) My audience was the South Manchester Area Co-op Members Group led by **Angela Downing** and their most generous donation was converted into 17 new members via a one-night only special offer!

It's AGM preparation season right now and the pace is hotting up to produce the 2004 Annual report with a change of typesetter and

printer. **Eric Kime** has been most effective as link man with both. You will notice some changes in the report format and a dash or two of innovation.

Further on in this **Signpost** you will see details, commencing May, of our PNFS (no longer joint with RA) walks programme. Please try to come on them and support and enjoy the walks which will be suitable for many of you.

I have to sign off with two sad items--firstly the death of **Eileen Daley**, one of our VPs. A member since 1969, she was the wife of our then Hon Secretary **Phil Daley** back in the seventies. At that time she was active in local politics and became the first woman chairman of Marple Council before it was taken over by Stockport. She died in a rest home in Halifax where she had lived for some years. **Fred Ogden** spoke for the Society at a recent memorial tree planting in Marple park.

Secondly we will very soon lose the much valued services of **Bob Dumbarton** who is off to contribute to another charitable cause. Bob has been key to the introduction of computer services as well as wearing a second hat in administering the Agent/Inspector team. **Hilda Bowler** has kindly volunteered to cover the latter and the computer side coverage is still evolving but with **Reg Boot** already taking on extra workload.

Kind regards and I very much hope to welcome you at the AGM.

David Bratt

From The Editor

We regret that in the January edition of **Signpost** some members will have received copies whose reproductions of the photographs of the Inspectors Conference were excessively dark and which may have given the impression that the lights went out at Styal Mill.

This was not the case, our printers have apologised and we will all try to do better in the future.

To this end, in this issue we are taking the plunge into colour, which we hope will make our sometimes difficult subjects easier to understand. Let us know what you think.

The Leslie Meadowcroft Memorial Bridge

is now in place in Tom Wood, Charlesworth, near Glossop. It is the most imposing of five new bridges installed in the heavily - ravined enclave which is owned by the Woodland Trust. The huge main timbers for all the bridges were brought in by helicopter, part of a determined effort by Derbyshire County Council. Members and friends contributed £650 towards the cost of the bridge, the balance being made up from Society funds. The plaque in memory of our late President and Chairman is on order, to be fixed shortly. The surroundings are very muddy at present due to all the work carried out but we hope that by the time we have the dedication in late April all will have settled down.

-00-

Andy Overton is our new Inspector for Doncaster and district, assisting **John Harker** with his huge overload of South Yorkshire parishes. He has sent us this report on some of his problems. His photographs are featured in our centre spread and on the front cover.

Having Your Second Thoughts First

Most of the problems a Footpath Inspector encounters are straightforward cases of things not being as they should be, i.e. not according with either the Definitive Map or governing rights of way. However, it is occasionally the case that what seems at first to be a simple violation turns out to be more complicated. Two examples in Doncaster MBC's area will serve to illustrate this interesting and varied work.

The photo on the front cover shows Sykehouse FP24, which has been badly damaged by recreational 4x4 vehicles. This public footpath along a Green Lane has vehicular rights for landowners only. First impressions are that the Council needs to restore the surface to a state fit for walkers, take measures effectively to prohibit unauthorised vehicles and prosecute offenders. Looking into things more closely, though, one finds that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that this lane and others in the area were wrongly designated when the Definitive Map was drawn up in 1954 and probably carry historical higher rights. Prosecution and exclusion of offroaders by the Council might not succeed so they are reluctant to act. Measures are in hand to resurface some of the damaged lanes but this one is not included. Having spent some time establishing facts and gathering evidence of the Council's position we are currently considering serving them with Section 56 notices to bring matters to a head. This would force them to make a decision to either reclassify lanes to allow vehicles, with an appropriate surface, or exclude them effectively and reinstate the original grassy track.

The wide, unspanned watercourse Photo 1 page 6 is an obstacle even to **John Harker**, shown on Thorpe-in-Balne FP2. This seems like a simple case of a missing bridge which the Council must replace. Investigation of the Definitive Map, though, shows that this bridge was already missing when the map was drawn up, having been washed away in 1949, but it is mentioned on the map and Walking Schedule. This bridge carried a path identified as public and someone must have been responsible for maintaining it. Getting to the bottom of that aspect is likely to hold the clue to getting it replaced and deciding what action would be appropriate to achieve this. Photo 2 was taken north of the missing bridge, showing the condition of the abandoned footpath. The PNFS is considering how we can best push this matter forward.

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Photo 1: Thorpe-in-Balne FP2 looking south east at the site of the missing Saddle Croft Bridge.

"I told you not to leave the dinghy at Fishlake" says John



Photo 2:

Thorpe-in-Balne FP2 at SE59701061, showing the broken and overgrown stile. This is north of the missing Saddle Croft Bridge and shows that the path has been abandoned by Doncaster MBC north of the bridge.

John Harker spots the skeleton of the last walker to try to get along this path.

...and while we are in Yorkshire....

Our Courts & Inquiries Officer, Roy Spoors, found these. Action is being taken.



Footbridge closed for 2 years



Padlocked gate and illegal notice.
"Footpath closed"



Overgrown path



Bad stile



Overgrown hedge makes access difficult

Chelford Circular Walk 26th January 2005

Thirty-one walkers set off from Chelford station at the later time of 10.32 as advertised in the RA publicity. The weather was surprisingly good for this low level winter walk.

From the parking lot of the cattle market we passed under the railway and across the fields and the main road to skirt the large sand quarry at Blooms pits and then by a large mere (in fact an old flooded sand quarry) with many gulls and other birds, to George's Wood and the track known as Stubby Lane. After passing between several highly restored 'farms' the path crossed several fields to skirt Heawood Hall and more fields to Rector's Plantation where the kissing gate exit proved exceptionally muddy due to cattle, in spite of some wood deposits of the previous week. Across the field to Nether Alderley Church and Church Hall for a welcome cup of coffee, biscuits and toilets. Hospitality courtesy of PNFS. RA members were very surprised at this hospitality which would have been even more welcome if the weather had been the usual January weather.

Just after 12 the party set off along well waymarked paths, crossing Sand Lane, Welsh Row and the railway to approach Fields Farm which is in fact a VERY large collection of glasshouses — perhaps 10 acres!. (Some half of this has been erected since our first 'recce' last October, and the workers' caravans were still present beside the directed path). Two further muddy fields took us past an open cow shed where many walkers admired a fine Jersey cow who had caused much of the muddy path: also numerous hens and fine cockerels which were somewhat late with their crowing. Down the track to cross the main road and down a country lane, admiring a fine verge with several hundred snowdrops already in flower. Leaving the lane we passed several 'farms' now highly desirable and expensive Cheshire homes complete with tennis courts, and across several fields with Little Moss Farm on our left, to the path along the periphery of Warford Golf Club with a large badger sett in a small copse which created great interest as many walkers had never seen one before. A final field and 100 yards of road brought us to the Stag's Head Inn at 1.30- and trouble! The RA did not inform their members of the pub stop for lunch and they had all brought packed lunches. The landlord had been made aware of the walk, had laid aside a room and lit a very good fire, all to no avail. I had a good lunch and a couple of pints, a few others came in for a drink, and after apologies we left.

Down the road past the David Lewis Centre and along a bridle path passing Peck Mills Farm and woodcutters with a tremendous pile of logs as we approached Carter Lane, turning off to follow the track to the railway and after a few hundred yards back to the car park just before 3 p.m.

I was surprised how many walkers congratulated me on the walk since it was not through any spectacular scenery and this low level local walk had been chosen bearing in mind the bad weather we often get in January. However, on reflection most walkers came from inner city or suburban backgrounds and this to me not very scenic farming country was clearly different and a delight to them.

Peter Bowler

Walks Programme

As from May the PNFS and Manchester RA will no longer operate a joint walks programme. Our walks will be for members, their friends and Affiliates and led by a PNFS member. We very much hope the walks will be supported by your good selves. Initially the walks will be on the last Wednesday of each month but if the turnout level is encouraging and leaders are forthcoming then the frequency can be increased. Leaders are requested where possible to have a public transport option to the start point. Walks will be up to 10 miles and of moderate grade (1000ft ascent max). We will use *Signpost* to give details and below are the walks for March, May, June and July. Leaders and walks are sought for August onwards and details should be given please to **Jeff Lewis** 0161 766 4683. Lets make a success of it!!

MARCH 30

Rainow Circular

Bus No 60 from Macclesfield Bus Station 9.50. Walk starts 10.10 from Rainow Round Meadow Car Park opposite Parish Church. Round Lamaload and White Nancy. 9 miles. Lunch at the Rising Sun Rainow. Leaders: **Peter and Hilda Bowler** Tel:01625 432 426

MAY 25

Knutsford. Man Picc 09.24, walk starts 10.15 from Knutsford station. 10 miles, Mainly flat. Please bring packed lunch Leader **David Bratt** 01925 762472

Please turn to page 12 for June and July walks

PNFS People

Fred Travis, long-serving Inspector for Tameside and once a vigorous signpost erector has, at the age of 90 been appointed an Honorary Life Member of the PNFS. He is still the talented craftsman who made the delightful scale model of a Derbyshire stone wall and ladder stile which graces the Society's exhibition stand, but nowadays he turns his hand to making carved walking sticks.

As you will have already read, the mainstay of our growing Taylor House computer set-up, **Bob Dumbarton**, will be leaving us at the end of March. He and his wife will be taking on a more personal hands-on role in another charity. We are going to miss his cheerful Monday-morning presence and the efficient way he kept up the connections with our Inspector network. He himself was Inspector for Ollerton, Peover and Plumley and has now been replaced by **David Hibbert**. Members who attended the 2002 and 2004 Inspectors Conferences will be aware of the vital part in both events taken by Bob as both

organiser and lecturer and will join us in sending him off on his new venture with our sincere good wishes and grateful thanks.

Our thanks are also due to **Jim Wild** for his long service as Inspector for the Disley district. He has decided to retire from that post, being replaced by **David Taylor**, but, we're happy to say, will continue with his valued work at Taylor House where he corrects and marks up the changes to definitive footpaths on our collection of maps, entertaining us the while with jokes which he obtains from his grandchildren.

We welcome two other new Inspectors recently appointed. They are **Martin Riley**, who is assisting **Jack Robinson** in Saddleworth and Chadderton, and **John Fitzgerald**, who looks after Sudbury in South Derbyshire.

The appeal for assistance put out at the last Inspectors' Conference has had a startling effect. Suddenly we are back to full strength in assessors,

making good the grievous losses in manpower we sustained last year. **Alan Hooley** has come in as Leader of the assessors and **Peter Crofts** has moved to Tuesdays to help **Adrian Littleton** reorganise the files. Alan's team now consists of **Harold Fore**, **Jeff Lomax**, **Wally Smith** and **John Grimsey**. **Denis Rowlinson** is, of course, still in residence, the only survivor of last year's team. **Brian Summerscales** has also started to help with communications between Taylor House and our Inspectors.

Since we re-acquired the PNFS library from the dusty basement of Manchester Central Library, where it had been lost to public view for over 30 years, there has been a need to sort, collate and organise the collection of books, maps and guides into some usable form. So along came **Barbara Heathcott Wood** to volunteer to do just that with professional expertise. She's locked away in a corner of our smallest office. After she has completed the job we hope to offer any surplus items free to interested members at the AGM.

When **Brian Taylor**, our Signpost contractor was about to

dig in the new replacement for the broken 1924 signpost at the Flouch Inn, Langsett, up came **Mr Davies**, a retired signalman who lives nearby, offering his help, which was gladly accepted. Result:

Signpost 52 on the route via Cut Gate and Slippery Stones was erected in half the time. Many thanks Mr D!



Mr Davies and Brian Taylor with a job well done.

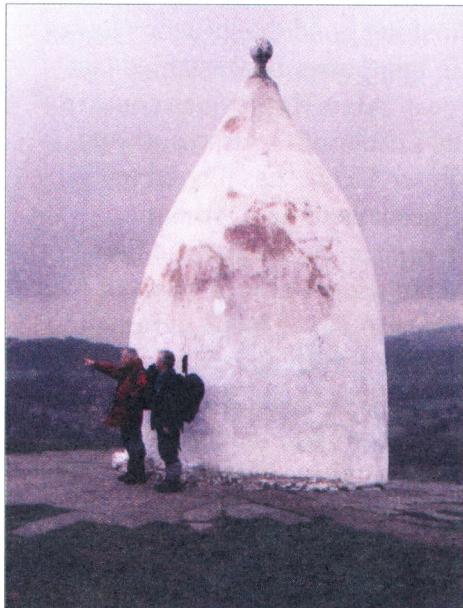
JUNE 29

Marple . Man Picc
09.45 ,walk starts 10.15
from Marple station. 8
miles, Undulating, Please
bring packed lunch.
Leader (to meet train)
Fred Ogden 0161 449
9674

July 27

Middlewood. Man Picc
09.37, walk starts 10.15
from Middlewood station.
9 miles. Pub lunch optional.
Leaders (to meet train)

Peter and Hilda Bowler



White Nancy at Bollington. Visit this
monument on the Wednesday walk.

And finally a reminder that the Society's ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
will be held at the MASONIC TEMPLE Bridge St. Manchester
commencing at 11.00 on Saturday 23rd April 2005. There will be a FREE
BUFFET LUNCH. Please book your place with Eric KIME, 35 Buxton
Lane Marple Stockport SK6 7QL. Tel: 0161 427 1082.

The Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

**Taylor House, 23 Turncroft Lane, Offerton
Stockport SK1 4AB Tel: 0161 480 3565
Fax: 0161 429 7279 Reg Charity No:212219**

mail@peakandnorthern.org.uk

www.peakandnorthern.org.uk