

SIGNPOST

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

Number 18

October 2005



Down in the forest...

....the dedication of the Leslie Meadowcroft Memorial Bridge

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Again there is no shortage of topics for this report--and in all bar one there are positive things to be said; so lets start by taking the bull by the horns. The Society has for decades, it seems to me, taken as its priority the matter of proposals to either divert, extinguish or create footpaths. To pursue this matter vigorously the Society obtained in 1983 prescribed status with Highway Authorities (HAs) and set up, and still maintains, a sizeable manned and most competent Assessor section. The section studies such proposals and after reference to the appropriate Agent/Inspector, the Society's position is thus determined; all very laudable and this strength must be maintained. But there is a poor relation and that is the matter of pursuing Obstructions and Faults. These I am sure frustrate the walking population far more than the effect of any diversion. They amount to a direct challenge by landowners/tenants to our walking rights. Barbed wire, blocked stiles, removed signs, illegal notices, dogs, vehicles on and damaging paths, rubbish mounds and verbal harrassment are but some of the means encountered to seek to deter us from walking our footpath heritage. The pursuit of these issues at the admin stage rests at Taylor House with a very small team who also undertake other valuable duties for the Society. To exacerbate matters we log and seek to pursue every issue raised, however minor, to the detriment of focusing on the real baddies. So its clear we need more hands on deck, we need to go after the already identified HAs who are abject performers using the new legislation to hand and we need to sort the wheat from the chaff in issues

to be pursued. It's my and our job as management to bring this strength up to at least match the other. I would welcome your opinions --supportive or otherwise.

Our walks programme is gaining gradual momentum--the first three walks (reports elsewhere) having four, five and eight attendees respectively. The Broadbottom walk on Wed Oct 26 will visit new PNFS signs and the Leslie Meadowcroft bridge.

Membership is around 940 (same as close on Dec 31 last year) and we have a number of slide lectures (good recruiters) to come, so we should be close to 1000 at year end.

Thanks are due to **Peter Ritman** for setting Taylor House up on broadband which speeds up information processing to the delight of **David Tattersall** handling our e-mails.

We will before long have three e-mail addresses to split incoming messages into Faults, Diversions and General matters which will aid efficiency on Mondays. Correspondence by post and phone messages will, of course, continue to receive proper attention--we have to be all round smart in what we do.

Finally please note we hold our first ever all-member half year meeting on

**Sat Oct 29th at 11.00 at
The Masonic Hall Bridge St
Manchester.**

Coffee from 10.30 and a complementary buffet lunch and a great opportunity for two way dialogue on matters near and dear to the Society and a social occasion as well.

Kind regards and hope to see you at the half year meeting.

David Bratt

NEW PNFS POLICY STATEMENTS...Part 2

By Roy Spoors, Vice Chairman

In the last edition of 'Signpost' the first three policy statements covering *Alleygating, Common Access Land and Wind Farms* were detailed. This time the policy to be covered is perhaps the most important of all to the Society that of *Proposals to alter the Rights of Way Network*.

It must be recorded that thanks are due to Adrian Littleton who has put a lot of time and effort into developing and keeping this policy up to date. There are a number of different types of proposals and orders that can alter the network and each is detailed below. However, whilst the Society strives to improve the network, there are two constraints that always apply,

- * building development and changes in land use – which continually alter the public rights of way environment
- * the legal rules which tightly control how changes in the network may be made

Creations of New Public Rights of Way

Any creation which is not part of a package of rationalisation or diversion proposals will be encouraged.

The promoter shall be given all supporting evidence that we can muster. Other creations shall be considered on the merits of the packages of which they form part.

Supporting evidence is often quite difficult to provide from our archive and the most useful evidence is 'user evidence forms' but, these can only be collected by local people on the ground.

Upgradings and Downgradings of Public Rights of Way

Proposals for such changes should be supported or resisted (as the merits determine) on historical evidence (from maps etc) and evidence of user.

The fact that such a change will reduce enjoyment of walking is a spur to evidence-hunting; not a ground for objection

One of the main considerations is always the potential for conflict between walkers and other users e.g. horse riders on bridleways and horse riders and vehicles on BOAT's. The suitability of the way for its proposed use is an aspect often looked at though it is NOT a basis for objection.

In this area the CROW Act 2000 provides for the re-classification of RUPPs to 'restricted byway', however, there is a period of grace where applications to upgrade a RUPP to a BOAT instead, will be considered. This is a contentious area and the Society is currently drafting a new policy addition to cover these applications, as in some areas there is already a significant number in the backlog. This new policy will be covered in the next issue of 'Signpost'.

Diversions of Public Rights of Way

A diversion should be opposed if the diversion route is not as convenient and enjoyable as the existing route; and in responding to a proposal or order PNFS should strive to achieve greater convenience and enjoyment.

If a diversion is proposed or ordered in respect of an obstructed way, the highway authority shall be urged not to consider it until the obstruction has been removed.

This rule does not apply where the obstruction is a quarry, or a completed (or substantially completed) building: in which event a route should be demanded which is at least as convenient and enjoyable as the obstructed route.

Diversion on to housing estate roads should be avoided. Preference will be given to made-up estate paths through landscaped or open space away from vehicular traffic.

If a way is to be diverted from an open route to a route alongside a wall or other physical boundary we would seek to have a minimum width of 1.5 metres (for a footpath) or 3 metres (for a bridleway).

If a way which is to be diverted is to be enclosed on both sides, the width will be the greater of the existing width or 2 metres (for a footpath) or 3 metres (for a bridleway.)

Rationalisation schemes are subject to the same criteria.

This category represents the majority of the work carried out by the Assessors in Taylor House. In most cases now these orders are handled by a 'holding objection' and a request to our local agent/Inspector for an opinion 'on the ground'. Increasingly these orders are made in the official phrase 'in the interests of the landowner' often to divert away from a house or garden so that all diversions are assessed very carefully.

Extinguishments of Public Rights of Way

A proposal or order to extinguish a way will be opposed unless
(a) *a suitable alternative way is available (or to be provided); or*
(b) *the way is no longer needed by the public.*

If an extinguishment proposal or order is made in respect of an obstructed way, the highway authority shall be urged not to consider it until the obstruction has been removed.

This rule does not apply where the obstruction is a quarry, or a completed (or substantially completed) building: in which event a route should be demanded which is at least as convenient and enjoyable as the obstructed route.

Well that concludes this very important policy statement so, as usual, if you have any comments, issues or suggestions please get in touch with any of your Officers.

Brian Morrison

is a man with a mission. His offer of his services as itinerant signpost refurbisher was eagerly accepted so now he spends his spare time riding (on his bike) to the rescue of neglected posts. Finding one in need of loving care, he cleans it, gives it a coat of green paint and rides away, returning later in the day to apply a second coat, then comes back the next week to paint the letters white. Then on to the next! Well done!

(Picture page 6)

Fourposter on Belmont

The Signpost erection team of **Fred Ogden, Ted Wolfe, Jerzy**

Matuszewski and Brian Taylor had a field day on September 12th when they put up four new signs north of Belmont Reservoir, Lancashire.

One of them required a 3/4 mile carry across the moor, where the assistance of United Utilities ranger **Helen Galloway** and her Land Rover proved invaluable. Members of the North West Fellwalkers were there to help erect a sign dedicated to one of their group. A lesson in co-operation putting the seal on a very successful day in glorious sunshine.

(Picture on Page 7)

Leslie's Bridge Dedicated

Three years of planning, frustration and perseverance eventually paid off with an event that was worthy of the man. More than 60 of his friends and admirers turned out at Tom Wood Farm, Charlesworth to pay tribute to **Leslie Meadowcroft** and his 50 year

devotion to the cause of footpath preservation. The bridge which bears his name carries the footpath through the wood between Charlesworth and Broadbottom was put in by helicopter by Derbyshire County Council with our financial help. After a short ceremony with addresses by the Chairman and President, the assembled throng wound its way through the leafy glades, up and down countless steps, to the bridge where **Bill Johnson** had fixed the bronze plaque to a solid black post. We were sorry that after all those years together **Leslie's wife Lorna** could not make it down to the bridge, but her **granddaughter Sylvia** did and no doubt gave her all the details afterwards. Incidentally, the ridge of the Cown Edge Way can be seen about a mile away across the valley. **David Bratt** proposes that the route which Leslie helped put together could easily be diverted to take in Tom Wood and his bridge.

(Pictures on front cover and page 7)

PROPOSED CHANGE TO THE CONSTITUTION

For discussion at the half-yearly meeting.

From 2006 all affiliated Societies will pay a common subscription of £10 per annum. They will receive copies of the minutes of all members' meetings free of charge.

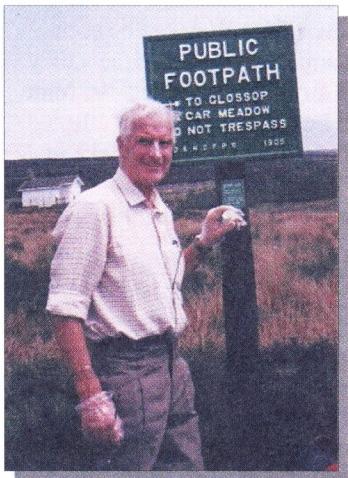
**Proposed: David Bratt
Seconded: Derek Seddon**



L to R: Peter Wade, David Stearne, Chairman David Bratt, Vince Joyce and Petal the dog who declined to walk.



The Chairman with Guy the landlord of the Cat and Fiddle receiving the postcard from Tan Hill Inn.



Brian Morrison with the newly repainted SP2 - a splendid result.



Judith Halman, leader of the August walk displays the PNFS badge!



Lorna Meadowcroft with the memorial plaque before the dedication ceremony.



Admiring the Leslie Meadowcroft Bridge in Tom Wood



The stile that drew the Chairman's blood.
Walk report page 9.



Members of NW Fellwalkers (left) complete the job on signpost 305. Ted Wolfe looks for new challenges.

PNFS WINS AT PUBLIC INQUIRY

The 20th July 2005 saw the local Public Inquiry (PI) into an extinguishment order for footpath Bradford (west) 312. The order had been made under s118 of HA 1980 and therefore the test to be applied was 'not needed for public use'.

Footpath 312 crosses the car park, passes the club house and then skirts part of the course of West Bradford Golf Club. The order had been sought by the club and originally was supported by Bradford MBC, however, as the PI approached the Council decided to adopt a 'neutral stance' in deference to local opinion. This meant that at the PI the case in support of the order was led by the solicitor for the golf club.

Paul Clarke, our local representative for Bradford, had been involved from the initial consultation and he produced two written reports and also visited the club to meet with their vice president. This resulted in the Society objecting to the order consistently throughout the process, while the RA and OSS withdrew their objections. Paul's view, supported by Taylor House was that footpath 312 was used and therefore 'needed', a stance that was reinforced by the local residents who were objecting.

Come the PI and the solicitor for the golf club centred his arguments around the fact that despite 312 being well used there was an 'equally convenient' alternative and that extinguishment would bring other benefits to the golf club. Namely, allow the car park to be fenced to prevent crime; reduce conflict between walkers and vehicles; prevent antisocial behaviour around the club house. The Society argued that 'use' had to be the prime consideration and that the 'equally convenient' alternative was no such thing ! In the event the Inspector in his decision, accepted the arguments put forward and refused to confirm the order.

Well done to **Paul Clarke** for his tenacity and consistently providing the detailed work that allowed the arguments to be put so successfully.

Roy Spooers,
Courts and Inquiries Officer.

NOTES ON TANCAT (Pictures on page 6)

Well with more than a little relief I can tell you that we did succeed in walking from the Tan Hill Inn to the Cat and Fiddle--133 miles in 6 days. For the first five days the weather was ideal then on the final day it was a soaked-to-the-skin job but by then we were focused on finishing and celebrating in style (and we did).

We left Tan Hill, North Yorks, carrying a postcard from the landlord to his counterpart at The Cat humourously extolling the virtues of his being the highest pub in the UK whilst The Cat was 42 ft lower. Day 1 was all Pennine Way

crossing the Coast to Coast at Keld and then over Gt Shunner Fell to Hawes.

Next it was a day over hill ranges including Buckden Pike to Grassington arriving after a most pleasant stretch of the Dalesway. Day three necessitated the crossing of Skipton on market day, teeming with people and it was a joy to exit the madding crowd and head for Lothersdale then a long character building grind to Stanbury.

Our next target was Marsden but sadly and already over half way one of our four had to pull out suffering from awful blisters. We elected not to carry him on a litter! However once we had passed by distant Stoodley Pike and crossed the M62 we felt we were getting on home ground.

The penultimate day, Marsden to Edale via Black Hill, Bleaklow and Kinder was never going to be easy--28 miles and around 5500 feet of ascent and it took us 11.5 hrs but near the end there was light relief in meeting The Naked Rambler and girl friend and another friend--interestingly nakedness does not go as far as not wearing boots!! Their objective was John O' Groats. Of course in pursuit of their "rights" they infringe the rights of others--that sounds familiar.

And so to The Cat--a mere stroll of 15 miles--where the landlord was presented with his postcard--and immediately proceeded to write one out to Tan Hill saying whilst they might be marginally lower, they were more famous and featured in proper TV programmes not adverts (Ted Moul!)

Suffice it to say the 3 PNFS members who had completed (**David Stearne**, **Vince Joyce** and myself) chose not to act as postmen for the return trip. If you are interested--I have the maps!

David Bratt

PNFS Walks

30th June Marple Bridge/Ludworth

The deliberate aim of this interesting walk was to try little used paths in the Marple Bridge and Ludworth area.

We had walked only about three-quarters of a mile when we encountered a very dodgy stile at the northern end of the path Marple 50. Barely half an hour later we found the commencement of Marple 5 so overgrown it took your Chairman some time to trample down nettles and other vegetation to allow progress. Photos in the centre pages show the situation. A hundred yards further was a bridge more or less completely covered in undergrowth and in a very dangerous condition. At the top of the path the stile on to Ernscroft Lane greeted us with a protruding staple which drew blood from the Chairman, (see picture page 7) but fortunately we had no more difficult problems until much later when we tried to cross Ludworth Moor itself on paths Marple 11, 12 and 13. These were non-existent and it was evident that no one had used these rights of way for a very

long time. However, we did manage to survive, eventually returning to Marple Station for 3.45pm after walking about 8 adventurous miles.

I would like to add that not all the Society's walks are as difficult as this one, but it is necessary for us all to walk the neglected paths as well as the popular ones. Needless to say, Stockport MBC have been made aware of the faults mentioned above, but at the time of writing no response has been received.

Fred Ogden

27th July Ladybrook Valley- Lyme Park

The walk started from Middlewood Station and two travellers were walked back to Jackson's Brickwork car park for the motorised walkers.

We went up the Ladybrook Valley Interest Trail to the canal past Brookside Farm to Elmhurst Cottage which is the boundary of Lyme Park. After crossing the park the walk followed the Bollinhurst Brook path to Cockhead, passing Horse Coppice and Bollinhurst reservoirs to the six path many signed junction, including a PNFS sign. Bearing right down the track over Bollinhurst Bridge up to the East Lodge of the Park and after another quarter of a mile at the copse we turned left and climbed the hill to Lantern Wood, passing the Lantern with a fine view down to the Hall. On and up a minor track, over an awkward stone stile, up the hill to the park boundary, now at the 364m contour on the map. Following this boundary for half a mile to a monument to a Mr. Monkhouse, a Manchester Guardian literary editor and his children situated at 400m over the wall from Bowstonegate Farm. The monument had an excellent toposcope and convenient steps for lunch break seats, with superb views all round.

After lunch the walk led down to Knights Low Wood and turned left on a path leading west out of the wood into Drinkwater Meadow and diagonally across this with Pursefield Wood on the left to a stile, across the road and up a track with the Knott on the left, round the hill and down to Green Farm. Then down to Throstlenest Farm by a PNFS sign to Higher Poynton, across three fields to the canal. A good half mile along the canal to Nelson Pit Visitor Centre for a look around and a pit stop at the Boar's Head across the road since it was nearly three o'clock and the train was only a mile away and not until 4.15pm

Peter Bowler

31st August Walk Mobberley Circular (picture on page 6)

My first lead for the PNFS and it was a dry sunny day, always a good start and I needed it as the Chairman and two Footpath Inspectors, **Eileen Leonard** and **Martin Riley** were present along with four other members. (The total of eight being the current record!!-Ed)

We walked from Mobberley Station to Manchester Airport right under the flight path looking across to the landing lights on Runway 1 where we stopped for coffee and saw some spectacular close by take-offs. After picking blackberries

(bags provided by leader!) we then proceeded under Runway 2 via a huge tunnel built to divert the river Bollin. Lunch was taken at Salterley Mere (mushrooms collected) and we then walked on springy paths onto the peat bog where Lindow Man was found. Then it was on to the Quakers Graveyard, an overspill used from the church in Wilmslow dating back to 1614. The final stroll was through fields to Mobberley Church where water bottles were refilled and then to the Station just in time to avoid a cloudburst. 10 miles/5 hrs.

Judith Halman

Future Walks

WED OCT 26 BROADBOTTOM STATION

walk starts 10.15
Man Piccadilly 09.47. Leader **David Bratt**. Walk 10 miles includes visit to Tom Wood. Bring lunch. Any queries please call 01925 762472.

WED NOV 30 HIGHER POYNTON (Boars Head bus stop)

Stockport Bus Station bus 191 at 09.45. Leader **Jean Arnett**. Walk starts at 10.15 (car parking nearby). 10 miles-some uphill. Bring lunch. Sorry but no dogs. Any queries please call 0161 487 4264.

WED DEC 28 CHEADLE HULME STATION

walk starts 10.15
Man Piccadilly 09.50. Leader **Jeff Lewis**. Walk 10 miles. Bring lunch. Any queries please call 0161 766 4683

COUNCIL MEETING

10.30am SATURDAY 29th OCTOBER 2005

at the FREEMASONS HALL, QUAY STREET, MANCHESTER

The normal Agenda will be followed by a

FREE BUFFET LUNCH

If you wish to attend PLEASE BOOK WITH ERIC KIME

on 0161 427 1082

or 35 Buxton Lane, Marple, Stockport SK6 7QL

**After lunch will be a Question & Answer Session and Debate
on any topic relevant to the Society's business.**

We want your views. Please come to help run the PNFS

Bridges by the Dozen

Walkers have reason to be grateful to United Utilities who have installed over 30 new bridges and boardwalks over the groughs of Torside Moor, NW of Glossop. They weren't put in for our benefit, being aimed at getting shooters into position for August 12th, but what a boon they are on that muddy route up to Bleaklow. Shame that the grouse were thin on the ground at the start of the season.



The Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

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