

SIGNPOST

Newsletter of the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

Number 20

April 2006

We now have 1000+ members

Chairman's Report

Its been another quarter of solid progress, membership having advanced to 1065 helped already by the introduction of the new leaflet. Its roll out under **June Mabon's** control has seen 2000 of the 5000 first print run already distributed, many into visitor centres and libraries.

Adrian Littleton represented the PNFS and assisted local residents of Bolton le Sands at a recent Public Inquiry regarding a sought closure (result awaited) and so impressed them with his advocacy that they donated £500 to the Society which we are converting to an additional 38 memberships not yet reflected in our total figures.

Keith Wykes has decided that he will no longer stand for Office at this year's AGM. This really is an end of an era event as Keith was for many years the Treasurer (and a Trustee) of the Society in some of its most difficult and survival-challenging years. Latterly Keith has worked in various



Front Page News.
For pictures and report see pages 6 and 8

aspects of signpost maintenance. The hallmarks of his contributions to the Society have always been enthusiasm and a profound belief and regard in the aims of the PNFS and its wellbeing. Somehow Officers meetings will never be the same. To allow a smooth transfer **Ted Wolfe** has already been given the responsibility for maintenance out in the field where some 50 posts require remedial attention and **David Morton** has been assigned the upkeep of the signpost database.

Saddleworth FP 55 had its definitive line walked as intended but in arctic weather on Feb 22 ably led by **Martin Riley**. The PNFS walk through a farm of abject squalor was very well reported by the Oldham Evening Chronicle. Within the 14 strong group (a record!) were also members of both Oldham and Manchester RA affiliates.

The Society has agreed to fund a long needed 8m wood/metal bridge (plus anti-slip) over Hoo Brook, near Grindon Staffordshire at a cost of £1800.

On 19th January **Fred Ogden** and I represented the Society at the dedication of kindly donated SP 307 (in memory of **Russell and Alice Prince**) in the Manifold Valley attended by many members of the CHA Manchester Rambling Club. (see photo page 5). Then on the 4th March I walked with the Eccles Rambling and Social Club to mark

their Diamond Jubilee year and a visit to SP 154 near Keeper's Cottage, Lyme Park, this kindly donated new sign replacing the original 154 planted to commemorate their 21st anniversary (see photo page 7).

Both outings were very impactful on me in terms of the so evidently shared enjoyment and comradeship of our Affiliated groups. Thank you both.

We welcome **Geoff Errington** from Belper who is adding Assessing duties to those of one of our Inspectors. Also **Joe Park**, a member of the Tally Ho Club, who is now Inspector for Cuddington, Davenham etc in Cheshire. A belated welcome to **Margaret Matuszewski** and her cheerful smile working on the so vital and never ending task of filing. Margaret works in a team with **Jean Arnett** –slowly recovering from a knee operation and we wish Jean well.

Finally its time to talk AGM!. A detailed notice refers on page 5 but kindly note in particular it will be on April 29th at the Britannia Hotel, Offerton Stockport and I very much hope to meet you there at what will be our main business and social gathering of the year.

David Bratt

Wednesday Walk 28th December 2005
Ladybrook Valley Interest Trail, Leader Jeff Lewis.
 4 people out on a pleasant, frosty day. The party encountered a blocked bridge in Poynton. Photo on page 7. Reported to Cheshire CC.

More Success with Serving Notices

In the last edition of *Signpost* it was reported that the Society had achieved significant success with its first batch of six Section 63 Orders. The second batch of six were served in December 2005 bringing the totals by Highway Authority to

Stockport MBC	4
Derbyshire CC	3
Blackburn with Darwen	2
Doncaster MBC	2
Rochdale MBC	1

With the exception of the last two orders served on Stockport MBC all of the rest have seen the obstructions removed within the first statutory 30 day period. This level of activity and success, particularly with these Highway Authorities, is just unheard of. The two orders still outstanding with Stockport MBC have been caused by difficulties with landowners, in one case simply finding out who the landowner was. To their credit the Legal Department at Stockport MBC have proven to be resolute and determined to enforce notices; a lesson that the Rights of Way Unit at Stockport MBC might learn.



Typical examples of the barbed wire across a stile or vegetation obstructing a line that have resulted in orders being served.

These orders are proving to be a very effective measure to use in the right circumstances and there is no doubt that Highway Authorities do not like to receive them. We will continue with a regular stream of these orders during 2006.

Roy Spoors

New Website and New Membership Category

Work has started on developing a completely new website for the Society and it is hoped to have it running live by the middle of 2006. The current website has served its purpose and certainly has got the Society a presence on the web. Now is an excellent time to continue to revise and update the external perception of our Society. Why? Well the total membership is now established at over 1,000 and the recently released leaflet has set new standards that are well worth living up to.

The new website will have a completely new look and feel, building on the style and content of the leaflet but also providing some new initiatives. These include simpler navigation, ease of use for visually impaired visitors, automatic emails, electronic form filling, bulletin board and eventually electronic walking guides that can be downloaded.

As part of the preparatory work for the new website some statistics were obtained for the current number of visitors to our site. These statistics are notoriously unreliable but even the most conservative assessment shows that in the last twelve months we have had over ten thousand, yes ten thousand, visits!!

This is not only very encouraging but clearly represents a previously untapped potential for all sorts of

interactions. One initiative that will be given prominence on the new site is a completely new approach to attracting a wider base of support. There will be no changes to the existing membership structure and arrangements for anybody who lives within our geographic area. However, for people living anywhere else there will be an invitation to become a 'Friend of the PNFS'.

This is not new and has been used by many organisations to increase their support base. So we will invite anyone who becomes a 'Friend' to make a donation to a value of their choosing and in return they can stay in touch with their roots, or interests. This is a really exciting opportunity and if it means that we can broaden our base of support and significantly increase the numbers of members and friends then it will be well worth the time and effort.

Roy Spooers.

'Preserving our Footpath Heritage'

An illustrated presentation telling the story of our Society from the struggles of its earliest days to the problems of the present. The slides have been completely re-mastered into digital form and presented using digital projection.

Clubs and Societies wishing to book the presentation should contact Peter Rhodes on 0161 439 6448

The Peak and Northern Footpaths Society ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**will be held on
Saturday 29th April 2006
at the**

**BRITANNIA HOTEL
Dialstone Lane Offerton Stockport**

10:30am Coffee for 11:00am start

**A HOT BUFFET LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED FREE TO MEMBERS
Please book with**

**Eric Kime 35 Buxton Lane Marple Stockport SK6 7QL
0161 427 1082
asap but no later than 22nd April
For directions to the hotel please see the back page**

Books received

BROADBOTTOM WALKS is the title of a new soft back book by Joan Abrams and Jean O'Brien, published by Broadbottom Community Assn, at £3. Members who attended the dedication of the Leslie Meadowcroft bridge will know what an interesting area this is. The book describes 10 moderate walks, well illustrated with photos and drawings by local artists. Recommended.

RIGHT TO ROAM A Celebration of the Sheffield Campaign for Access to Moorland, by Sissons and Smith, published by SCAM, 334 Manchester Rd, Sheffield S10 5DQ, £6.99

On this side of the Pennines the epic of the 1932 Mass Trespass to Kinder Scout and the imprisonment of the 6 leaders is well known but this book goes a long way to enlightening us about the crusade that was carried out from Sheffield fifty years later. Dissatisfied with the lack of progress in opening up the 10 moors to the north and west of Sheffield - Snailsden, Thurlstane, Bradfield, Strines et al, closed to walkers since the Enclosure Acts, a group of determined left-wingers reactivated the Mass Trespass movement and persisted with it until the 2000 CRoW Act was their reward. Now these moors are open to us all, we should not forget the dedication of these pioneers (some of whom are PNFS members today). This well-produced and illustrated book on glossy paper is a bargain, part detailed account of the rise of the movement by those who were there and a section of 8 walks with maps of routes over these now legally-available areas.



Martin Riley, David Bratt and June Mabon lead the trek through rubbish-strewn Castleshaw Farmyard.

Photo reproduced by kind permission of the Oldham Evening Chronicle



Saddleworth 55. The path continues through the farmyard!



The bridge over a stream on the Ladybrook Valley Heritage Trail at Poynton which the Society has been promised will be cleared. Watch this space!



Replacement sign 154 at Keeper's Cottage in Lyme Park

February 22nd Walk report

The walk led by **Martin Riley**, our Inspector for Oldham, was the outcome of a series of problems with Saddleworth 55. The route led through the yard of Castleshaw Farm, Dirty Lane, Delph and was calculated to make a point. **Martin, Eileen Leonard** and others had reported opposition from the somewhat eccentric owner who had strewn the path with miscellaneous, dangerous junk ranging from cars and corrugated iron to timber and domestic appliances. The owner had remonstrated with walkers on several occasions and once was reported to have appeared with a gun. It was decided it was time to assert our rights on behalf of all walkers. We slipped and slithered our way over the snow-covered rubbish and out through the wired-up rear entrance. The owner chose not to make an appearance, but we had made our point and we expect the local authority to be following through after the press publicity.

Thanks to the efforts of our Publicity Officer **June Mabon**, this assertion of our legal rights received good coverage from the local press. We made the front page of the Oldham Chronicle and, next day, an editorial comment. We were also reported in the Oldham Advertiser.

Martin writes:-

This was my first time leading a walk and I think it was a record turnout. The focus was on the problems on footpath Saddleworth 55. Thirteen walkers set off from Greenfield Station, to be joined later by **June Mabon** at Castleshaw. We walked up the steep slope of Wharmton Hill in sleet and a strong, cold wind. Across Saddleworth golf course, where I became a little disorientated but thankfully managed to recover. Onwards to Wall Hill, Thurston Clough Road and the landfill site that was High Moor Quarry. A welcome stop for a brew beyond High Moor then through the soon to-be-diverted Saddleworth 148 at Knott Hill Farm, then down into Delph village and along a short stretch of the River Tame. Following Hull Brook out of Delph we approached Lower Castleshaw Reservoir and then on to Higher Castleshaw Farm through which Saddleworth 55 passes. Photographers from the local papers were waiting for us. We managed to walk the line of the path through the farm yard even though it was obstructed by all kinds of debris and two lines of stock wire fencing. Leaving the farm (without meeting the owner) we had a very cold lunch in Harrop Edge Lane, then over Harrop Edge and down to Harropdale Farm where unsuccessful attempts to divert Saddleworth 73 were made last year. Through Diggle village and along the brook to Heyes Farm where an attempt was made to divert Saddleworth 75. The last couple of miles back to Greenfield was along the Pennine Bridleway (the old railway line) through Uppermill. 11 miles.

THE PATH FROM TOWN END TO BOLTON-LE-SANDS VILLAGE (NEAR LANCASTER), VIA THE TOW PATH

In January 2006 *Signpost* I described how an Order had been made to put this Path on to the Definitive Map; but Lancashire County Council had undergone two changes of mind (opposition; then neutrality); so I was to present the case for confirmation at the inquiry on 21 & 22 February.

During 14 years' membership of this Society I have never fought a battle which I felt was more worth while. The supporters' team work; the warmth of their comradeship, the value to local residents of this short cut (in sociability during use and liberation from cars); the neglect of LCC's 'Environmental Director' to investigate (let alone care about) these environmental qualities and the perversity of the couple who bought a cottage with a Path they loathed and then polluted their next 25 years by grumbling about it – all made the preparation and inquiry advocacy

challenging and exciting.

If you are lucky enough to be involved in such a path, don't assume that all you need are witnesses who have used it for 20 years. The rules are extremely complex and riddled with High Court interpretations. Your witnesses must have used the path openly, without (i) interruption, (ii) permission of the landowner or (iii) denial of his intention to dedicate.

Because the public right to use this Path had been 'brought into question' in 1968, user witnesses for 1948 -68 were essential. Our wonderful team included two ladies who enlisted a dozen such witnesses; some of whom went to school along the Path in the 1920s. Some were over 90.

Space (but not my enthusiasm) is now exhausted. I'll describe the inquiry, and perhaps the result, in the next *Signpost*.

Adrian Littleton

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DINING OUT

Some suggestions from Frank Wetton

Two cafes, mainly for walkers, have recently opened in our area. **Higher Greasley Farm** (GR94266631, Tel:01260 227 291) on the side of Winchle Minn with views over Dane Valley and the Roaches. Open Sats & Suns in summer. Drinks, home-made cakes etc. and **Common Barn Farm, Rainow** (GR96887603. Tel 01625 574 878). Open every day except Mondays, hope to be all-year, but check. Drinks and all-day breakfasts. There is also a **Mobile Tea Van** at Trentabank, Macclesfield Forest, which is worth bearing in mind. It has a mobile phone but number not known.

SP 190: Our member **BILL McGUINNESS** tells the story behind one recent memorial signpost -

Lives Remembered

When we were young the high moors above Hollingworth, the Brushes Valley and Carrbrook were our playground. Wild Bank, Harridge Pike and Buckton Castle were our favourite places because from there we could look out over the valley of the River Tame, most of the Cheshire plain and much of Lancashire, to the mountains of Wales in the far distance. What magnificent sunsets we saw and what raging fires we saw as buildings in Manchester burned and burned during the blitz. Lying in the heather late on an August evening, with no school the following day, watching the full moon rising over Wimberry Moss and Hoarstone Edge was sheer magic - a magic that entered the soul - never to leave.

When my parents died in the late 1970s and my brother, unfortunately, followed them in November 1991 I wanted our names to be remembered, together, in the place which had meant so much to us throughout our young lives. The wish remained with me all through the 1990s and it wasn't until 2004 when **Fred Ogden, Bill Johnson and Keith Wykes** of the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society came up with the idea that a plaque, bearing our names, could be attached to a new public footpath sign which was to be erected between Arnfield and Carrbrook. This was a perfect solution to the problem since our first moorland walk, as boys, in the early 1940s, had been from Carrbrook to Arnfield with our relative and neighbour, Uncle John Rhodes, who was at that time Head Gamekeeper for the Earl of Stamford and Warrington.

Having been forced to face up to ramblers taking part in the Mass Trespass on Kinder in 1932, dear Uncle John, who seemed to know the site of every ground nesting bird between Chew Valley and Edale, was, in his declining years, given to firing at the elderberry flowers, growing along the lane side, and, as he did so shouting, "bloody ramblers" - BANG! Eventually his friends had to "disarm" him.

After signpost 190 had been erected I visited the site on Higher Bank overlooking Ogden Brook (my Dad's favourite spot) and there on the edge of Boar Flats, with nothing to hear but the wind in the heather and the distant bleating of sheep, the calls of the curlews and the grouse and the distinctive song of an ascending lark, I knew that it was exactly the right place for a memorial to three people who had been so much part of my young life.

As we get older there is a time in your life when you feel that these things *need* to be done but when they *are* done it gives a strange sense of peace to know that the names of your loved ones are, once again, closely associated with the place they knew and loved.

In those sometimes harsh, far off days, we had grouse for supper (in the season) flavoured with our Mam's own recipe for wild strawberry jelly, and I have tried to record this on the memorial plaque.

It's said that we live on the lives and memories of others and I think I believe this to be true. *What do you think?*

This message is engraved on the bronze plaque below the sign.

**In memory of
Ted and Ellen McGuinness
and their sons
Michael and William**

**We had Grouse for
Supper and Wild
Strawberries**

WALKS PROGRAMME APRIL-JUNE 2006

Note: From April 1st people who have a GMPTe 'bus pass' travel free after 9:30am on buses, trains and trams within the Greater Manchester area.

Kindly check rail/bus times are valid near to date of walk.

WED APR 26 WHALEY BRIDGE

Leader **Ted Wolfe**

Stockport Railway Station 09.48, Stockport Bus Station 9.05 or 9.35
Walk of 10 miles, hilly, terrain starts from Whaley Bridge Stn at 10.25.
Bring lunch. Any queries please call 01625 267964

WED MAY 31 HADFIELD TO GREENFIELD

Leader **Vince Joyce**

Man Piccadilly 10.18 Walk of 10 miles starts from Hadfield Station at 10.50 and ends at Greenfield Station. Leader advises purchase Wayfarer or use GMPTe 'bus pass'. Bring lunch. Any queries please call 01942 603626

WED JUN 28 NORTHWICH AND WEAVER VALLEY

Leader **Neil Collie**

Man Picc 10.24 Walk starts at 11.20 from Northwich Station.
Walk is 10 miles and is through woodland and Weaver Valley.
Bring lunch. Any queries please call 0161 440 9424.

Directions to Britannia Hotel

From M60 (anticlockwise) Exit junction 27 (the one after junction 1!) then....

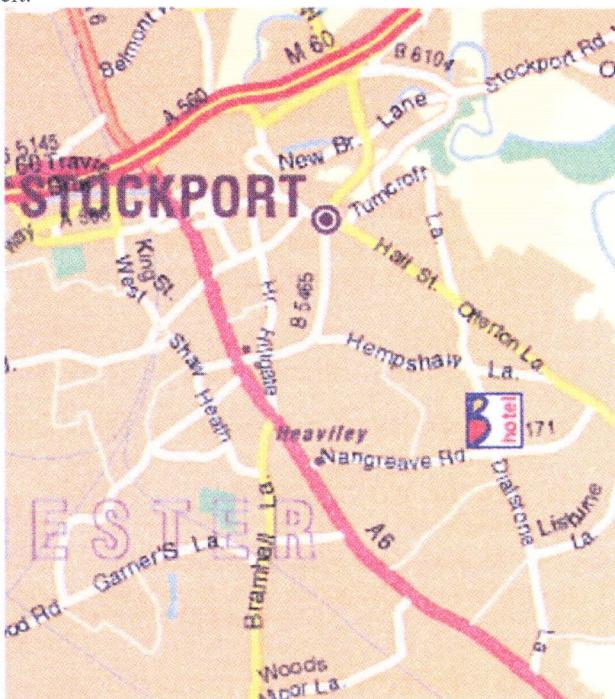
From M60 (clockwise) Exit junction 26 then....

Go down to large roundabout and take the A626 signposted Marple and go up St Mary's Way. At second set of lights filter left into Hall Street (still A626 Marple). At next set of lights, with garage on your right, bear right into Banks Lane. At next set of lights go straight ahead and the hotel is on the left.

From A6 South Pass through Hazel Grove and look for lights and sign for the left turn into Stepping Hill Hospital (A&E). At this crossroads **turn right here** into Dialstone Lane. The hotel is approximately one and a half miles on the right just past the first set of lights.

From A6 North

Go through the town centre and past the Town Hall. After passing St George's Church on right turn left into Nangreave Road at the Bamford Arms lights. At the first set of lights on Nangreave Road turn left into Dialstone Lane and the hotel is on your right.



From Stockport Station

No: 383 bus from Stockport or Marple stops outside the Britannia.

The Peak and Northern Footpath Society

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