

SIGNPOST

Newsletter of the Peak and Northern
Footpaths Society



Number 45

Winter 2014

Chairman's piece

Does the name Thomas Boulger mean anything to anyone? We would very much like to contact any of his relatives.

Thomas Boulger joined PNFS in 1921 as a Footpath Inspector and after one year became the Society's Secretary holding the position for 25 years. In 1946 he became Vice Chairman and later Chairman until the time of his death in 1963. He served 42 years as an Officer of PNFS. An amazing achievement.

In 1963 a stone memorial was erected at Carr Meadow, near Little Hayfield in recognition of Thomas's magnificent contribution, but over the years the harsh Pennine weather took its toll.

A couple of months ago our signpost officer David Morton, noticed that the memorial was starting to crumble and fall apart. Your Trustees unanimously agreed that the memorial should be renovated and Nick Outteridge our Hayfield Footpath Inspector agreed to organise this major task. See Nick's report opposite.

We do not forget our past volunteers who made such enormous contribution to the success of PNFS and we would very much like to establish contact with any relatives of Thomas Boulger who may not even know of the memorial.

If you do have any information please email us at :- editor.pnfs@gmail.com.

80 PNFS members attended our Half Year Meeting at the Britannia Hotel Stockport on November 23rd. This excellent turnout heard presentations on our plans for 2014, Society finances, volunteering for the future, Silverdale 14 and SK91 the Benfield path. The overall view was that we are having some excellent footpath results and that we are in a good position to move forward. It was felt that our investment in new IT equipment will prove a sound investment in this respect.

John Broadbent

Dates for your diary.

Saturday 12 April 2014 is the date for next year's AGM. Venue as above.

Saturday 15 November 2014 is the date for next year's HYM Venue as above

Cover Picture: The recently renovated memorial to Thomas Boulger

Thomas Bulger memorial

As Inspector for Hayfield Parish I was asked in July to investigate the condition of the Thomas Boulger Memorial. On examination it was clear that the inscription on the horizontally mounted stone was severely weathered. Further the entire structure had become unviable due to water ingress. Repair was not feasible and I recommended the rebuilding of the entire structure.

The inscription stone was duly taken to a monumental mason in Pendlebury, where it was polished on its other side and the words replicated in deep cut lettering.

Carr Meadow is on a very dangerous bend on the Glossop to Hayfield road with no available parking and the monument itself accessible only via a rutted track through a gate at the apex of the bend. Thankfully we were able to borrow a 4x4 vehicle and on August the 14th John Hodgson and I demolished the old memorial. On the 20th of August we returned and installed a reinforced concrete foundation.

By the end of October the inscription stone was ready and Robert Taylor, with me assisting rebuilt the monument over two days. Our aim with the new design was longevity. The new monument sets the memorial stone on a vertical plane, with a lintel above its top edge. The whole structure was then coated twice with a silicone based stone weatherproofing compound to ensure it will stand the test of time.

Nick Outridge

More dates for your diary.

Thanks to David Hurrell and Gavin Miller we are contributing two walks to the
Peak District Walking Festival.
www.visitpeakdistrict.com/events/PDWalkingFestival.aspx

Wednesday 30 April (combined with the April PNFS longer walk)

'Caves and Tors'

Leader David Hurrell (0114 288 6474)

Circular walk starts at 11.30 from Edale rail station

It is 10 miles with 2000ft ascent

Please bring lunch.

Friday 02 May

'A day in the Dales'

Leader Gavin Miller (01565 634 510)

Circular walk starts at 11.15 from Hartington village bus stop.

It is 10 miles with 1650 ft ascent

Please bring lunch (possible pub option)

Volunteering for the future

Do YOU know of people with talent and skills, perhaps willing to swell the number of hard-working volunteers in the cause of PNFS? We are looking for enthusiasts, willing to talk to John about possibilities. There are many and varied interesting ways, in which active volunteers might help PNFS achieve its important goals.

The area where YOU or others may live should not present a barrier. New and improved PNFS systems and processes shall mean anyone, anywhere with a broadband connection and access to a PC may potentially contribute.

YOU might help monitor the work of PNFS and its volunteers, by acting as a news-gatherer. This would support the publishing of Signpost magazine, circulation of Newsletters and feed the "News" section of the web site.

Are YOU interested in YOUR own community and organisations? Could YOU become an invaluable PNFS link with YOUR local newspaper? Are YOU aware of local environmental issues and community events? There is the potential to involve PNFS with what goes on everywhere. There are in excess of 90 local titles printing more than 2 million copies each week, across the area we cover.

YOU might help too, to develop active links with university faculties and student groups. Schools and youth groups could also want to explore opportunities for cooperation. Please think about a university or school near YOU.

Do YOU possess effective presentation and perhaps sales skills? The PNFS programme of illustrated lectures and presentations at shows and exhibitions needs to be expanded, to provide greater coverage across the whole area of operations.

Do YOU have a fascination for, and an impressive understanding of modern technology and systems? Volunteers using our office and training equipment require the day-to-day hands-on support and guidance from a capable enthusiast. In terms of modern systems too, could YOU perhaps help PNFS develop and shape an approach to effective use of Facebook and Twitter?

Would YOU be capable of organising PNFS meetings and internal training programmes? We want to improve PNFS live events for members and the important training for active volunteers.

Please do think about all of these things. Possibly too, YOU might have other and better ideas? Remember, ... please talk to John. YOUR footpaths society needs YOU!

Peter Nicholson

Proposed footpath diversion

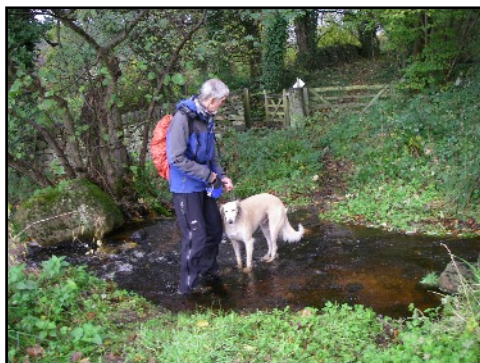
Inspector and dog get wet feet - all part of the job

Councils in our area are legally obliged to consult the Society when they make diversion orders; most are sufficiently sensible to consult us before they make orders, so that they have a chance to change the proposals if we respond that we will object to an order if it is made.

In August this year the Society was consulted by Derbyshire County Council about a proposed diversion of two paths which are close together in Gridleford and Froggatt parishes. The diversion order would be made under the provisions of section 119 Highways Act 1980. The diversions were considered by the council to be in the interests of the landowner, one of the requirements of the legislation, since they would "take the paths from the immediate vicinity of the house".

We are fortunate to have Inspectors for both parishes, and both were able to look at the proposals on site. The verdict was unanimous. The diversions would indeed be in the interests of the landowner.

However, other legal requirements are that the new routes must not be substantially less convenient for the public, and regard must be had to the effect on public enjoyment. In this case, one of the paths would be diverted through a stream, which the council said would be crossed on existing stepping stones. This crossing is shown in the photograph above - no apparent stepping stones, slippery stream bottom and wet feet, hardly convenient or enjoyable.



We therefore objected to the proposals. Fortunately the council has listened, and the landowner is now to be asked to provide a footbridge across the stream. But why consult on such a sub-standard scheme in the first place?

The council has a legal duty to protect the rights of the public using highways, which include public footpaths, and should not rely on volunteer groups such as our Society to safeguard the public interest.

Rhoda Barnett

This version of this article omits from the version as originally published material which does not affect the point made by the article but which occasioned a complaint to the Society

Silverdale Update

Good news.

As reported in the previous edition of Signpost, the Society's appeal to the Secretary of State against Lancashire Council's refusal to make a Definitive Map Modification Order to recognise the section of this path behind the sea wall was granted. The Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State found that 'There is a body of evidence which supports the view that the route is a long established public right of way on foot and is sufficient for a footpath to be alleged to subsist'. On the 30th September the matter came before the Council's Regulatory Committee. The officers recommended that 'the direction from the Secretary of State be followed and that the order should be promoted to confirmation'. This is important because it is normal practice for the Council to remain neutral in these circumstances i.e. where a refusal to make an order is overturned by the Secretary of State, so the applicant, the Society, would be responsible for presenting the case at a public inquiry should the order be opposed.

Since the original decision to refuse to make the order there had been a change in political control so there was a new chairman and only one of the members of the original committee was in attendance. The new chairman explained that she had visited the site and in view of the officer's report it was unclear why the previous committee did not follow the recommendation to make the order requested by the Society. Councillor DeMolfetta, the councillor who was on the original committee, explained that they had followed the best advice and did not have the benefit of the inspector's report. This is at the least disingenuous as the officer's report had recommended that the order be made and the inspector's report was not in existence at the time of the original decision, since the appeal had not taken place! However he did have the good grace to join with his fellow councillors in making a unanimous decision to make the order and support it to confirmation.

This is excellent news for the Society as it means we shall not have to face the considerable costs of employing lawyers to present the evidence should, as is almost certainly to be the case, the order is opposed by the owners of the properties next to the path. The next stage is for Lancashire Council to advertise the order. If it is opposed the matter is referred to the Planning Inspectorate to conduct a public inquiry. The Society will assist the Council in any way we can. Unfortunately there is no time limit for the Council to act, so it will be some time before this case is resolved and members of the walking public can again enjoy this wonderful path overlooking Morecambe Bay and will not have to struggle along the rocky foreshore below the sea wall.

Terry Norris

Bridge report

The successful completion of two bridges in Bolton was reported by our Chairman in the Summer issue of the Newsletter. The project eliminates a particularly boggy stretch of footpath on Turton Bradshaw 009 and opens up access towards the West Pennine Moors from Jumbles Reservoir Country Park.

There are now two more successful projects to report.

Firstly, a new footbridge has been installed over Gigg Brook on the footpath known as the Far Benfield path or Bredbury & Romiley Footpath 91. This path is in Stockport, north of Etherow Country Park, and has been impassible for many years. There was a very steep bank leading down to the stream, very deep mud and no footbridge across Gigg Brook. For the last two years we have been working with Stockport MBC and the landowners to agree the extent of work necessary to bring the footpath back into use. The Trustees of the Society agreed to pay for the cost of the footbridge which is £7,130. This donation includes the funds collected in memory of Adrian Littleton. A set of steps up the steep slope, a boardwalk, extensive vegetation clearance and minor bridge works are being financed by Stockport Council with a contribution from the Manchester & High Peak Ramblers. The work is now complete and the path can be walked for the first time for many years. See John Harker's article on the next page for more about this historic path.



Secondly, we have been instrumental in the dedication of a new footpath in Doncaster, the 589th! This new right of way links Leger Way to one of the town's most loved parks – Sandall Beat Woods.

John is seen here handing over the society's cheque, for £1720, to Councillor Christine Mills. Our contribution covered the the cost of the

materials for a new fully accessible bridge across a drainage channel on the edge of the woods.

In return, Doncaster Council has dedicated the footpath as a new public right of way, ensuring access is available for ever.

Handover events for both these bridges are being organised.

Better Late Than Never

The Society's Annual Report for 1929 reported on the success of a private prosecution brought by the Society against the person responsible for obstructing the public footpath commonly known as The "Benfield Path". The legal bill for the Society was £50 14s 6d.

The prosecution did not prevent successful negotiations taking place between the Society and the convicted landowner concerning the marking out of the path with stakes and a Society signpost and agreement on a Society-funded bridge across the Gigg Brook. However, the 1930 Annual Report reported, with regret, the failure of the project due to the landowner on the Benfield side of the brook not consenting to a bridge.

Now, 83 years on, the Society can report to its members and the wider walking public that renewed negotiations with the present day landowners has led to not only a Society-funded bridge across Gigg Brook to be dedicated to the memory of the late Adrian Littleton, but further work on the approaches to the bridge on either side. This additional work has been paid for in part by additional funds released by the Society and a donation by the Manchester & High Peak Area of the Ramblers' Association. Stockport MBC have found the money for the rest of the work out of a tight and diminishing public rights of way budget. In total, for a Society outlay of over £7,000 we have attracted match funding from elsewhere to cover a bill for the work in excess of £20,000. Particular thanks should go to Neil Collie, the Society Bridges Volunteer and Ernest Nama of SMBC Public Rights of Way for keeping the project moving forward despite a difficult location to deal with. Our gratitude also goes to Mr. Bennett and Mr. Suppan, the two landowners involved, for their consents.

The accompanying photos will give the reader an impression of the works carried out to make accessible what was, until a few months ago, a completely unwalkable footpath. Some minor works remain to be done. Waymarking the route, especially on the eastern side is needed to minimise inadvertent trespass off the definitive line. A minor legal diversion is pending to make the definitive line match the walkable line. However, we can congratulate ourselves that the 'unfinished business' of 1929 is nearly finished. A 'hand over' ceremony will happen in the New Year and a more private ceremony in the presence of Adrian's family will take place in the spring. I am leading a Society Short Walk taking in this footpath on April 9th 2014. Watch the website or newsletter for details.

John Harker



Top: John Broadbent surveys Gigg Brook before the bridge was installed

Above: John Broadbent & John Harker on the newly installed bridge

Left: The much improved access via steps.

Signpost report

Seven more new signposts are destined for outlying areas. Check the website Home page and Signposts Gallery for future news:

446 was installed on the 5th September at **Huncoat, Accrington**, financed by new member Roy Chetham on behalf of Huncoat Community Forum. Roy has subsequently become our inspector for Hyndburn.



Signpost 446 and plaque detail

Meanwhile I've done some maintenance on older signs as follows :

283 overlooking **Calf Hey Reservoir** at Haslingden Grane was reposted and repainted.

156 near **Clough House**, Wildboardclough was very badly weathered and now has a new, modern style plate and memorial plaque honouring Mildred Robertson.

143 on the boundary between **Macclesfield Forest** and the high, open moorland en route to Shutlingsloe, has been shotblasted, repainted (six coats), reposted and moved a few yards to make it more visible, with help from the Peak National Park Ranger.

I also uncovered the chequered and itinerant career of signpost **102**, but that will have to wait.

Dave Morton

WALKS PROGRAMME

Please wear appropriate outdoor clothing and bring lunch. If you are travelling on public transport, please check rail/bus times before setting out. **You are responsible for your own safety during the walk.** PNFS walk leaders reserve the right to exclude anybody from the walk.

SHORT WALKS

Wednesday, 8th January

Leader: Bill Buckley (01457 855639)
Disley/Lyme Park/Bowstones circular - approx 6miles
Train from Piccadilly 10.52.
Start Disley Station 11.20.
Good paths, modest hills

Wednesday 12 February

Leader: John Broadbent (0161 449 7251)
Marple/Werneth Low circular via New Benfield Footbridge.
Train from Piccadilly 10.14
Start Marple station 10.40.
Modest ascents, 6 miles Fantastic views.

Wednesday 12 March

Leader: Colin Williams (0161 748 2147)
Newhey Circular - Approx. 6.5 miles and 1200 ft. ascent
Start Newhey Metrolink Station at 11.00

Wednesday 9 April

Leader: John Harker (01142 397629)
Romiley to Marple 7 miles approx. including Benfield Path
1000 ft ascent approx
Train from Piccadilly 10.45 or Sheffield 10.14
Start Romiley station at 11.15a.m.
Return from Marple

LONGER WALKS

Wednesday 29 January

Leader David Brown (01633 733236)
Peak Forest to Buxton via Millers Dale
11 miles 1200 ft ascent
08.52 Man Picc to Whaley Bridge
09.45 190 bus to Peak Forest church.
Walk starts 10.15.

Wednesday 26 February

Leader Rosemary Fox (0161 9693423)
Edale to Hope linear via Lose Hill
10 miles 1500 ft ascent
08.45 Man Picc to Edale
Walk starts 09.35

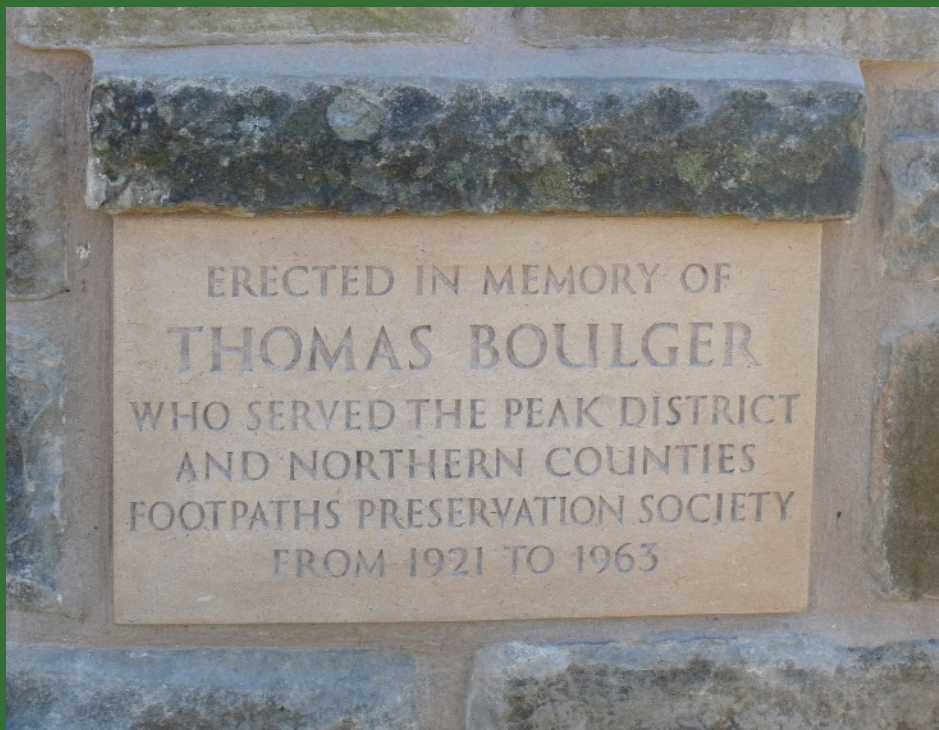
Wednesday 26 March

Leader Alan Talbot(07714 826899)
Marsden circular
10 miles 2000ft ascent
09.27 Man Vic to Marsden or
09.11 Man Picc change Stalybridge for 09.42 to
Marsden
Walk starts 10.05

Wednesday 30 April

See page 2 for details

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The renovated memorial stone

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