

SIGNPOST

Magazine of the
Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

Number 64 - Summer 2020



Silverdale FP14 Brown's Houses

S605 put up by David Morton



Our chairman David Hurrell continues his convalescence in a stroke rehabilitation unit in Sheffield. Unfortunately this has been disrupted by the effect on the NHS of the coronavirus epidemic and he has been moved to a different unit. The address, at time of writing, is Chapel Lodge, 105 Station Road, Sheffield S35 2XF. The current lockdown has meant that he is not able to receive visitors and I am sure, therefore, that he would welcome hearing from his many friends by letter or card in the meantime. We all wish him well for his continuing recovery.

The last issue of Signpost went to press before the effects of the covid-19 pandemic had begun to be fully recognised in Britain. It was not long afterwards that restrictions started to be introduced, firstly on large gatherings, which caused us to postpone our AGM from April to October, and then, as we all know, to full lockdown. This has inevitably led to further significant curtailment of the society's activities. We are unable to hold meetings, and footpath inspections, the erection of signposts and our walks programmes were all suspended. However, any footpath problems brought to our attention are being reported to relevant rights of way authorities and we know that some

authorities are actively dealing with these where they are able to.

As I write, the so-called exit strategy from the lockdown restrictions has barely begun and the 'road map' showing the way forward is far from clear. No doubt we, as a society, will have to adapt to the 'new normal', whatever that turns out to be.

I have personally noted that some people who have previously taken little interest in footpaths have become much more aware of their existence in their local area and have begun to explore and value them in their daily exercise. Perhaps this will lead to a greater public appreciation of our footpath network. Who knows?

The society is poised to resume its normal activities as soon as government guidelines allow and meantime work continues behind the scenes where possible.

I do hope you enjoy reading about some of our recent activities in the following pages and that they don't make you too nostalgic for the days not so long ago when we could roam freely wherever and with whoever we wished!

In the meantime, do keep safe.
Gavin Miller, Vice Chairman and Trustee



Photograph by David Hurrell

Editorial

During the first week of the lockdown late March, I received the following email from Kay Douglas: *I am a member and wanted to congratulate you on the spring edition. The unique character and dedication of the contributors really shone through. In particular, David Morton's final paragraph on page 12 resonated. Your lively review of the Darwen area walk was enhanced by the photographs. How charming was the green sign which ended 'leave no litter'. I have enjoyed a packed lunch seated amongst the ruins of Hollinshead Hall with Eccles Rambling Club. Thank you for providing such uplifting reading in these frustrating times. It seems the glorious countryside is beckoning us and we cannot respond. Thank goodness we have memories and photographs of walks enjoyed.*

Thank you, Kay, and everyone who contributed to this issue.

Happy reading.
Shirley M Addy, BA,
Editor and Footpath Inspector



Speakers

Do you give talks to local groups?

Would you like to tell them about what the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society is about, what it does and its great achievements?

Join the list of PNFS speakers.

The PNFS website has a list of speakers who are happy to give talks about the Society's works.

If you would like to be added to this list, email speakers@pnfs.org.uk.

Any interested group will contact you directly.

Please let Taylor House know of any talks you give on the PNFS via the above email address.

AGM and Walks Programme

Due to the coronavirus epidemic the society postponed its annual general meeting which was due to take place in April 2020. It is rescheduled for Saturday, 17 October 2020.

The walks programme has been suspended until further notice.

For updates see website.

Parish Notes ~ Hope Woodland



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Centred around Ladybower Reservoirs, the parish of Hope Woodlands is one of the largest in the Peak District. Covering an area of approximately fifty square kilometres it has upwards of fifty-three kilometres of footpaths. Accessed via the A57 Snake Pass, the Fairholmes Visitor Centre (SK 17228935) provides a convenient base from which to explore the area. For those wishing to learn more about the construction of the reservoirs, Professor Brian Robinson has published two excellent booklets: “Howden and Derwent: The building of the upper dams of the Derwent Valley Water Board” and “Memories of Tin Town: The navy village of Birchinlee and its people.”

The term ‘woodlands’ is a slight misnomer. A very small proportion of the area is now covered with tree plantations, the parish name hinting at its long ago flora. The vast swathes of moorland are grazed by sheep.

The eastern boundary of the parish runs roughly up the middle of Ladybower and Derwent reservoirs before heading west to gather in parts of the Kinder and

Bleaklow massifs. The valley of the River Alport journeys south eastwards from its source high up at Alport Head on Bleaklow. It eventually joins the River Ashop at Alport Bridge (SK 14228957).

This region is remote and covered with the mosaic of land-use familiar to driven grouse moors. Shooting butts pepper the area. One of the most spectacular landscape features of the Peak District is to be found in this parish. Alport Castles (SK 14269147) is a magnificent rocky fortress. At over 700 metres, it is believed to be the longest landslip in the UK. Towers of gritstone are strewn along the eastern flank of the Alport Valley. The most impressive, named ‘The Tower’, is said to resemble a Motte and Bailey Castle if viewed from certain angles.



This is the haunt of Ravens, (*Corvus corax*) and Peregrine Falcons, (*Falco peregrinus*). The latter have struggled to survive partly due to persecution and the illegal activities of egg collectors. Protected now, the number of breeding pairs in the UK is estimated to be only about 1,500. Volunteers from the RSPB carefully monitor and guard this particular spot. Peregrine falcons are known to be faithful to nesting sites over many years.

It was a crisp February morning when we set out on our walk. A bridleway starts just beyond the War Memorial on the road into Fairholmes. It commemorates those from neighbouring parishes who lost their lives in the Great War. Frost glistened on the path up through Ridges Coppice (SK 18058848). Looking back, the reservoir was bathed in mist, whilst the opposite hillside basked in early morning sunshine.



The original intention had been to go up through the woods, join the path heading due south east over Bridge-end Pasture and down over Crook Hill.



However, having climbed up through the heavily shaded and chilly woods we were greeted by glorious sunshine and decided to walk out to Alport Castles before heading back.

Following the track upwards we emerged onto the evocatively named 'Open Hagg'. Heading north west, with woodland now on our right, there is an expanse of open countryside ahead. This delightful path squeezes down through

Woodcock Coppice then leads out to the Castles. Splendid panoramic views of the



surrounding moors, north to Ronksley Moor, west to the High Peak, south towards Hope and east to Howden moor reinforces the sense of isolation. We sat awhile over looking the towers soaking up the views and the sunshine. A little further along at Birchlin Hat you will find PNFS signpost 516, surely the Society's most lowly one! North-east from here is Ditch Clough taking you back down through Ditch Clough Plantation to Howden reservoir. Retracing our steps to Open Hagg we then followed the path over Bridge-end Pasture. Here we were rewarded with excellent views of the iconic Ladybower Bridge as we



headed down through Crookhill Farm. This parish provides a wide variety of walking opportunities with stunning views wherever you choose to wander.
Pauline Williams, Member

This article is part of a series of Parish Notes which will be published both on the website and in future editions of the magazine. Readers who would like to contribute are encouraged to contact Mel Bale at webmaster@pnfs.org.uk.



S605 for Silverdale FP14

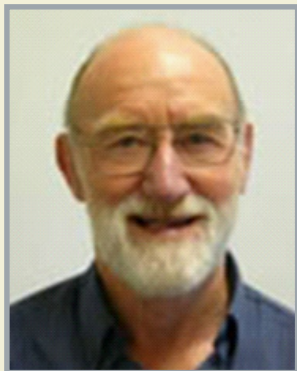
On 25 February 2020 a group of ramblers turned up as I was fixing the plate for S605 at the top of a very high signpost provided by Lancashire County Council. Members will have read in previous issues of Signpost about the twenty-year campaign by Terry Norris and PNFS to have the path through Brown's Houses recognised as a public right of way. Our new signpost marks the footpath going through Brown's Houses so walkers can no longer be forced to walk on the foreshore.

It was a good job that I took some stepladders with me, but I wish that I had taken longer ones. At least it will be hard for anyone to tamper with the plate, as it is out of reach. I told the rambling group that Fred Ogden, to whom this signpost is dedicated, was my illustrious predecessor. Among the group were the Carr twins Brenda and Margaret, who are members of Eccles Rambling and Social Club and sponsors of S418 and S419 at Langden Brook in Bowland. The group also included Mr and Mrs John Grimsey. They were all staying at Parkside Guesthouse at Arnside. Passing walkers were delighted to be told that they have an absolute right to walk safely on through the gate regardless of the "PRIVATE" signs on it, rather than risk a broken leg, wrist or twisted ankle on the broken concrete of the foreshore route.

The weather forecast was terrible with strong westerlies all day, hail showers and thunder and lightning at lunchtime. None of them materialised, although the fields on both sides of the road from Carnforth to Leighton Moss RSPB were flooded, with big puddles covering half the road in places. A passing Rambler, who was an ex-farmer from near Tan Hill Inn, told me that the whole area had been pumped dry and sown with crops during the Second World War, using the nearby Paint Mine pump. The pump-house has a prominent stone chimney and the Paint Mine was a source of red lead, etc used for marking sheep. It turned into a very pleasant day in spite of the 150 mile round trip. S605 has pipped our signs at Lowgill near High Bentham to become our most northerly signpost. If yesterday is anything to go by, it will be seen by a lot of walkers.

A fortnight later I received an email from a resident who is also a parish councillor in Silverdale: "I would like to thank very much your organisation for this new sign, erected following the long period of dispute at this location, resolved finally at enquiry last year. Positive comments from grateful residents are now being heard about how much more accessible and enjoyable the route along the foreshore has become. I'm sure many of the visitors to our popular AONB will also be appreciative. I will personally monitor the situation at this location (mile and a half from my home) and advise of any issues that arise concerning either use of the right of way or the sign. A personal donation to the society in appreciation of your actions here will follow this email. Thanks again, JB." *David Morton, Signpost Officer*

Reg Boot - An Appreciation



We record with sadness the passing of Reg Boot on 24 March 2020. Reg, being born with the surname Boot, was surely predestined to make his mark walking the hills and dales on his beloved footpaths and to do all he could to strive for their protection. He found PNFS very much to his liking. And in this regard the Society fully reciprocated.

Reg was a godsend to any chairman, ie a willing and competent volunteer! So when Ernie Sutton retired as Membership Secretary in 2006 Reg with no fuss or need for any gentle coercion stepped up and took on a key job in the Society, not just recording the numbers but working proactively to chase up any wavering members.

He was also an enthusiastic member of the Management team and would enliven proceedings at the monthly meetings. Reg had a solution, ie his solution, to any problem irrespective of in whose bailiwick it fell. He would bark out a terse no-nonsense solution and if it meant he had to carry out its execution so be it.

Reg retired as Membership Secretary in 2011. He turned his attention to being Footpath Inspector for Cheadle and Gatley and represented the Society on the Stockport Local Access Forum, attendance at such being a true test of devotion to the cause.

Latterly he stepped into the breach to work with the Assessors whose numbers had declined. He saw the need to update the working procedures documentation and did just that. His colleagues note that despite encroaching ill health Reg was ever reliable, cheerful, willing and fastidious.

He was a member of the Rucksack Club and an early completer of the daunting Tan Hill pub to Cat and Fiddle pub long distance hill walk (between the first and second highest pubs in the UK).

Our sympathies have already been extended to the family, but are herewith repeated. The wake has had to be deferred but come that day Reg will be saluted by the Society.

Reg for sure left a most valued Boot size mark on our Society. RIP.
David Bratt, John Grimsey and Brian Hamilton

Megaloughton Lane, Derby, Railway Crossing

*New Megaloughton Lane
Railway Crossing*



In Signpost No 56, February 2018, I described the successful objection by PNFS to an extinguishment order made by Derby City Council. This order was made following an application by Network Rail to close the section of Megaloughton Lane, a public footpath, where it crossed the Derby to London railway line. Of course PNFS is as concerned for public safety as Network Rail, but this order was made so that the speed of trains could be increased to shorten journey times by six seconds.

Since the extinguishment was not allowed, Network Rail has been looking at other ways to achieve its aims, and it was agreed by the City Council that the best way to do this was to create a new crossing about twenty metres away from the existing crossing.

At long last, this crossing is now open. Use of the crossing is controlled by lights, as in the photograph. There is a phone provided for those people who do not have a mobile. At the moment the crossing is used by the public on a permitted basis, since an order to divert the path on to the crossing has not yet been made. This case shows how long such matters take to resolve, but that perseverance brings results.



Notice by the new crossing

Rhoda Barnett, Courts and Inquiries Officer (Derbyshire)

They Don't Build Them Like This Any More

*2016 Harrop Brook Bridge,
Rainow FP28 - Pott ShrigleyFP4)*



I came across this footbridge near Bollington some years ago when I was the Bridges Assessor for the Society. It is in a lovely setting on the Gritstone Trail and adds beauty to the surroundings. The bridge is located in the Peak District National Park (at grid reference SJ 948785) and on the Gritstone Trail, a popular long distance trail stretching south from Disley through East Cheshire and Staffordshire to Kidsgrove.

After severe flooding in 2018, the bridge was considered to be unsafe due to movement of some large stones at its base. The bridge was probably built in Victorian times, it looks like a pack-horse bridge and is known locally as the 'Donkey Bridge'. Cheshire East Council closed the footpath and there was talk of replacing the bridge with a cheaper wooden structure. The Council asked local organisations for donations so that they could 'justify' the additional cost of restoration to their finance department. I was contacted by the local Pott Shrigley Inspector, John Goodman, who was as keen as I was to retain this iconic arch bridge. In the event, the PNFS Trustees were very supportive and pledged £1,000 towards the cost. Smaller donations were obtained from East Cheshire Ramblers, Pott Shrigley Parish Council and from Rainow Parish Council.

The repairs took a long time to organise as Harrop Brook is, surprisingly, classified as a 'main river' and the responsibility of the Environment Agency. However the restoration was completed in early 2020 when stones were replaced in the arch and bags filled with fast-set concrete were carefully placed at the side of the stream to protect the bridge from further damage. Whilst the restoration looks stark initially, I fully expect it will mellow over time with the lichen and vegetation covering the bank to blend into the surroundings. (Photo: The repairs are at right hand side of the bridge.) A very satisfactory outcome. Thank you PNFS!

Once these current coronavirus restrictions are lifted and we can socialise again, we hope to organise a 'hand-over event' at the site – another task for our new Bridges Assessor, Nigel Howe.

Neil Collie, Member



Signpost Synergy

I am writing this in the sixth week of the UK's coronavirus lockdown. By the time you read this I hope that we shall be well on a path back to normality, or at least be on a path across some of our favourite countryside again! However, an unanticipated bonus of my enforced domesticity is that many paperwork tasks have now been completed, and my library of Signpost is again neat and tidy. Whilst sorting and tidying this I re-read some and discovered a curious coincidence. The Seven Signposts Walk described by Shirley Addy in issue 62 Spring 2020 is the same route I'd walked in 'A Walk in Virtual Reality' in issue 61 Autumn 2019.

I would not have made this connection had it not been for her images of PNFS signs, especially the more unusual fingerpost variety. I'd taken this picture on my walk and immediately recognised it as the same sign as in Shirley's article. I then followed the advice in her article to visit <http://peakandnorthern.org.uk/signposts/where-they-are.htm> and identified it as 'Fingerpost 30 SD 67469 19067 Old Lyons Farm, N of Belmont; adj to S304'. Even more impressive, this revealed yet another image of the sign, also with blue sky in the background, which for Darwen Moor is a highly unusual coincidence.



Fingerpost 30



Location: Old Lyons Farm, N of Belmont, adj to S304

Grid reference: SD 67469 19067



You can pan and zoom the map using your mouse or keyboard [\[How?\]](#)

[Larger map](#)

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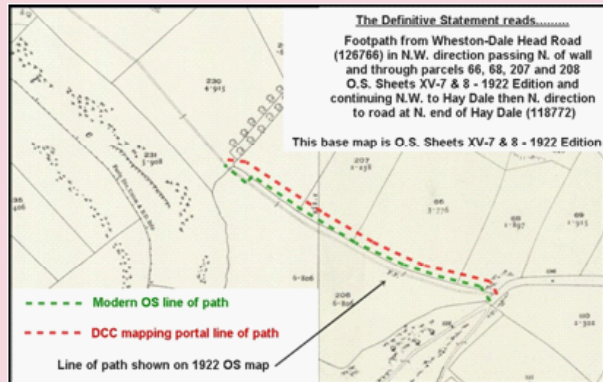
As you can see, the PNFS website also provides an OS 1:50000 map view of all sign locations. I usually study OS maps and plan my route before setting out and have latterly been plotting them as GPS eXchange format (or GPX) files, so that the route appears on my Smartphone. This is a great help when walking as I can always check that I've not strayed off my intended route. It's therefore a pleasant surprise to encounter a PNFS sign, and I always stop to admire them and often take a picture.

My article described that I'd managed to convert the GPX format file into Google Earth's KML format and then retrace my steps in Google's 3D virtual world. Using the PNFS website's Google Earth view of sign locations, I've now been able to show my route together with the positions of Shirley's Seven Signs. Fingerpost 30 is the one with a yellow pushpin marker.



So thanks to some extremely hard work from the PNFS team it's now possible for me to anticipate what signs I may encounter on my walks. Even more intriguing is the potential for walk routes to be planned around PNFS signposts. If the lockdown continues for much longer, I shall attempt to discover routes that include more than Shirley's Seven in 5.5 miles of this walk. Perhaps other readers would like to take up the challenge?

Murray Fullerton, Member



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Gap at Wheston

Harry Boynton has recently drawn my attention to a gap in Wheston FPs 1 and 2. There most certainly is a gap on the Definitive Map, the DCC Portal and the FID but the Statement is quite clear that the north end of FP1 extends to the road so it looks like we will have to submit a DMMO application for the missing 66 metres.

What I found more interesting during the investigation was the very detailed description of the route in the Definitive Statement. I haven't seen such detail elsewhere in the statement. I haven't seen the parish claim but it looks like a direct copy and I wonder if the surveyor offered this precision to ensure the historic route of the path was abandoned. This extract of the 1922 OS map shows a FP on the south side of the boundary but the path is now to the north as in the statement. The Definitive Map clearly shows this but also shows the move to the south as shown on the modern OS map, while the Mapping Portal shows a different story again. A good example, I would say, that the Mapping Portal is not the Definitive Map.

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector

Signpost Report

In the new year the weather stayed resolutely wet and then cold, but then the weather improved dramatically and the ground finally dried. While it was doing so, along came Covid-19, accompanied first by government dithering and then severe restrictions on movement, in order belatedly to bring the spread of the disease under control. These restrictions have of course curtailed both inspections and maintenance. Another result is that there is just one new signpost to report in the three month period, giving a total of **527** signposts. The new sign, which I have written about on page 6 is:

S605 at GR SD 46479 73476 on Silverdale FP14 at Browns Houses, Silverdale, Lancashire - It is arguably the most important sign of the past decade, as it stands at the edge of Morecambe Bay and directs walkers of the scenic Lancashire Coastal Path to an older, safer and more direct alternative to walking along the foreshore. It represents a successful, twenty year struggle by Terry Norris PNFS, supported by the officers of Lancashire County Council, against one of the owners of Browns Houses and his councillor allies, who denied the existence of a public right of way, in the face of both evidence and common-sense. The foreshore is dangerous, not only due to high tides, but also because the sea has reduced the concrete ramp, which links the Silverdale-Browns Houses road down to the foreshore, to large, irregular lumps, which threaten to twist ankles and break wrists or collarbones.

Signs in the pipeline

S594 at Stydd Manor Farm, Ribchester

S598 at Ashes Farm, Copster Green

S601/602 at Pain Hill Farm, Slaidburn

S606 at Butterley, Ashover

S608 at Higgins Clough, PF canal, Disley sponsored by Disley Footpaths Society

S609 just north of Longstone Edge, in memory of Colin Henson 1933-2016

S610 at Shutts Farm, Bakewell, in memory of Geoff Errington 1949-2012

S611 near Bakestonedale, Pott Shrigley for John Goodman's 80th birthday

Maintenance

Shirley inspected 10 signs in Lancashire and I managed to inspect, clean and touch up the "badge" paint on 44 in Cheshire, the Wirral, Glossop, Limb Valley. MPs were attached to 3 signs, 17 wedged, etc.

Missing

S273 on Prestbury Lane - see short report in forthcoming Signpost issue 65.

Good News

As a result of my advert in the recent Annual Report and Shirley's good example, two young, fit men have independently volunteered to help with signpost work and I'm feeling relieved, like Henry VIII must have felt on the day when he was told that he finally had a son and heir. Pete, Ted and John will be very glad of their help too.

David Morton, Signpost Officer

Signposts available for commemoration

The following signposts are still available for individual walkers or walking groups who would like me to make and fix a commemorative plaque to one in return for a donation of £375, which will cover the cost of a new signpost. They are located across our area. Their photographs and specific GR and OS map locations are shown individually on option 2 of the signposts gallery of our website pnfs.org.uk.

Starting with the newest, they are 606/4/3/1, 599/8/4/3/2/1, 589/8/7/5/0, 579/8/7/5/4/1, 567/6/5, 553, 543/1/0, 537/4/3/2/1, 526/2, 514 and 507.

Read the article *Last Tango in Halifax* in this issue concerning S580.

Please take a look, then if you wish to, phone me on 0161 283 7824 or email me at davidcmorton@ntlworld.com.

David Morton, Signpost Officer



S540



S575



S592



S604

Quiz Part 1

by Ken Brockway

Do you know the parish of these public rights of way? To help you, the names of the relevant Highways Authorities are: FP211: Sheffield, FP130: Lancashire, FP3: Cheshire West, BW64: Staffordshire, FP169: Kirklees. Answers in next issue.



Beyond Covid-19

Our highway authority rights of way officers are working from home and are snowed under with emails they can do little about. Complaints from path users of illegal signs stating 'Path Closed' and landowners pressing the HA highway authorities to close paths which are being heavily used. It's good to hear that the rights of way network is being used for the exercise that we are encouraged and allowed to take. Although some, as always press the rules to the limit and beyond. Nothing new there.

We are also required to maintain social distancing and this will be a challenge on those busy and enclosed paths. I'm reminded of my last good walk returning to Edale along FP37 from wide open spaces the last few yards is fenced and narrow. Just one of so many such examples.

As I write the World Health Organisation is stating that measures to combat the spread of this virus will be with us for a very long time, masks and social distancing could become the norm not a short term solution. So I put these two observations together and what do I conclude. Footpaths are too narrow to be used safely if we can't distance ourselves from other users. Well perhaps we can't do much about existing paths except the approach used on narrow sections of roads, 'traffic lights'. But we should be looking to ensure that any new path, is safe to use and offers a minimum width. I will leave it to the experts to tell us what that should be.

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector

CROMFORD AND HIGH PEAK RAILWAY LINE

The PNFS has been approached by a local resident and PNFS member, David Stirling for help to claim a section of the dismantled Cromford and High Peak railway line as a public footpath.

Does anyone out there know of it and have they used it without let or hindrance? The footpath being claimed links an existing footpath at Plex Farm to Old Macclesfield Road.

If so, can they contact the PNFS initially on inspection@pnfs.org.uk and the society will pass on the

details to David Stirling. Details of the route (see map) can be found on his website: <https://www.goyt-valley.org.uk/threat-of-legal-action>.



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Holmfirth FP60 and Wolfstones Heights

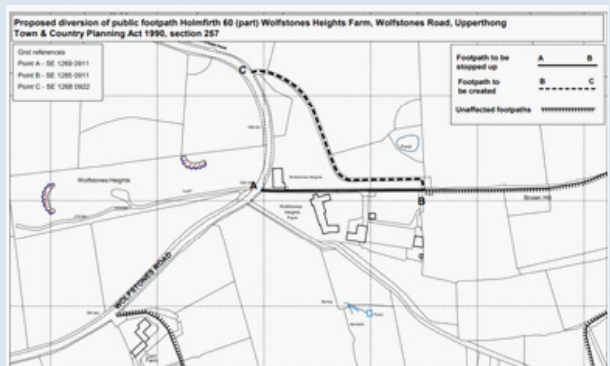


Wolfstones Heights is more than an evocative name conjuring up long forgotten stories of last Wolves lurking in a wild corner of Yorkshire. Long after the Wolves have disappeared, here in the 21st Century, it remains a place of value to both the local population and visiting walkers alike and, I like to think, retains an element of those wild past times.

At 323 metres above sea level the trig point sits on an island of heathery ground which has been open to the public for fairs, celebrations, quarrying, running, walking, picnicking and enjoying the view for as long as there have been people here. Access to Wolfstones Heights is an entirely car free experience from the valley and surrounding villages via a lovely walk along Holmfirth Footpath 60.

For the past few years this valued access has been under threat thanks to a planning application for something as banal as car parking spaces at a nearby property. Kirklees Council granted authority for the construction of the spaces which implicitly involved the diversion of Holmfirth 60 away from Wolfstones Heights. The effect of the proposal would be to move the terminus of Holmfirth 60 from its direct connection to Wolfstones into a no man's land on a blind bend of a road which then facilitated a walk back up the hill!

The proposal arguably stemmed from an error in the planning consultation process with Kirklees Rights of Way Section registering no objection because the path on Wolfstone Heights itself is not definitive, nor is the land recorded as open access under the provisions of the CROW Act. However what they missed was the fact that Wolfstone Heights is owned by the Parish



Council and dedicated for public enjoyment. This fact became apparent in the unprecedented level of objection to the proposal but despite this Kirklees Rights of Way section would not acknowledge the initial error or consider maintaining the direct route of Holmfirth 60.

After several years and a number of withdrawn and resubmitted proposals (all diverging Holmfirth 60 away from Wolfstones) the final proposal went to Planning Committee earlier this year. Rather oddly the Officer recommendation was that Kirklees should make an order to divert Holmfirth 60 but should objections be received the council would take a neutral stance and the applicant would instead argue for the order at a public inquiry. This seemed to me highly unusual.

I spoke at the Committee outlining Peak & Northern's detailed objections in the allocated 2 minutes! Credit must also go to Huddersfield Ramblers, Holmfirth Walkers Are Welcome and Holmfirth Harriers who all spoke against the proposal.

Following a well-informed discussion the committee voted not to make an order to divert Holmfirth 60. This is the first time in almost 20 years that the committee has voted against an officer recommendation on a footpath diversion proposal. It is a significant victory and protects Holmfirth 60 for future enjoyment by the public. I was convinced that the only realistic chance to defeat the diversion was at the committee stage because councillors tend to listen to wider arguments beyond the strict legal criteria which would be considered at a public inquiry.

Of course this is only a very brief summary of events and the amount of work that goes into making a case, successful or otherwise, is substantial. It is a team effort at Peak & Northern and I am grateful for the support and input from members of the Courts & Inquiries Officers Committee and the ever enthusiastic Terry Norris.

Andy Leader, Courts and Inquiries Officer

PNFS Display in Libraries



A small display about the Society and its work has been put on at Ripley Library. It is possible that libraries throughout the county have a similar display case available for publicity. Derbyshire members might like to investigate their library and consider putting on a display to help promote the Society. A poster, bottom left, in the Volunteer Centre window also helps to get our message across.



Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector

Blackpool Bridge, Holmfirth

Blackpool Bridge is an intriguing name to read on an OS map by a river out on a Yorkshire moor. On seeing it for the first time 30 years ago it conjured up images of towers, illuminations, kiss-me-quick hats and teeth-cracking rock. It can't be right I thought to myself. Having come across plenty of cartographers' naming mistakes in the past I filed it away for future reference. Holmfirth is a part of the world where there is often a mismatch between locally used names and what the Ordnance Survey records. On asking directions out of Holmfirth for a certain pub many years ago I was told firmly to follow the "Isle of Skye Road out of town"! That's going to be some drive I thought as I drove off without a clue.



Blackpool Bridge crosses Marsden Clough at SE 088 069 on Holmfirth Footpath 64. Heathery banks tumble steeply to a peaty river surrounded by gritstone rocks. The grouse cackle here all year round and in spring curlew babble like the river and cuckoos call. An appealing location for a picnic and paddle and whilst the river can be hopped across in normal conditions it rises dramatically and flows quickly after rain. Blackpool Bridge is the only safe crossing in Marsden Clough and has saved the bacon of many a sodden rambler coming off Black Hill.

The original Blackpool Bridge was a rather grand stone affair with two arches and built to carry horse drawn carriages. It's long gone but the abutments remain on the south bank. The track back then led up to a farm called "Better Than Expectations" which easily makes it to the number one spot in my hit parade of farm names around here. Sadly this wonderful name was at some point downgraded to the more prosaic "Goodbent Lodge".

The modern Blackpool Bridge has always been a rickety affair built with minimum materials due to the inaccessibility of the site and council budgets not stretching to a helicopter. Its condition had deteriorated to such a degree that in early 2018, with the approval of the Courts & Inquiries Officers' Committee, I served a Section 56 notice on Kirklees Council with the intention of securing a replacement bridge. As ever with these cases there's much toing and froing in the form of emails, phone calls, site meetings, occasional foot stampings and bridges over troubled waters but in just under two years Peak & Northern have secured a completely new Blackpool Bridge.



The new Blackpool Bridge is a significant upgrade being made from sustainable hard wood and having a non-slip surface. Bob Procter the Society's Footbridge Officer became involved and we contributed £2,000 for these improvements. The overall cost of the new bridge was £12,000.

The PROW Project Officer at Kirklees did an excellent job and pulled out all the stops to get the bridge in before the end of November 2019. The Trust for Conservation volunteers worked in some atrociously wet weather throughout that month to get the job done and I'd like to express my thanks to them and Kirklees staff. The new Blackpool Bridge fits in well with its wild surroundings and should carry walkers across the clough for many years to come.

But does it have the right name? I think not. Talking to the generation above me in the valley it quickly became apparent that it is not Blackpool Bridge but Black Pool Bridge. The bridge has no connection with the famous Lancashire resort but, according to my sources, is simply named after the large black pool just down river of the bridge where back in the day youngsters would swim and play. I've spoken to several people who learnt to swim here. Perhaps the cartographer had the seaside on his mind?

Photograph by author, print source unknown

Andrew Leader, Courts and Inquiries Officer for Kirklees

Corker Bottoms Lane Sheffield

The before and after photos are of an unclassified road in the suburb where I live in Sheffield - the Manor Estate. It forms a pleasant off tarmac route for walkers through a green space which at the moment is all that many local people have to use under the current restrictions.

I took the 'before' photo in January and reported it to Sheffield Council as the Highway Authority. A three metre wide unsurfaced track was reduced to about two to three feet. That was before the growing season kicked in. The 'after' photo was taken on 31 March. Fortunately, the council cleared it a few weeks ago, before the virtual shutdown of council services. That clearance will keep a pleasant route open for locals desperate for a bit of exercise (like me) once per day. I shall endeavour to keep it open with secateurs during the coming months.

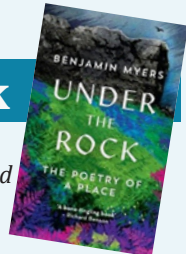
The grid reference is SK3800 8705.

John Harker, Area Officer Sheffield





Book Review: Under the Rock



Under the Rock: The Poetry of Place by Benjamin Myers, published by Elliot and Thompson

The writer Benjamin Myers might be familiar to some of our members. His book “The Gallows Pole” (2017) tells the story of the Cragg Vale Coiners and won the Walter Scott Prize for historical fiction. Ben followed up the success of that book with something completely different. “Under the Rock” is his first venture into non-fiction. The book’s subtitle, “The Poetry of a Place,” might seem to pigeon hole the work within the ‘new nature writing’ genre and in some ways that is true. However, whilst aspects of the book do fit neatly into that style of writing, large parts of it don’t. The author readily admits that he doesn’t know a great deal about nature and struggles to identify birds and trees!

The central theme of the book is the relationship that Ben, his friends and neighbours have with their landscape and how this in turn shapes their lives and those that came before them. The book begins when the writer decides to leave London and move to Mytholmroyd in the Calder Valley in order ‘to navigate a new way’. The choice of place is deeply significant as his new home sits under two enormous shadows. Firstly there is Scout Rock, a large disused quarry with a very chequered past. Secondly is the memory and writing of Ted Hughes. Hughes was born in the village in 1930 and even though he moved to Mexborough in South Yorkshire when he was only seven the surrounding landscape had a lasting impact on his work throughout his career. In 1963 the poet wrote an essay titled “The Rock”, which Ben describes as the ‘perfect primer to Hughes poetry’. The essay is about Scout Rock and so much more: ‘the violence of landscape, haunted memory, myth, the animal kingdom, a changing England, the inner self and the close proximity of death’. This is also an apt description of “Under the Rock”

The book is divided into four ‘elemental’ sections, Wood, Earth, Water and Rock, each of which end with the writer’s Field Notes. These are a series of short poems and photographs which illuminate the author’s preceding thoughts and observations. There are many reasons why people enjoy walking. For me it is both important and rewarding to understand as much as possible about where I am walking. Whilst I love wild places, a post-industrial landscape also has much to offer. “Under the Rock” is an ideal companion with which to explore just such a place. Not only does it describe the area but it brings it to life. In Ben’s own words, it makes ‘the unremarkable remarkable’. You feel as if you are with the writer as he explores his new patch and in some cases literally unearths its past.

The only criticism I have of the book is the relatively poor quality reproductions of the author’s own photographs. They are an integral part of the book and it is a shame that the publisher has failed to do them justice. I have no doubt that we’ll be hearing much more about this writer in the coming years and I for one very much look forward to reading his next book, who knows where it will take me!

If you want to find out even more about Mytholmroyd and walks around the village I recommend that you take look at the website of the local walking group at <http://www.mytholmroydwalkers.org/> and download their guides to the area.

Photographs: copyright Ben Myers, reproduced with permission.
Mel Bale, Membership Secretary and Trustee





Melbourne Footpaths 13, 22 & 30

Junction of FPs 13, 22 and 30 Melbourne, October 2018

These footpaths on Park Farm, in the south of Derbyshire, cross attractive countryside near to the small town of Melbourne. If they were unobstructed, the paths would be very popular with local people and visitors. However, at the junction of the three paths, there is an overgrown cattle grid and a locked field gate across it which are illegal structures blocking the legal lines of both FP13 (which is located at approximately point A in the photo) and FP22. Walkers are encouraged to use the field gate in the foreground, but this is not on the legal line of FP22, and in any case is very difficult to open.

After two years of fruitless discussion with Derbyshire County Council, in January this year on behalf of PNFS, I served s130(A) Highways Act 1980 Notices on the council to try to secure the removal of the cattle grid and locked gate. The council as required served Notices on the tenants, but I managed to convince the council that it was a requirement of the legislation that they also served Notice on the Estate which owns the land. The response has been that I was informed at the beginning of March that an application for a diversion order had been received by the council – encouraging, but of course whether or not this will be a satisfactory outcome depends on the nature of the diversion proposals. Unfortunately all work by the council with respect to this matter has now been stopped, but hopefully when normal circumstances resume, I and the Melbourne local PNFS Inspector, Barry Thomas, who has carried out most of the necessary work in connection with this issue, will be able to assess the proposals. If they do not achieve an acceptable solution, the s130(A) Notices will be pursued to the magistrates' court, or new Notices served if the time limit has expired.

Rhoda Barnett, Courts and Inquiries Officer (Derbyshire)

The Brocken Spectre

What is the Brocken Spectre? A long-forgotten Gothic novel? No. An obscure Hammer horror film? No. A rare meteorological phenomena? Yes. The spectre appears when an observer looks down from height into fog with the sun behind him or her, resulting in the observer's shadow being cast onto the fog. It can also sometimes be observed from an aeroplane. You can find an explanation at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brocken_spectre. It is named after the Brocken peak in Germany.

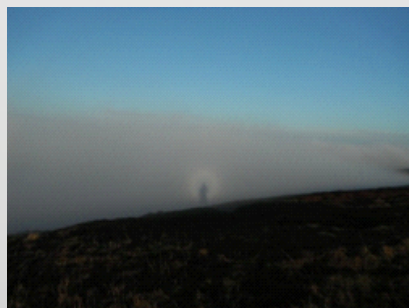
I was once lucky enough to observe my own Brocken Spectre near Holme Moss in Kirklees. I was walking east along Issue Edge (approximately SE087053) in fairly thick fog. A light wind developed which cleared the fog from the plateau, but left the fog on the lower land below undisturbed. I noticed a rainbow-like halo surrounding a figure on the fog bank to my left that seemed to be moving along with me. Waving my arms aloft confirmed that what I could see below was my own shadow. Within a few moments it had disappeared as conditions changed.

At the time I could not put a name to this phenomena. I mentioned it to a few people but they knew nothing. I just filed away the few hastily grabbed photos I had taken and forgot about it. Just recently I was reading *Mountains of the Mind* by Robert Macfarlane in which he mentions seeing his own Brocken Spectre and I realised what I had seen. Sadly the image I give here cannot do justice to what I saw that day. Has anyone else seen their own Brocken Spectre?

Andrew Harter, Inspector and Taylor House Volunteer



*Wind clearing fog from plateau.
Holme Moss transmitter in background*



My personal Brocken Spectre

Share Your Walks

Have you enjoyed a walk that you would like to share with members?

Following Shirley Addy's *Seven Signposts Walk* in the spring 2020 issue of Signpost, it has been suggested that members be invited to submit walk route descriptions for the magazine and website.

Seven Signposts Walk is an example of the preferred format and what is needed, including OS map reference, grid reference of starting point and parking and public transport details. Up to four photographs can be included. Lastly, the route must be in areas covered by the PNFS and directions should be brief.

Please email your route description, photographs and gpx file to Mel Bale at webmaster@pnfs.org.uk.



PNFS LOVE OUR FOOTPATHS

*Do you like walking or running on footpaths?
Or horse riding or cycling on bridleways?*
Help us care for our countryside

Have you come across any of these problems?



*Broken stile or gate?
No signs?*



*Path overgrown,
or deep mud?*



*Path obstructed by
barbed wire or other
objects?*

Be a Path Checker

Simply send an email to:

pathcheckers@pnfs.org.uk

and include in your email:

- ***Your name (and phone number if you wish)***
- ***Photo of the problem***
- ***Short description***
- ***Grid reference of the problem***

And we'll do our best to get it sorted for you. We will report back to you on our progress.



Use OS Locate to find your location and click on '***Share my location***' to send email.
OS Locate is a free app available for Android and iPhones.

For more information on the Pathcheckers scheme visit
www.pnfs.org.uk/pathcheckers

The Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

Taylor House, 23 Turncroft Lane, Offerton, Stockport, SK1 4AB

Registered Charity No 212219

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Signpost in *Last Tango in Halifax*

In March I caught up with episode two of the latest series of *Last Tango in Halifax*. One of several subplots was the appearance of a Banksy-like giraffe painted on the white, end wall of Gillian's farmhouse. The farm is also the location of our sign S580, which in real life stands by the entrance to Knowl Farm, Norden, Rochdale, which is quite a long way from Halifax. The best chance of seeing it on television comes at the point where cars are being driven up the hill and, at the last moment, turn sharp left into the farmyard.

I am indebted to our contractor John Hodgson for tipping me off in good time to watch out for it. The sign, erected by John and I in 2019, is available for a commemorative plaque for any walker or walking group, for a donation of £375.

David Morton, Signpost Officer



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