

SIGNPOST

Magazine of the
Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

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Train passing under Ilkeston FP11
Photograph by Ken Brockway



Autumn is a colourful time and this year the trees and bracken look spectacular. Whilst the days are getting shorter it is still a real pleasure to walk on the amazing network of public rights of way in our beautiful countryside, perhaps we appreciate this more because of the challenging eighteen months everyone has endured.

I know that some charities and groups have been diminished as a consequence of the pandemic but, as was evident at our half year meeting on 6 November, PNFS is thriving and expanding. We heard that our membership and inspectors are increasing in number, we have been actively focused on our aims and there is a healthy bank balance to support our work. In this edition of *Signpost* you can see some of the interesting things which are undertaken by our members, officers and Trustees. I know that some people try to 'bag' the PNFS signposts, which you can see across our counties as our 'silent ambassadors'. They are more visible in some areas than others, so if you feel there is a good candidate footpath or junction for a new signpost in places which have few, please contact David Morton, our signpost officer.

An increasing number of inspectors is brilliant but we still have a significant number of parishes without a dedicated inspector, making it more difficult to ensure that public rights of way are maintained in good condition in those areas.

The work which has been done recently by colleagues to create training materials and informative talks is outstanding, so if you think you could be an inspector but feel daunted, there is great support for everyone.

Personally I am looking forward to a new challenge, inspecting 'parishes' in west Lancashire in the area I grew up in, that will give me a new lens on well known places.

Our programme of walks is going well. I recently joined a longer one around the river Bollin which was great fun and a chance to meet up safely with other members. Do have a look at the programme which now includes Chesterfield based walks. The principle that the walks should be designed to be accessible by public transport is fantastic, and very pertinent as the recent COP26 shone a light on the urgency of making changes to avoid climate change causing irreparable damage to our planet.

I am sure you will read the excellent article by David Gosling, recalling his encounter with some very unfriendly cows, with a mixture of interest and nervousness. When I first heard of his experience I was horrified about the event and relieved that it was no worse. I have had a healthy regard for the unpredictable nature of cows for many years, but David's experience and the advice included is well worth noting.

As this will be the final edition of *Signpost* for this year I wish everyone well for the festive season which is fast approaching. As we start to look forward to 2022 I am optimistic that we will be able to start meeting in person and thank everyone for their work over the past few months.

Kathy Mclean, Chair

With a ton of cow above me, I was feeling extremely vulnerable....

David Gosling tells us about his encounter with cattle. I was walking with my friend Tony, but without my cocker spaniel dog Bessie, near Buxton. It was a sunny day in August and we were on a right of way which forms part of the Peak Park Boundary Walk and the Mid Shires Way. Neither of us were nervous around cattle, so we thought nothing of entering a field where a group of Herefords (those are the creamy brown ones) were grazing. As we approached the cattle, I noticed that they had young calves, which set warning bells ringing in my head, especially after another incident earlier this year.

But even when they moved closer, we had no warning that one of them would toss its head, instantly throwing me to the ground with a thump. The cow proceeded to trample on me. Another cow knocked over Tony and gave him similar treatment. I managed to get to my feet and tried to push the cow away from Tony but was promptly knocked over a second time.



I tried to protect myself but while I was lying on the ground with a ton of cow above me, I was feeling extremely vulnerable. Fortunately, the herd decided that the threat had been eliminated and they wandered away leaving us gasping for breath, in pain and in deep shock. To cut a long story short, we managed to stagger to the nearest house and from there we were taken to A&E. We had scans, x-rays and a cut on my arm was treated. I was told I had broken ribs and multiple bruises, but no serious injuries and we were sent home with some painkillers.

Since that incident many people have told me about their scary escapes from cattle, so I began to wonder if this kind of event is becoming more common. It soon became apparent that there are no statistics which will help us here. There is something like 9.7 million cattle in the UK and between March 2000 and March 2020, 98 people were killed by cattle (according to the HSE). Of those, 22 were members of the public, with the rest being either farmers or farm workers.

Where recorded, 91% of HSE reported fatalities on the public were caused by cows with calves; only one death involved a bull, and even this was unproven in court. In a piece of research by Liverpool University academics, they found that 48% of attacks were caused by (unspecified) herds, followed by single cows (22%), cows and calves (20%), heifers (7%), and one bull attack (2%). Behavioural research suggests maternal defensive aggression may be behind many attacks. 94% of walkers killed had dogs, and two thirds of all attacks involved dogs.

These fatalities are only the tip of the iceberg. There are many incidents which go unrecorded, so estimating the risk of being attacked by cows is nigh on impossible. But on the blog 'Killer Cows' it is reported that 600 ramblers or countryside visitors in one single year were sufficiently disgruntled to go to the trouble of reporting concerns with cattle on the Ramblers' 'Pathwatch'.

So what does the law say? The answer seems to be not a lot. There are restrictions on bulls on rights of way (see the section on Rights of Way Law in the PNFS Training for Inspectors on the website) but there is nothing specifically about cows. However, section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places an obligation on employers and self-employed persons not to put at risk the health and safety of persons not in their employment. This suggests that farmers should not have cattle who pose a risk to the walkers in a field with a right of way.

The HSE guidance says, addressing land managers, that "When you are considering where to keep livestock you should take into account that members of the public are unlikely to be aware of the behavioural characteristics of cattle". That is certainly true. They also point out that "Any animal known to be dangerous by the keeper may not be kept at large in fields with PROW. If such an animal causes injury to a walker (or anyone else) there could arise both criminal and civil liability for the keeper." However, the farmer claimed that what had happened on the day we walked into the field of cattle was that they

had broken into the field with a PROW because someone had cut the fence trying to liberate badgers. So clearly it is not possible to guard against all contingencies. Furthermore, most incidents with cattle go unrecorded and the HSE is currently doing little to enforce its guidance to farmers.

There's plenty of advice and guidance from the HSE, NFU and the RA available on their websites, but the lessons I have learned from my painful experience are:

1. Be vigilant. We were far too casual when we walked into field and not paying attention to the animals that were in it. We should have checked whether they had young ones and also walked around the herd not through it.
2. Give cattle a wide berth. Although it is not always possible to do so, it is better to walk around the cattle. Wherever possible I would recommend walking along the edge of the field and keeping a close eye on the movement of the cattle.
3. Notices. The HSE and NFU recommend the use of notices to warn the public when cattle are in a field with young ones. Unfortunately, this advice is rarely followed. The HSE needs to be much more vigilant about enforcing the guidelines that already exist.
4. Separation of walkers and cattle. The NFU have advocated giving farmers the ability to temporarily divert paths. The RA have already rejected this idea and with good reason. I think walkers would be in an impossible position if there were a sequence of temporary diversions. We therefore need to be careful about demanding that walkers are separated from cattle, because we might not like the solutions farmers come up with. However, I do think movable electric fencing should be used more often to keep a right of way through the field open and safe.
5. More information. Part of the problem at the moment is a lack of information about the risks involved and a lack of research. I found it impossible to report the incident via the HSE website and eventually I wrote a letter to which the HSE has not replied. What is needed is a well-designed, official system to enable walkers to report incidents and allow HSE to document accidents (not just fatalities). Evidence for risk factors could then be properly assessed and used to develop better guidance in order to reduce attacks on walkers.
6. Enforcement. At present there appears to be little or no enforcement of the guidance that HSE has issued to landowners. Cows with young calves should not be in a field with a PROW. Resources should be allocated to achieve a reasonable enforcement regime.

I am lucky that I have made a full recovery, but others such as Pip Peacock, recently featured on BBC Radio 4, have not been so fortunate. If one of the cows which trampled on me had stamped on my head or a vital organ, it's easy to see how another fatality might have hit the news and it might have been me!

Note: Photograph taken by David does not show the guilty cattle and is included for illustration purposes but it can be seen that the cows were uncomfortably close.

Postscript by Rhoda Barnett, Courts & Inquiries Officer: On behalf of PNFS, I have been working with the Ramblers on the serious problem of attacks by cattle on walkers. Briefly, Defra is now looking at a scheme piloted in Devon and Cornwall where temporary permissive paths were used to enable walkers, if they wished, to avoid fields with cattle - see <https://www.fwi.co.uk/business/business-management/health-and-safety/how-new-footpaths-scheme-will-help-prevent-cattle-attacks> Definitive routes of paths had to remain usable by walkers. This scheme had the support of the local Ramblers, OSS, local authorities and the HSE. Also the HSE has said that it does not receive enough reports of incidents involving cattle and walkers for its budget to be spent on pursuing this issue. The response was that the average walker has not heard of the HSE, and in any case the form on the HSE website on which incidents should be reported is confusing and inappropriate. So few reports are received and so there is little HSE action. The Ramblers have suggested to the HSE that they co-operate on revising the form, and if successful, they will promote the use of the form. I agreed that PNFS will look at the revised form, to be produced within the next few weeks.



Cattle and Walkers

Rhoda Barnett, Courts & Inquiries Officer has been in contact with the Ramblers regarding the serious problem of attacks by cattle on walkers. As many PNFS members will have great concerns on the subject, here is her report:

Phone conversation with Stephen Russell of the Ramblers on 4 November 2021 - This phone conversation took place following an approach by me to the Ramblers on 15 August 2021. PNFS has been concerned for a long time about the safety of walkers on PROW in fields where cattle are grazing, and the deterrent effect of the presence of cattle on the use of such paths. I hoped that we could work with the Ramblers on ways to resolve these issues, since they are a national body and employ staff, so have a much greater opportunity to influence the relevant national bodies compared to PNFS. Points raised were:

1. Ramblers have expressed concerns about the NFU's approach, which is to make permanent diversions of paths out of grazing fields easier to obtain. The NFU has stated that Ramblers are standing in the way of protecting the safety of walkers.
2. Government (Defra) response to the NFU proposal was that this would require a change in the law and there was no Parliamentary time for this. Instead, in Nov/Dec 2020, Defra said that they would look at the conclusions from a scheme piloted in Devon and Cornwall where temporary permissive paths were used to enable walkers to avoid fields with cattle if they wished. Definitive routes of paths had to remain usable by walkers. This scheme had the support of the local Ramblers, OSS, local authorities and the HSE. The Ramblers have heard nothing since, but have chased Defra a month ago, and will chase again.
3. Ramblers consider that farmers need to make far greater use of the measures advised in the HSE's Agriculture Information Sheet No 17EW (rev1) Cattle and Public Access in England and Wales, which will be promoted in the forthcoming Natural England advice to land managers
4. The Ramblers have also talked to a HSE person who was approachable - he said that the problem for the HSE is that it does not receive enough reports of incidents involving cattle and walkers for its budget to be spent on pursuing this issue, so it does not appreciate the scale of the problem. The Ramblers response was that the average walker has not heard of the HSE, and in any case the form on the HSE website on which incidents should be reported is confusing and inappropriate. So few reports are received and so there is little HSE action. The Ramblers have suggested to the HSE that they co-operate on revising the form, and if successful, they will promote the use of the form. I agreed that PNFS will look at the revised form, to be produced within the next few weeks.
5. Some walkers want a complete ban on cattle being grazed in fields crossed by PROW, but we agreed that this was a non-starter in view of the needs of farmers and the current pressures they are experiencing.
6. There could be opportunities to look at remedies in association with the new post-Brexit agricultural payments scheme, but it seems that concerns about public access will concentrate on safety measures such as the installation of fences to protect walkers from hazards, but as yet this is unclear. Also there are proposals to improve public access in protected areas (National parks and AONBs) by paying farmers to replace stiles with gates.

Update email from Stephen Russell on 14 November 2021

1. Defra intends to follow up the Devon and Cornwall scheme with Cornwall Council.
2. On 1 August 2019 there was an article in Farmers Weekly which explained in greater detail what the trial was all about: <https://www.fwi.co.uk/business/business-management/health-and-safety/how-new-footpaths-scheme-will-help-prevent-cattle-attacks>

Sometimes Help Comes From Unexpected Quarters

Many walkers will be familiar with New Mills in the Derbyshire High Peak. On the two railway lines between Manchester and Buxton and Manchester and Sheffield, it's a popular start or finish point for walks in this area on the edge of the National Park. In August 2019, I was due to represent the Society at a public inquiry at the Town Hall on Spring Bank Road. Fate intervened as you might recall. The Toddbrook Reservoir in Whaley Bridge, just up the Goyt valley from New Mills, threatened to burst as its wall showed definite signs of strain. The public inquiry was postponed as witnesses and the public might be unable to travel due to emergency road and rail closures. In the event, this proved to be fortuitous for me.

Rescheduled for late November 2019, I arrived at the Town Hall in the hope that I could persuade the independent inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State at Defra, to confirm a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) published by Derbyshire County Council (DCC) to add a public footpath to the Definitive Map & Statement (DM&S).

This saga had begun way back in 2002, when an area of land astride the river Sett in New Mills came up for sale. Used informally for recreation by local people, they were concerned that building development might deprive them of that access. An attempt to claim the land as a village green failed, but as an insurance policy, certain paths that crossed the site were claimed as public rights of way by applications under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1983 section 53. Again, all bar one were refused by DCC. The one that was accepted was a route from St. George's Road to the bridleway we know as the "Sett Valley Trail" along the old New Mills-Hayfield railway line that closed in 1970 and bought by DCC to create a multi user trail.

The application had been for a public bridleway. DCC assessed the evidence gathered in support of the application and found it inadequate to pass the threshold test for bridleway status, but it passed the threshold for a DMMO for public footpath status. However, by now it was 2012. It had taken DCC 10 years before the case had reached this far. Not all that unusual in the DM&S arena of public rights of way. Another 7 years passed before we finally reached the Town Hall in New Mills.

By now, DCC had got cold feet about the strength of the user evidence and had decided to withdraw its support for confirmation of the DMMO. That means that the onus falls on the applicant for the DMMO to make the case in favour of confirmation. That was New Mills Town Council, but they got cold feet as well and withdrew their support. This was where the Society decided to step in as a 'white knight'.

As Area Officer for the High Peak I felt strongly that those who had submitted their evidence nearly 20 years ago, deserved to have their case heard. So, armed with their original user evidence forms supplied to me by a DCC officer who was sympathetic, I started ringing phone numbers that I had no idea would still be valid or if that person had died or moved. One witness had died only recently and it was his widow who answered the phone. That was a difficult moment, especially for her. Others had moved away or were too frail now to help out. However, several witnesses were keen to help

out and after a long interview by phone agreed to turn up at the Town Hall to speak and give evidence. Vital if an inspector is to weigh the evidence and test its veracity. Would they actually come on the day though?

Then the cavalry arrived. An apt metaphor perhaps? The local Dark Peak Bridleways Association (DPBA) had found out about the public inquiry from a legal notice posted on site and spotted by local horse riders who also used the claimed path, and had for many years. Local riders were quickly mobilised to obtain user evidence, and the resources of the national British Horse Society (BHS) were tapped into to retain a professional rights of way consultant to represent the DPBA and BHS at the public inquiry.

To get their evidence assessed, the DPBA had to appear at the public inquiry as an objector to the DMMO, just like the landowner who had objected. The objection was not that there was no public right of way along the route claimed, but that the route had a higher status than footpath. They sought the confirmation of the Order, but wanted the inspector, Mr. Beckett, to use the legal powers an inspector has, to modify the Order such that the route is added as a bridleway not just as a footpath. After all, that was what the original claim back in 2002 said it was, a public bridleway.

It was clear to me that a mutuality of interest existed between PNFS and the horse riding bodies. My witnesses by themselves, about half a dozen, might not be enough to convince the inspector about footpath status. Combining the evidence of horse riders and walkers might do the trick.

Thus it proved to be the case, despite vigorous attempts by the landowner to cast doubt on the conduct of DCC and the evidence of the witnesses and the applicant. After a site visit the day after the public inquiry, we awaited the inspector's decision letter with fingers crossed. On December 16th. 2019 we got an early Xmas present which you can read by using the link below. There were some further legal details to be sorted out, caused by the modification of the confirmed DMMO to show a bridleway instead of a footpath. This additional process was delayed by the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, but has now been completed.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/854762/row_3201724_interim_od.pdf

Everyone, except the landowner, has won. Walkers and horse riders (not forgetting mountain bikers) have a new legally safeguarded bridleway between St George's Road at Salem Cottages across the wooded slope up to the Sett Valley Trail. PNFS has, by its persistence in adhering to its charitable purposes as set out in its constitution, furthered the cause of protecting and enhancing public access to the path network. The DPBA and BHS has improved the network for its members and other riders by an impressive piece of quick organising and putting up money to retain a consultant to get its case across.

Whilst part of me likes to think that I would have won the case for footpath status anyway with my little band of witnesses, in reality I know that without the efforts of the DPBA and BHS there might well have been a very different outcome. Our thanks to them, and as a postscript to this case, the DPBA is now affiliated to PNFS. Three cheers all around!

John Harker, ex Area Officer High Peak Borough, but still active in loads of other places

Cornholme



In June 2021 signs were erected by the landowner at each end of an unregistered path close to my home in Cornholme, Todmorden, saying "Conservation area, no public access" and "No public footpath, no public right of way." They posed a direct threat to more than forty years of unchallenged use of this path by local people, who, myself included, became incensed. The land in question has not been used for any agricultural purposes in thirty years at least and for many years was not even fenced. We welcome its use for conservation providing we retain the right to walk over it. Several of us were aware of the impending deadline for registering paths on the definitive map and also knew that there were several in our area which were not registered. We had discussed organising a meeting to make applications to register

these but Covid restrictions meant we were unable to proceed, but the erection of these signs forced us into action.

Being retired I thought I had time to research the procedure and I spent many hours on the computer. I found the sites of the Ramblers Association and also the Open Spaces Society particularly useful. Unfortunately I didn't find reference to PNFS until much later. I had difficulty contacting anyone directly in the footpaths team at Calderdale Council and several emails were unanswered. Eventually I was given the contact details for our footpaths officer, Ryan Kaye who was most supportive and offered sage advice throughout the process. The forms required for registering this path under the twenty years rule were obtained and copied many times by my wife. We received support from a local parish councillor who also lives close to the path and had used it regularly for many years. An outdoor socially distanced meeting was called and a note was put on the local village Facebook site. To our surprise thirty people attended. Unfortunately the landowner was not one of them.

A definitive footpath, Todmorden 61 also passed over this person's land and has been the subject of concerted efforts to prevent people's lawful use by various means over the years including building a stone wall across it. This path passed directly in front of the farmhouse windows and not wishing to compromise the family's privacy I had never used it. A few years ago an application to move part of the path away from the farm buildings was approved and so far as I am aware there were no objections. Once the diversion works were complete I felt justified in using the path and attempted to do so whilst out walking with my two dogs. I was confronted by effluent from a septic tank to a depth of about six inches. I had wellingtons on but my dogs didn't and I was forced to retrace my steps.

I rang Calderdale Council and was told that if it was sewage it was Yorkshire Water's responsibility. Yorkshire Water said they have no sewers in the area and it was Calderdale Council's responsibility. I sent an email to our town councillor but received no reply. I mentioned the sewage to our local voluntary footpath maintenance group CROWS when I came across them one day and they were aware of the problem but said

they only work on paths with the landowner's permission and that I should contact Calderdale Council. I'm sorry to say that at this point I gave up. At our meeting I had said that in addition to attempting to register the claimed path that I was determined that footpath 61 would be brought back into use and that legal means would be used if necessary.

Our application for the registration of the claimed path was accepted by the footpaths officer and forty witness statements were included. We were told that there is a backlog of over eighty cases in our area and that our application will not be looked at for at least a year. We also made Ryan Kaye aware of the problems on footpath 61, both the effluent and the grossly overgrown state of the path. He was sympathetic and said that he had obtained a quote to clear the path but that it was expensive and his boss was reluctant to sanction the expenditure. Several of us offered to clear the path at no expense to the council if the landowners permission could be obtained but this was not forthcoming. Eventually we ran out of patience and section 130A notices were issued, one in respect of the sewage and one the overgrowth. The landowner was notified and a new septic tank was installed in advance of the enforcement officer's site visit. The council's contractor cleared the overgrowth and the path was reopened.

Job done! Not quite as the saga continues. The landowner has now opened a permissive path which runs parallel to 61 and about twenty yards away on the edge of an open field. We don't know what the purpose of this is but are convinced that once again he is trying to prevent the lawful use of the footpath. Can anyone suggest an explanation of his motives? His alternative path is clearly signposted whilst the official path has no waymarkers. The permissive path still follows his garden fence and is more visible from the farmhouse. We feel sure that given his previous attempts to close this path he has not provided an alternative route for the benefit of walkers.

During the time it has taken for these actions the head of the rights of way team at Calderdale has retired and not been replaced, Ryan Kaye has moved to a different job within the highways department and no-one else recruited. So far as we are able to ascertain there is now no one in the rights of way department at Calderdale Council, despite the fact that there is a greater concentration of footpaths and bridleways in Calderdale than any other authority in the country and Ryan Kaye estimates that there are at least 500 unclaimed footpaths in this area.

Unless the government can be persuaded to extend the 2026 deadline, all of these will be automatically extinguished, whilst landowners will continue to retain the right to apply for diversions or extinguishment of registered paths. Hardly seems equitable does it?

These actions have been a community effort and many people besides myself have been involved in applying pressure on the council from every conceivable angle. The forty people who have taken the time and trouble to fill in witness statements have made a major contribution to our efforts to register this path and we were amazed that such a high percentage of forms handed out were returned. Testament to how important rights of way and the access they provide to our beautiful countryside are to local communities.

Geoff Wilkinson, new member

Saving Lost Ways

We have a fantastic network of 140,000 miles of public rights of way in England and Wales: footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways which criss-cross the country and enable us to access our amazing natural landscapes and navigate our towns and cities, but there are thousands of miles of public paths which are unrecorded and, if not claimed by 1 January 2026, could be lost forever.

MILES OF POTENTIAL UNRECORDED RIGHTS OF WAY

Cheshire: 513 miles ~ **Derbyshire:** 463 miles

Greater Manchester: 392 miles ~ **Lancashire:** 584 miles

Merseyside: 158 miles ~ **South Yorkshire:** 388 miles

Staffordshire: 778 miles ~ **West Yorkshire:** 514 miles

Public paths in England and Wales are recorded on the *definitive map*, the legal record of rights of way which are held by local councils. The requirement for local councils to have a definitive map of rights of way came from the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949), a pioneering legislative achievement of the Attlee government. Over the 1950s and 1960s (and in some areas into the 1970s and 80s) councils drew up their maps with assistance from parishes and communities. However the process of mapping wasn't straightforward and many historical paths were simply missed.

In 2020, the Ramblers' Don't Lose Your Way campaign created a tool enabling members of the public to compare the current Ordnance Survey map with two historical maps and find any potentially missing paths. Thousands of people joined the search for these lost paths, and together mapped all of England and Wales in just six weeks. Using this tool, we have identified over *49,000 miles of potential unrecorded paths*. The resulting map of potential lost rights of way can be found at dontloseyourway.ramblers.org.uk. We won't be able to save all paths and we are now going through a process of prioritising these paths to focus on the ones which would bring the most benefit to the rights of way network. You can get involved with this prioritisation by going to the website and suggesting priorities for potential unrecorded paths in your area.

Identification is only the first step. To save any individual path an application needs to be made to the local council for it to be added to the definitive map. We are now building further tools and guidance to enable the public to research and make an application for one (or more!) of these lost paths. It involves digging into historical records to unearth clues that the route was public in the past and, if the application is successful, will mean that the path is protected long into the future. These applications based on historical evidence cannot be made after the government deadline of 1 January 2026. Considering the size of the problem, the Ramblers are calling for this deadline to be extended by at least five years - see www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/dont-lose-your-way-2026/2026-and-the-case-for-postponement.aspx.

Our public rights of way network is crucial in enabling us all to access the countryside, whether on foot, bicycle or horseback, but it is more than that. Our paths are part of the "ordinary" history of our country, describing how our ancestors interacted with, and enjoyed, the landscape over centuries. The Ramblers, and our

and our volunteers are working closely with local and national organisations to save these historic paths across England and Wales. It would be fantastic if members of the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society could get involved to help save this important part of our shared heritage and secure access long into the future. To join the movement and get involved with the historical research please sign at <https://mailchi.mp/4e9c723104e2/maj979cfpg>. Our right to access the countryside has been hard fought over many decades and we now have less than five years left to save these vital paths for generations to come.

Jack Cornish, Programme Manager, Don't Lose Your Way, the Ramblers

Postscript by Rhoda Barnett, Courts & Inquiries Officer: The Ramblers are a national organisation with paid staff and so have much greater financial and people resources than PNFS for tackling the issue of recording lost ways. Whilst we actively researching and making applications in Derbyshire, we do not have the volunteer capacity to extend this across the whole of our area, so if you are interested in taking part in this work, we urge you to contact Jack Cornish and help the Ramblers to preserve our historic public rights of way.

Troway Hall Farm Cafe

In October 2021, my partner and I were walking in north east Derbyshire when we decided to call at the Troway Hall Farm cafe in Troway, which is a hamlet in Eckington parish on the edge of the Moss Valley. We enjoyed a drink and a piece of cake each, although the cafe does lunches and other food. I attach some photos including one of my hot chocolate and chocolate cake and one of my partner's plum and almond cake. Both very nice indeed. It's also a farm shop where people can order the farm's produce. Visit <http://wp.wardsoftroway.co.uk>. Although it is little more than a hamlet down a narrow country lane off the main road between Coal Aston and Eckington, it also boasts a pub. The Gate Inn immediately opposite the cafe. Next door to the farm cafe is Troway Hall itself, dating from the early C17th at least. It has a restaurant called The Beestro which is open Tuesday to Saturday. See <http://www.beestro.co.uk>.

This area of north east Derbyshire is often overlooked by walkers as they rush out into the National Park. The valley stretches for several miles between Coal Aston and Eckington and has only one road, which crosses it at right angles. Hence it is very quiet and peaceful and ideal for walkers, cyclists and horse riders with an excellent network of footpaths and bridleways through fields and woodlands some of which are nature reserves. Indeed the National Trust itself owns two adjoining meadows in part of the valley which are considered outstanding for never having been ploughed or fertilised. In the summer they were full of wild orchids, and other scarce meadowland flowers like Eyebright and Dyer's Greenweed, when my partner and I visited them.

John Harker, Area Officer (NE Derbyshire)

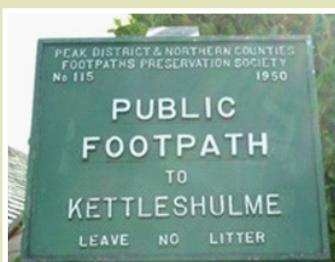
(Editor's note: If anyone knows of an excellent cafe or pub, let me know. Details will then appear in Signpost or Waymark.)



A History of PNFS Signposts - Part Two

In the '20s most of our new signs were painted, wooden fingerposts. F8 (*see photograph*) is the best of them. It has 6 fingers. After one was sawn off, it only had five and the spot is known to some as "Five Lane Ends". It used to be regularly repainted. In 1940, as invasion loomed, it was taken down by the County Surveyor, then, like our other signs, reinstated in 1943. All-wood fingerposts' mortice joints are prone to rot and attract those who either swing on or reverse their white vans into the long fingers. They're also surprisingly expensive if you have to pay for all those incised letters and mortice joints, so they have become a rarity. For many years a PNFS member, Jack Ogden of Gorton, used to repaint F8 and other fingerposts annually, using public transport like Harold Wild. Harold called tramcars "cars" not "trams". Jack, who I visited at his home, also liaised with and led walks for the Manchester Rambling Club for the Blind, who themselves sponsored 3 of our signposts (114 at Shelf Brook, above S59 at Mossy Lea; 120 on Gun Lane, Mellor and 239 at Summer Close, Rainow. 239 still has a Braille memorial plaque).

As far as I can tell, Harold Wild's earliest, surviving, full, cast iron plate was No 50 at Mickleden Edge above Langsett. It was cast in 1925 and points to the Flouch Inn and the long gone Hazlehead Station. Harold was Signpost Supervisor till 1954 and was responsible for about 100 signposts and direction posts, plus 8 all-wood fingerposts as well as being footpath inspector. Not bad, when you consider that he had a dislocated hip, no car and helped to raise two girls through the recession, Great Depression and World War 2. He also created in meticulous detail a comprehensive written record, in book form, of all our signposts from number 1 at Carr Meadow to 119 at Elmerhurst by Lyme Park in 1954. Of all his signs, three of my favourites are S57 from 1924 (*see photograph*) above Hagg Side, Derwent, which has been moved twice, 118 from 1953 at West End Clough and 115 from 1950 (*see photograph*) at Lower Cliff Farm, Kettleshulme. 115 is in memory of



Sergeant AF Hart who died in active service with the RAF on 11 August 1943. It was the first of our signposts with a memorial plaque. Harold himself is commemorated on S118 and on Bridge 9 at Rowarth (*see photograph*), which he lived to see in 1982. There is a fuller tribute to him by John Harrop on pp21-22 of the 1997 Annual Report which you can find in the Members Area of our website.

In the hungry 30s, along the long, moorland tracks from Derwent to Moscar and Strines, simple, cheap cast iron plates with just two words and one or two arrows were used on these exposed routes going over Derwent Edge. Of thirty only seven survive (including three outliers: No 7 at Stony Ford, 28 at Alport Bridge and 30 on Darwen Moor). Being cast iron, they've lasted very well F18 cast in 1933 (*see photograph*). Interestingly some or all were erected for us by the gamekeepers. Since then twenty-three of the thirty have disappeared.



I have not been able to find out much about the period from 1954 to 1974 when the Signpost Supervisors were called F Higgins, T Ewart and H Lees who erected ten, forty and three signs respectively. The annual reports for that twenty-year period have little to say.

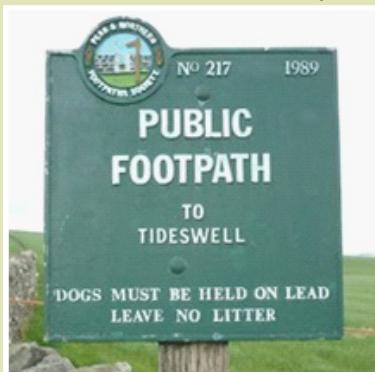
From 1975-1982 Frank Mason of Mellor was our Signpost Supervisor. Needhams Foundry in Stockport had closed, prices had inflated and vandalism was a problem, so Frank introduced a cheaper, plain, vertical, plate made by Crossley and Sons. Sixteen were bought, of which only three survive, due in part to a later replacement programme in the mid-noughties instigated by David Bratt and implemented by Neil Collie. The three survivors are 159 at Rowarth, 183 at Brushes, Stalybridge Country Park and 215 (*see photograph*) at Phoside Farm, Hayfield, where in his youth our founder member Thomas Mower had worked in the now-ruined mill.



The post of Signpost Officer was left vacant in 1983-4, but in 1984-5 the job was done by Charles Peers, who favoured wooden fingerposts on concrete stumps, something which I've copied. In 1987 his successor Percy Hutchinson of Marple Bridge, who died aged 100 this year, introduced the new, familiar style of signpost with its little badge or logo in the top left hand corner. The first was 217 (*see photograph*) located on the Limestone Way, just west of Tideswell. It was followed by several hundred more. Thirty-four years later we're ready with 618-21 at Chipping, Bowland and planning 622 at Stafford, which will be our southernmost sign. Percy and his wife Muriel are commemorated in S464 at Damstead Farm, Mellor near to where he lived. Leaving nothing to chance, he donated it himself.

To be continued.

David Morton, Signpost Officer



Signpost Report

On 13 August 2021 I thought that we had 539 signposts in total. Since then we've added five, but now the database shows that we have 547, confirmed by webmaster Mel Bale.

New signposts fitted August-November

S618 at SD 62721 44629, Laund Farm, Chipping, Bowland with Leagram, FP6 BW5
S619 at SD 62890 45029, as above, FP6
S620 at SD 62056 44122, as above, FP3-10
S621 at SD 62718 45101, as above, FP14, BW5
S622 at SJ 95333 25592, Hopton Pools, Stafford on Hopton FPs 4, 23 and 24, erected by John Hodgson and Chad Wilkinson. 618 and 621 were erected by myself, IMO Ramblers Martin Heys and Ron Wilson. 619 and 620 were erected by farmer Simon Stott, IMO Ramblers Ken Lawson and Alec Adams. All four were donated by Manchester and High Peak Ramblers.



S220 Combs - Before and after photographs of S220 at Combs, which was repainted by Steve Brown, who does an exceptional job!

Maintenance August-November - Note: SB&PC

stands for shot-blasted and powder-coated

S247(N) and 323 SB&PC and highlighted, ready for return to Mill Hill and Moscar.

Maintenance on 23 (SB&PC), 80, 95 (SB&PC), 185 (replacement of damaged MP), 220, 225, 250, 354, 392.

Replaced lost JUP and touch-up on 354 (Weaver Hills), which farmer has reinstated on a sturdy, square x-section metal post.

Replaced north plate on S247 (Mill Hill, KS), then refitted plate (SB&PC) and shifted JUP on S323 (Moscar).

S282 and 284 repainted then replanted at Edgworth and Haslingden Grane by John Hodgson, Andy McMullan and Graham Fullerton.

S262 reinstated on recycled timber posts, near Bronte Cottage, north of Hathersage by John Hodgson and Ted Wolfe.

Retrieved plate from S105 (near Cat and Fiddle) for SB&PC, inspected 103 (Sparbent), fitted MP to 532 at Wicken Walls for First Wed. Walkers, then new JUP to 531. 26 degrees C on moor tops!

Reinstated plate on S023 (Peep o'Day); retrieved S367 (Barlow House Farm, Hr Poynton).

Steve Brown repainted S093 south of Lose Hill.

Reinstated S095 after SB&PC, at Buxton Old Road, White Hall Outdoor Centre, Buxton, with the help of team member John Shuttleworth.

Inspected 14, 21, 22, 112, 187, 214, 288, 348, 349, 350, 372 (repainted logo and removed graffiti and stickers), 499, 500.

Repainted S311 (logo and edges); cleaned/inspected 565/6/7, 573; photographed locations for 624/5/6 (Clay Cross) and 630 (planned).

Fixed repainted plate to S367 (Lyme Handley).

Steve Brown repainted S250 (above Bunsal Incline).

Collected S105 from SPC, then inspected/washed/repainted 147, 200, 315, 429, 433/4/6/7, 557 near Shining Tor.

Replaced stolen JUP (old style) on 147 (Goytsclough) then met Steve Brown to reinstate S105 using recycled wooden post. Weather cold. Celebrated reopening of Cat and Fiddle with lattes.

Prospects

Four new signs at Stretton Hall Farm, Clay Cross, plus another at Alton, Ashover; one at Langley; one on Winter Hill; one by R Hamps at Morridge, Onecote, Leek, which may require brush-cutter. Over thirty signposts are still available for those wishing to make a donation of £375. See list on [Waymark](#) or contact me on 01612 837824 or davidcmorton@ntlworld.com and davidmorton1942@gmail.com.

David Morton, Signpost Officer

Inspector Spotlight: Bill Parke

As the coordinator of Footpath Inspectors, I am very well aware that we rely heavily on some inspectors to monitor PROW across many parishes. So, I am delighted to introduce Bill Parke in this Inspectors' Profile. As you will see, in his own words below, Bill's inspections cover a large area from North East Derbyshire to Staffordshire. In fact, he has more parishes than any other inspector (though Shirley Addy runs him a close second). He is a conscientious and efficient inspector who does a great job identifying footpath problems and following-up to get them resolved. It's good to hear that he, and his dog Bilbo, enjoy inspecting footpaths as a relaxing past-time which also brings benefits to walkers.



I joined the merry band of PNFS inspectors back in 2015 after seeing some of its wonderful signposts. This was soon after recovering from open heart surgery. I needed to recover and maintain my fitness and undertaking inspections on behalf of PNFS appeared to be an ideal solution - and so it has proved. Initially, my inspections were confined to Holmesfield in North East Derbyshire, but I have gradually increased the parishes I inspect to cover a significant area stretching from South Yorkshire through Derbyshire and Staffordshire. My inspection area covers urban Chesterfield and the southern outskirts of Sheffield, all of North East Derbyshire with its industrial and coal mining history as well as the foothills of the Peak District. It sweeps through the Chatsworth Estate and Bakewell to the River Dove at Hartington. That river is followed south to the edge of Ashbourne and then it is over into Staffordshire. Here I follow the River Manifold north from Ilam across moorland hills to Axe Edge the highest point in Staffordshire.

This is a heavy workload, 54 parishes in all with about 1250 km of PROW, but as the retired Chief Engineer of a FTSE 100 company I do not have any problem with this level of commitment, and it is thoroughly relaxing. I carry out inspections at least two days of each week and clock up between 12 to 15 km per day with my constant companion Bilbo, a 7 year old black Labrador rescue dog. He has a charming habit of sitting at a path junction awaiting instruction as to which direction to take. He loves the exercise but sometimes I think he only joins me for the picnic. Walking has always been part of my life. I walked with my parents mainly across the Chiltern Hills but my commitment moved on apace as a university undergraduate reading engineering. In those days one of the first requirements was to learn German as a significant number of textbooks were written in that language. The simple solution was to spend vacations walking across Germany, Switzerland and Austria in areas where no one spoke English.

Why do I do this work? I enjoy the mental and physical health benefits it brings, but I also want to put something back into the community. I had a very good education and professional career. In those days university education was at the tax payers' expense - so this is pay-back time. Also, I firmly believe that more people taking-up walking on our footpaths will relieve some of the pressure on the NHS.

My role in monitoring footpaths has led to many improvements which have benefitted walkers. For example, I reported the collapsed bridge across the River Moss on Eckington FP10 which was replaced by a newly installed footbridge. Another example was a stile on Parwich FP28 which was turned into an assault course by the landowner. Following my report, DCC insisted that the top rail was removed, and a wicket gate inserted into the wooden fence.



The good news is that I have built up a good level of trust with the Derbyshire CC PROW team and they do provide feedback on my fault reports. I find now that I can accept their word when a fault has been cleared - which saves on re-inspection visits. It is very helpful that PNFS has the Footpath Inspection Database, which is an ideal record keeping system. The main benefit is that it makes it easy for me to schedule my inspections which is essential given the number of PROW involved. It certainly cuts down on the paperwork compared to previous systems followed by PNFS. I would not recommend my workload to everybody unless you are willing to put in the time and you have the requisite level of fitness but even the inspection of one, or a few, parishes provides mental and physical benefits. So, choose the level you can manage and go for it!

If you would like to become a Footpath Inspector for PNFS contact me at inspection@pnfs.org.uk or ring 07841647275.

David Gosling, Footpath Inspection Co-ordinator



The Cheshire Circuit

A new long distance trail is about to become a reality. The Cheshire Circuit (TCC) is the brainchild of Martin Bracegirdle MBE. Martin has spent many months putting together a roughly circular route which takes in Cheshire and Shropshire, so a large part of it is within PNFS country. Of course the trail can be joined at any point, but nominally the start and end point is Frodsham (SJ 51724 77912) in Cheshire. From here the trail travels south along the established Sandstone Trail quickly passing PNFS Signpost 596 at Dunsdale Hollow (SJ 51404 76211) and then continuing to Whitchurch (SJ 54149 41574) before turning east towards the Shropshire Union Canal at Audlem (SJ 65860 43496). The route then heads north, along the Weaver Way to the Manchester Ship Canal. Finally, Frodsham Marsh (SJ 50772 78807) is crossed before returning to the starting point. The total length of the trail is approximately 100 miles.

Full details of TCC will soon be available from a dedicated website, www.thecheshirecircuit.org. This will feature 43 downloadable OS maps showing the exact line of the route. The maps have been annotated to show interesting features along the trail. There is an accompanying Navigation Key which even includes PNFS signs, etc. Martin has completed the entire trail 3 times and has been busy placing waymarks where appropriate. There will be an official launch of TCC next spring, exact details to follow nearer the time.

Members are invited to send their experiences and photographs of the route to me at webmaster@pnfs.org.uk so that they can be shared with others via a new TCC webpage on the PNFS website.

Mel Bale, Trustee, Membership Secretary and Webmaster



*The Old Hall, Frodsham, photo
© Eirian Evans*



*Waymarkers, Audlem photo
© Mat Fascione*



PNFS funds a new bridge at Wards Reservoir, Belmont

Our largest expenditure on bridges last year, about £14,000, was a project at Ward's Reservoir in the parish of Belmont just five miles north of Bolton. The bridge was finally opened in September this year at a ceremony which had been much delayed by the COVID pandemic. I was approached in the summer of 2019 by Keith Harrison on behalf of the Belmont Residents Association. He told me about a circular walk around a piece of water known locally as the Blue Lagoon. Unfortunately, this circular walk had become hazardous and indeed one local resident had suffered considerable injuries from a fall on this once popular walk.

When I first went to look at the situation it was the wettest November day you could imagine. Torrents of water were rushing down the hillside from Winter Hill and overflowing over the rights of way. Until a few years ago there was an elegant iron bridge over this fellside steam known as the Great Gutte, but when the bridge became unsafe, Blackburn and Darwen didn't have the funds to replace it. Crossing the Great Gutte was not the only hazard on this route. The path had become eroded and dangerous at one end of the reservoir and in a number of places the wooden walkways and footbridges were missing planks

There was considerable uncertainty about who was responsible for the land's other necessary repairs but, at an on-site meeting with Blackburn and Darwen's highways officers, it was agreed that, if the council met its responsibilities for maintaining the footpath. PNFS would fund a new bridge over Great Gutte. Nigel Howe, PNFS bridges officer, came up with an elegant solution which was effective and affordable. The old bridge abutments would be demolished and a new walkway with handrails would be secured across the existing stones of the overflow.

Although the works were delayed by COVID, it is to the credit of the officers that they approved plans and a contractor as soon as possible. They also carried out the repairs to the footpath and walk ways. At the opening of the new structure the Belmont residents expressed their gratitude to both Peak and Northern and Blackburn Council. After several years the walkway around Ward's Reservoir has been restored and both local residents and visitors to this well-known beauty spot can now stroll safely around the water's edge. A superb example of collaboration between PNFS and the local council.

*David Gosling,
Trustee and Inspection Co-ordinator*



Book Review: Walking The Invisible: Following in the Brontës' Footsteps

By Michael Stewart, Harper Collins Publishers, 2021

You don't have to be a fan of the Brontës in order to enjoy this book. If you are, then you will be able to literally follow in their footsteps as the author takes you on a series of walks linked to literary outputs of the family. The author, Michael Stewart, is Head of Creative Writing at the University of Huddersfield. He explains that, 'I travelled all over the North of England in search of their lives and landscape. In doing so, I realised how important it was to encourage other people to visit these places too.'

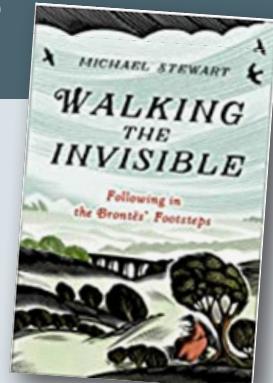
Many of you will be familiar with the Poet Laureate's 'Stanza Stones' (Enitharmon Press, 2013), verses written by Simon Armitage and carved into stone by Pip Hall. This has been devised into a walking trail, nearly fifty miles long, in the Pennines. For his book, Stewart also worked with Pip Hall who carved the words provided by four well known authors. He commissioned poems from Carol Ann Duffy, Kate Bush the singer/songwriter, the Scottish Makar Jackie Kay and novelist Jeanette Winterson. He did so believing that, 'these four writers have pushed forward contemporary literature in the same ways the Bronte sisters opened up the possibilities of the Victorian novel and Victorian poetry. Bold, experimental, playful and dark, the four poems are a recognition of what is alive in our language today.'

Stewart combines descriptions of his walks with historical information about the area, the Brontë family and other inhabitants in the region at the time. This is interspersed with anecdotes about local people he meets on his way and places he passes through. On a stretch of the Pennine Way he notes how the flagstones, 'are deep and solid and bear the marks of industry'. He reflects on their 'intriguingly circular' nature, 'quarried hereabouts to line the floors of factories and mills,' once trod by people in hob nailed boots, and now 'brought back to their place of origin to be trod by different types of footwear.' He decides to retrace the walk that Mr Earnshaw took in 1771 'when he travelled from Wuthering Heights to Liverpool', setting off from Top Withens as 'being the most likely source of inspiration for the farmhouse location of the novel'. A later chapter explores a further potential origin story for 'Wuthering Heights' in Dentdale, Cumbria. What links the two is a possible connection to the slave trade that he seeks to uncover.

There are five walking routes found at the end of the book. The excellent maps and illustrations have been drawn by Chris Goddard, author of, 'The South Yorkshire Moors', which was reviewed in *Signpost 59* (<http://pnfs.org.uk/newsletter/1902/10.htm>). The walks vary in length from 6.3 km (4 miles) to 23.7 km (14.5 miles) and include access via public transport and the availability of refreshments en route.

There is a great deal of interesting information in this book with the added attraction of walking being at its heart. Stewart has carried out a great deal of research and walked many miles to bring us an engrossing and fascinating read.

Pauline Williams, Member



'The idea of being authors was as natural to us as walking'

Drawing © Christopher Goddard

Parish Notes ~ Repton, South Derbyshire and Ramsbottom, Bury

The latest article in the Parish Notes series has been inspired by a book that I read over the summer months, *That Will Be England Gone, The Last Summer of Cricket* by Michael Henderson. The book is about much more than cricket though, it also explores 'landscape, place, poetry, music, national mythology' according to *The New Statesman*. These are some of the issues that I hoped that this series of articles would themselves include. Two successive chapters of the book each cover a PNFS parish, firstly, Repton in South Derbyshire and then Ramsbottom in Bury. I have a confession to make, I have never visited either of these parishes, however reading the book encouraged me to find out more about them and I hope you will feel the same after reading what follows.

As you will know Kathy McClean is the Chair of PNFS, she is also our Footpath Inspector for Repton. Kathy says that the parish 'includes a network of paths around the ancient village, interlinked with the famous school and long footpaths across open farmland with panoramic views'. These words embody what many would consider the essence of Repton, namely the 'ancient village' and the 'famous school'. The village's relatively small modern day footprint belies the fact that it was once the historic capital of Mercia.

Repton is home to one of the most prestigious 'public schools' in England. It was founded in 1557, so it perhaps doesn't have quite the same reputational attractions as Eton which is over a century older. The village's long and fascinating history is never far away. In 1974 an archaeological dig uncovered a Viking burial ground containing the remains of over 200 warriors. The River Trent forms part of the northern boundary of the parish but the river once ran much closer to the village as can be seen from the remnant 'Old Trent Water'.

A more recent change to the landscape



*Former Priory Building, Repton School,
Photo © Alan Murray-Rust*



*The Spinnings Brookbottoms Mill,
Photo © Paul Anderson*

came in the 1970 with the creation of the Foremark reservoir, half of which is in the southern part of the parish. The reservoir and its surrounds are a nature reserve and half of Britain's 57 resident species of butterfly species can be found in the area.

Ramsbottom couldn't be a greater contrast! In the Middle Ages it was an area of extensive woodland and once the trees were cleared it has been described as consisting of 'scattered woods, farmsteads, moorland and swamps'. The Industrial Revolution in the late 18th century transformed Ramsbottom into a Mill Town. Like many other towns in the area it became a centre for

spinning, weaving and printing. The relative affluence that those industries brought are long gone but the mill buildings remain as a reminder of the past. Robert Peel is synonymous with Ramsbottom although he was actually born in the nearby Bury. He made his fortune in the parish before becoming

Prime Minister in 1834 and again in 1841. Peel Tower overlooks the town from nearby Holcombe. As its name suggests the town sits in the bottom of a valley. The River Irwell bisects the parish flowing north to south, with the M66 following a similar but higher route to the east. The parish is flanked west and east by moorland, areas which I suspect offer the most interesting if challenging walking!

Despite the obvious differences in these two parishes, they both have a fascinating history and varied, interesting and contrasting landscapes. Well worth a visit I would suggest.
Mel Bale, Trustee, Membership Secretary and Webmaster

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.

Sheffield Footpath 651

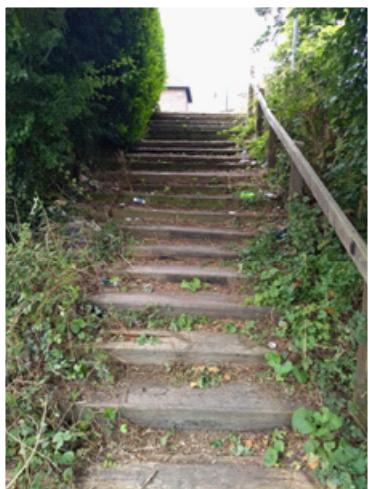
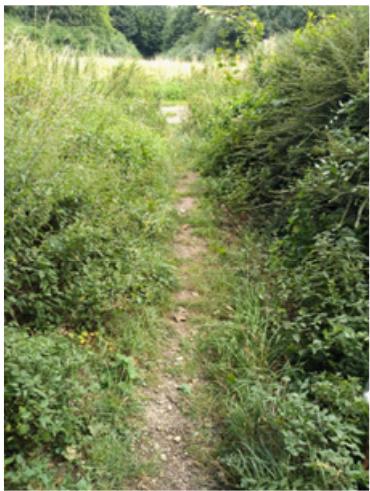
Manor Estate

Late summer I took part in one of the regular community litter picking events organised by Manor Knights, part of the Sheffield Litter Pickers coalition. We targeted Harborough Avenue between Manor Park Centre and the junction with Manor Lane.

I targeted the flight of railway sleeper steps on this public footpath between Harborough Avenue and Corker Bottoms Lane. It's the one that the "Fix It" group from the Sheffield Ramblers did work on a few years ago, installing a handrail. The steps were a mess. Only about one third of the width was available due to encroaching undergrowth and overhanging vegetation, especially the hawthorn/privet hedge from the adjacent house on Harborough Avenue. I cleared all the litter and scraped what I could of the vegetation away from the surface of the steps revealing more width. The adjacent householder needs reminding to cut back the hedge which covers at least a quarter of the width. The plaque screwed to the top post of the handrail saying that the work had been done by the Ramblers had been vandalised and is in fragments.

One photo shows a small tree/shrub growing from one of the steps and another shows the remainder of the path to the junction with Corker Bottoms Lane badly impeded by stinging nettle. The third photo shows the steps after removing litter but before I scraped off a lot of earth and upgrowth. Several of the railway sleepers are now rotting and will need replacing sooner or later. The fourth photo shows the path cleared of nettles.

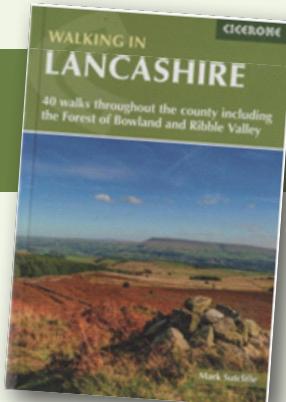
John Harker, Area Officer (Sheffield)



Book Review: Walking in Lancashire

By Mark Sutcliffe, published by Cicerone

Walking in Lancashire is a new addition to Cicerone's excellent collection of walking guides, although it is not a new title. Mark Sutcliffe was asked to update the late Mary Welsh's book of the same title. He is suitably qualified to do so. As well as being a Lancastrian, he is an experienced outdoor writer and editor of magazines such as *Countryfile* and *Trail*. *Walking in Lancashire* is in Cicerone's usual compact format but includes a new feature: folded covers which stiffen the book and conveniently contains a map of Lancashire marked with the walks' numbers and a contents listing for ease of reference. I would have liked to see the covers being slightly wider so they could also serve as bookmarks. Like the publisher's other walking guides, it is in very clear and easy to read layout and designed to be carried in a hand.



The guide starts with a brief introduction of Lancashire's countryside and a potted history of the County Palatine of Lancashire, descriptions of its geology and wildlife, and practical information. Interestingly, the author makes reference to neglected footpath maintenance, stating the quality of stiles, etc varies quite widely across the county, but praises Pendle, Blackburn and Wyre for their "excellent job". There are forty walks which are well distributed throughout the county, covering less obvious areas as well as the hotspots in the Forest of Bowland, Ribble Valley, Pendle and West Pennines.

The walks are circular and 5-10 miles long with most being around 7 miles long. One notable exception is the two-day 28 mile linear Bowland Traverse which includes what Alfred Wainwright described as "the best moorland walk in England". Each walk is headed with useful details of the start/finish locations, distance, total ascent, time, map number, refreshments, parking and public transport where available. These are followed by a short summary of the route. The routes are succinctly written with descriptions of highlighted features that do not interfere with its flow, and are accompanied by colour extracts of an OS 1:50k map clearly showing the route and colour photographs. After the walks, there is a route summary table and blank pages for notes. In case any 'signpost baggers' are wondering, there is one photograph of a PNFS signpost in the book.

As a Lancastrian, I found *Walking in Lancashire* to be a refreshing addition to my library of walking books of my county. As I've said on a previous review (*Signpost 65*), a Cicerone's walking guide has about everything what I want out of one. It is designed to be read easily whilst enjoying some of the most beautiful walking in the country. *Walking in Lancashire* is recommended to all walkers seeking the "Red Rose County (that) has it all."

Shirley M Addy, Editor, Footpath Inspector, Courts and Inquiries Officer

New guidance on writing emails

Probably at one time or another we have all experienced sending an email that is misinterpreted or causes offence that we did not intend, or perhaps we fired a response in anger using words we come to regret later.

With these problems in mind the Trustees have agreed a new set of guidelines on communications within the Society. Please take the time to read these guidelines which you will find on the PNFS website. Look for Good Practice in Communications.

<http://peakandnorthern.org.uk/about-us/constitution.htm#gpic>



The Great Wall of Ramsgreave

Ramsgreave is a small parish in Ribble Valley with more miles of PROWs than it has roads. As such part of our job at the Parish Council is to try to keep them in good condition. We have a very small budget so cannot fund any works ourselves and are reliant on external grant income for more or less everything we do. We were in the fortunate position of having a PNFS footpaths inspector (Shirley Addy) who had carried out a complete PROW survey of the parish. The survey raised several faults but the major one was the issue of a collapsed dry-stone wall blocking FP4 as well as scattered fallen stones along the length of the footpath, a high risk for sprained ankles. This was not news to me as I frequently walked this path, during lockdown I began to pass more people there and everyone complained about the state of it.

In the summer, Lancashire County Council offered the opportunity for PCs to apply for a grant of £500 for PROW maintenance. We applied and although I knew it wouldn't go far I hoped we could do something to improve this section of path. I knew that in theory it was the landowner that had a duty to maintain the PROW. This clearly wasn't happening so my first port of call was to establish why not. Some inquiries informed me that there was no landowner due to a legal dispute that I was warned could go on for years, so practically speaking there was no landowner I could ask to repair the path. However, I had been told by PNFS and colleagues from other PCs that to carry out work to the path without the landowner's permission was unwise. I explained this conundrum to the PROW team at LCC and asked if I could have their authorisation to have the wall repaired. They said I could as it was 'reasonable in the interests of the public to carry out the work' but advised me to inform anyone who might have an interest, out of courtesy, which I did.



I then set out to get the required three quotes. Being in the fortunate position of having a local resident who is a drystone waller I got my first quote very easily, but wallers are thin on the ground and I had to contact another five wallers and lots of emails and phone calls before I got another two quotes. Our local waller was the best value for money so he was awarded the tender and started work within a couple of weeks. I received a couple of alarming updates about how some bits had completely collapsed, but a couple of days later he told me it was finished. As soon as I had the chance, I set out in the driving rain to see the path for myself. I was absolutely delighted with the work. The path was completely clear and it was a pleasure to walk along, I couldn't wait to share it on facebook! Parish Council work has taught me that nothing is ever straightforward and the persistence required in the face of bureaucracy can be immensely frustrating. However, sticking with it and getting results benefits the whole community. Not everyone will use the path, but if residents see the parish council is working on their behalf then this hopefully leads to better engagement in future.

Kathryn Berzins, Member and Ramsgreave Parish Council Chair

Walks for PNFS Members

IT IS VITAL that attendees check all train times and pnfs.org.uk for any updates

SHORTER WALKS - All on Wednesdays

John Fisher, Co-ordinator, johnfisher560@btinternet.com, 01625 439298 or 07432 825624

January and February		No walks planned
9 March	Paul Easthope 01457 855015	Mossley circular, 7 miles. Paul is inspector for Mossley and will show some problems. Train from Manchester Piccadilly 09:58. Walk starts Mossley station 10:20
13 April	David Gosling 07841 647275	Marple circular, 8 miles. Walk devised to pass maximum number (20) of PNFS signposts. Train from Manchester Piccadilly 10:19. Walk starts Marple station 10:45
11 May	Dave Rigby 01484 846412	Slaithwaite circular, 7 miles. Train from Manchester Piccadilly 09:58. Walk starts Slaithwaite station 10:35
8 June	Peter Burns 01744 893432	Shorter walk, 5 miles. Start at the Tyldesley Interchange on the Leigh Guided Busway. More details to follow on website and in next <i>Waymark</i> or <i>Signpost</i>

LONGER WALKS - All on Wednesdays

Ken Smith, Co-ordinator, kensmith4rj@icloud.com, 07918 154959

Note: If you would like to lead a walk for one of the vacant slots please email Ken Smith on kensmith4rj@icloud.com

26 January	Udo Pope	Check website for update
23 February		Leader: Yet to be arranged
30 March		Leader: Yet to be arranged
27 April		Leader: Yet to be arranged
25 May	David Gosling 07841 647275	Adlington to Poynton walk, 12 miles. From Adlington Station 10:10 am (09:44 am from Manchester Piccadilly). Return from Poynton Station approx 16:00
29 June		Leader: Yet to be arranged
27 July	Ross Myddelton 07941 547378	Silverdale walk, 11 miles. Train 08:48 Piccadilly. Arrives Silverdale 10:29. Book Arnside return. Walk starts at 10:30
31 August	Dave Rigby 07527 582143	Slaithwaite hilly circular walk, 10 miles. Train leaves Piccadilly 09:58. Arrives Slaithwaite 10:33. Walk starts at 10:35
28 September	Ken Smith 07918 154959	Marsden to Greenfield via Pule Hill, 10 miles, 1432 ft. Train 09:58 Piccadilly. Walk starts at 10:30

EAST SIDE WALKS - All on Tuesdays

Ken Brockway, Co-ordinator, great.english.walk@gmail.com, 01773 287225

18 January	John Kidd 01283 701991	Bolsover Castle-Sutton Scarsdale-Chesterfield, linear 8 miles on a slow way. 10:04 service 1 from Stephenson Place stop 2. Walk start 10:35 Bolsover Market Place
15 February	Leader tbc 01773 287225	Kelstedge - Ashover circular 10 miles. 09:27 service X17 Coach Station stand D. Walk starts 09:50 Kelstedge bus shelter
15 March	Leader tbc 01773 287225	Chesterfield Round-Barlow-Linacre, linear 10 miles from Unstone-Chesterfield. 09:40 service 43 Beetwell Street stop B2. Walk starts 10:05 opposite Crow Lane
19 April		Check <i>Waymark</i> or website for update

Would anyone wishing to lead an east side walk please email Ken Brockway as above

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S095 Restored



On 20 September 2021, new signpost team member John Shuttleworth (*see photograph*) from Marple Bridge helped me to restore S095 to its position on Buxton Old/Roman Road, behind White Hall Outdoor Centre, which in 1951 was the first such Local Education Authority centre in Britain*. The 1938 cast iron plate weighs a ton and I'd found it hard work to remove it to my car for repair a fortnight earlier, so I was glad of his help getting it back up the hill. It's now been shot-blasted, powder-coated, highlighted and added to the list of signposts available as memorials.

* In the early 60s the working-class, Manchester mountaineer Joe Brown, who famously climbed the Old Man of Hoy, live in 1967 and 1984 on BBC 2, was an instructor there.

He created an orienteering course in the upper Goyt valley by carving six-figure grid references into rocks at twenty different locations. Each GR was a clue to the whereabouts of the next. I've recently managed to find nineteen of them.

The twentieth seems to have been a victim of erosion or damage.

David Morton, Signpost Officer

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