



Signpost

Magazine of the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

Number 78 - Winter 2023



Bridge over Highlow Brook which marks a parish boundary at the meeting of Highlow FPs 5 and 9 and Grindleford FP10.

Photograph by Ken Brockway.



From the Chair

As we transitioned into autumn and prepared for the shorter days of winter PNFS seems to have been as busy as ever. At the beginning of October, I attended a meeting of Lancashire footpath inspectors near Preston organised by David Gosling, Simon Worrall and Linda Smith. It was brilliant to see and meet so many colleagues, some have been volunteering for years, others are quite new. David Goode, from Lancashire County Council joined to share information and answer questions. It was a great session and probably a model to be repeated in other counties.

As you will know David Gosling has been our lead, ably supported by Linda, for footpath inspectors, training looking after and significantly increasing the number of inspectors over the past few years. I am delighted that Simon Worrall has been working alongside David for some months and has now taken over the role as lead officer for public rights of way inspectors. This is a great example of succession planning in action. Thank you to David for his invaluable work in this area. He of course continues as a Trustee and Vice Chair, his contribution goes well beyond one area!

At the end of October some Trustees and Courts and Inquiries Officers met at Taylor House to reflect on the priorities we identified last year and review the progress we have made. It was an excellent discussion and one of the key priorities we discussed is to encourage even more members to volunteer for roles within PNFS. Succession planning, as noted above, is vital to ensure the society thrives

for another 130 years. If you are interested in doing more for the society, just make contact. I can be reached by email at chair@pnfs.org.uk. Watch out for any specific requests related to individual roles.

Our next event is the half year meeting in Sheffield in November, which will probably have happened by the time you read this *Signpost*. We plan to share more of our thoughts for the future and seek your views in shaping a strategy for the next five years.

I live in Derby, which was badly affected by flood water recently. Walking near the river Derwent afterwards I noted that some of 'my paths' were flooded becoming impassable. This is something which may become more common over the coming years and which I am sure we will all want to monitor. Good flood defences have helped in some areas, but these extreme events do remind us of the force of nature.

Hopefully I will see you in November, and I would like to thank you all for the work you do to help us achieve our aims.

Kathy Mclean, Chair





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Fed-up with finding paths obstructed or overgrown?

Become a footpath inspector for PNFS!

Monitor rights of way on behalf of the Society

- in an area you have agreed to inspect
- at your own pace
- in your own time
- find the paths on our unique database
- record your inspections
- report problems

Have the satisfaction of supporting the work of the Society and protecting our right to walk public footpaths.

If you are interested contact the Society's Footpath Inspection Coordinator, Simon Worrall, by email inspection@pnfs.org.uk

PARISH NOTES

It was not possible to include the regular Parish Notes page in this issue due to a misunderstanding. There are so many wonderful unsung parts of our green and pleasant land - and we want to hear about them. If you would like to write about your parish or a favourite one, contact Mel Bale on membership@pnfs.org.uk.

CROW cut-off date commencement

On 20 October 2023, DEFRA made the following announcement.

In March 2023, the Secretary of State announced her decision to commence and extend the cut-off date (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 Section 53).

The Secretary of State has now asked for the cut-off date to be commenced and extended as swiftly as possible. Following this decision, the cut-off date provisions in CROW will be commenced and come into force next week on 25 October. On Thursday, 26 October a Statutory Instrument (SI) to extend the cut-off date to 1 January 2031 will be laid in Parliament and will automatically become law on 17 November unless it is annulled. This means that the cut-off date will come into effect ahead of the exceptions regulations.

The Secretary of State is strongly committed to implementing the exception relating to applications not determined at the cut-off date and is content with those relating to the List of Streets/National Street Gazetteer, urban areas, conversion of private rights of way to public and for BOATs. The Secretary of State would like to consider final drafts of the exceptions relating to unrecorded and under-recorded width and quashed DMMOs before proceeding, but does not consider that the exception on rights of way in regular use before the cut-off date should be included. The Secretary of State's view is that to provide certainty, rights of way that would fall solely under this exception should be applied for and either determined before the cut-off date, or become subject to the exception on outstanding applications and determined after it.

As further background on the SIs, the commencement order will commence only sections 53 to 56 of CROW. This will bring in the cut-off date as well as the regulation-making powers enabling us to lay the extension regulations (under s56) and later on the exceptions to extinguishment regulations (under s54). We will not at this stage be commencing either paragraph 4 of Schedule 5 to CROW (BOATs not to be added to the definitive map) or the cut-off date provisions in Dereg (sections 20 to 22), which will all be commenced in due course.

For any further information, contact me on CandI1@pnfs.org.uk.
Rhoda Barnett, Courts and Inquiries Officer



PNFS Social Media

Mark Chung, a Footpath Inspector in Pendle, is now responsible for social media for PNFS.

Members are invited to send any news items for Facebook or Instagram to markchung@pnfs.org.uk. Please note that this is the correct email address which was incorrectly quoted in the previous issue of Signpost.

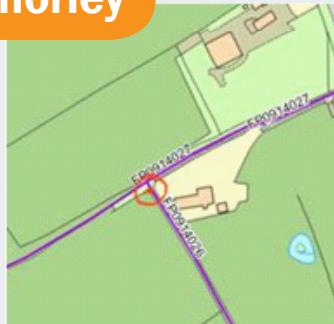


Euxton FP27, Chorley

Footpath FP27 is in the Euxton parish that I have just started inspecting. The rogue stile is in fact off the route for path 27 but access along the proper route is via a locked gate. This looks like some historical diversions have gone on, then the fence was moved leaving a stile in free space and a locked gate. Not very clever.

Steven Greenbank, Footpath Inspector

Map © Crown copyright 2023 Ordnance Survey. Media 026/23



The Misadventures of a Signpost Officer - New signposts S645-S648

Signposts 647 and 648 at Harrop Hall, Slaidburn resulted from a suggestion from our footpath inspector for the whole Ribble Valley, Shirley Addy. Her suggestions always include useful information such as the contact details of parish council clerks. This time there were two as Harrop Hall Farm straddles the boundary between Slaidburn and Grindleton. As a result I was quickly able to phone the farmer and fix a date to visit. Slaidburn is a lovely village and Harrop Hall is a picture-book farm with its cobbled yard and sheep dogs.

Luckily one of the farmer brothers walked me around and put me right on the line of the footpath to Harrop Lodge, which I had set incorrectly from my OS map. Plates were ordered from Leander in August and the signs were erected on a cold but very clear and sunny day on 15 October, followed by a visit to the Hark to Bounty pub. John Hodgson and I are looking forward to visiting Slaidburn again to erect signposts at nearby Broadhead farm.

Signposts 645 at Crowgutter farm, Ipstones came about when John and I reposted and reinstated S353 in the Weaver Hills, a few miles to the east. Looking at the OS map, I'd noticed a footpath junction below Ipstones Edge, where six footpaths converged so I called at a couple of farms before finding the landowner at a third - Crowgutter. He consented, I checked the relevant field, confirmed the specific locus and ordered the plate. We erected it just two days after the Slaidburn signs. Luckily I phoned the farmer to let him know we were coming and he said the ground was very wet, so I took a trolley just in case. On arrival on the 17th we found the farmer was away, but his wife kindly offered the use of his Kubota RTV. We were like two kids with a new toy. John allowed me to drive up and I duly turned off into the wrong field and got bogged down. While John tried to dig us out, the front wheels were slipping but the back ones were not turning. I suspected that we were not in 4WD mode, but neither of us remembered how to set it, so I phoned the farmer. Due to my hearing loss, I handed my phone to John, who was then able to put it into 4WD and abracadabra! the wheels gripped. We drove up the track to the next field and erected the sign. After that we drove back to Jenkin Chapel and erected 646 at Green Stack. I had got consent for 646 when I met the lady of the house in April as I reinstated S329's plate. This time it went uneventfully, until I banged my head painfully on the tailgate of John's estate car. I hope it was a case of third time lucky!

David Morton, Signpost Officer



Green Stack Farm, Rainow



Walks from Marple Station

Recently, by chance, I stumbled upon a twenty-eight page A5 booklet in the leaflet racks at Marple railway station. What's more, it was free, always a big plus for a Yorkshireman like me.

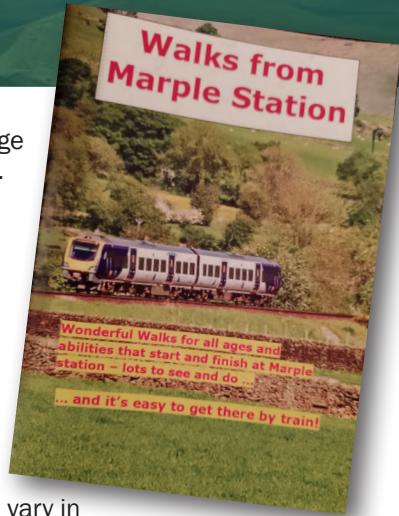
It has been published by the Friends of Marple Station, an award-winning voluntary community group set up to improve the station's facilities and lobby for improvements to services and trains.

The booklet, called *Walks from Marple Station*, was published in July 2023 and the eight varied walks described are designed to encourage visitors to explore the Marple area using the train and, hopefully, spend money in local pubs, cafes, shops etc. The walks vary in length from 5.9km (3.7 miles) to 13.2km (8.3 miles). They all start and finish at the station but some can be started or finished at other nearby stations. It has been funded with sponsorship from South East Manchester Community Rail Partnership, and Transport for Greater Manchester. The Marple & District Rambling Club, a PNFS-affiliate, checked and refined the walks prior to publication.

It says that all the walks are on public rights of way, but I beg to differ. The walk that my wife and I had planned to do before we arrived by train at Marple happened to coincide with part of one of the eight walks. The route, as it left Etherow Country Park, uses a permissive footpath to connect to a public footpath near Beacom House Farm. We found the permissive path to have been blocked off by a fence as it left the Park. It was clear that walkers were bypassing the fence which was easy enough. We followed it along the edge of a steep gully and then came to the reason for the closure. Part of the revetted path had collapsed into the gully. We got through and reached a stile at the junction with a public footpath with a faded Stockport Council notice pinned to it, saying path closed.

How long the path has been, or will remain closed, is unknown. However, a permissive path is an "orphan child" with no legal obligations on the part of the landowner or Highway Authority to maintain it. It certainly knocks a hole in the booklet's Walks 6 and 7, although Walk 6 does pass one of the Society's signposts which is shown in a small photo on page 20 of the booklet.

Each of the eight walks has a map to accompany it using what appears to a OpenStreet mapping base, with the route highlighted. Its inadequate for close navigation on the ground unless you are very familiar with the area, but I assume that the authors are aiming this booklet at those who will have an Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map to hand and are able to use it? Perhaps that should have been mentioned in the booklet's "Introduction"? There are numerous web links in the booklet to enable users to access more information about the features to be seen on the walks. This is a good idea when space is limited and cluttering the route descriptions needs to be avoided. There are also numerous photos to give some flavour to the walks.



These quibbles aside, the booklet is in my view, an excellent introduction to walking in the Marple area, a much underrated walking destination in my personal opinion. Perhaps because it's so close to the Peak District National Park, it gets overlooked as people rush to reach Edale or one of the other stations along the Hope Valley, Buxton or Glossop lines. I've been guilty of that myself, but having worked for this Society covering Stockport Borough as a Courts & Inquiries Officer since 2007, I've come to have a much better appreciation of its qualities as a walking destination.

PNFS has its issues with Stockport Council as recent events covered in the last edition of *Signpost* have highlighted. If this booklet increases the number of boots walking local public rights of way, that can only be a positive outcome. The best guarantor of open paths is public use and this booklet will hopefully wet appetites to explore more of Stockport's path network beyond those described in these walks. Maybe even persuade the 'powers that be' to invest more money in maintaining them? We can but dream.

If you can't find a copy, contact the Friends and they will send you a hard copy, or email you a pdf. Walk No.1 can be downloaded from their website and the others are due to follow. Email them on friendsomarplestation@gmail.com or visit their website at www.friendsofmarplestation.co.uk

John Harker, Area Officer Sheffield

Public Space Protection Order

A Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) allows a Local Authority to prevent or restrict a range of what they consider to be antisocial behaviour in a public space which includes public highways like public footpaths.

It can take the form that this Society deals with erecting gates across the public highway to prevent public use to deter antisocial behaviour.

This photo shows a rather odd one that I spotted on a recent city break in Cambridge. The competition for customers is clearly becoming excessive and leading to pedestrians feeling harassed.

John Harker Courts & Inquiries Officer (but not for Cambridge)



As I considered how to tell you about the history of our Society, I looked through the Society's 15th annual report for 1903. In many ways it seems surprisingly like today. There had been five meetings in the year, four nowadays. The society had £153 in the bank. Using an inflation calculator this is £15,2422, nowadays we have about £18,000. There are complaints about Cheshire County Council being unhelpful about erecting the fingerposts that the Society had purchased, issues about stiles, obstructions and even cyclists on footpaths, all sounds remarkably familiar.

A striking difference with our modern-day annual report is that it lists the members and membership paid. Most paid 5 shillings (£25 nowadays). Our current subscription is £4. However, a few members paid more. Two of these who could clearly afford this were Sir William Lever (later Lord) of Thornton Manor who paid £1 and the Duke of Westminster, Eaton Hall, Chester £2, 2 shillings.

Incidentally, Sir William Lever was also Vice President but resigned soon after as the Society objected to his plan to close the coastal footpath at Bromborough to allow industrial development. This episode in the Society's history is well documented as it went to court, along with Sir William Lever's spitefulness when calling the Society "this silly Society" and his erection of a corrugated iron wall to enclose the path when he lost the court case. He finally "won" in 1923 when he closed the path through an Act of Parliament. 100 years on there is pressure to formally reopen the path much of which is already being used.

Our Society which was 15 years old in 1903 is therefore second oldest continually running footpath preservation society that has retained its original name. I thought it was the oldest in England but found that the Leicestershire Footpath Association which remains active today was founded one year before in 1887. The Commons Preservation Society was founded earlier in 1865, but later changed its name a few times and is now the Open Space Society. The National Trust was founded in 1895.

So, what was happening in the second half of the nineteenth century to trigger this interest in preservation of footpaths and open spaces? A lot of it related to land enclosure which had started in earnest in the 17th century and continued till 1914. The process was driven by what is called the agricultural revolution and in its later stages was authorised through hundreds of acts of parliament. However, to quote the Land Magazine. "The enclosure movement was ended when it started to upset the middle classes." By the 1860s influential city dwellers noticed that areas for recreation were getting thin on the ground. Also, there must have been concern about footpaths because in many urban areas, footpath societies sprang up.

Amongst these were the Manchester Association for the Preservation of Ancient Public Footpaths which evolved into the Peak and Northern Counties Footpath Preservation Society in 1894. Now the Peak and Northern Footpath Society, the society of this newsletter. Also, in Wirral a footpath society was formed in the 1870s and some of its members were key players in the formation of our Society in 1888 which as I said has not changed its name so keeping that lovely if old fashioned term *preservation* in our name but dropped by most others for the sake of brevity, I guess.

The middle classes arose from the increased prosperity in the cities. They drove the early preservation movements. The Commons Preservation Society soon after its foundation was active in preserving of Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath for instance. This was the era when Liverpool was referred to as the second city of the Empire because of its prosperity. So, it is not surprising that its middle class who were also now able to commute from Wirral should be seeking to preserve their rural areas and paths. Merseyside was also the first area in Britain to develop public parks such as Princess Park in Liverpool and Birkenhead Park. The first meetings of our Society were in fact held in offices in Liverpool.

One of the first acts of the Society was to draw up maps of the local footpaths and open spaces. Another was to start to purchase wrought iron signposts which remain a characteristic feature of the Wirral landscape. In the first half of the 20th century Ordnance Survey maps did not have footpaths on them. The OS would publish maps with overprinting of footpaths for organisations such as ours. I have one of the later ones published in 1945. A quick trawl through the internet shows that other footpath societies were doing this at the same time. The Society also produced a handbook of Wirral Walks.

The interwar years produced many changes. The Society had by then erected about a hundred footpath signs. The growth of the motor car made walking on roads much less attractive. The working class became involved in the footpaths and land access as exemplifies in the mass trespass at Kinder Scout and the formation of the Rambler's Association. There is not a lot of evidence that our Society embraced this social change when they objected to families erecting tents on Leasowe Common. This was a period when there was a considerable loss of countryside to urban development particularly around cities. It resulted in a lot of discussion about town and country planning but not enacted till after the war.

In Wirral, the Leverhulme estates had bought much agricultural land in central Wirral to conserve around Thornton Manor Lord Leverhulme's home. During this period also the local councils and National Trust acquired much of the wonderful open spaces we have in Wirral in particular Thurstanston Common/Royden Park, Arrowe Park, Bidston Hill, Eastham Woods, Dibbinsdale and Caldy Hill.

The second world war resulted in the removal and storage of all signposts. When they were re-erected in 1944 it was found that some were missing and many suffered damage to the fingerposts which were replaced with less satisfactory steel plates. The 1944 annual report commented that an accumulated total of 155 signposts had been purchased. Also, that 20 paths had been closed due to military and agricultural requirements. I am not sure whether all have reopened.

The post war Labour government produced much legalisation about conservation and town planning that we still live with today. The requirement for a definitive map of footpaths and much of the planning legislation as exemplified by the 10 yearly local plans. This was followed in 1955 by the green belt legislation. All of this made statutory the responsibility for councils to fulfil much that the Society had been pushing for. However, in 1959 Cheshire County Council still had not produced the definitive map so the Society had to pressurise them to do so. This is the sort of action that the Society does today such as encouraging HM Government to complete our short stretch of the delayed King Charles III English Coastal Path. In conjunction with the Wirral Green Space Alliance, we successfully

opposed the bid by Leverhulme estates to build on the green belt. In addition, volunteer path clearance appears to have started in 1968 and continues today.

The council for a period repainted the signposts but we are back to having to do this ourselves. In addition, we have had to rescue some from a tangle of hedge growth that now affects many signs because of mechanical hedge cutting.

Why has the Society been so successful in keeping going? It is difficult to tell from the historical record. My view is that it has adapted to a changing world, and it has not been just a pressure group but has also been involved in practical tasks. It has, as many similar organisations, had periods when its survival has been threatened by the reluctance of the membership to come forward to be committee members.

The Society has made significant contributions to the development and preservation of public spaces and outdoor recreational areas, in Wirral. Some aspects of its legacy that it can be proud of include:

- **Being part of the creation of the Wirral Way and Country Park**

Transforming the abandoned Hooton to West Kirby railway into the country's first country park, the Wirral Way and Country Park, is a noteworthy achievement. This initiative which happened exactly 50 years ago provides a beautiful and accessible green space for the local community and visitors to enjoy nature and engage in outdoor activities.

- **Protection of the Extensive Footpath Network**

Protecting and maintaining an extensive footpath network has several positive impacts on the community. It encourages physical activity, enables people to explore and connect with the natural environment, and contributes to a sense of well-being. By safeguarding these footpaths, the Society played a role in promoting health and leisure in the region.

- **Preservation of Public Open Spaces**

The Society's involvement in the preservation and development of public open spaces contributed to the overall quality of life for the people living in Wirral. Access to such spaces enhances residents' physical and mental well-being, fosters community connections, and provides opportunities for recreation and relaxation.

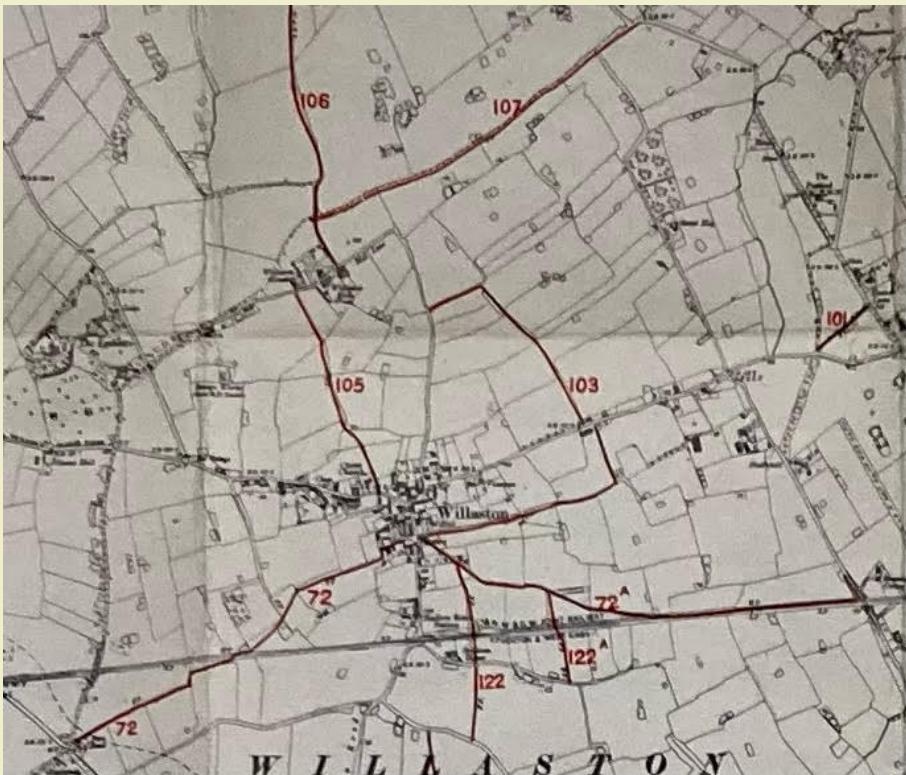
- **Influence on Local Councils and Funding**

While local councils and legacies may have funded the land acquisitions, the Society's influence and advocacy must have played a crucial role in shaping these purchases. Their efforts could have influenced decision-makers to prioritize public open spaces.

In summary, the Society's legacy includes a significant contribution to the creation and preservation of public open spaces, recreational areas, and footpath networks in Wirral. These achievements enrich the quality of life for residents and visitors, promoted a connection with nature, and provided opportunities for leisure and physical activity. The Society's influence on local councils and advocacy efforts should also be acknowledged as a factor in these accomplishments.

*Peter Todd, Wirral Footpath and Open Space
Preservation Society*





Signpost Report

Prospects and Signpost Donations

Three signposts at Broadhead Farm near Slaidburn are in hand and so is a fourth at Baileys Farm, Kettleshulme, a fifth at Thursbitch, near Shining Tor, a sixth on Longstone Moor to be sponsored by the Nottingham based Rock and Heather Club and a seventh at Flagg Hall south of Buxton. Footpath Inspector Cheryl Speight of Chorley responded to my request for suggestions and I am planning to visit Withnell Moor soon. We have landowner's consent from United Utilities for two signs overlooking Withnell and Brinscall.

David Gosling suggested three locations in or near Wincle and we have landowner's consent for two of them at Whitelee Farm, close to the River Dane. Our Footpath Inspector David Gartside has helped me greatly by meeting two other landowners to overcome problems of accessing one of the Wincle signs by car.

Two signs at Wensley, near Matlock, were almost in the bag, but the "owner", who gave consent over the phone, proved to be not the owner, when I drove over to recce the locations with the much-needed help of Footpath Inspector Richard Whiteside. Although the two locations are close together, they belong to different owners. I traced one, but he is down at his mothers in Dorset in an area of poor mobile reception and the other lives somewhere in Rowsley and is poorly.

Just one donation has been received to date (24.10.23). In June Dougie Morris of Rawtenstall, a Life Member of the Ramblers, kindly donated £500 for a first PNFS signpost in The Forest of Rossendale. With help from United Utilities and our Footpath Inspector Danny Allen, we are choosing a location on the moors with consent for one or two more. It is a good walking area with as yet no PNFS signs. Two more donations have been promised for signs not yet made.

New Signposts

S645 at SK 03244 50502 NE of Crowgutter Farm on Ipstones Edge, FPs 63 and 65

S646 at SJ 98878 76851 by Green Stack Farm, Rainow, FPs 10 and 11

S647 at SD 73439 51103 next to Harrop Hall Farm, Grindleton, Ribble Valley FPs 21, 25, 27

S648 at SD 73298 51182 near to Harrop Hall Farm, Slaidburn, Ribble Valley FPs 19, 25

Maintenance

April-May - Steve Brown repainted 89, 324, 231, 5 and 32. John Hodgson and I fixed 314 near Windgather to a Concrete Repair Post and retrieved the plate from 115 for SB&PC. At the end of May I retrieved 458 which had rotted and fallen from Manley Common. Footpath Inspector Jim Bosworth inspected 498/8 near Wirksworth and I inspected, cleaned and touched up 134, 614, 600, 335, 322 and 596 on or near the Sandstone Trail. Shirley Addy inspected 418/9 and 385/7 at Lowgill

May-June - Steve Brown repainted logos on 486 then 119 and plates 440/2 near Breckhead. John O. and Paul M. of Marsden repainted 358/9. Colin B. of Buxton repainted 237 below Fernilee.

John Hodgson and I reinstated 458 at Manley. PDNP were notified of damaged finger on F8 at Bullshaw Farm. I inspected 234, 272, 297, 318, 549, 563, 24,

27, 39, 166, 173, 226, 334, 444, 521, 414, repaired finger on 206 + new MP for Phyll Pott and retrieved 275 (rotted post) from Dinting, Glossop.

July-September - John A. repainted 339 at Thurstaston. Steve Brown repainted 105x-plate then 348, 439, 499, 500 and 285. Shirley Addy inspected 534/5 and 594 and cleaned 386 at Wiswell. I reinstated 275 and 115 and inspected 147, 302/9, 532, 243, 583, 388/9, 390, 454/5, 283.

Drove to Slaiburn and got consent for 5 signs, also to Baileys Farm and Longstone Moor; reposted/repainted/reinstated 302/9 near Wicken Walls and 182; repainted 160 and F15 at Slippery Stones, fixed MPs to 580, 60, 639 and 284. Cleaned and touched up or repainted 256, 336, 467/8/9, 483, 502/3, 554, 464/5, 300, 360-365 and 438 at Wakefield/Doncaster.

Visited farmer at Whitelee Farm, Wincle re two new signs, then "maintained" 104, 156/8, 176, 189, 239, 321, 428, 559, 611, then 197/9, 431/2, 461 and 501 at Mellor. On the 23rd I had a 10 hour day driving first to Colne then via Haworth to East Morton. I repainted 551 near Bronte Falls, which had been defaced, then touched up 411/2, 514, 554/5 and checked bridges 26 and 27 in The Glen at East Morton, Keighley. B27 was wrecked by the 2015 floods, but has been replaced by Bradford C'side Services – see photo in S & B Gallery on our website. Collected 8 new plates from Leander at Dove Holes

October - 363 was reinstated by Countryside Officer Gail Butterworth at Anglers Country Park, Wakefield. Maintained 342, 475/6/7/8/9, 480/5, 515 at Limb Valley Park, Sheffield and 31, 145, 177, 188, 250, 338, 373, 490, as part of an abortive trip to Wensley re consent for two planned signposts.

Thanks to all my helpers!

David Morton, Signpost Officer

S160 and F15 Repainting

David Morton and signposts S160 and F15 after three hours painting at Slippery Stones, Upper Derwent Valley. There were a few midges about, and both his hands were occupied whilst he was up the stepladder with paint and paintbrush or paintpad, so he was glad there weren't millions!



PNFS Lancashire Inspectors Regional Meeting



On Saturday, 14 October 2023, twenty-three inspectors and members attended PNFS's first Lancashire regional meeting. Held at Broughton and District Club near Preston, it was aimed primarily at Lancashire inspectors.

After opening at 9.30 for tea and coffee, chair Kathy Mclean welcomed the meeting at 10.00. She drew attention to how PNFS needed more trustees, courts and inquiries officers and footpath inspectors.

Lancashire has:

- 12,437 footpaths, bridleways and other public rights of way
- 245 parishes
- 14 borough council areas
- Only 37% of these PROWs has PNFS inspection history
- Currently PNFS has 33 footpath inspectors in Lancashire.



David Gosling, retiring inspection co-ordinator, and Linda Smith (Volunteer Support) discussed the other responsibilities have besides inspecting and reporting faults, such as reviewing proposed diversions and DMMOs, examining planning applications, liaising with parish councils and looking for possible locations for signposts which are the society's silent ambassadors.

Our guest speaker was David Goode, head of the Lancashire County Council's PROW team. He explained how LCC manages 5,500 km of recorded PROWs and how they prioritise different faults. LCC mainly relies on contractors to rectify faults, fit new gates or footbridges. They work through direct action, with parishes and user groups, serve enforcement notices, prosecute (although rarely).



David also explained how often it was more cost effective to supply materials and pay for repairs rather than leave the job to the landowner particularly as LCC no longer repair or replace stiles, using metal gates instead. The LCC gives £500 per year to any parish council using the Local Delivery Scheme for maintaining or improving PROWs.

David questioned the value of footpath inspections and argued that intervening at an early stage when planning applications for development are submitted would be more useful. In his conclusion David admitted that his officers could not carry out footpath inspections and that job was 'up to you guys'. We had the opportunity to ask David questions and many inspectors raised issues they had come across and wanted resolved!

After lunch, there was an open forum with our new inspection co-ordinator, Simon Worrall who discussed aspects of the Footpath Inspection Database (FID) and gave an update on Path Checkers.

Lastly, John Harker, Courts and Inquiries Officer, explained the various types of legal actions available to PNFS to encourage HAs and landowners to rectify faults on the PROW network. John also highlighted areas that inspectors should look for such as new stiles and other limitations that may not be authorised. He reminded inspectors that limitations were for the benefit of the landowner not the walker!

The meeting closed after 13.30. Thanks to the good turnout, David Gosling said that a regional meeting will be held in Leeds for inspectors covering Yorkshire.

Shirley M Addy, Footpath Inspector and Courts and Inquiries Officer



Photographs show presentations given by Kathy Mclean, David Gosling and Linda Smith, David Goode, Simon Worrall, John Harker



Waddington FP11

In May 2023 I received a report via John Fisher, Assessor, regarding a damaged stile on FP11 in Waddington, Ribble Valley. It stated “there is a dangerous stile near Feazers wood where the base that you step on is secure but all of the fence posts and support posts have rotted at their base, resulting in none of them being fixed to the ground. The whole fence/support moves and doesn’t give any support as you climb.” In 2017 I had first reported this stile as having its bottom step fallen off but since then it had deteriorated a lot. As I had already received two reports on the same stile during the last twelve months, I visited it and found it to be loose, leaning and difficult to climb.

Early June 2023 I asked Lancashire County Council when the faulty stile would be rectified, stating that it was on a well-used path in a popular area. I had no reply when the Courts and Inquiries Officers meeting was held in the next month so I was given approval for a S130A Letter Before Action to be sent to LCC. Again no response was forthcoming so late August 2023 I served S130A Notice on the County.

On 23 September 2023 I was pleased to get Notice from LCC that the “Highway Authority have negotiated replacing the stile with a kissing gate and the works will be undertaken shortly.” Great! I waited until today, 24 October, before visiting the new gate.

I was disappointed to see the same old stile still standing. The fencing had been straightened and secured by several new posts and on one side a wide metal gate was propped by posts to serve as a fence. The stile had received a new post so it was secure. Naturally, I am not happy with this new arrangement. The farmer had clearly taken some time to strengthen and

straighten the fence and stile, which suggests to me that he has no intention of having a kissing gate fitted.



I had already decided to write an article about my latest success as a Courts and Inquiries Officer for this issue of Signpost and had expected to take a photograph of a new kissing gate to go with it. Unfortunately, I can only include one of the newly-strengthened stile and gate acting as a fence. As the stile is safe and sound to use, there is not much that can be done, except perhaps wait for the whole edifice to start leaning again. .



Photographs show (top) stile before action taken and (bottom) stile as now.

Shirley M Addy, Footpath Inspector and Courts and Inquiries Officer



Seen these? Use Path Checker app!



Did you know that PNFS has its own smartphone app called Path Checker? Path Checker is free and can be downloaded from both the App Store and Google Play.



It has three features. By default it shows the user's grid reference and allows them to enter details of a fault have just encountered. An existing or new photograph can be selected and then all the details emailed to the society by pressing a submit button.

The other two features are available via the 'Map' and 'PNFS' icons at the bottom of the screen. The former shows the society's signposts and bridges via standard location icons. Selecting an icon shows a photograph of the signpost/bridge along with its details. 'PNFS' provides three links to the society's website, 'Join Us', 'Support Us' and 'About Us'.

Our new app simplifies the reporting of a fault. Why not download it now and try it out? Tell your friends and family about it as well.

*Mel Bale,
Trustee,
Membership
Secretary and
Webmaster*



Inspecting Pendle

The borough of Pendle lies in north-east Lancashire covering an area of 169 square kilometres (65 square miles in “old money”) and has a population approaching 96,000 residing mainly around the towns of Colne, Nelson and Brierfield in the south of the district and Earby and Barnoldswick in the north. The Leeds to Liverpool canal completed in 1816 meanders through the borough and was an important transport link for the industrial development of the area later enhanced by the East Lancashire rail line connecting Colne with Burnley, Blackburn, and Preston and most recently the M65 motorway, first opened in 1981 (linking Brierfield to Burnley) has since extended along the Colne valley connecting the borough with the major road networks around Preston.

Historically Pendle has long been associated with the textile trade, primarily cotton weaving, due to the climate and abundance of water. The borough was the site of many large mills which diversified into weaving silk and man-made fibres in the 20th century. Most of the mill buildings have been lost although some remain as factories or have been converted into housing. Modern day manufacturing in Pendle, as it is in Lancashire more widely, is dependant on the aerospace industry with many engineering companies producing components for larger businesses in the UK and overseas. One treasured relic of the bygone industrial age is the last remaining Clarion House near Roughlee. The Clarion was a place of relaxation and escape for the mill workers based in the towns of Nelson and Colne. It's still open today on most Sundays for a pint of tea!

Despite Pendle's industrial heritage much of the borough is still very rural and dominated by the famous Pendle Hill. Formed from Carboniferous aged sandstone known as Pendle Grit, the hill dominates the area and is of course very popular with walkers. Pendle is also well known for its Witch folklore and the 45-mile Pendle Way winds its way through the countryside, way marked with special wooden signs depicting a flying witch on a broomstick! Pendle is fortunate in having a rights of way network which is like a spider's web of paths across the whole district. This gives excellent public access to Pendle's varied landscapes of woods, moors, fields, historic towns, villages, and farms. The network of footpaths and bridleways create endless opportunities for walks of different lengths as well as many every-day paths for short trips. As well as providing a resource for local people Pendle attracts individuals and walking groups from across the north-west.

For many years a PNFS stalwart, Shirley Northcott, dealt with diversions and other proposed changes to the Pendle network but the Society had very few inspection records in the database. In 2022 PNFS appointed Mark Chung and Simon Worrall as Footpath Inspectors. Between us we now cover seven of Pendle's historic 18 parishes. There are nearly 1,700 footpaths in Pendle and we've inspected around 35% of the paths in less than two years. Only another 1,100 to go! Pendle Borough is fortunate to have a full time Countryside Access Officer (CAO) who looks after the PROW network. Whilst Lancashire County Council maintains oversight, the Pendle CAO looks after the day-to-day maintenance of the footpaths and deals with diversion orders, notices, and enforcement action within the borough.

Over recent years the CAO has developed a small number of volunteers to help with maintenance. Pendle has a larger volunteer pool managed by the Green Spaces team that organise vegetation clearance, tree planting, and litter picking activities particularly around several nature reserves and recreational areas. A small number also help the CAO with PROW maintenance. Since being appointed Inspectors both Mark and Simon regularly volunteer with the CAO to sort out PROW issues mainly the replacement of broken stiles and wooden kissing gates with metal CentreWire gates. We have also installed small bridges over ditches, planted signposts, refurbished existing gates, and dug many, many post holes some four feet deep! We go out in all weathers; it's mainly wet when Mark volunteers and usually dry when Simon's helping out!

We have now been helping the CAO for over a year and have picked up the knowledge required to install gates and other PROW furniture. Recently we have been discussing carrying out some of this work without the direct supervision of the CAO and along with a few other volunteers carrying out improvements independently so the CAO can spend more time focussed on other areas of his role which often suffer due to the current maintenance demands. Clearly health and safety is important and in order to facilitate this project PNFS has recently approved a small grant to enable Mark and Simon to attend a specialist outdoor first aid course which is a prerequisite for remote maintenance work out in the countryside. Volunteering in this way has save many thousands of pounds and will make the very limited PROW budget in Pendle go further.

As well as inspecting and reporting faults we both get to help fix them as well (perhaps not the same faults but Pendle faults nonetheless). Like other parts of Lancashire, faults are dealt with using a priority matrix so the ones we get involved in are very often those reported by members of the public or local councillors. It's very rewarding to meet walkers complimenting the work and how much they prefer the new metal gate!

Below and overleaf are some before and after photographs of the work we have carried out in Pendle recently.





The combination of inspecting and volunteering is something we are both very keen to continue. We have quite a few parishes that currently have no inspector so if you live in or near the area and fancy joining us in Pendle we would be pleased to hear from you. There's also a fair chance we'll get you digging post holes too! (If you do want further information about inspecting in Pendle please email inspection@pnfs.org.uk)
Mark Chung and Simon Worrall, Pendle Inspectors and Countryside Volunteers

Whilst planning a route for a walk with friends in the Ribble Valley, of which I am the footpath inspector, I always pencil locations on the map where I have previously reported faults. That way I can ascertain whether an issue I encounter on the walk is a new one or has already been reported. Also, when I see a shiny new kissing gate, I will know that it replaces a stile previously recorded as a fault.

Needless to say, it's always good to see a fault sorted. During a recent walk in the parish of Dutton, I was pleased to see that a badly damaged stile had been replaced by a metal kissing gate. In November 2019 I had described fault as "Stile is badly damaged at SD65595 36573. One step is missing and the other is ill-placed, the uprights are loose so the whole structure wobbles, making climbing rather hazardous." See the before and after photographs.

Lancashire County Council has a policy of not repairing faulty stiles or replacing them. Instead they install metal gates. As well being easy to spot, they are accessible, will never rot or collapse and are cost-effective. I've reported well above five hundred faults to the LCC. I know the sheer bulk of them have not been fixed, nevertheless it's always a bonus to be able to tick off one fault during a walk. Another six hundred to do

Shirley M Addy, Footpath Inspector and Courts and Inquiries Officer



Checking old faults



PNFS plaque



A plaque dedicated to the founding of PNFS can be found on the corner of Peter Street and Mount Street in Manchester city centre. It reads:

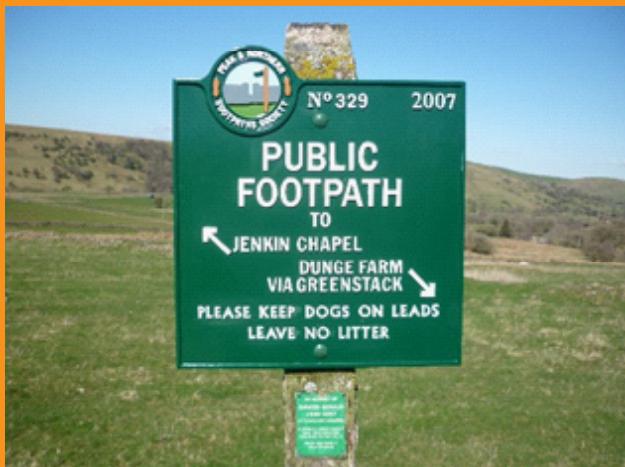
The Peak District and Northern Counties Footpaths Preservation Society was founded on this site 16 August 1894. Photograph taken by a Ramblers member forwarded to me. Geoff Jones, Courts and Inquiries Officer

S432 Mellor Golf Course

Before and after (with dog) painting photographs of S432.



David Morton,
Signpost Officer



PNFS Signposts - considerations for selecting locations

The Society urgently needs more locations for its signposts. If you know of a suitable place for one, please bear in mind the following considerations. Contact David Morton, Signpost Officer, on signposts@pnfs.org.uk. Signposts can be sponsored with commemorative plaques.

We always need

- The landowner's consent. Try asking at nearby farms. If the landowner remains unknown, look up the contact details of the Parish Council Clerk.

We like the Signposts to be

- At a junction of footpaths and/or bridleways in walking country.
- Accessible for installation and future maintenance.
- In parishes and areas which have few or no existing PNFS signs as "silent ambassadors".
- Close to a wall or fence, if in a field used by horses or cattle.
- In the shelter of trees, which minimises the need for maintenance.
- In locations where lost walkers face potential danger, eg. those regularly visited by Mountain Rescue Teams in bad weather.

We like to avoid

- Locations near busy roads or roads treated with salt in the winter, eg. A57.
- Locations adjacent to an existing Highway Authority or Peak District National Park footpath sign.
- Ex-farms now in multi-occupancy where you need to get 6 or 7 peoples' consent.
- National Trust (NT) estates, unless we have a donor willing to accept their ban on memorial plaques (eg. S526 above Alport Castle, which was actually donated by the Friends of the NT).
- Locations where vandalism is a likely problem.

In August 2023 Wilpshire saw seven new gates being fitted on its footpaths. These were of the galvanised metal self-closing type and were paid for by Wilpshire Parish Council.

Last year Councillor Tony Gaffney on behalf of the Parish Council purchased ten metal gates because a significant saving in costs could be made, with the intention of them being fitted whenever the contractor was available. A total of £2,826 including £225 carriage was paid. Eight hoops were kindly provided and paid by Lancashire County Council's PROW department because the farmer would not allow the gates to be installed without them. The gates and hoops were then stored by the contractor. The contractor Paul Mollart was paid £175 for fitting each gate.

The remaining three gates will be fitted later this year, one of which awaits the farmer pulling an old post out with his tractor.

Recently I inspected these newly-installed gates and I can readily testify they are a great improvement. In at least one location they are easily spotted from a distance and have made the footpaths easier to follow or find. I would like to thank Wilpshire Parish Council, especially Tony Gaffney, for their continuing efforts in maintaining this parish as a pleasant and enjoyable area for walkers.

Shirley M Addy, Footpath Inspector and Courts and Inquiries Officer

The new gates of Wilpshire





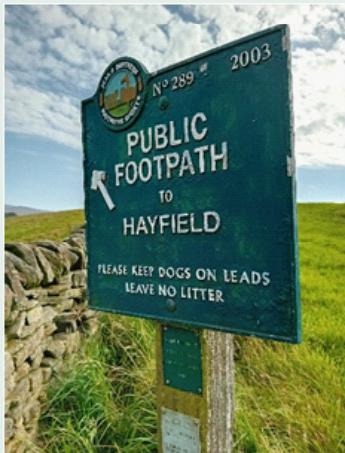
An interesting ambiguous sign



The route is only vaguely shown on maps as a cycle route. It offers a direct link from Conisbrough station to the Trans Pennine Trail. It is the only direct link northwards over the River Don because Conisbrough FP14 does not have a bridge.

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector

S289 repainted by Steve Brown in September 2023



Photographs show before (left) and right (after) of signpost

A day in the life of a Signpost Officer



S551



Japanese translation on S411



S551



B27

On Saturday, 23 September 2023 I spent ten hours driving and attending to signposts between Colne, Oxenhope and East Morton near Keighley. The first was S412 on the Pendle and Bronte Ways above Trawden, then onwards to S551 near Bronte Falls, which had been reported as defaced.

S551 is about a mile up a cart track, so to save time and carry extra graffiti removers, I used my folding “rescue bike”, which I’d recently pulled out of the Micker Brook in Cheadle’s Brookfield Park and repaired. I had to push it uphill a couple of times, but it certainly saved time on the return which was nearly all downhill. It was a very busy footpath that sunny Saturday, but I rode considerably and explained to some of the many walkers that I’d needed the bike for the job I had done on the signpost.

Next came S411 on Penistone Hill, which stands next to a Highways Authority fingerpost, which points the way to Bronte Falls in Japanese as well as English, due to their keen interest in the Brontes and Haworth. After touching up S411 and S514 at Oxenhope, I then drove through Haworth and Keighley to check, cut the brambles and touch-up S554 at Sunny Dale, followed by a pleasant walk through The Glen to S555 at Upwood, East Morton, in the company of a young couple foraging for fungi. On returning through The Glen, I took photos of Bridges 26 and 27. They were installed in May 2009 by Bradford Countryside Services, but in 2015 Bridge 27 was destroyed by the floods which hit Yorkshire hard. It has now been replaced by a recycled plastic one. It was 7pm when I got home, but I’d met some nice people and enjoyed the mixture of activities yet again.

David Morton, Signpost Officer

PNFS walks

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



Saturday, 6 January 2024 Shirley Addy 07434 897143 text	Ribchester. Easy/medium, 9 miles. We walk to Stydd, Duddel Hill, Green-gore and Hurst Green. We bag three PNFS signposts en route. We then return by following the River Ribble back to Ribchester. Walk starts 09:30 Ribchester car park, P&D, PR3 3ZH, SD64827 35181.
Wednesday, 10 January 2024 Shirley Addy 07434 897143 text	We follow part of the Ribble Valley Jubilee trail. Easy/medium. We climb to the Top of Ramsgreave and visit Mellor's underground nuclear bunker used by Royal Observation Corps in the 1950-60s. We continue the trail downhill to Copster Green before ascending back to the start. Manchester Victoria 09:43 to Ramsgreave and Wilpshire 10:40. Walk starts from station at 10:41.
Wednesday, 31 January 2024 Shirley Addy 07434 897143 text	Whalley. After climbing the Nab, we admire views from the craggy Bowley Hill before dropping down to circumambulating Dean Clough reservoir. Lastly we follow the traffic-free Moor Lane back into Whalley. Train 09:43 Piccadilly to Whalley 10:51. Walk starts from station at 10:55 (and 11:05 at Dog Inn for those parking on Accrington Road, BB7 9SP, SD73317 36196).
Saturday, 3 February 2024 David Gosling 07841 647275	Ring of Trees, Buxton, 10 miles. The Ring of Trees walk is a circular route through the woods cared for by Buxton Civic Association. Start at Buxton Railway Station (SK059737) at 10:00. Parking on nearby streets. Visiting Poole's Cavern café approximately halfway round. Moderately hilly (2,000 feet ascent). See https://buxtoncivicassociation.org.uk/woodlands .
Wednesday, 14 February 2024 Paul Easthope 07759 653354	Meet at Glossop railway station (SK 0342 9421) for a circular walk of about 8 miles. Train from Manchester Piccadilly leaving at 9:33 arriving Glossop at 10:03. Walk starts at 10:15.
Wednesday, 28 February 2024	Walk leader required. Details to follow on website.
Saturday, 2 March 2024 Kathy Mclean 07967 802549	Walk details to follow on website.
Wednesday, 13 March 2024 David Gosling 07841 647275	Meet at Furness Vale railway station (SJ 00840 83552) for a circular walk (1100 feet ascent) of about 6 miles via The Navigation at Bugsworth Basin. Train from Manchester Piccadilly leaving at 9:51 arriving Furness Vale at 10:29. Walk starts at 10:30.
Wednesday, 27 March 2024	Walk leader required. Details to follow on website.

Want to lead a walk? Contact: Shirley Addy (Saturdays), smaddy@talktalk.net;

Ross Myddelton (Wednesdays 5-9 miles), r.myddelton1@ntlworld.com;

Ken Smith (Wednesdays 9-12 miles), kensmith4rj@icloud.com

Saturday, 2 September

saw chair Kathy Mclean leading walk from Eyam in beautiful weather.

Photograph taken at S457.



Wednesday, 11 October

11th short walk started and finished at Littleborough station. Up to Blackstone Edge ascent 1,500 ft then onto Pennine Way and Pennine Bridleway, 9 miles. Four walkers in continuous mist, rain and wind so wet that we didn't stop for lunch or stop walking. A big thank you to walk leader Mick Chatham.



Wednesday, 30 August

Longer walk Burnley to Todmorden led by Gavin Miller. Photograph taken at the Singing Ringing Tree



Holmfirth Footpath 65



A long standing obstruction on Holmfirth FP65 has now been removed and replaced with a British Standard gate following service of a s130A notice on the local council. Whilst I may be regularly disappointed to see obstructions stay in place my dogs are quite happy with the frequent visits to check on progress!

Andy Leader, Courts and Inquiries Officer