

Magazine of the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

Signpost

Number 79 - Spring 2024



Saddleworth FP92
Photograph by Ken Smith



From the Chair

Happy New walking Year! I hope you enjoyed the festive season however you marked it. The news that December 2023 was the wettest and warmest for a century fits with how it felt. These conditions certainly make footpaths more likely to be wet and boggy and underlines the importance of our work to bring their condition to the attention of the Highways Authorities. Some of my local footpaths near the river Derwent have been completely under water. Today I was walking on Stannage Edge, along with many others, no hint of warmth in January, although the weak sun briefly provided some respite from the bitter wind. Some of the paths were a challenge to both boots and gaiters!

Reflecting on the last part of 2023, I was delighted to see so many members at the half-year meeting in Sheffield. We discussed our current thinking about the strategic direction of the society, heard an introductory talk from our new Footpath



Inspector Co-ordinator, Simon Worrall, an inspirational few words from our President, David Bratt and a great talk by our guest speaker.

As we start the new year, a time to look forward and make (or not) resolutions and plans, it feels like a good moment to think about our hopes and aspirations for our voluntary work in the year ahead. To help us achieve these we will be looking for new Trustees, additional volunteers to take on the role of Courts and Inquiries Officers, more Footpath Inspectors, especially for the parts of our geography which are more sparsely covered, and for successes in preserving and improving footpaths. Let us know if you feel able to help with any of these roles.

I mentioned our strategic thinking and we hope to have a strategy for the next five years to present at the Annual General Meeting in May. We will be hoping for your input to make sure it meets our objectives and is in line with your wishes as members.

Look out for more regional meetings following the very successful one in Preston in October, and for more training opportunities if you are a footpath inspector.

I hope to see you at one of the gatherings this year, in the meantime thank you for supporting this important work.

Kathy Mclean, Chair





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Annual General Meeting

The Society's annual general meeting will be held on
Saturday, 18 May 2024
at the Guildhall, Stockport.

This venue is near Stockport's railway station and on major bus routes such as 192 and has good parking. Further details will be circulated to members.

Summer issue of Signpost and Annual Report

It has been decided to combine the Annual Report with the summer issue of *Signpost*. This is to reduce the printing and postage costs.

Therefore the deadlines for copy for *Signpost* are now:
spring - 15 January; summer - 1 April (with Annual Report); autumn - 1 July; winter - 1 October.

Please note that all reports for the **Annual Report** must be sent to PNFS Secretary, David Brown on secretary@pnfs.org.uk no later than 1 March.

Cattle Attacks on Walkers - HSE Guidance

It is almost impossible to avoid walking in fields with cattle in the English countryside, but since my incident in August 2021, I am much more cautious than I used to be when walking near cattle. I am also much more aware of the fatalities and injuries which have been inflicted on walkers because of cattle attacks. For example, in the Ribble Valley, in February 2023 there was a fatality where the victim was an experienced walker - <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/uk-news/mum-who-loved-outside-dog-26172055>.

HSE (the Health and Safety executive) seem to have hardened their position on this issue in the light of growing public concern. In a press release issued on 15 December 2023, the HSE said: **“Farmers should not place cattle with calves in fields where members of the public have a legal right to walk. HSE will take action when legal duties are not followed.”**

This statement follows the case of teacher Marian Clode who was killed by a cow in 2016 in Northumberland but which has only just come to the courts. The farm company was fined £72,500 and must also pay £34,700 in costs. Read <https://press.hse.gov.uk/2023/12/15/farming-business-fined-after-a-walker-dies-in-cattle-incident>.

In another recent case, in Devon earlier this year, the same advice is given with the additional guidelines for farmers as follows.

Avoid putting cattle, especially cows with calves, in fields with public access; keep animals and people separated, including erecting fencing (permanent or temporary) such as electric fencing; assess the temperament of any cattle before putting them into a field with public access; consider culling any animal that shows signs of aggression; any animal that has shown any sign of aggression must not be kept in a field with public access; clearly sign post all public access routes across the farm. Display signage at all entrances to the field stating what is in the field (cows with calves or bulls).

See <https://press.hse.gov.uk/2023/11/24/farmer-fined-after-cow-attack-left-man-fearing-for-his-life/>.

In PNFS we are publicising this simple rule: **Farmers should not put cattle with young calves in fields with a public right of way.** See <https://press.hse.gov.uk/2023/03/14/farmer-fined-after-dog-walker-thrown-8ft-into-the-air-and-trampled-by-cow>.

PNFS has written to the HSE requesting clarification of the phrase ‘legal duties’ with respect to cattle and when and how it will ‘take action’.

PNFS members can all contribute to walkers’ safety. Whenever you find cattle with calves in a field with a right of way across it, and/or where there is a lack of adequate signage, **report the case to the HSE**, and the local authority. Here is the link to the HSE web page to make a report: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/tell-us-about-a-health-and-safety-issue.htm>.

Please also copy your reports to me, David Gosling, (AO4@pnfs.org.uk) so that PNFS can collect evidence of the HSE guidance being ignored.

David Gosling, Vice Chair



Vacancies for Courts & Inquiries Officers

Are you passionate about rights of way and interested in the legislation that helps to protect them? If a Highway Authority fails to fix a problem, could you help to give them a nudge or, if necessary, take enforcement action such as serving the appropriate statutory notice on it ?

If yes, then the Courts and Inquiries team would love to hear from you.

About you ~ Ideally you will have experience of inspecting footpaths and be familiar with reporting faults and assisting with proposed diversions or other changes to the network. However, if you don't have this background but are enthusiastic and willing to learn, we would love to hear from you. Full training and support will be provided, including the opportunity to attend a comprehensive external training course.

About us ~ We are currently a team of nine C&IOs covering 35 Highways Authorities. Our backgrounds range from new members to those with years of experience as a PROW officer. We meet six times a year, both online and at Taylor House, and support each other with all aspects of the role.

The time commitment for this role varies but on average takes around three days a month.

Interested and would like to know more? Please contact us on mail@pnfs.org.uk and a member of the team will respond to you.

S235 Repainted



Photos taken on 30 November of S235 on Longworth Moor near Belmont, before and after cleaning in freezing temperatures. It took me 20-30 minutes to remove the lichen with a scraper, water and nail brush. It now needs repainting in warmer weather. The signs on the West Pennine Moors are a poor advert for PNFS in spite of our having several volunteers living in or near the area. I finished my day's work in darkness by the river Yarrow with signs 279 and 260 and was glad of my torch. It is impossible for me to maintain our many aging signposts without MORE help with cleaning and repainting them. My thanks to those of you in other areas who ARE helping.

David Morton, Signpost Officer

Editor's note: If anyone is interested in inspecting and maintaining our wonderful signposts, contact David on signposts@pnfs.org.uk.

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



PNFS Signposts - considerations for selecting locations

The Society 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.



The Art of Walking – A History in 100 Images

by William Chapman Sharpe. Yale University Press,
2023, ISBN 9780300266849, £25

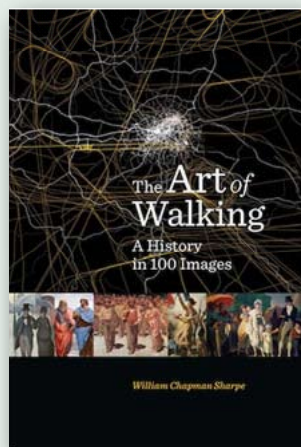
Should hikers carry weapons? That is one of the issues raised, though not necessarily answered, in William Chapman Sharpe's book *The Art of Walking – A History in 100 Images*. That both author and publisher are American is a pointer to why this question arises.

Starting with a photograph of 3.6 million year old fossilised footprints left by a group of proto-humans in present-day Laetoli in Tanzania, and ending with a satirical internet meme on the perils of pandemic walking, this book certainly attempts a broad overview of history. In between we are presented with an array of images including cave art, the earliest known shoes, classical era statuary, works of Renaissance and Surrealist art, and abstract and performance art of more recent times. We are introduced to the flaneurs of the 19th century and the psycho-geographers of the 20th. There are various examples from popular culture such as Charlie Chaplin's tramp, Dorothy and friends on the Yellow Brick Road, and The Beatles on the Abbey Road zebra. The seemingly abstract pattern on the book's cover is a combination of the tracks from a GPS device worn for over a decade by artist Jeremy Wood as he travelled around London (the white lines are walking tracks, the other colours are different modes of travel).

Each image is accompanied by a commentary explaining its historical context, and occasionally its hidden messages – sometimes profound, sometimes humorous, and sometimes misleading. An example of the misleading is an illustration from 1830's America which shows a runaway slave. I assumed at first glance it was produced by the anti-slavery lobby. In fact it originated with the pro-slavery side. By depicting the escapee as fit and healthy and well-clothed they were trying to present themselves as benefactors to the enslaved. It is not the only image in the book that the modern reader would probably interpret incorrectly unless they read the associated commentary.

The role walking has played in war provides some of the book's most powerful images. This is best illustrated by a recruiting poster from WW1 showing men marching off to war which is immediately followed by John Singer Sargent's *Gassed* showing a line of blinded soldiers returning from the front. The ability of dictators to harness walking for their own malevolent purposes is emphasised by a photograph of Hitler reviewing goose-stepping stormtroopers at Nuremberg. Images of the role walking played in revolutions, protests, and social struggles (some violent, some not) are also featured.

As can be seen the book has many depictions of walking we in PNFS would consider peripheral or irrelevant to our interests. Further examples are the



indoor shopping mall, the catwalk, and Philippe Petit's audacious 1974 tightrope walk between New York's Twin Towers. The walker as figure of fun also appears in the guise of "smartphone zombies" and Monty Python's *Ministry of Silly Walks*.

However, there are plenty of images with which PNFS members can identify with, though even some of these have elements of danger. There are various idealised images from the Romantic age when the middle classes first popularised walking for leisure. We are shown philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (actually painted long after his death) supposedly out on a botanical walk, but dressed as though he has just stepped out of a drawing room. Just as in any field of human activity where some strive for enlightenment there are others who seek to plumb the depths, such as sensationalist writer Nicolas Edme Restif. He prowled the nighttime streets of revolutionary Paris and produced several volumes of lurid tales of crime and vice based on his observations. He became known as the "Rousseau of the gutter".

We are shown one of the earliest walker's guidebooks – a guide to the Forest of Fontainebleau by Claude-Francois Denecourt. Then from the early 20th century we see the Kinder Mass Trespass, and also two walkers on America's Appalachian Trail both of whom are armed. Whether the guns are for protection against human or animal adversaries is not clear. The author tells us that the decision about carrying weapons remains a controversial part of hike planning – at least for Americans. The more mundane, but very real, hazards posed by crossing roads in different eras also feature – the ordure-filled streets of pre-automobile Paris; and from 1930's America an exhortation not to "jay-walk" – by which time the car lobby had already succeeded in making pedestrians second-class citizens on the nation's roads.

The author acknowledges that his choice of images concentrates on Europe and North America. Pre-modern Christian imagery takes up a significant proportion of the book. Most of the images featured are male-only, or at least male-dominated, reflecting the past choices of artists and photographers. However, the author has included a significant number in which women are prominent or the key players.

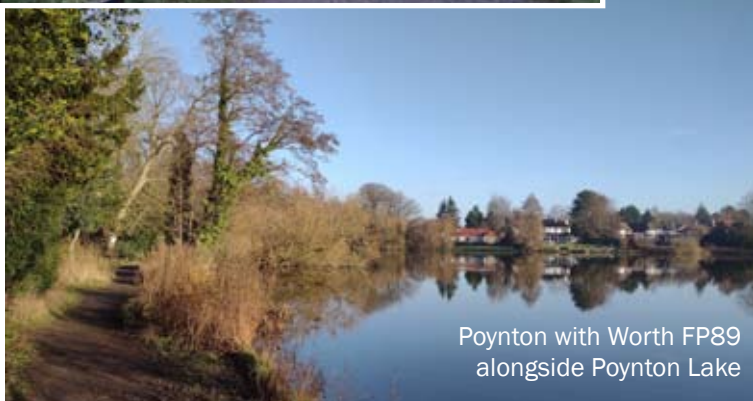
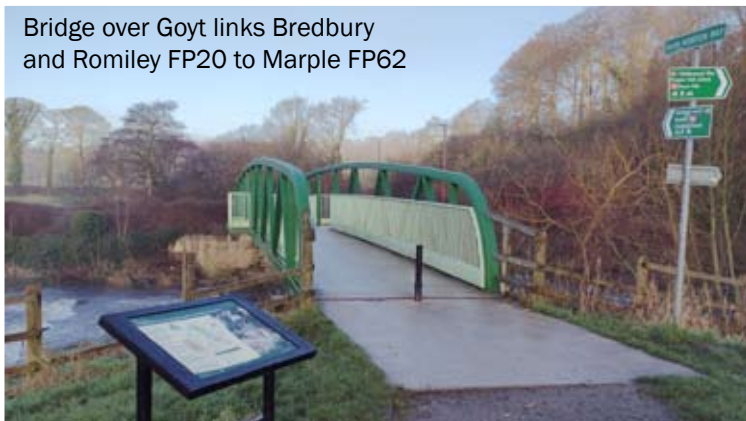
So, how successful is the book in presenting a history of walking? In my view such a fundamental aspect of human nature and culture is too vast to be condensed into 100 images. The book is more a collection of snapshots, but an absorbing read nonetheless. A book like this inevitably prompts the reader to imagine what they would have included. My own choices would have included an extract from a Definitive Map, the plaque on Peter Street in Manchester commemorating the founding of our Society, and maybe just a simple Public Footpath sign. What would you have chosen?

Incidentally, Jim Leary in his talk at our recent HYM about his book *Footmarks: an Archaeology of Movement* used two images that also appear in *The Art of Walking*. These were the Laetoli footprints and Raphael's *School of Athens*. I have yet to read Leary's book, so there may be more crossovers between the two.

Andrew Harter. Inspector for Leeds and Bradford and Taylor House Volunteer

Call it an obsession or something else but having embarked on Slow Way walks I like them to connect. Easy close to home but challenged by invites eagerly accepted to walk routes with friends not of my choosing. I did start in Greater Manchester after a PNFS meeting then returned with Slow Way friends walking into central Manchester from Stockport. So a few loose ends to tie together and here it is. Not the most direct of routes, because I don't like to walk routes with three good reviews, but it now links them together and provided me with a most enjoyable day's walking.

Bridge over Goyt links Bredbury and Romiley FP20 to Marple FP62



I started the day by bus to Chesterfield, a route I had not considered but suggested by Traveline, because Chesterfield has a better train service than my local station. From there to Sheffield where I had a short wait for the Hope Valley train to Romiley and the walk starts bright and early just after 9 am.

Romiley to Hazel Grove see:

<https://beta.slowways.org/Route/Hazrom/11076/#reviews>

Hazel Grove to Poynton see: <https://beta.slowways.org/Route/Poyhaz/11075/#reviews>

Poynton to Whaley Bridge see: <https://beta.slowways.org/Route/Poywha/7743/#reviews>

As recorded in the last Slow Way review I arrived at Whaley Bridge just in time to get the Skyline 199 which dropped me at New Mills Newtown with sufficient time to get across town to Central station and the train for Sheffield which had

plenty of seats so I selected a good window location.

Not much happened until we arrived at Edale where the platform had the appearance of a football special expected. What was encouraging of the anorak and woolly hat clothed revelers was their youth. We can only hope that their obvious current enthusiasm for the outdoors is retained and they are the supporters of PNFS and Ramblers of the future.



Whaley Bridge FP91 approaching Toddbrook Reservoir



Poynton with Worth FP44 becomes Adlington FP10 at the bridge

Ken Brockway, feeling his age with bus pass in pocket

Unusual stile

On the Wednesday walk of 10 January 2024, I led the group to an unusual stile in Mellor. It comprises two angled square-section metal uprights set in a groove and each chained to a gatepost. To pass through this stile, the walker separates the two posts which widen to a V. When released the posts move together.

Shirley M Addy, Footpath Inspector and C&IO



Photographs by Ross Myddelton (left) and Ken Smith (right)

Membership Matters

One the best aspects of my role as Membership Secretary is receiving new membership applications. When I took over from Bill Buckley virtually all such applications came by post and were usually just a completed membership form. Since we introduced PayPal payments, everything has changed. On the plus side, membership is confirmed as soon as I can process the associated automated email. However, PayPal emails are impersonal and just include a person's name and address, so I'm always delighted when I receive an unsolicited message telling me that a payment has been made and giving me some background information.

A case in point happened recently. I've changed the names of the people involved, but they have agreed to let me tell their story. Susan contacted me to say that she had just submitted a payment for Household membership for her and her husband, Jim. The membership was to a birthday gift for Jim. Susan asked if they could possibly make a surprise visit to our Taylor House office in Stockport, so that Jim could pick up his Membership Welcome Pack and learn more about the work of the society. The use of Taylor House has declined significantly since the pandemic, so much so that it didn't seem practical to arrange a special visit especially as the couple would have been travelling across the Pennines from Yorkshire. As I live in the same neck of the woods as them, I suggested that we could have a surprise meeting in a café. A time and place was agreed, and Susan gave me a description of them as a couple. I arrived on time, spotted them having coffee and introduced myself to a very surprised Jim. When I handed him his membership confirmation letter and he read it, Jim realised why Susan has insisted that they go for coffee before heading off on their planned birthday walk. We had a lovely chat about the work of the society before they set off in search of yet more of our signposts.

Writing about a Household membership has reminded me that it might be helpful if our membership records held more than one email address for such memberships. I'll include that idea in my next membership email.

I'm glad to say that there has been a surge in membership applications since the beginning of the year, as well as a good response to the last set of renewal reminders that I sent out. If you haven't yet replied please do as soon as possible.

A few changes have been made to the website recently. The production of our *Waymark* eNewsletter has been suspended and the link to it on the home page has been replaced by a one dedicated to Signpost News. More prominence has also been given to information about our Signposts and Bridges. As soon as people have pointed out shortcoming and errors on the website, I endeavour to correct them.

If members have any questions about membership or ideas for new items on the website, please contact me at membership@pnfs.org.uk.

Mel Bale, Membership Secretary and Trustee

Half Year Meeting

Due to unforeseen circumstances I had to take over the last minute arrangements for the society's Half Yearly Meeting which was held at Victoria Hall in Sheffield on November 18th. A few anxious emails were exchanged between myself and our Chair, Kathy McLean over the days leading up to the meeting. I'd only received a handful of messages confirming attendance, so we were both a little worried about how many members would actually turn up on the day. Fortunately we needn't have been concerned, soon after 9:30 a steady stream of people started to arrive and by 10:00 the meeting room was almost full. Kathy welcomed everyone and then introduced Simon Worrall who is our new Footpath Inspection Coordinator. He firstly thanked the tireless work of his predecessor, David Gosling, and then explained how he came to be involved in the society. He went on outline what his new role entailed and what progress he had made to date. There was a brief Q&A during which a number of interesting issues were raised, such as when is a footpath fault not a fault!

Kathy then summarised what had been discussed at our recent 'Strategy Day', this prompted a wider discussion about the society's future direction. The matter of increasing subscription rates at the next AGM was also raised.

After a refreshment break, the Chair introduced our guest speaker, Dr. Jim Leary. Jim is a lecturer in Field Archaeology at the University of York and has recently written a book titled Footmarks, A Journey Into our Restless Past. He gave a very interesting talk about the history of movement through the landscape and how the study of this helps us understand how people lived in the past. The meeting concluded with a few questions to Jim.



Kathy McLean and Jim Leary

After the meeting a small group of members accompanied John Harker as he led a walk around Sheffield City Centre 'looking at buildings of historical and architectural merit'. These included the now semi derelict Town Hall/Police station built in the 1700s. Jack Burling, a PNFS member and Footpath Inspector, was held in the station cells here before his first trial as a conscientious objector in the early 1950s. The walk also visited the junction of the rivers Sheaf and Don, the site of Sheffield Castle, the basin of the Sheffield & Tinsley Canal, Fitzalan Square with its statue of Edward the VII and the former General Post Office built in the 19th century.

A few days after the meeting I emailed most of the members who had attended and asked them what they had thought of the venue, whether they had enjoyed the presentations and Jim's talk and if they had any thoughts about the how future meetings could be improved. Most of the replies that I received were positive and constructive. Cynthia Ashton of www.sheffield-co-op-ramblers.co.uk, wrote "Myself and husband Barry both attended the meeting at the Victoria Hall yesterday. It was the first time we had been to a PNFS meeting. It was quite informative. You have a lot of volunteers who work hard. We also enjoyed Jim Leary's talk about our ancestors migrating to different places.

Signpost 478 and Sheffield Co-operative Ramblers Memorial Plaque



It was the Sheffield Co-operative Ramblers centenary in 2020. (A number of planned events had to be cancelled due to Covid) We had already paid PNFS the previous year for us to adopt an existing sign on the Sheffield Round Walk in the Limb Valley. David Morton came along and fixed the plaque at the very beginning of lock down. He brought his daughter's dog with him so he had an excuse to be out! He sent us some photos of it."

Unfortunately David had been unable to attend the meeting but he replied to Cynthia saying "Thanks for your kind words re S478 in the Limb Valley. I'd forgotten about my daughter's spaniel Brodie, but it was March 2020 and he was unknowingly part of my cover story. Reference to Sheffield Co-op Ramblers always reminds me of a fine day in March 2012, when I found one of your signposts above Ewden on Mortimer Road looking sadly neglected, took it home and repainted it."

Many thanks to the people who volunteered to help at the meeting, in particular John Harker and Tim Lewis who ensured that members found their way safely and quickly to the venue! *Mel Bale, Membership Secretary and Trustee*



Sheffield Co-operative Ramblers refurbished by David Morton



Britain's Pilgrim Places

By Nick Mayhew-Smith and Guy Hayward,
published by Lifestyle Press, 2021

A recent magazine article titled 'The Art of Walking' by Guy Hayward, sparked my interest in the idea of pilgrimage. Guy is a Co-Founder and a Trustee the British Pilgrimage Trust (BPT) and one of the authors of Britain's Pilgrim Places along with Nick Mayhew-Smith.

The range of places visited in the article tempted me to get hold of their book. The book divides Britain into seven regions, Scotland, Wales, Northern England, Midlands, East Anglia, South West and South East. Within each of these regions 'pilgrimage sites' and 'pilgrimage routes' are identified and detailed. The overall totals of each are 426 and 42 respectively. There is no doubting the quality and detail of the books contents which are excellent. All of the routes have a QR code which links to a dedicated page on BPT website showing details of the route and links to a range of online maps detailing it. All the suggested sites have been photographed specially for the book and have What3Word and GPS locations, as well as 'old-fashioned' directions for the less technically minded.

My only quibble with the book is that virtually everything covered relates to Christianity in one way or another. Despite the books length, 608 pages in all, the first mention non-Christian places of interest only appears on page 594! This seems to be at odds with the claims on the BPT's own website. For example, "Pilgrimage takes people outdoors, often with a conscious intention to connect with nature. The act of walking with a purpose or intention frees up the mind from its usual grooves, and encourages new mental connections to be formed, which can improve mental health and inner wellbeing. Slowly walking through nature and visiting ancient sacred heritage is a fun form of physical exercise and connects you with local communities."

The book very clearly equates pilgrimage to religion, however I prefer a much broader definition of the word. To me it is the visiting places of cultural or historical significance rather than as a religious act in itself. Chambers dictionary defines such places of ones 'venerated for its associations'. Yes, of course these would include so called 'holy places', but also Megalithic sites and remarkable landscapes. Such sites have a 'sense of place', simply being in them makes us feel different.

A couple of years ago I was walking with a friend when we came across the strangely named Lud's Church (SJ 98694 65545). It's not a church at all, but a natural chasm, despite this though I could understand where the name had come from, it did indeed have a 'sense of place'. It's a shame that such places are not included in Britain's Pilgrimage Places. I'd be interested to hear from members if they have similar non-religious places of pilgrimage, perhaps email me at membership@pnfs.org.uk

Mel Bale, Membership Secretary and Trustee



Footpath Inspector Coordinator

At the end of 2023 I took over the role of Footpath Inspections Coordinator from David Gosling who had been in the role for over ten years. Having recently retired after too many years as a desk bound Chartered Accountant I joined the Society in early 2022 and became a Footpath Inspector in Pendle, Lancashire tramping around four parishes in the north of the borough. I enjoy the outdoors and natural environment being a keen walker and the fortunate guardian of a piece of ancient woodland.

Inspecting footpaths seemed like a great volunteering opportunity and in such a lovely area of the north-west. My patch includes Pendle Hill and parts of the Pendle Way with its much-loved “witch on a broomstick” signpost blades.

As readers of Signpost may already know, Pendle is one of the only Lancashire boroughs with a full-time public rights of way (PROW) officer, Tom Partridge. Along with fellow Pendle inspector, Mark Chung, we know Tom well and can report, discuss inspection faults, and try to get them resolved on behalf of the many walkers passing along the many miles of Pendle’s 1,610 paths. Mark and I both regularly volunteer with Tom helping to install new gates, repair paths and clear overgrowth whilst keeping up with our respective inspection activity. I take great satisfaction from actively playing a small part in maintaining the PROW in Pendle.

With some of the Society’s trustees and officers looking to appoint successors to their roles I spent some time shadowing David Gosling during 2023. David was instrumental in bringing the Footpath Inspection Database (FID) to the Society so part of my time spent with David was learning how the FID was administered for inspector changes and for PROW amendments such as diversions and other definitive map modifications. Having put my name forward I was approved by the Trustees for the Footpath Inspection Coordinator (FIC) role in October 2023 and have since been getting to grips with the role.



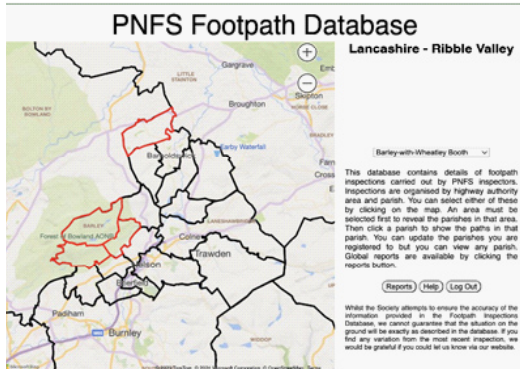
The role of FIC encompasses a number of key activities:

- Being a point of contact for current inspectors and assisting them in any way possible with inspection issues.
- Monitoring and maintaining the Footpath Inspection Database.
- Appointing new inspectors to the Society and handling ‘retirements’.
- Training new inspectors and getting them started.
- Liaising with John Fisher, the Society’s Path Checker coordinator.
- Liaising with Linda Smith, the Society’s Volunteer coordinator.
- Attending Society meetings.
- Reporting monthly to the Trustees.

Katie Landon, an inspector in Staffordshire, provides support updating the FID. I'm grateful for the invaluable support from both John and Linda both of whom liaise with inspectors on Path Checker reports and Footpath Inspector appointments, training, and support respectively, and for Katie's FID work.

The Society covers an area with some 18,000 miles of PRow in 33 Highway Authority areas. In the last two year's Society inspectors have covered some 16,000 individual PRow and walked well over 6,000 miles between them, reporting thousands of faults to their respective authorities. This is some achievement! Monitoring the PRow is one of the Society's key objectives and we would not be able to do this without the dedication of our volunteer footpath inspectors.

Whilst we have good inspection coverage in many areas south of Stockport we are still underrepresented in Staffordshire, Stoke, Wakefield, Rotherham, Doncaster, Bury, Liverpool and surrounding areas, Blackpool, and many other areas of Lancashire. Good coverage is generally achieved in areas where we have most members. We are always looking for new inspectors in areas where we have the least coverage.



A Society inspector's role involves:

- Walking the PRow in their parish(es) at least every two years if they can.
- Recording their inspections on the FID.
- Reporting faults found to the Highway Authority and following them up.
- Responding to Path Checker reports.
- Surveying and reporting on any proposed changes to PRow.
- Escalating serious or long-standing faults to the Society.
- Getting involved locally with parish councils, PRow forums if they can.

Recently training for new inspectors has been delivered remotely using Microsoft Teams which is proving successful I believe.

If any member of the Society wishes to learn more about the footpath inspection role then please get in touch by emailing inspection@pnfs.org.uk

Finally, I would like to thank David Gosling for the time spent on handing over to me and, of course, for the sterling work done over many years building the inspection team and its infrastructure. David continues as a Trustee of the Society and is still involved in mentoring and providing support to the inspection team.

Simon Worrall, Footpath Inspection Coordinator

We are recruiting Trustees to help strengthen our Board. We welcome applicants who can help us to diversify our age profile, skills, experience and background. In a fast-changing world we are looking for someone who can help us form a vision for the future of the society which respects our history but allows us to take full advantage of modern technology to create a dynamic future. We are particularly looking for people with one of the following areas of expertise:

- experience of accounting to review and manage our finances
- publicity and public relations
- legal experience particularly relating to footpath law

If you are interested, please email Kathy Mclean (chair@pnfs.org.uk) no later than end of March.

What will you be doing?

Our Trustees are responsible for managing the finances as well as the strategic leadership and governance of the unincorporated Charity's activities and the achievement of its charitable purposes in line with charity law. Trustees are required to attend the Trustee Board (Managing Committee) about ten per year. Trustees may take on further special responsibilities, both directly and through the medium of subcommittees. Meetings are monthly held during the day (Friday) via Zoom or in person in Stockport at Taylor House and are of 2 hours duration. The minimum commitment for this role is 4-5 hours per month. Trustees are elected/re-elected on an annual basis at each AGM held in May, in line with the requirements of our constitution.

Our trustees are located across our region, including South Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire and Greater Manchester. All our Trustees are volunteers and receive travel expenses in line with our expenses policy. If appointed a full induction and online trustee training is provided to support you in this role.

What are we looking for?

We are looking for new trustees who can contribute knowledge and experience to the Board. Whilst not exclusive we would particularly value someone with the following skills and experience:

- Managing finance as part of succession planning to support our current Treasurer.
- Publicity to help us maximise our profile both across our geography and nationally, to improve membership numbers and increase the number of volunteers.
- Sourcing funding opportunities to increase revenue bespoke to the Society's objectives.

An interest in walking (or cycling or horse riding) and a love of the outdoors is desirable.

What difference will you make?

As a Trustee you will be responsible for the strategic leadership and governance of the Society's charity activities and the achievement of its charitable purposes in line with charity law. You will be helping us to ensure public rights of way remain open and the public continue to enjoy access to open spaces. Your work will ensure we can continue to help walkers and all other users of the network by funding bridges and other improvements, erecting signposts so people can find their way, and keeping paths open by monitoring rights of way.

For once, this regular magazine feature ventures beyond the 'official' PNFS boundary. Both the East Riding and North Yorkshire are 'no go' areas for PNFS, despite both being very popular areas to walk, and comprising over three quarters (11.13K sq km) of the original county of Yorkshire. The PNFS counties of South and West Yorkshire are considerably smaller (3.58K sq km) but have over twice the population, 3.77 million compared to 1.77 million.

I've chosen one parish each from North Yorkshire and the East Riding, more or less at random. I've never visited them, but they have curious names and interesting histories. Sicklinghall (SE 36468 48467) is a North Yorkshire parish, 3 miles west of Wetherby. The Parish Council's website states "There is a network of footpaths and bridleways which makes it a popular centre for walkers, riders and cyclists". In fact there are 15 RoWs in the parish, 6 paths and 9 bridleways. The River Wharfe forms the southern boundary of the parish. Sicklinghall has a long history of being the home of various religious orders, the final one being 'The Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux' which finally closed its doors in the village of the same name in or around 2014.

Sicklinghall Community House
(<https://www.omiworld.org/lemma/sicklinghall-lys-marie-1852>)



Wetwang (SE 93308 59102) is an East Riding parish. As is the case with many place names, its origin is unclear, but it is possible that stems from Wet Field as there is a nearby village Driffild (Dry Field). Between 1975 and 1979 an area known as Wetwang Slack was extensively excavated by John Dent of Sheffield University. He uncovered a large Iron Age cemetery. Subsequently, in 2000, the local authority decided that another site should be investigated before planning permission for a proposed housing development could be granted. Initial investigations suggested that an professional excavation was likely to lead to significant discoveries. Staff from the British Museum and English Heritage became involved and discovered that the site was a barrow which contained the remains of an iron age chariot beneath which was the skeleton of a woman. The discoveries are now housed in the British Museum. The area was the subject of a Guardian

Country written by Amy-Jane Beer in December 2023 (<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/dec/04/country-diary-a-blank-unsettling-place-where-even-death-has-been-erased>).

Mel Bale, Trustee and Webmaster



*Wetwang Slack,
copyright Amy-Jane Beer,
used by kind permission*

Wordsearch **What to see on a walk**

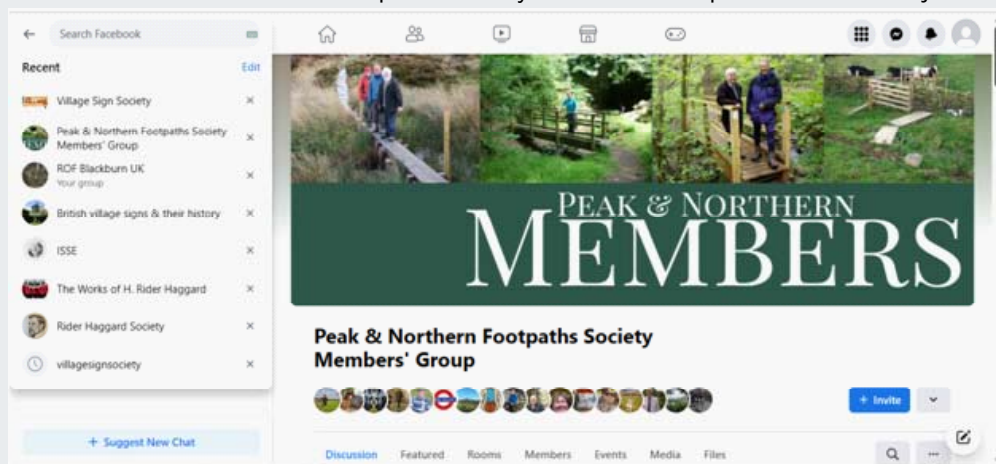
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G	I	S	T	T	U	R	N	E	P	A	R	A	E
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U	E	R	S	I	G	N	P	O	S	T	T	B	T
Y	A	D	C	O	U	L	T	A	T	R	L	H	S
F	G	K	I	S	S	I	N	G	G	A	T	E	T

FOOTBRIDGE
 STREAM
 FIELD
 SIGNPOST
 WAYMARK
 SUNKEN LANE
 COWS
 LADDERSTILE
 HILL
 FARM TRACK
 KISSING GATE
 SHEEP
 BARBED WIRE
 DRY STONE WALL
 MUD
 PLANK
 BRIDLEWAY
 FOOTPATH

PNFS Facebook for **Members**



There's a Facebook just for PNFS members. Interested? Go to Facebook and search for "Peak & Northern Footpaths Society Members' Group" and then ask to join.



Prospects and Signpost Donations

Four new signpost plates have been collected and are in preparation:

653 for Thursbitch ruin below Shining Tor ridge

654 for Longstone Moor near Wardlow

655 and 656 on Whitelee Farm, Wincle, suggested by David Gosling.

Several more are in the pipeline:

657 and 658 at Ratten Clough ruin on Withnell Moor, Chorley, which I visited with footpath inspector Cheryl Speight, have consent.

659 on Flagg FPs 1 and 2, suggested by Michael Granger has landowner's consent.

Thanks to an earlier donation from Rawtenstall rambler Dougie Morris and the considerable help of footpath inspector Danny Allen, we expect to get the go-ahead for two to four signposts on the Rossendale moors, where currently there are none and which are overdue.

New Signposts (erected in November)

649 at GR SD 72045 51188, Broadhead Farm, Slaidburn, FPs 19 and 20

650 at GR SD 72065 51177, Broadhead Farm, Slaidburn, FPs 19 and 20

651 at GR SD 72050 51151, Broadhead Farm, Slaidburn, FPs 19 and 20

652 at GR SJ 98899 81095, Baileys Farm, Lyme Handley FP 34

Maintenance

October: John Hodgson and I reinstated S645 on Longhurst Lane, Mellor, using a concrete repair post, after the wooden post rotted and fell.

November: My three year inspection cycle caught up with:

- 008, 28, 185, 208, 213, 220/5, 268, 417, of Combs/Taxal
- 223/3, 347, 264, 435, 38, 26, 276, 170, 463, 542/3 at Peak Forest, Litton, Hazlebadge, Brough, Hathersage, Blacka Moor, Owler Bar, Holymoorside and Hassop.
- 286, 129, 130, 240, 267, 526, 253, 235, 127, 303, 279, 260 on West Pennine Moors

Steve Brown touched up logos on 483 and 432.

December:

- 182 on its concrete repair post near Peak School/The Moorside since August was snapped off, allegedly by a very large, brown bull, so on a wet and windy day, I bolted it to a handy and sturdy fence post by a cattle grid and, so far as I know, it is still standing - see photographs in this issue.
- 613 above Diggle was inspected for me by Ken Smith.
- 189, 333, 142, 143 and Toposcope 1 on Shutlingsloe were inspected and cleaned in a stiff breeze which became a full gale at the exposed T1.

Many thanks to Steve Brown for all his repainting and to other helpers named above.

Total Signs: 578 plus 2 toposcopes = 580

David Morton, Signpost Officer

Fallen S182 – Prime Suspect



On 12 December 2024 in the swirling rain and mist I drove up the steep hill from Disley to repair S182 near Peak School (formerly the Moorside Hotel), Lyme Handley. The sign sits in a bog and after falling over in July was fixed to a concrete repair post, which I expected to last for years. Instead it had lasted little more than three months when Steve Brown, a leading member of the signpost team who lives in Disley, reported it down again.

The concrete post had been snapped clean off at ground level. A new drainage channel had been dug nearby, so I suspected someone using a ditch digger had accidentally knocked it over. However today I met the occupant of the nearby farm, who readily admitted to digging the ditch, but pointed me towards a very large brown blob in the distance, barely visible through the mist and rain.

Here are photographs of a very sheepish-looking, very large, brown bull, who couldn't look me in the eye as I stared accusingly at him.

This time I repaired the post by bolting it to a sturdy fencepost next to the adjacent cattle-grid. The original sign 182 dates back to 1975, but required a new plate in 2006.





David Morton, Signpost Officer

Don't upset the **Boys in Blue**

As footpaths go, Eckington Footpath 166 in the village of Renishaw north-east Derbyshire, is of very limited value even to a path 'geek' like me. It connects two roads - A6135 and Spinkhill Lane - by forming the third side of a small triangle but doesn't really form a link in the surrounding path network. It was added to the Definitive Map about 10 years ago after a public inquiry. Prior to that, its reason for existence had been to connect the car park of Renishaw Police Station and Police Court to the station and police court building complex. (Sylvia Pankhurst was fined £50 there in 1918 for inciting people to rebel.) Its primary function ceased in the 1980s and the buildings had become a private six-bedroom house.

Now, that house is to be converted into thirteen apartments some with multiple bedrooms, with the former station/court car park divided up into marked parking spaces for residents of the proposed apartments and their visitors. It was this aspect that started alarm bells ringing when I asked local inspector Bill Parke to assess the application's impact on FP166. Bill alerted me to the impact of parking spaces on the definitive line of the footpath as it crossed the car park. Two parking spaces were across the footpath. Parked cars on a public footpath, or a public footway by the side of a road, aren't exactly unknown to pedestrians as we all know. However, why create a new problem where none existed before?

My comments to NE Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC), the Planning Authority here, highlighted this issue to the Case Officer. The Application Form from the developer mentioned no path diversion necessary. No footpath was shown on the application plans. This is a real weakness in the planning system which creates real problems for volunteers like us and for everyone involved in the planning system. That included Derbyshire Police, whose "Designing Out Crime" Officer had commented on the potential risk to vehicles parked in the parking area if the area wasn't overlooked by apartment windows. The existence of a footpath across the car park was highlighted by me in my response to NEDDC which objected to the potential obstruction of FP166 by parked cars. Having seen my comments about FP166, which the plans had not revealed to him, the "Designing Out Crime" Officer sent in additional comments saying there was an even greater security risk from the presence of the previously unknown footpath which he expected PNFS would ask to be cleared of overgrowth where it passed between buildings.

The Society's submission, together with one from the local Ramblers' Group Footpaths Secretary, led to amended plans being submitted by the applicant which rearranged the layout of car parking spaces to avoid obstructing FP 166. In light of this, I withdrew the Society's objection. A minor victory perhaps, but what of the threat posed by this footpath to the law and order of the neighbourhood?

It is common for path volunteers checking planning applications to read comments from a Police Force saying what a threat a proposed new path might pose in a new estate or an existing one might pose such as FP 166. At one public inquiry in Glossop,

Derbyshire Police turned up in force to tell the inquiry inspector what a threat to law and order Glossop FP17 posed to local people unless the Extinguishment Order he had been appointed to determine, was confirmed. PNFS had objected to the closure of this path across a recreation ground. Rhoda Barnett as the Courts & Inquiries Officer for the county, and I as Area Officer for High Peak at that time, managed to defeat that closure, but very rarely do the police in general see a public right of way as a community asset which encourages non-vehicular journeys which might otherwise clog up roads and lead to accidents. To say nothing of encouraging more eyes and ears to see potential illegal behaviour, or the health benefits.

If there is a moral in this story, its to reimpose the need for all planning applications to show the location of public rights of way on any plans attached to it, and for Police Forces to see beyond the alleged 'downside' of public paths and appreciate the positive benefits of using them.

John Harker, Area Officer NE Derbyshire District



PNFS Braille Signposts

Before and after photos of overgrown S239 at Summer Close Farm, Rainow. These illustrate the range of work I do. It's our only sign with a surviving braille memorial plaque. We once had three.

David Morton, Signpost Officer

Trying to get a local Planning Authority (LPA), or the applicant for a development, to pay heed to the existence and importance of public rights of way, can be an uphill struggle to say the least.

Society volunteers spend many hours trying to mitigate the effects of development on a public right of way. We lobby for more sympathetic treatment of a path or paths affected by development. Diverting it onto estate road pavements which themselves will be adopted as public anyway, means the loss of a path.

Earlier in 2023, both this Society and its allies in the local Ramblers' group, expressed serious reservations about the proposal to divert a section of footpath 4 in North Wingfield parish south of Chesterfield in North-East Derbyshire District. I spoke at length on the phone to the developer's agent expressing our concerns about the proposal to divert onto pavements of the proposed estate.

In May 2023, I wrote a letter to the LPA case officer: *"Please note that as a statutory consultee, I am objecting, on behalf of the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society, to this application for housing off Chesterfield Road, North Wingfield. The application, if granted consent unamended, will necessitate the diversion of part of definitive footpath North Wingfield No.4."*

The proposal as indicated on the paperwork would necessitate diverting a section of the footpath onto an estate road footway. This is a footway/pavement which I assume will be adopted anyway when all the public highways being created are handed over for adoption by the County Council, as Highway Authority, under the relevant section of the Highways Act 1980. Diverting one highway onto another one, does not create two highways. Effectively, it is an extinguishment whatever the legislation says. This is contrary to the advice of central government in DEFRA Circular 1/09, which advises the retention of public rights of way in green corridors wherever possible. More thought should have been given to the layout of the proposed housing at a much earlier stage. The LPA is remiss in not insisting on this at pre-application stage.

If the layout of the proposed housing cannot be amended at this stage, we would prefer the diverted footpath to run through the non-built area north of the road where sports facilities are proposed. The footpath could be segregated from the road and its footway, at least in part, to run as a separate feature, perhaps even upgraded to allow multi use by cyclists.

I spoke at length to the applicant's named Agent, Rachel Mathewson last week. I indicated my views on diverting the footpath as indicated on the plans. Also, I indicated our wish to see a formal link on the NW boundary of the site so that new residents could access the public footpath running NE-SW along the outer edge of the site. She told me that there was an informal access point here. She had seen it whilst she was on site. I would urge you to impose a condition that this informal access point is upgraded to a formal one at the applicant's expense. This area is, I was told, going to remain a green space post development.

The Society reserves its position vis a vis a Public Path Diversion Order if the proposed route of the footpath remains along the estate road footway as shown on the indicative plan. There is room north of that estate road for a separate segregated footpath/cycleway, at least in part if not in its entirety.”

Sometimes we fail to alter the outcomes. Here, it would appear from amended plans recently put forward by the applicant, our lobbying has born fruit and much of the affected footpath will run through a ‘green space’ north of the proposed housing. A small victory for those of us who don’t go walking to spend time trudging along estate road pavements.



Planning map showing original PROW diversion to the north along pavements



Planning map showing PROW diversion through green space after objections raised

John Harker, Area Officer NE Derbyshire District

Wilpshire BW7 flooded by a football



One December afternoon, when it was not raining, my husband and I decided to go for a 2.5 mile stroll 'round the block'. As we walked on BW7 which is between Tipping's Farm and Vicarage Lane, we encountered a series of deep puddles with parts of the path being washed away into a ditch. We were able to continue on the path by tiptoeing on a few small islands above the murky water. See photograph of the stream flooding over the path and finding its own way into the stream.

I reported this flooding to Cllr Tony Gafney of Wilpshire Parish Council. I've reported of his efforts in previous issues of *Signpost*. He informed me that a blocked culvert was responsible for the bridleway being flooded.

A week later he told me that he has sorted the flooding. It was caused by an old football and detritus in a blocked manhole he had spotted in the adjoining property's garden. He called at the house and with the assistance of the householders removed the ball and detritus. The football came out on the end of a fork and a spade was used to move enough of the built-up detritus to let the water through.

When the stream has emptied, the householders will clear out the pit where there is years' worth of mess, about two feet thick. The top of the manhole had been buried under soil and the householders did not know about it, and as they don't walk on the bridleway often, they were unaware of the blocked stream. Tony will be restoring part of the path with some stones left over from previous surface work.

Photographs by Tony Gaffney.

Shirley M Addy, Footpath Inspector and Courts and Inquiries Officer

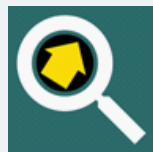




Seen these? Use Path Checker app!



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'.

The app can now be used to record when signposts or other PNFS sites are visited. Just click on the marker on the map to record a visit, click again to cancel a visit. A list of visits can be emailed to yourself by clicking the Share icon on the map screen.

Our 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*





Saturday, 2 March 2024 – Kathy Mclean 07967 802549. Meet at the car park Glasston Dock (P&D) at 10:00 SD 44718 56043 for a circular walk. 11 miles along the river Lune and Lancaster canal with little ascent. The nearest railway station is Lancaster. ***Text Kathy if you are intending to join the walk***.

Wednesday, 13 March 2024 – David Gosling 07841 647275. Meet at Furness Vale railway station (SK 00840 83552) for a circular walk (1100 feet ascent) of about 6 miles via The Navigation at Bugsworth Basin. Train from Piccadilly leaving at 9:51 arriving Furness Vale at 10:29. Walk starts at 10:30 SK23 7QS.

Wednesday, 27 March 2024 – John Mooney 07514 219563 mooney_je@yahoo.co.uk. Wilmslow to Styal. Bollin Valley Way, Quarry Bank Mill and Airport Perimeter. Train 09:36 Piccadilly arrives Wilmslow 10:09 via Styal Line. Walk starts at 10:15, 10.5 miles 500 ft ascent. SK9 1BU.

Saturday, 6 April 2024 - Linda Smith 07808 319733 lindae.smith@hotmail.com. Frodsham and Helsby Hills 7.5 miles (9 miles with extra 1.5 mile option) circular walk, 1,400 ft ascent. Walk takes in spectacular views over the Mersey estuary and includes lovely woodland paths. Walk is stile- and cow-free. There is an option for extra 1.5 miles if pub refreshments are required. Trains from Liverpool and Manchester arrive 09:29. Walk starts 09:45 at Frodsham railway station car park (south side). Car parking £1.50 for over 6 hours. WA6 7DN

Wednesday, 10 April 2024 - Ken Brockway 07895 983857 great.english.walk@gmail.com. Kidsgrove to Congleton. Train from Piccadilly 09:46. Walk starts Kidsgrove when train arrives approx 10:31. Choice of walks easy 6 miles along canal towpath or 7.5 miles over Mow Cop. Return by train from Congleton ST7 1BX.

Wednesday, 24 April 2024 – Udo Pope 07717 802468 udo.pope@ntlworld.com. Chinley to Marple: via Chinley Churn, Lantern Pike and Mellor. 11.5 miles, ascent 1821 ft, descent 2113 ft. Train from Piccadilly 09:48, arrives in Chinley 10:22 (SK 03792 82581). Walk starts at 10:25 SK23 6AR

Saturday, 4 May 2024 - Shirley Addy 07434 897143 text smaddy@talktalk.net. West Pennines from Tockholes. 8 miles. Bag seven PNFS signposts on this easy/medium moorland, woodland and reservoir walk. Route previously published in Signpost. Starts 09:30 from Royal Arms, Tockholes. Adjacent free parking BB3 OPA.

Wednesday, 8 May 2024 - John Fisher 07432 825624 johnfisher560@btinternet.com. Edale circular. Easy walk, 6 miles, some short climbs. Visiting up to 8 PNFS signposts. Walk starts and ends at Edale railway station S33 7ZA. Train Piccadilly, 09:48 arrives Edale 10:31. Or from Sheffield 10-14, arrives Edale 10:47. Please notify Leader if arriving by this train. Check times nearer the date. Walk starts Edale station at 10:35 or 10:50.

Wednesday, 29 May 2024 – Bill Minshall 07771 985846 bill.minshall@btinternet.com. Walk details to follow.

Want to lead a walk? Contact: Shirley Addy (Saturdays), smaddy@talktalk.net, 07434 897143 text; Ross Myddelton (Wednesdays 5-9 miles), r.myddelton1@ntlworld.com, 07941 547378; Ken Smith (Wednesdays 9-12 miles), kensmith4rj@icloud.com, 07918 154959

December joint walk with short and longer groups, visiting the 3 outbuildings in the Park - Lantern House, Paddock Cottage and Lyme Cage, 7.8 miles with breathtaking views. 13 members attended. A big thank you to walk leader John Fisher.

Photograph by Ken Smith.



Saturday, 6 January

Led by Shirley Addy, from Ribchester to Hurst Green and back along the Ribble, checking three PNFS signposts en route.

Photograph by Ross Myddelton.



Wednesday, 10 January

Following parts of the Ribble Valley Jubilee Trail, from Ramsgreave to Mellor, Clayton-le-Dale, Copster Green, Salesbury and Wilpshire.

Photographs by Ross Myddelton taken at Mellor's bunker, and by leader Shirley Addy showing the group restoring a waymark post to its vertical position.



PNFS (Post not for scratching)



So this is what PNFS signs are for!

Photographs taken by David Gosling on the PNFS 25 October 2023 walk led by Ann Haden.