

Magazine of the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

Signpost

Number 80 - Summer 2024



PNFS short walk from Whalley, June 2023

Photograph by Shirley M Addy

At the time of writing, we are holding a local meeting in Leeds on 13 April. Inspectors and other volunteers have been invited. More details of this meeting will appear in the next issue of Signpost. The last local meeting we held in Preston was very successful with a chance to meet and hear from a Highways Authority Officer. We plan to hold more meetings to allow us to meet volunteers nearer to their homes.

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As you will see from the Annual Report we have the Annual General Meeting on 18 May in Stockport. This will be a chance to hear about the society and its activities over the past year, appoint the Trustees and engage with our strategy. Please do attend; lunch is provided.

Everyone has been aware of the increasing cost of living, which impacts on charities too, of course. We have been thinking of ways to reduce costs but maintain and improve the way the society works and has impact. By sending out the summer edition of Signpost with the Annual Report we have saved about £1,500 a year. This is a great help to the society as the money saved can be used to support the achievement of our objects. I would also like to thank members who have opted to receive Signpost electronically. Again, this reduces cost significantly but allows us to maintain our communication with members. If you have any ideas about reducing costs do make contact or share at the AGM.

We have had a number of successes in terms of progressing the repair of out of repair footpaths; for example, Andy Leader has been pursuing a court case in Kirklees. Future editions will give more details.

I hope to see you at the AGM. Do continue to enjoy the wonderful countryside and the amazing network of public rights of way.

Kathy Mclean, Chair



Gisburn Forest FP31, one of the many damaged footbridges in the Ribblesdale. Photograph by Shirley M Addy



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Telephone/text 07984 059150

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

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

For more details of above and other volunteering roles, go to pnfs.org.uk/volunteer



PNFS Helps to Save Rights of Way, Mirrless Fields



Mirrless Fields is a 26.88 ha (60 acres) green space located in Hazel Grove, Stockport. Over the last 40 years the Fields have been widely used as a much-loved semi-wild area. In partnership with the Cheshire Wildlife Trust family events have been held by the Friends of Mirrless Fields and it is a popular area for walking. The Fields are owned by MAN Energy (Ltd) who have sought to overthrow Stockport's 'strategic open space' designation with an application to build houses on the much-used open field with the Mirrless Oak in the centre. In January 2022 this application was refused by Stockport Council, but MAN appealed this decision and a Public Inquiry was held in November 2023.

At the Inquiry, PNFS was represented by David Gosling who was a member of the Rule Six Group 'Residents Against Development on Mirrless Fields'. The argument was put in favour of retaining the whole of the green space and the existing right of way (126s) which is part of the Fred Perry Way. The application was opposed because of the importance of the site for recreation, preservation of wildlife and its contribution to the public health of the area.

The proposal is for outline planning permission for 200 houses on 4.4 ha of the site while the remaining land would be transferred to the Land Trust (or similar organisation) which would guarantee public access to the remainder of the site. The Appeal was allowed by the Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State in a decision dated 24 January 2024.

Although this means a large part of the publicly accessible space will be lost to housing, the permission is granted on condition that the PRoW 126s would either stay in its current position or be diverted in a route agreed with the Council. Furthermore, there will be improvements and upgrades to the other rights of way in the area.

These improvements to rights of way and protection to the Fred Perry Way were achieved by PNFS drawing attention to the impact of the development on well-used and loved public footpaths.

PNFS needs more volunteers to scrutinise planning applications, particularly those for large housing developments, and to make the case for protecting or improving the rights of way network.

If you can help, please get in touch.

David Gosling, Vice Chair





Weird Walk: Wanderings and Wonderings Through the British Ritual Year

By Alex Hornsby, James Nicholls and Owen Tromans,
published by Fiona Robertson
www.watkinspublishing.com, 2023, hardback £19:99



In the forward by Stewart Lee writes that, 'the Weird Walkers walk the landscape in the shadows of the seasons as we used to experience them before they blurred, reminding us of how we once measured out the increments of our humanity, and etched it into rock and earth, in the annual cycles of rotting and rebirth.' (p9)

The authors seek to reconnect or 're-enchant' us with our past through documenting walks that take in folk lore and visits to historical sites. They aim to encourage the reader to immerse themselves in such ways. Motivated by a feeling that through increased urbanisation people no longer experience a close connection to nature and the past, the authors seek to point out the 'old markers of time' that still exist and where they believe 'Britain's revenant spirit can be found, often off the beaten track, down country lanes and in the fields and woodlands.' (p12)

To encourage us to explore such places chapters focuses on eight different sites of interest for each season. The book is full of photographs and illustrations and uses a range of text styles and fonts throughout. Along with a list of observations relevant to each season there are more detailed descriptions of historical sites and suggested walking routes. There are standing stones, dolmens, green men, medieval ruins and numerous traditions associated with each season. Places of interest range from Cornwall to the north of Scotland.

In seeking to rekindle our interest in a 'kind of magical thinking' that the modern world has left behind the authors believe that the British countryside is, 'a deep resource of rich, transformative strangeness and one that should be available to us all, regardless of our background or identity.' (p275)

A great deal of time and effort has gone into compiling this book. Interesting snippets of information link the past to the present. It works as a guidebook to the various sites and highlights how rich our past is in providing evidence of those that lived here before us. Such places need revisiting, re-evaluating and protecting if we wish to re-kindle our sense of wonder and magic.

Pauline Williams, Member



*David Morton
inspecting S487*

Prospects and Signpost Donations

Three new signpost plates plus one replacement have been collected and are ready for highlighting:

657 and 658 for Withnell Moor, Chorley, suggested by Cheryl Speight

659 for Flagg suggested by Michael Granger

124 for Rushup Edge, which fell and was irreparably damaged in February

Prospects for two or three signposts on Rossendale Moors have receded, as I have been unable to contact the relevant UU manager by phone or email.

Four signpost donations have been received:

- 656 Wincle, which will be unveiled on our 130th anniversary on 16 August
- 654 on Longstone Moor
- 124 on Rushup Edge
- 387 on Turton Moor near Dimple

New Signposts

No new signposts have been erected since November, mainly due to wet and wintry conditions. The following are ready for installing:

- 653 at Thursbitch near Rainow
- 654 on Longstone Moor
- 655 and 656 at Wincle, which will be erected in early August for our 130th anniversary

Maintenance

January

- Repaired S213, using wooden half post at Cowlow Farm, Dove Holes
- S467 repainted by Steve Brown

February

- Retrieved 124 from Rushup Edge with David Gosling. Received credible report that 385 is missing presumed stolen from Lowgill, Bentham.

Early March

- Retrieved S241 from Bottoms Hall Farm (NPR) then checked 336 at Mellor
- S504x at Derwent Edge reported broken on 19 February Jim Cowell; 504 intact.
- Painted 513 (Over Alderley), Wedged post on 211 (Nether Alderley, inspected 227 (Ollerton) and 141 (Tabley Inferior). Mel visited 504, but the broken bits had disappeared.
- 99, 456 and 463 checked by Gordon Richards; both JUP & MP missing from 456 on Abney Moor.
- S233 (Dimpus Clough) inspected by Simon Worrall
- Inspected 486/7 at Cotebank, Chinley

Total Signs: 577 plus 2 toposcopes = 579

David Morton, Signpost Officer



*S487 inspected by PNFS walkers
led by David Gosling from
Furness Vale in March*

Why I joined PNFS



Keeping paths open since 1894 ...

I've always been a walker; my parents, way back in the 1950s, emphasised to junior Peter that footpaths which were Rights of Way were mutually advantageous to both walkers and land owners alike; they clearly defined where 'steps' could be taken, land owner's property and privacy respected and mutual benefit gained by all.

My parents had been children in the days of the First World War - those beginning days of walking and cycling groups, the birth times off modern rock climbing, the formation of Clarion Houses et al to support the masses of folk wanting fresh air and to engage in the wonderful scenery we are blessed with in the South Pennines, Peak District and Yorkshire Dales. This movement for 'common folk' to countryside access was to give birth to the groups, clubs and friends meeting; out of factories and foundries, those folk found healthy clean (albeit usually somewhat damp ... air by the bucketful, the exact opposite of weekday workdays where people were reduced to machine minders.

So it was: five-year old Peter found himself toddling along with parents at every opportunity, the local history and features pointed out, as things that I should commit to memory: the row of 6 tiny houses that were home to the colliers at Tunshill; the air shafts rising from the pit below, demanding a pebble be chucked over the dry stone wall surrounding safety barrier (which I oft climbed (!!!) to gaze down at the tiny dot of light reflected from water hundreds of feet below); farmers, with most of whom my parents were on first name terms: indeed, my parents, in their own childhood, had been similarly walked by their parents just as I was, so knew all the local farm families.

High on the moor, the ancient road across the Pennines from Rochdale to Huddersfield or Halifax was a thing of wonderment; The Rapes Highway had carried laden pack horses (and people) between these towns as vital trade connecting, for not just Centuries, but Millennia.

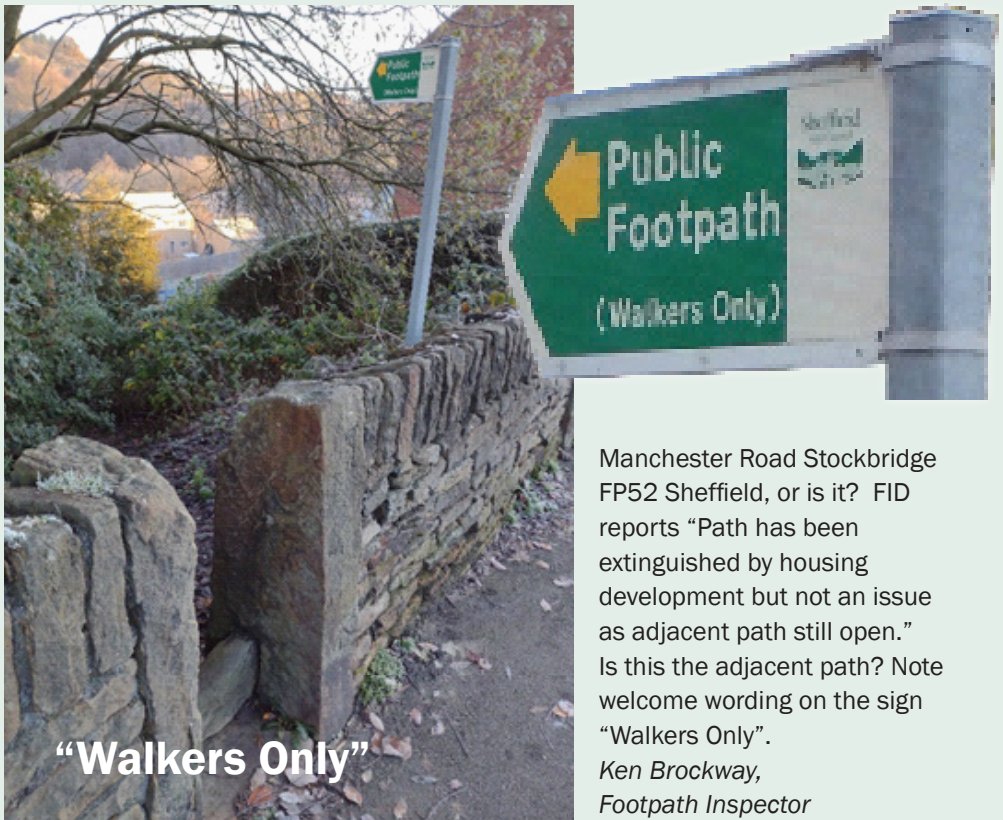
The South-Eastern County boundary corner of Lancashire was an spot high on White Hill, to be observed and wondered at: how had this exact place, this precise point been delineated? By whom? When? Why?

These (and countless other) questions prompted long discussions which helped alleviate my aching feet and legs on the long trek homewards, following the guiding lights of sodium yellow in Rochdale's streets way away in descending dark. I say Rochdale: oft times we'd be on Crompton Moor, talking to the colliers working a drift mine above Buckstones Quarry; or wandering the old lanes to Ogden above New Hey and thence over Roughbank to Rag Hole Clough - which (of course!) housed a gruesome ghostly 'Boggart' in dank and gloomy depths - thence over to Hollingworth Lake and home to Milnrow.

Ah, memories, memories: 'the walking' has been deeply instilled within me and finds me a'gate around my now home town of Burnley. Whilst 'doing' a route from an elderly guide book, I see time and tide wait for no man; the landmarks referred to are gone - but there, on the edge of my vision, a sign post of green back and white letters: a 'Peak and Northern' sign showing my way in the gathering gloaming. 'Thank you', I say, to whoever put that sign at Mountain Farm, near Stang Top: having now joined the 'Peak & Northern' I hope to do so in person!

Peter Thornton, Member

Photograph of S585 at Mountain Farm by Shirley M Addy



Manchester Road Stockbridge
FP52 Sheffield, or is it? FID
reports "Path has been
extinguished by housing
development but not an issue
as adjacent path still open."
Is this the adjacent path? Note
welcome wording on the sign
"Walkers Only".
*Ken Brockway,
Footpath Inspector*

You're never too old to learn!



On 26 January 2024, I finally ventured out in the cold but sunny weather to fix signpost 231 at Cowlow Farm, Dove Holes. In the morning I'd sat through a two hour management meeting, where I struggled to hear some of the speakers. The sign had been ready for some time, just waiting for a break in the weather.



From 1988 to 2006 the sign had been one of the tubular post variety (see photo of S215), which were all the society could afford at the time. Most have since been replaced and in 2008 it was S213's turn. In late Autumn 2023 I decided that the plate was corroded and needed shot-blasting and powder-coating. I sawed through the wooden post, because the mild steel coach bolts used by my predecessors were rusted solid. Also the top of the post had rotted and needed replacing, whereas the lower half was still sound. I used a length of 4" x 3" timber, which I'd retrieved from a skip, and I took a sash-cramp with me to hold the two half-posts together while I drilled bolt-holes through them.

When I arrived at the scene, I'd barely begun the job when the farmer arrived. He'd noticed the disappearance of the upper half of the post in November and thought it had been stolen, even though I'd sawn the post at an angle of 45 degrees and attached a small plaque saying it had been taken away for repair. He was very pleased to see it. I drilled the first hole and started to hammer the threaded S/S rod through, only to find that, despite the sash-cramp, the upper half post had slipped slightly, so he came to my rescue.

I removed the sash cramp, knocked the bolt till it stuck out, then with two pairs of hands we were able to line up the hole and bolt and get the job finished. The sun was setting behind Lady Low.

The upper bolt was very close to a strand of barbed wire and, as I pulled my socket spanner out of the countersunk hole with my left hand, it came out with a rush and I punctured a small but prominent vein in the back of my hand on the nearest barb. I sucked up the blood, but it kept coming instead of clotting and I was only halfway through the job, so still needed both hands. Several large drops had fallen onto the back bumper of the car. I had left my first aid kit at home and couldn't find suitable material for a dressing, so I put on a disposable blue glove and pressed on. It did the trick and kept the blood off my clothes and at some point my blood clotted. Luckily I'm not on blood thinners! The farmer's photo of me and the sign features the blue glove. On getting home I removed the bloody glove and washed my hands. The bleeding had definitely stopped and there was the smallest of puncture holes. I found a packet of assorted plasters and only needed the smallest, normally used for a spot or pimple!

Lessons learned: Next time I'll either wear work gloves or place a folded towel over the barb and I'll fix a screw or nail under the upper half post, so that it can't slip down. Oh, and I'll make sure I've got my first aid kit!

David Morton, Signpost Officer



First aid in the outdoors



Since the award of my Scout First Aid badge over 40 years ago I have, from time to time, thought it would be a good idea to gain a formal first aid qualification. Enjoying the great outdoors whether walking, cycling or any other activity is not without risk and I had asked myself the question “what would I do if something bad happened?” especially when you look at your mobile phone and there’s no signal.

You may have read about the exploits of the Pendle Two - Mark Chung and me - PNFS footpath inspectors who regularly volunteer with the Pendle Countryside Access Team installing gates, repairing boardwalks and generally fixing PRoW issues. To carry out some of this work without the Borough Council’s officer on site we needed to be qualified in Outdoor First Aid (and have read many, many risk assessments!) During December 2023 Mark and I spent two days gaining the ITC Certificate in Outdoor First Aid at SCQF Level 6 which was funded by the Society to enhance our volunteering roles.

In an everyday urban setting medical care is an emergency telephone call away with urgent response times measured in minutes. The further away from the urban environment then medical services will take longer to reach any incident, measured in hours not minutes. This may involve Mountain Rescue being deployed.

The objective of all first aid is to preserve life, prevent worsening and promote recovery. We were taught the basics of providing immediate care in an outdoor environment through a triage approach known as A, B, C.

A

Assess - the situation; stop, look, and consider your own personal safety (you are no good to the casualty if you get injured too).

Alert – check if the casualty is alert. Are they conscious?

Airway – check to make sure the airway is clear.

B

Breathing – look and listen and feel for signs of breathing.

C

Circulation – look for serious bleeding, resuscitate using CPR / defibrillator

Shouting for assistance and calling the emergency services is part of the early stages of the ABC process and calls for further checks, a head-to-toe check to look for any damage and injury and use of emotional tools - asking permission, maintaining contact, explaining what you are doing, taking charge to boost confidence.

The course used realistic dummies for CPR and covered the use of defibrillators. We covered many other aspects of first aid (soft tissue damage, broken limbs, choking, eye injuries, first aid kit contents and environmental diseases amongst other topics) all taught with the outdoors in mind.

Having spent three quarters of the course in the classroom we moved outdoors on the final afternoon and were presented with several realistic scenarios involving a casualty presenting as unconscious, not breathing or alert but uncooperative lying in

the woods or out on open ground. To add authenticity, it was pouring with rain and at one point started hailing! It really brought home just how challenging a situation might be if a stranger or one of your party becomes injured in the middle of nowhere. After all that we had to complete a written test before finding out whether we had qualified.

The course was run by members of an active Mountain Rescue team and could not have been of more interest. The assessors all had first-hand experience of dealing with casualties suffering from minor injuries to more serious situations and sadly fatalities.

I feel much more confident in dealing with a medical emergency should one arise whether that's in the household, down my road, out walking or whilst volunteering on an isolated moor in Pendle. No doubt, it was time to upgrade my Scout First Aid qualification!

Simon Worrall, Footpath Inspection Coordinator

PNFS walks

Saturday, 3 February

David Gosling led the group through the Ring of Trees in Buxton.

Photograph by David Gosling.



Wednesday, 28 February

Led by Bill Minshall, via Congleton Edge and The Cloud. *Photographs by Ken Smith.*



PNFS walks

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



Wednesday, 12 June - Brian Lomas 0161 6885237 r.myddelton1@ntlworld.com.
Failsworth to Stalybridge. Meet Brian 10:00 outside Manchester Piccadilly Travelodge (former Woolworths building), Piccadilly Gardens for onward bus travel (No 76 stand D) to Failsworth. Walk along undulating footpaths and quiet lanes to Stalybridge. 7.5 miles. Return by train from Stalybridge. M1 1LU

Saturday, 15 June - Simon Worrall 07702 582486. ***Date changed from 1 June***.
Approximately 8 mile circuit from the hamlet of Rowarth, in the Peak District National Park nestled in the hills between Marple Bridge and New Mills. 1,200ft of ascents mainly on the route from Rowarth up to Cown Edge rocks, passing two unusual PNFS signposts. Following decent footpaths, including the Pennine Bridleway, towards and up Lantern Pike (PNFS part funded toposcope at summit) before heading back to Rowarth along a quiet lane and farm tracks possibly via The Little Mill public house on the edge of the hamlet. Meet at Rowarth car park, off Goddard Lane (SK22 1EF; SK01156 89212; pipes.forensic.rewriting). Walk will start at 10:00am.

Wednesday, 26 June - Ross Myddelton 07941 547378 r.myddelton1@ntlworld.com
Silverdale to Carnforth. Starts with route up to The Pepperpot monument with spectacular views of Morcambe Bay and Bowland Fells. Walk includes Thrang Brow, Cringle Barrow Hill and Warton Crag to finish in Carnforth. 10 miles and 1300 ft ascent. 08:50 train from Manchester Piccadilly, arrives Silverdale at 10:30. Walk starts 10:30 LA5 OSP.

Saturday, 6 July - Mick Chatham 07792 709198/01706 379318. Cragg Vale Coiners walk. Starts 10:15 from Mytholmroyd railway station at the bottom of the slope on the Cragg Road. 11 miles walk visiting the abodes of some of the Cragg Vale coiners. We will also be visiting a Starfish site (a WII decoy station). Walk will entail going up one side of the valley, and crossing and back down the other. Plenty of car parking near station HX7 5DZ. Train available from Manchester Victoria.

Wednesday, 10 July - John Harker 07929 051978 trueblade55@yahoo.co.uk. See website for walk details.

Wednesday, 31 July - Gavin Miller 07951 746323 gavinmiller687@gmail.com. See website for walk details.

Saturday, 3 August - Ross Myddelton 07941 547378 r.myddelton1@ntlworld.com. Worsthorne circular. Route includes Hurstwood, Gorple Rocks, Widdop and Swinden Reservoirs. Meet at Church Square, Worsthorne. 11 miles with 1200 ft ascent. Walk starts 10:30 SD875325 BB10 3NH.

Saturday, 10 August ROSS MYDDELTON 07941 547378 r.myddelton1@ntlworld.com
BIDSTON HILL: A low level walk on the Wirral Peninsular starting from Upton Railway Station, climbing the hill to find a Lighthouse, Windmill and Observatory with fine views of Liverpool and the Welsh Hills. Return by train from Bidston Station via Liverpool to Manchester or Upton for those arriving by car. Train from Manchester Piccadilly leaves at 9:44 change Shotton, arrive Upton Station at 11:40 For details of parking options at Upton see Merseyrail webpage SJ279882 CH43 9RY

Wednesday, 14 August - Sue Davies (Short) SUE DAVIES 07967 035784 suekercher@hotmail.co.uk, BAMFORD CIRCULAR 6 mile circular from Bamford Station with 3 hours walking and steep ascent (1000ft) up to Bamford Edge. Descent down to Ladybower, crossing the dam and returning via the Thornhill Trail. Train time 9:48 from Manchester Piccadilly arrives Bamford 10:40 Or from Sheffield 10:14 arrives Bamford 10:36 WALK STARTS AT 10:45 SK208825 S33 OBN

Wednesday, 28 August - Ann Haden 07766 194900 ann.vernon-haden@virginmedia.com. ***NOTE!*** New walk leader required for this walk or suggestions for alternative walk. Ann is willing to recce this walk with another leader in May. Please contact Ann if you wish to volunteer. EDALE CIRCULAR WALK Kinder via Ollerbrook, Crookstone Knoll, Edale End, YH. Walk starts and ends at Edale Railway Station. Train 09:48 am Piccadilly arrives Edale 10:31 am. WALK STARTS AT 10:35 am. 12 miles 2087 ft ascent. End of walk refreshments optional at The Ramblers Inn S33 7ZP

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