

Magazine of the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

Signpost

Number 81 - Autumn 2024



Near the start of the Roaches
at Roach End, Staffordshire
Photograph by Judith Colman



From the Chair



Walking in damp and rather cold summer weather is something we are getting used to! However, I am pleased to note that this has not dampened spirits at PNFS. In May we held our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Stockport. It was a pleasure to welcome members who received our Annual Report and appointed the Trustees. We also shared key ideas from our developing strategy. We invited feedback and will circulate the draft so that members can comment directly. We hope to be able to launch this in the autumn and then set out a delivery plan.

We enjoyed a talk by Jack Cornish who has published a new book 'Lost Ways'. His presentation and subsequent discussion were very interesting.

At the AGM I mentioned that we were in the process of seeking two new Trustees and I am pleased to say that Chloe Jeffries and Simon Robinson will be joining us. We believe they will bring additional skills and leadership capacity to the management of PNFS.

Paul Eastwood presented the Treasurers report, Paul has been our Treasurer for many years but now we have reached the time to find someone to succeed him. The work Paul has done for the society has been tremendous and we are very grateful for his commitment. If you believe you have the financial skill or know someone who does, please let us know.

The work of the society continues, and I am pleased to note that we are gradually increasing the coverage of parishes by

footpath inspectors. Simon Worrall is supporting current inspectors and appointing additional volunteers. This is very valuable to the society as it helps us understand more about the public rights of way.

Advertising our charity is important and one way we can do that is through car stickers. I am sure we are all familiar with stickers from other societies and groups, they do play a part in raising the profile. Mel Bale, membership secretary has been working to develop some car stickers which will be available shortly.

As usual we will be holding a half year meeting in the Autumn, details and date will be sent round in due course.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy the countryside and I look forward to seeing you later in the year.

Kathy Mclean, Chair





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The Society's Half Yearly Meeting

will be held in the Carpenter Room,
Sheffield Central Library on
Saturday, 16 November 2024

Light refreshments will be available from 10:00 until the beginning of the meeting at 10:30

10:30 - 11:30 PNFS current and future activities (details to be announced)

Refreshment break

11:45 Dr Abbi Flint, Research Associate in the School of History, Classics and Archaeology, Newcastle University. Abbi will be talking about the research project 'In all our footsteps: tracking, mapping and experiencing rights-of-way in post-war Britain'

Attendees are invited to bring their own lunch

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

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



Celebrating birthday with a new signpost

In March of this year, I had great fun on my 82nd birthday erecting S654 in glorious sunshine, with the help of Footpath Inspectors Derek Northin and Ann Vernon-Hayden, together with her husband Harry, who single-handedly carried the signpost 200 metres over lumpy moorland on his shoulder.

As the job finished, we celebrated it and my birthday with ginger cake and some Cardhu single malt. Then Gordon Richards turned up on behalf of Nottingham Heather and Rock Club, who donated the sign, but who sadly are winding up.

We saw several car rallies on the A623 and Moor Lane before going our separate ways. I rewarded Derek and Ann with a few waymarkers and nails.

For John Hodgson and I there was more enjoyment over a pint at the wonderful Three Stags Heads pub, which opens at weekends and is the best and only, old-fashioned, unspoilt pub that I know and it has a real log fire and a choice of four well-kept real ales from breweries at Abbeydale, Great Hucklow and Brough, near Bradwell. Seating is a mixture of benches and home-made, three-legged stools. It dates back to the 1680s and was friendly and informal. The Abbeydale was £4 a pint.

David Morton, Signpost Officer



*Celebrating
David's
82nd birthday*

*From left: David,
Gordon, John*



*From left: Derek,
Ann, Harry, John*



*Three Stags Head to
finish David's birthday
celebrations*



Ecclesbourne Way

During a recent walk along part of the Ecclesbourne Way, a promoted route linking Duffield and Wirksworth in Derbyshire, I came across a remeandering of the river from which the way takes its name.



Work had already taken place to remove a flood protection weir to create a fish pass at Snake Lane in Duffield and here just south of Shottle station, an intermediate stop on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, I found another project. As I headed south along Shottle and Postern FP 80 it was clear work was in progress. The path should follow the east bank of a rather straight section of the river and I wondered initially if this had been diverted during the construction of the adjacent railway.

Arrival at the now disused weir amended the theory with the discovery of stonework indicating a former mill. The First edition OS one inch map published 1836 available to download on the National Library of Australia Trove website shows Postern Mill on the site. The map fails to show the railway which did not open until 1867.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust are leading the project which they say will support the recovery of Atlantic salmon. I'm amazed knowing that the fish will have to approach from the North Sea at the Humber, swim up the Trent then Derwent before arriving at Postern but then I'm no wildlife expert. Other fish to benefit are eel classified as 'critically endangered' plus grayling, trout, lamprey, minnow, stone loach, and bullhead.



The project was working with partners including the Devonshire Group, this offered an interesting link to the extensive land ownership associated with Chatsworth.

While the ground was still waterlogged after so much rain I was fortunate to have chosen a bright sunny day so as the path climbed away from the river I had good views across the valley. This included a large complex of buildings out of place in such a rural location.



The map showed it as The Knowle which from a distance looked like a detention centre. So another Google search to discover the house, once the home of an author, unheard of by me, now housed an international company. Well I would like to tell you what they do but again it was a bit above my pay grade so I'll leave you to look up Lubrizol who say "Our world leading scientists and engineers collaborate to invent and develop unique molecules with ground-breaking performance". History of the organisation involves a company started in 1908 by the Dalton family of Belper which later became known as Silkolene, a name I do recognise. The Silkolene name is now used to promote oil for motorcycles.

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector

Photographs

Bypassed weir that served Postern Mill

OS First edition sheet 71 - © Crown copyright 2024

Ordnance Survey. Media 048/24

Footbridge over River Ecclesbourne Shottle and Postern FP 77

Unusual waymarks on Idridgehay and Alton FP22, Derbyshire

I spotted these waymarks on Idridgehay and Alton FP22 recently. On the PNFS FID I found what the parish's footpath inspector David Armin had to say. "The path passes through several conservation meadows which are being kept uncut to encourage biodiversity. Path on the ground therefore unclear in early summer but landowner has hung used plastic sacs on trees and hedges to help indicate the line of the route. Gates in a poor state of repair but do not obstruct progress."

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector



Unusual stile in Cliviger

Although I am not a member of PNFS, I sometimes report faulty stiles and footpath problems using your PNFS path checker app. I am Ramblers Secretary for a club affiliated to Peak & Northern through paying a subscription to you.

I was very interested to see your article in the spring 2024 issue of *Signpost* magazine about an unusual stile in Mellor. In early March, I reported damage via the app to the same kind of stile which was in Cliviger, near Burnley! I had thought that stile was a one off as I had never seen anything similar on



my walks. John Fisher kindly responded, copying in Simon Worrall and replied that he would report it to Lancashire CC. I had already reported it to them as John mentioned there was no Inspectors in that area, so perhaps our two pronged approach will work.

I had thought that the unique stile was perhaps historically connected to the lands around Dyneley Hall. Sir Simon Towneley and his wife Mary lived at the hall which is not too far from Towneley Hall in Burnley (the Mary Towneley Loop). But now I've got to think again as your reported stile in Mellor is miles away from Cliviger! I've just found another one by Googling 'Unusual metal stiles' so it appears it isn't as unique as I first thought!

Hopefully the broken one at Cliviger will be mended soon. Unusual things like that seen on walks adds to the pleasures of rambling!

The photograph shows the damaged stile. The reason it has broken is because the wooden post it is attached to has rotted at the base. Let's hope that it will be repaired and not replaced by something else. I have found that Lancashire County Council are quite good at responding to footpath problems when I have reported other things to them. One time they cleared an overgrown footpath in Adlington which was great but unfortunately, it was on the day I led the walk so we still couldn't use it!

A walker who used the Path Checker app

Mr Richard Marsden Pankhurst (1835-1898)

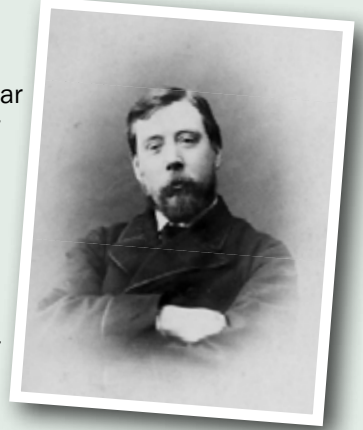
A founder member of our Managing Committee and in 1895 our Honorary Counsel when we confronted the Duke of Devonshire

Born in Stoke on Trent in 1835, Richard's parents moved to Manchester and he was educated at Manchester Grammar School and Owens College, which later became Manchester University. In 1851 his father Henry was an auctioneer and dealer living in Jackson Street, Hulme, Lancashire.

In 1858 he graduated in law from the University of London, founded in 1836, and in 1859 was awarded LL.B with Honours, then LL.D in 1863, winning the gold medal. He was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1867, joining the Northern Assizes circuit, as well as becoming a member of the Bar of the County Palatine of Lancaster Court and a Mason at St.George's Lodge, Manchester.

He was a founder member of the Manchester Liberal Association, but later fell out with them. He campaigned for a multitude of causes such as universal, free, secular education, home rule for the Irish, free speech, disestablishment of the Church of England, abolition of the House of Lords, the nationalisation of land and the independence of India, as well as secret ballots in elections and universal male suffrage.

In today's terms he was a radical socialist barrister. He also helped to establish the National Society of Women's Suffrage, drafting the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill - the first such women's suffrage bill in England, which later led to the Married Women's Property Act (1882). The latter gave wives absolute control over their property as well as their earnings.



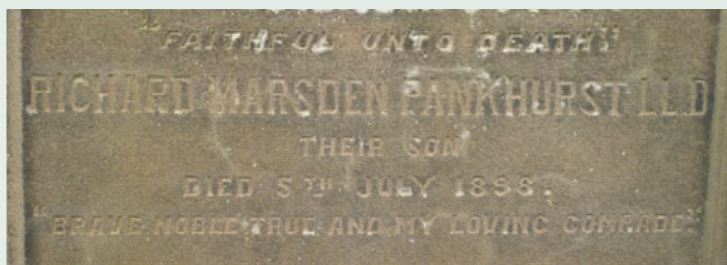
In 1878 aged 43 he married Emmeline Goulden aged 19. They played a major part in establishing the Independent Labour Party, as well as forming the Women's Franchise League in 1889. In 1903 Emmeline founded the Women's Political and Social Union, when her local branch of the ILP refused to accept women members! She and Richard had five children in ten years: Adela, Christabel, Sylvia and two sons: Francis Henry and Henry Francis, who both died young.

The Pankhursts formed part of a political circle, which included such luminaries as Annie Besant, William Morris, Keir Hardie, Robert Blatchford (editor from 1891 of "The Clarion") and George Bernard Shaw. Richard stood for Parliament in 1883 as an independent candidate for Manchester and in 1885 for Rotherhithe, Kent, but lost on both occasions. He never gave up campaigning. Known by his detractors as the "Red Doctor", his controversial views gained him great respect in the Independent Labour Party, but not in the reactionary Establishment or its Press.

He lived and died in the then leafy, upper-middle class suburb of Victoria Park, Rusholme, where Charles Halle, Forde Maddox Brown and Richard Cobden also lived.

In 1894 he became a founder member of PNFS and I am fairly confident that his legal expertise and standing gave PNFS the confidence to face down the Duke of Devonshire, who had arbitrarily closed the historic pack-horse route from Hayfield to the Snake Pass* Agreement was reached in 1896, when Richard was also advising then representing the Winter Hill mass trespassers' leaders. Now that really was a MASS trespass; an estimated 22,000 over two weekends, compared to a few hundred on the Kinder Trespass in 1932.

In July 1898 Richard died suddenly of stomach ulcers at the age of 62 or 63. He is buried with his parents in plot G1106 in the older part of Brooklands Cemetery, Sale.



Sources: I gleaned most of this from the internet. I am particularly indebted to Wikipedia and the website findagrave.com, especially its very active, anonymous member "1414Jan".

* I intend to check the PNFS archives held at Manchester Central Library re Richard's part in our negotiations with the D of D's solicitors in 1895-96, which he shared with Charles Tallent-Bateman, who wrote-up the agreement and retired as our Hon. Solicitor around 1901 (see 1901 Annual Report).

*Photographs: Richard Pankhurst c1890 (public domain); his grave and inscription on gravestone (both David Morton)
David Morton, Signpost Officer*

In the spring I did a walk from Cannock to Rugeley both still in Staffordshire. It's so easy in urban areas to walk the same route that you might take by car, bus or bike. Searching out the green route can be a challenge and leads me to suggest that our good friend, the Ordnance Survey map is not always helpful. To follow my progress I suggest you settle down with an OS map and locate Cannock rail station.

The A460 offer a direct road route to Rugeley, an alternative might be along the A4601 then minor roads passing Hednesford station and onward to Cannock Chase where a green route becomes a matter of almost infinite choice. The challenge is getting to that wonderful green open space from a densely populated urban area. The answer for most, drive to a Chase car park.

Starting from the rail station I spotted a green undeveloped parcel of land directly north of the road. OS shows a dead end definitive path (green dash line) and some black dash lines, indicating paths but these two swing east and meet the A460. So I take a look at OpenStreetMap (OSM) this names the green space as Mill Green Nature Park and shows some additional red dash lines including one that follows along the east side of the rail line and meets the definitive path, this looks good. On the ground the OS black dash path has an excellent tarmac surface, while the OSM path is compacted earth but well used. It started as a wide path through woodland, (see picture), then dropped to cross a stream on a well constructed bridge. From there it's between the railway and an industrial site but still a shade of green. The path continued to join Cannock Town FP50(a) (see picture). This now north south path is shown on old maps east west and crossing the railway, what a remarkable realignment it has had.

OSM tells me Cannock Town FP50(a) meets Hawk Green Lane, it also shows me Phoenix Road which appears to offer a route through to the roundabout where the A460 and A4601 meet. Google Maps also shows and names Phoenix Road but Street View has not explored it. I add it to my route. On the walk I find the road open but gated with a sign stating times the gates will be closed. I inspect the map and amend the route along a short road detour.



North from the A460 and A4601 roundabout OS show those orange spots which may offer an ill defined cycle track so I plot that as best I can joining up the dots. On the ground the approach road is off putting having the appearance of a retail park service road. But no, there is a tarmac track which has folk on it and it looks inviting. It follows a stream and bushes on the other bank offer a screen from the rail line. The path opens out into a wide grassy dell with a pond and a meeting of paths.

At Stafford Lane I had plotted a route that continued to join up orange dots but on the ground signs directed walkers and cyclists to Hednesford centre by Cheviot Rise so I follow the signs, a decision I regret. No issues but the orange dots do offer a greener route.

Hednesford is a thriving town with all services a walker may require at the half way point so I'm pleased my planned route included it. Heading north out of the town OS offered five orange dots that did nothing to inspire confidence (see map extract). The large block of building north east of the station turned out to be a Tesco store which Google would have told me but not offered any navigational assistance. OSM was the saviour here guiding me through the busy Hednesford Park then alongside the railway.



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A short pavement walk offered a safe crossing of the railway line and into Brindley Heath Road where I expected to continue along the pavement but was delighted to find just over the hedge a good stone surface with an open grass bank to my right. The path continued as orange dots onto Cannock Chase. It would now be easy to continue along this mapped route but it made a detour that I didn't require to the visitor centre and car park. There are many tracks marked across the Access Land on OS, OSM but less so on Google, perhaps better here to look at their satellite layer. I was lucky to choose a route with no bikes, good open view and a choice of seats to admire the view (see picture).

Eventually I met Brindley Heath BRO.306 Marquis's Drive and continued on definitive paths as shown on OS to reach Slitting Mill. I was surprised to find that Rugeley FP 10 had been repaired and was open for use (see picture). I was not surprised to find that FP11 and the corresponding orange dot in the middle of a ploughed field remains ignored. Instead we are corralled to use a well surfaced field edge path that initially follows FP9. How come it's not been officially diverted?

As FP11 turns east and returns to use, the cycle route continues north alongside the Rising Brook briefly using a part of Rugeley FP22 and into Hagley Park. I then crossed the road to use pleasant paths through Elmore Park, all of which offered a very green route into the centre of Rugeley.

The whole walk was 12.6 km but less than 4 km was shown on the definitive map. I used three different maps to plan the walk and still had to amend it during the walk. We need a single source of reliable information.

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector

*approaching
wide grassy
dell*



*admiring the
view Cannock
Chase*



*Rugeley FP
10 repaired
and open*



*Cannock
Town FP50(a)*



PNFS Meeting in Leeds, 13 April 2024



As part of our programme of holding local meetings in different locations across the PNFS region, we convened a meeting for members in Leeds/Bradford and the surrounding areas. The venue was the Carriageworks Theatre, very close to the Town Hall, and the guest speaker was Danny Jackson, the manager of Bradford's Countryside and Rights Way team. Among those attending, it was good to see two representatives of West Riding Ramblers and also Hilda Bowler who was a stalwart volunteer at Taylor House until her retirement and move to Ilkley.



Chair of PNFS, Kathy McLean, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Danny. He explained the three areas for which he has responsibility: site management of the countryside sites owned by the council including the moorland expanse of Ilkely Moor; biodiversity and ecology, which have become high priority concerns in recent years; and public rights of way. He also explained that every major planning application these days must demonstrate a net biodiversity gain of 10%. His staff must assess each application to determine whether this has been achieved using the formulas set down by DEFRA.

Bradford has four officers working on rights of way (3 FTE). The remit includes the legal management of the network, namely keeping the definitive map up-to-date, handling Public Path Orders and dealing with obstructions. On the practical management of the PROW network maintenance is split between CROW (rural & promoted network) and Highways Maintenance (urban network). The team is also responsible for signing and waymarking and promotion of the network.

Danny went on to explain the difference between rights of way recognised on the definitive map and many non-definitive paths in the Bradford urban area that was excluded by the 1949 act.

He talked about the way his team deals with path diversions, creations and closures under the 1980 Highways Act and the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. He said that he was expecting a considerable increase in applications to divert paths since the new guidance was published by DEFRA in August 2023



which declares a presumption in favour of diverting paths out of gardens and farmyards. be busy monitoring the impact of these new guidelines which could have a major impact on our rights of way.

He commented that the postponement of the 2026 deadline under the CROW Act to 2031 had prevented the anticipated deluge of DMMO applications, and that his authority had 78 applications on the register, of which 20 have been completed, 8 are in progress, leaving a backlog of 50. He noted that was waiting regulations on “exemptions” and “basic evidential test”.

Danny shared some pictures of the work of his team and he noted the positive partnership with PNFS on signposts and footbridges.

The following discussion reinforced the positive working relationship which exists between PNFS and Bradford’s Rights of Way team.

Simon Worrall’s presentation outlined the current numbers of footpath inspectors (180 are registered with PNFS as volunteer inspectors) and he shared some remarkable statistics. The PNFS area includes 17,650 miles of PRoW in 35 Highways Authorities/ Unitary Areas. In the last two years 15,814 paths have been inspected, which amounts to 5,850 miles of paths walked, which is 37% of the total network. He noted that there were 8,022 faults outstanding (recorded on the Faults Inspections Database) of which 10% were classified as serious faults.

Andrew Harter is our principal footpath inspector in the Leeds and Bradford area. Prior to 2019 most of Leeds had never been inspected, so Andrew decided to inspect as many paths as possible throughout the district rather than do a few parishes on a two-yearly cycle. About 65% of Leeds paths have now had a one-off inspection in the period 2019-2024 but we need more inspectors to walk the paths regularly. In Bradford we now have 4 or 5 Inspectors, and 24% of Bradford paths have been inspected over the period 2019-2024. New inspectors will be very welcome in both Leeds and Bradford.

Andy Leader, Courts and Inquiries Officer for Kirklees reported on his struggle with Kirklees Council to repair and maintain a well-known byway in the Holme Valley



Valley known as Ramsden Road. Andy illustrated the terrible state of this byway, damaged repeatedly by off-road vehicles, like the one we see in the photo below.

Andy has previously served notices under S56 of the 1980 Highways Act to complain that the highway is out of repair.

However, in recent months Andy has taken the complaint to Kirklees magistrate Court. This action, fully supported by the Trustees of PNFS, has brought a new sense of urgency to Kirklees's Officers. They asked for an adjournment to come up with a plan, which they have now done. A schedule of works to address the problems on Ramsden Road must now be completed before 31st March 2027. This case underlines the importance of the legal fund which PNFS holds in reserve, because it was only when the threat of legal action became a reality that this long-overdue work was finally committed to. Well done Andy.

Finally, we heard from John Harker who provided another example of the impact of the work of the Courts and Inquiries Officers. In this case John attended a Public Inquiry in Leeds at which PNFS objected to two railway crossings which Network rail wished to extinguish without any adequate alternative for walkers. John explained Leeds Council decided not to be represented at the public inquiry citing financial costs. They relied on written statements which carry far less evidential value as the evidence submitted cannot be tested under cross-examination.

PNFS was the only objector to the closure of the Garforth FP7 LC closure. The Micklefield BW 8 closure was, in theory, a better bet because the objection had the support of Leeds Council and Micklefield Parish Council.

John made the case on behalf of PNFS. Network Rail had 6 witnesses whose written statements amounted to several hundred pages. Despite the difficulties in contesting cases defended by Network Rail, the Ramblers have had a recent success in contesting a level crossing closure. So there is some hope. We await the outcome of the inquiry.

Although we had hoped for larger numbers of members attending, the meeting was judged to have been a success, especially for the contacts made with West Riding ramblers and the opportunity to meet Danny Jackson Head of PROW team at Bradford. The speakers demonstrated, once again, the determination of our volunteers to protect rights of way in all areas served by PNFS.

David Gosling, Vice Chair



Brew a cuppa and take 5 to Make Ways



As Peak and Northern Footpaths Society members, we know where to take a walk but too many people do not know where they can or can't walk. So part of our aims must be to encourage more people to get out walking.



Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

Our signs and walks programme already do that but it can take a while for new path explorers to feel confident to set out on their own. We all know of obstructions to paths shown on OS maps and the the failure of those same maps to show some well used routes.

Nobody has mapped the landscape with enough information for the general public to make informed decisions about where they can walk. A new project from Slow Ways aims to map the country and identify good paths, bad paths and locations where a path is needed.

A big ask but as experienced users of footpaths, we can encourage novices to enjoy walking which will have the added benefit of potential new members. Take a look at the 'Make Ways' website makeways.org where you can identify, good paths, bad paths and wished for paths.

No promises that improvements will be achieved but plotting a wish list will show where we need links to make a real independent walking network.

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector

Where have all the **ramblers** gone?

To paraphrase the words of Pete Seeger, in his song 'Where Have All the Flowers Gone?' that was written in 1955. I would ask: Where have all the ramblers gone, have they all become hikers, everyone? I ask this question because I have enjoyed walking, in the countryside, for over 60 years and always look forward to putting my hiking boots on, before a walk, but I have never been hiking. This may seem a strange statement to make, in modern times, but I am a Rambler not a hiker and prefer to use a traditional term. Perhaps I am old fashioned, in this regard, because I was taught that kids had four legs, and lived on farms, but now they go to school and restaurants advertise their meals, but that is a different story so I must not digress. I can never understand why the term hiking is preferred, by makers of YouTube videos, when day walks are described. The term hiking was used by the scouts, in 1927, to describe journeys, in the countryside, that involved carrying a tent, bedding, food and cooking equipment, to spend at least one night outdoors. In contrast, a ramble undertaken during a day, without camping, cannot strictly be called a hike, although a backpack may be carried, containing a flask and sandwiches, and other essentials, such as gloves, waterproofs and a compass.

In 1931, GHB Ward, and his friend Stephen Morton, lodged a formal protest against the use of the word hike and hiker instead of the words ramble and Rambler. Ward and Morton (1931, p8) wrote to the Editor of the Sheffield Daily Telegraph and stated: 'The executive committee of the Sheffield and District Ramblers' Federation have observed that during the last few months the Press, principally in London, have endeavoured to substitute the word "Hiker" for "Rambler." We respectfully suggest that the word Rambler, which, like footballer and cricketer, has existed without question during the last two generations is well understood by all and sundry.' It was acknowledged that the word hike was an old English term but the original meaning was apparently not applicable, to walking or rambling, because it meant clearing out in a hurry. Although, the term may have applied, in those days, when walkers were spotted crossing Kinder Scout and were chased off the moor by keen gamekeepers. Wilmore (1931, p11), in a letter to the Editor of the Nelson Leader, commented: 'We who have been rambling for a quarter or half of a century have been proud to be dubbed "trampers," "ramblers," or "shankers," but now the stunt of "hiking" has been discovered in America or somewhere, and it is with us in full blast in all the latest colour, like an irresistible influenza epidemic.'

Unfortunately, the American influence has persisted and many walkers are still calling a day's walk in the countryside a hike instead of a ramble. Newspaper readers (Daily Telegraph, 1931, p4) were informed: 'We cannot see any need for calling ramblers anything but ramblers. The other word is a novelty, but an ugly novelty.' Regrettably, the novelty has persisted and the word 'hiking' has become, in modern parlance, a 'cool' term to use. The only thing that is cool, in my house, is the inside of the fridge so I am sticking to the term 'rambling' because it accurately describes my outings to the countryside.

Unfortunately, I never met GHB Ward, or his friend Stephen Morton, but I have much in common with their enthusiasm for rambling in the Peak District. Fortunately, much

has changed for keen walkers since Mr. Ward, and members of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, undertook many rambles before the Second World War. It was reported (Sheffield Independent, 1931, p6) that according to the London press: 'a "hiker" is a much superior person to the "rambler." The "rambler," it seems, is a very delicate individual who just wanders round the countryside, and goes home at night; but the "hiker" is one who gallantly sleeps out in a bag on the moors, and generally seeks hardship.' Newspaper readers (Ibid) were also informed: 'The distinction is rather silly – but then, the London Press has only just discovered "hiking," although it has been going on in this area for the last ten years.' Anyone who studies the routes, undertaken by members of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, will find that G. H. B. Ward, believed that 'A Rambler made is a man improved' and conclude that the rambles, that they completed, were not planned for delicate individuals because every route was challenging.

But where have all the ramblers gone? Have they gone to ground, everyone? Mr. Ward, of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, once stated: 'The man who knows his Derbyshire and the Rambler's Paradise around Sheffield has learned that a One-Inch Ordnance Map is more valuable than a Seven-and-Sixpenny Novel.' Present day ramblers are more fortunate because they can use Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps OL1 and OL24 to plan numerous rambles, in the Peak District, but how many walkers take the trouble of plotting circular walks, of several miles, on 1:25,000 scale maps. Has the true art of rambling declined? The exception being, of course, walk leaders of organised rambling clubs who must have plotted, over the years, numerous circular routes. A good example being the members of Marple District Rambling Club who have published two books of their favourite rambles. Similarly, members of the Peak and Northern Footpath Society (PNFS) have also undertaken various walks in the Peak District. Unfortunately, many walkers, who have not joined a rambling club, prefer to visit popular areas such as Mam Tor, Chee Dale and Dovedale, but very few seem to venture further and undertake rambles, of 7 or 8 miles, from places such as: Brassington; Elton; Grindon; Wash; and Winster. Similarly, many visitors to the Peak District enjoy walking along the High Peak, Monsal and Tissington Trails, without exploring many paths in the region. Perhaps it is a matter of confidence but as Mr. Ward said: 'The man who never was lost never went very far.' My friend and I have been walking, in the Peak District, for over 40 years and we enjoy exploring routes that we have not previously followed. We also enjoy finding paths, that are rarely used, and locating stiles that few ramblers have crossed.

I wish that more walkers would venture further and take the advice of Mr Ward who also said: 'Those who do not know her footpaths do not England know.' My friend and I usually go walking every Thursday, and we have often undertaken a walk, of over 7 miles, without meeting a single Rambler; although some walkers have been met when popular areas have been reached. We have occasionally encountered a local resident, along a path or track, walking their dog and exchanged greetings with farmers. My friend and I attune ourselves to nature, by listening to the sounds of birds and livestock and rushing streams. We often sit, beside a stone wall, to enjoy our sandwiches and a warm drink, at lunchtime, to appreciate scenic views. Many miles have been covered, in the Peak District, and we like to identify distant hills, in the landscape, that we have previously crossed. During our travels, in the countryside, overgrown paths have been discovered,

defective footbridges have been encountered, and routes blocked with trees have been found. Many problems, discovered during our rambles, have been reported to the PNFS for issues to be resolved. Every ramble that my friend and I undertake, in the Peak District, is an adventure because many paths and tracks, not previously followed, must be found. Good map reading skills are essential and we have occasionally used a magnetic compass to cross large fields and moorland areas. It can be challenging, to follow rarely used paths and find hidden stiles, but it is rewarding when splendid scenes are discovered. Every footpath that is followed, in the Peak District, provides new opportunities to appreciate the region. Morton (1934, p. 4), in the Sheffield Independent, wrote: 'It is far preferable to venture and be "lost" every time one goes over our moors and hills, and to feel the emotions engendered by a glimpse into nature, than it is to complete a ramble according to schedule or plan with the methodical tread of an automaton and miss the inspiration of senses in tune with the country through which you pass.' I can understand his sentiment because I have recorded a series of rambles and hope these will be published in the near future. Guidance has been prepared so ardent ramblers can explore many different areas of the Peak District countryside.

Ron Braddock, Member

i Ward, G. B H. and Morton, S. E. (1931) 'Hiker or Rambler?', Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 30 May, p. 8.

ii Wilmore, P. (1931) 'Fools, Fields and Farmers', Nelson Leader, 8 May, p. 11.

iii Sheffield Daily Telegraph (1931) 'Current Topics, Hike and Ramble', 29 May, p. 4.

iv Sheffield Independent (1931) 'General Topics, Hikers and Ramblers', 25, May, p. 6.

v Ibid.

vi Morton, S. E. (1934) 'The Story of Eyam's Plague Heroism Retold', Sheffield Independent, 17 August, p. 4.

Chatsworth Estate **footpaths website**

I recently discovered while walking a path in the Derwent Valley at Crich parish Derbyshire a sign with a QR code. The sign had been fixed to the footpath finger post by the landowner, the Chatsworth Estate. It was promoting or advising of their 'Open Access Woodland' in the long disused part of Duke's Quarry. The walked path here fails to follow the definitive line the latter being a death trap if followed as it drops over an abandoned tall sheer quarry face. So it was good news that the landowner acknowledges the walked route. Mastering the QR code with some assistance it took me to a most interesting map which is described as Chatsworth Footpaths and Open Access Woodlands - Chatsworth. maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/basic/index.html?appid=d677400e3b6141728863b338414a09a0. While it failed to offer information about the Duke's Quarry site it did show clusters of footpaths which shows the extent of land owned by Chatsworth. We can only hope that the woodland information will soon be added.

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector



Signpost Report

Prospects and Signpost Donations

656 at Whitelee farm, Wincle, will be erected and unveiled on Saturday 17th August to commemorate our 130th anniversary

655 will also be erected up at the farm

657 and 658 at Withnell Moor, Chorley

653 at Thursbitch near Rainow.

Prospects for two signposts on Rossendale Moors have improved, as I have been able to contact the relevant UU manager, but am still awaiting his decision.

Four donations for memorial plaques totalling £135 have been received. Three came from friends of

Norman Bamforth, who is now commemorated on a joint plaque with his brother on 300 in Tom Wood.

The fourth is from Gordon Richards on 463 at Holmesfield. It celebrates his 80th birthday.

New Signposts

The following were erected in drier conditions.

654 on Longstone Moor, donated by Notts Rock and

Heather Club to commemorate their 70th anniversary. See elsewhere for more details.

659 at Flagg. We were able to drive John's car across the fields.



Theft

385, in memory of Jean Horsfall's mother Esther near Lowgill church was reported missing in February. Subsequent enquiries of Tatham Parish Council and the new landowners have produced no explanation, but our sign has been replaced by a Tatham Parish Council sign – see photo courtesy of our Footpath Inspector for Roeburndale Hugh Stewart. The mystery remains. It appears to have been stolen from what I deemed a very safe location. My last email to the council has not been answered.

Maintenance

124 for Rushup Edge repaired and reinstated

March

Reinstated 241 at Bottoms Hall, Mellor with John Hodgson.

April

201,309,320,539,132,156,609,584,92,13/20,25,271,408,505/6/7/8/9/10/11/19,224,556,606,205,550,522,24,420

inspected with help from Andy McMullan, Ann Vernon-Haden and Derek Northin.

233,281,489 repainted by Steve Brown

May

F30, S303/4/5/6, 537/8 inspected by Shirley Addy whilst leading the Saturday walk in May.

Reinstated 124 on recycled plastic post with John and James Hodgson
287,129,130,127,39,24,343,108,582,547/8,381 and 622 at Stafford
inspected with help of David Edge and Simon Worrall.

New MP ILMO Ron and Vera Lees fitted to 287 N of Dimple

71 having fallen was recovered from Alport Bridge and 271 from Hope Bridge with help of Rick Murphy (next door neighbour to TH). Touched up F28

Repaired top step of stile

F8 at Bullshaw Farm – fingers rotting, reported by Simon Worrall; reminder sent to Andy Bentham (PDNP) on 23 May, but no action taken as of 28.6.24

522 at Mosley Hall Farm repainted by Steve Brown, following a murder there.

June

Reinstated 130 on WRP by A666 Darwen Rd

99 and 99a at Stoke Ford and 396 at Padfield repainted by Steve Brown

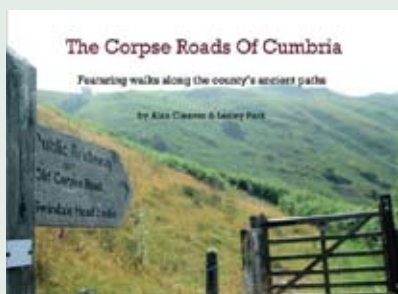
151,399,299,300,559,517/8,43 inspected/cleaned with help of Martin Balderson, Brian Hamilton and Richard Davies.

MPs fitted to 559 IMO Pete Ash (Signpost Team member) and to 456 using Resist-Torx screws following theft of original MP IMO Barry and Rita Ware of Marple Ramblers.

Total Signs: 577 plus 2 toposcopes = 579

David Morton, Signpost Officer





The Corpse Roads of Cumbria – Walks along the county's ancient paths

Alan Cleaver and Lesley Park, published by Chitty Mouse Press, 2019, £10

Journeys of the Soul – Vernacular funeral routes in Upper Calderdale

John Billingsley, published by Northern Earth, 2023, £5



Corpse roads were the routes used to take bodies from remote rural communities to distant “mother” churches for burial. In some cases they followed difficult high-level terrain. The bodies were carried by people or horses – and not always in a coffin.

Although the routes were probably used for other purposes as well, the association with funerals resulted in the accumulation of legends and superstition. As more churches were licensed for burials, and alternative routes capable of carrying wheeled traffic were developed, the use of corpse roads declined but the legends and superstition have lingered on.

Cleaver’s and Park’s book was first published in black and white in 2018. It must have sold well because in little over a year it had been re-issued in a revised full-colour edition. In many ways it is a conventional guide book with annotated maps (OS Explorer extracts), route descriptions and numerous photographs. Seventeen routes are described, ranging from short low-level strolls to more demanding fell walks. The authors also describe a range of customs, such as the use of “death chairs” and “telling the bees”, to build up a picture of how families dealt with death in a society very different from our own.

While Cleaver and Park are respectful of the customs and folklore that has built up around corpse roads they are not over-awed. They even question the validity of some of the routes when they find the evidence wanting. For example, they point out that the earliest published evidence of the Ambleside to Grasmere corpse road only dates from 1912; and that neither Dorothy or William Wordsworth mention it in their writings even though it passed their front door. The authors also consider that two alleged “coffin rests” (where mourners paused on their journey) on this route are “unconvincing”.

In Billingsley’s book the emphasis is very much on the spiritual. This is best illustrated by his concluding appendix in which he argues that the supernatural aspects of corpse roads should not be seen as “ephemeral bygone superstition” but as a subject “valid for study within local history without compromising rational objectivity”. Whether he actually believes in the supernatural or sees himself as a dispassionate observer of other peoples’ beliefs is not clear.

The author begins the book with a review of corpse roads across Northern England (and also as far away as the Netherlands). He then moves onto an examination of routes leading to Heptonstall and Halifax. The path network in Upper Calderdale is so dense that in many places there would have been several choices about which route to take. Therefore, the author's descriptions include a great deal of discussion about whether the corpse route took a particular path or another one nearby. This contrasts with Cumbria where there was much less route choice. The limited use of maps in the book makes the routes more difficult to follow – whether on a map at home or in the field – than those in the Cumbria book. There are a number of small black and white photos which, while adequate, would probably be more informative if reproduced at a larger size and in colour.

My first impressions of these books were that they had been written from very different viewpoints: Cleaver and Park producing a guide book with a dash of folklore, while Billingsley concentrates on folklore, legends and the supernatural. In terms of presentation they are indeed very different. The Cumbria book is heavily illustrated, while the Calderdale book is text-dominated. Nevertheless, in the course of writing this review I have recognised that there are significant overlaps between the two. They both provide valuable insights into how our ancestors dealt with the practical, spiritual, and emotional difficulties associated with death.

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

Signpost 500 with Pennine Way Edale FP18 in the distance



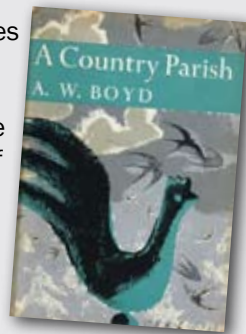
PNFS signposts available for memorials or dedications

Here is a list of 44 PNFS signposts available as at June 2024 to walkers and walking clubs for memorials or dedications. For grid references, photos and location maps see pnfs.org.uk/Signposts_Bridges For latest cost details contact David Morton, Signpost Officer on signposts@pnfs.org.uk.

- S299 at Tom Wood, Charlesworth
- S451/2 Pettypool Wood, Whitegate, Northwich
- S485 Limb Valley, Sheffield
- S531 at Wicken Walls, Flash, Buxton
- S533/4 at Hr. Hud Lee Farm, Hurst Green, Whalley, Lancs.
- S540/1 at Onecote Grange, Leek
- S553/65/6/7 at Ashover
- S577 at Elkstone, Warslow, Leek
- S585/7/8 at Mountain Farm, Blacko, Colne
- S589, 591/2/3 at Higher Gills Farm, Rimington, Clitheroe
- S594 at Ribchester, Ribble Valley
- S598/9 at Copster Green, Ribble Valley, Blackburn
- S603/4 at Little Snodworth, Langho, Ribble valley
- S617 at Dinckley Hall Farm, Copster Green, Ribble Valley
- S622 at Stafford, by the county showground
- S624/5/6/7 at Stretton Hall Farm, Clay Cross
- S628 at Harvey Gate, Onecote
- S633/4 on the Five Pits Trail at North Wingfield, NE Derbys.
- S638 at Bashall Eaves, north of Clitheroe
- S645 at Ipstones Edge, southeast of Leek
- S647/8 at Harrop Hall, Slaidburn
- S649/50/51 at Broadhead Farm, Slaidburn
- S652 at Baileys Farm, Lyme Handley
- S659 at Flagg Hall farm, Flagg



Some members may be familiar with the New Naturalist series of books. First published in 1945, with the intention 'to interest the general reader in the wildlife of Britain', the sequence of books now stretches to 147 individual titles. The original remit was quickly broadened to include all aspects of Natural History. A perfect example is number 9 in the series, 'A Country Parish', by A.W. Boyd. The parish featured is Great Budworth which lies a few miles north of the Cheshire town of Northwich and was, by chance, on the route home from a recent holiday in North Wales.



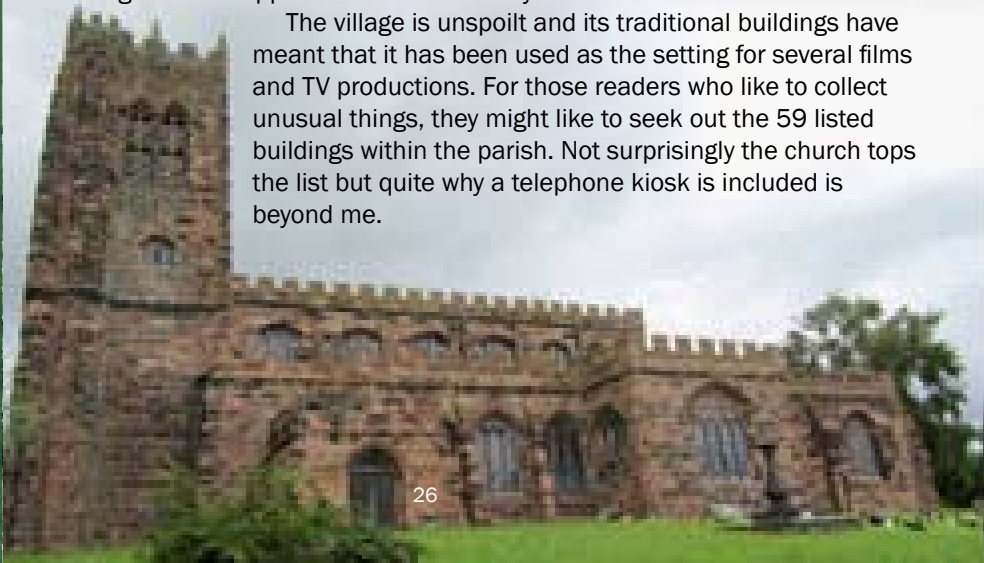
The parish is now a relatively small one. Its area is 365 hectares, has only 9 Public Rights of Way (PROW), and a population of under 400. In the 18th century it comprised 18 townships. These grew to such an extent that the parish was subdivided. Great Budworth parish is now encircled by these new parishes and at its heart is the village of the same name!!!!

When I visited back in April, it was clear that very little had changed for many years. My first port of call was the very traditional pub named not surprisingly the "George and Dragon". The food was excellent, as I'm sure the beer would have been, but as I was driving coffee had to suffice. A plaque above one of the pub's doors bears the inscription 'NIL NIMIUM CUPITO' which means 'I desire nothing to excess', a sentiment that I suspect isn't always followed by those that frequent the premises!

Directly across the road from the pub lies the church of St Mary and All Saints. The church's Lady Chapel dates from the fourteenth century whilst the rest of the building was added over the next two centuries. It has been described as "one of the finest examples of ecclesiastical architecture remaining in Cheshire".

Some of the old church records were in open view, one of which listed the payments required to be buried in the graveyard to the rear of the church. I was surprised to see that there were differing rates for being buried with the 'labouring class' as opposed to the 'Yeomanry'.

The village is unspoilt and its traditional buildings have meant that it has been used as the setting for several films and TV productions. For those readers who like to collect unusual things, they might like to seek out the 59 listed buildings within the parish. Not surprisingly the church tops the list but quite why a telephone kiosk is included is beyond me.



I'd highly recommend a visit to the parish. All its PROWs could be walked comfortably in a day, and there would still be plenty of time to visit both the pub and church. What more could you ask for, certainly 'nothing to excess'?

Mel Bale, Membership Secretary and Trustee



Photograph credits:
Pub photograph © philandju (cc-by-sa/2.0), Church photograph © John H Darch (cc-by-sa/2.0)



A few notes about our AGM

Kathy, our chair has already briefly mentioned our recent AGM, but I'd just like to add a few more words to what she has said.

Firstly, and most importantly, a proposal to increase our subscription rates was put to the meeting. Our rates hadn't been increased for over 10 years, and clearly the costs of running the society have risen over that period of time, especially in the last couple of years. There was a wide ranging discussion about the issue, followed by a vote which was almost unanimous, from memory I think there was one abstention! The new rates are:

<i>Individual</i>	£20	<i>Affiliates</i>	£30
<i>Household</i>	£30	<i>Concessions</i>	£10

Our website has been amended to reflect the new rates. If you pay your subscription by Direct Debit, your next payment will be at the new rate. We are in the process of having a new Join Us leaflet printed.

The other thing I'd like to mention is the talk that Jack Cornish gave after lunch at the AGM. Jack is a natural speaker and it was inspiring to hear him talk so passionately about walking and paths. He works for the Ramblers, and has the amazing job title of 'Head of Paths'. His book, *The Lost Paths* is excellent, and I recommend it wholeheartedly. After the AGM, I suggested to my fellow Trustees that we should ask Jack if he would like to be one of our Vice Presidents. They concurred and David Gosling, our Vice Chair contacted Jack. Here is his reply:

"I'm so pleased that my talk at the recent AGM was well received. And it's a real honour to be asked to become a PNFS Vice-President - I would be delighted to accept. Thank you to all the PNFS Trustees for thinking of me and for the invitation."

Mel Bale, Membership Secretary and Trustee

Inspection of Ribble Valley now complete

On 29 June 2024, I completed my inspection of all public rights of way in the entire Ribble Valley borough which has forty-nine parishes. On 7 November 2015, the day after being appointed as PNFS inspector for this borough, my first inspection started in Wilpshire and Salesbury. Hence it has taken me 8 years and 8 months to inspect all paths and bridleways in the Ribble Valley. I have previously written on how I became a PNFS inspector. For those who are interested in statistics, here they are:

Ribble Valley has 1,788 paths consisting of 756 miles or 1,217 kilometres.

Based on my inspections, 1,156 paths have no faults.

The remaining 632 paths have 1,022 faults, listed below, and 16 dangerous faults.

Illegal sign	2
Obstruction	289
Signpost	356
Stile, gate etc	317
Surface	30
Temporary closure order	6
Waymarking	22
Total	<u>1,022</u>

What the above figures don't show are the miles I had to walk on the road from where my car was parked or having to walk on a path that I'd already inspected in order to reach other paths. Perhaps the true number of miles I've actually walked as inspector is nearly a thousand.

I have relished the challenge of inspecting all of these public rights of way, apart from when I had to turn back from a stile or footbridge that was unsafe or a path completely blocked. Thankfully I am still nimble enough to climb over obdurate gates. The worst part of inspecting is having to make a long detour, but, looking at the bright side, I was getting great exercise in the fresh air.

Being an inspector has been a great motivation for exploring footpaths that I've not previously walked on. It has been extremely satisfying and, because I inspect on my own, liberating too. In spite of the hundreds of troublesome gates or stiles, mud, flooding, and obstructions I had to report to Lancashire County Council, it has been a pleasure being a PNFS inspector. From the outset I decided that I was not going to get worked up or discouraged by a lack of action by LCC to fix faults. Once I reported a fault, that was it, and I got on with the next inspection. Occasionally I would get a warm glow by seeing a new gate or footbridge where I'd previously seen a dilapidated one.

What am I going to do next? During and following the lockdown, I reinspected 12 parishes that are near to my home, so I have only another 37 to go over again. It'll be interesting to see how many of my faults remain. It's a relief that I will not have to report the same fault to LCC a second time, so less time will be spent on admin – unless they have become dangerous. But for a short while, I'm putting my feet up and resting my laurels!

Shirley M Addy, Footpath Inspector



Thornley-with-Wheatley FP49 stile inaccessible due to ground being washed away



Grindleton FP43 stile at a cliff edge



Thornley-with-Wheatley BW58 – Bridleway flooded by a pipe draining a field



Newton-by-Bowland FP17 – Stile with loose steps and posts



Dutton FP35 – Damaged stile



Chipping FP69 – Dilapidated boardwalk



Talking A Walk: A History of Recreational Walking in Britain

Ann Holt, published by The White Horse Press, 2024, hardback £70

At over 500 pages, including an extensive bibliography, this book is a detailed exploration of the history of walking. This book is a labour of love that delves into 'the walking habits and attitudes of ordinary people' (p3), as opposed to the well-documented accounts of more famous people such as Wordsworth, Austen, Dickens and Woolf. By 'ordinary', the author is concerned with 'all those walkers who never attracted much attention beyond their immediate social circle, time and place, leaving little lasting trace beyond the barest official records and sometimes not even that' (p3).

The book is divided into two parts. The first contains chapters on 'Going for a Walk', 'Why Walk' through to 'Resistance' which includes a section on the Kinder trespass and 'Right of Footway', a subject of concern to all. The second part deals with walking between the wars and covers legislation from passing of The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 up to the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

This is a fascinating book and contains a wealth of information about the history of walking. Chapters are sub-divided, making it possible to dip in and out. For example, the chapter on Open Country contains sections on: 'Public walks and parks'; 'Common Land'; 'Other Open Spaces'; 'Mountains and Moors' and details the struggles involved in gaining access to these places for ordinary people.

A chapter that members might find particularly interesting is the one titled 'Resistance'. It contains what can only be described as a 'forensic' analysis of the battle for access to the countryside. I was particularly pleased to see that it details the origins of PNFS.

Sadly, the price of the hardback version of the book probably puts it beyond the budget of most people. However, an ebook version is available for the more affordable price of £15 from whpress.co.uk/publications/product/taking-a-walk/. There may also be a paperback version next year.

Pauline Williams, Member





Saturday, 7 September – Walk leader required.

Wednesday, 11 September (Short) – Mick Chatham 07792 709198 chathamnick@gmail.com. Littleborough circular. Low level to Summit then over Chelburn Moor visiting the Stanza and Aiggin Stones returning via the Roman Road. 1300 ft ascent and 8 miles. Train from Manchester Victoria 09:36 arriving Littleborough 09:57. Walk starts 10:00. OL15 8AR

Wednesday, 25 September (Long) – Ken Smith 07918 154959 kensmith4rj@icloud.com. Marsden circular walk via Pule Hill, Black Moss, Butterley and Holme Moor. Walk starts and ends at Marsden Railway Station. Train 09:58 Piccadilly arrives Marsden 10:30. Walk starts at 10:35. 9.52 miles 1517 ft ascent. HD7 6DG

Saturday, 5 October – Mick Chatham. Todmorden and Bride Stone to see the new restoration of packhorse bridge funded by PNFS. Details to follow.

Wednesday, 9 October (Short) – Ross Myddelton. Walk details to follow.
r.myddelton1@ntlworld.com

Wednesday, 30 October (Long) – John Kidd 01283 701991 j.ollid@hotmail.com.
Walk details to follow.

Saturday, 2 November David Gosling 07841 647275 A04@pnfs.org.uk. Buxton woodland walk. This beautiful walk around the woodlands owned by The Buxton Civic Society is a variation on the Ring of Trees Walk timed to enjoy the autumn colours. This clockwise route will include some of Buxton's finest buildings, Solomons Temple on Grin Low, and a stop at Poole's Cavern Café at 5 miles. 10 miles and 449 m (1500 feet) ascent. Train from Manchester Piccadilly at 09:20, arrive in Buxton at 10:21. Walk starts at 10:30.

Wednesday, 13 November (Short) - Walk Leader Required - email to lead this walk
r.myddelton1@ntlworld.com

Wednesday, 27 November (Long) - John Mooney 07514 219563 mooney_je@yahoo.co.uk. Buxton to Whaley Bridge via Goyt Valley and Taxal. Train 09.51 Piccadilly arrives Buxton 10:54. Walk starts 11:00. 0.5 miles 1500 ft ascent. SK17 6AH

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



**Edale FP6 on the PNFS walk led by
John Fisher on Wednesday, 8 May**

Photograph by Ken Brockway