

Magazine of the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

Signpost

Number 86 - Winter 2025





From the Chair



What a glorious, summer! We are anticipating a very colourful autumn, with many leaves already changing. I hope you took the opportunity to get out and walk on our public rights of way, as well as inspecting them and reporting any faults. A number of members have described their walks in this issue of *Signpost*, illustrated with photographs. If you have any interesting walks to share, please do let us know.

I have been fortunate to walk in a range of geographies over the past few months, from Scotland to Cornwall, the Lake District and the Peak District, as well as my more local footpaths. I reflect that we are fortunate to have well maintained paths to walk but that there are challenges in some areas, and across the PNFS territory, we have many faults which are yet to be fixed.

I recently reinspected a path I knew well, following a report of difficulties by a walker. I was aware it had a number of issues which clearly have not been resolved. Sometimes I wonder why something so simple as the direction of a sign can be so wrong! In this photo you can see a perfect sign, sadly, instead of pointing through the wall gap, it was signalling the opposite direction.



However, we do have some great examples of success, where persistence by our inspectors, area officers and Courts and Inquiries Officers has led to real change and improvement. We also have some brilliant examples of rebuilt footbridges, replaced stiles and improved footpath surfaces. Our bridges and improvements officer, Nigel Howe works quietly and effectively in the background. We will be able to update you at our Half-Yearly meeting in Sheffield on 15th November. There is an advert for the session in this copy of *Signpost*. I hope you can attend, we have an interesting speaker, a chance to meet Trustees, volunteers and members and hear about the work of the society.

As I often mention we are always looking for more volunteers to take on roles within the society. If you have some time, there are many rewarding roles, such as that is supporting our publicity, inspecting footpaths, doing more administrative roles or learning more about the skills needed to become an area officer we would like to hear from you. If you know people who are not yet members, please advertise the society and encourage them to join.

Our green signposts are an important advert for us, and we know there are concentrations of these in some parts of the Peak District, but areas such as Staffordshire are very short of them. As David Morton reports, there have been few new ones installed in recent times, so if you have a suggestion, in any area, do come forward.

I hope to see you at the Half-Yearly Meeting, enjoy your walking and volunteering, thank you for everything you do for PNFS.

Kathy Mclean
Chair



The Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

Taylor House,
23 Turncroft Lane,
Offerton,
Stockport, SK1 4AB

Registered Charity No 212219

T: 0161 480 3565

W: pnfs.org.uk

E: mail@pnfs.org.uk



Signpost is edited and published for the Society by Shirley M Addy. Contact via editor@pnfs.org.uk or by post to Taylor House. Deadline dates for copy: 15 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October

Copyright of the original material belongs to the individual contributors unless stated otherwise. In addition to being published in *Signpost*, their photographs and text may be used in PNFS's social media, website or elsewhere. No part of *Signpost* may be reproduced in any form without prior written permission of the Society. The views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Society.

Design and print by Lymetrees
Telephone/text 07984 059150

Half Year Meeting

Saturday 15th November
Carpenter Room
Sheffield Central Library

- 10.30** Welcome from the Chair
- 10.45** Update on the activities of the Society, including progress on the Five Year Strategy
- 12.00** Guest Speaker: **Morag Rose**
Morag Rose is a walking activist, founder of the Loiterers Resistance Movement and a senior lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Liverpool. Her book, "The Feminist Art of Walking" will be published in October.

More details at pnfs.org.uk/HYM



INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

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



Front cover: Edale

Photograph by Ken Brockway



S661

Here are photographs of the latest signpost at Chapel Station.

The donors Mr and Mrs Chris Sizeland are in the bottom group photo. The sign commemorates the 800th anniversary of Chapel en le Frith. Note the unusual detail on it. *David Morton, Signpost Officer*



Group inspections report

20 August led by Ken Brockway ~ We/I, because no one else turned up, one apology, inspected some paths in **Barton under Needwood** and **Dunstall** in Staffordshire. This being on the edge of the Trent valley it should not have been a surprise to find gravel extraction. The OS map looks good as does the online Staffs footpath map but in reality most of the paths on the inspection circuit had long term temporary closures. Yes I should have checked in the PNFS archive, I didn't but back home I did look and one very significant order is not there. SCC don't post orders on the website and there were no site notices to say what was closed and where the alternative paths were. Rhoda tells me there is no requirement to provide site notices. The area was a mess with no path on its definitive line. I discovered later unsigned but some official temporary diversions, perhaps others with no formal diversion. Some closed that should be open, others open that the order said should be closed. The alternative routes were in places fenced and mown but when there was a choice of paths there was no guidance. It was a complete mess and I'm still waiting for SCC to tell me where the paths should be.

28 August led by David Gosling ~ There have been two visits to **Stafford** for group inspections. The first, I was unable to attend because of a last-minute domestic problem but on 24 July Aidan Moss and Bill Twigg walked a good number of rights of way to the west of Stafford, across Doxey Marshes and around Stafford castle. They found many changes that affect rights of way – including new housing and changes to the course of the river.

On a second visit to Stafford, an enjoyable small group inspection took place on 28 August, when Bill Twigg, Aidan Moss and I walked 8 miles inspecting some of the many rights of way on Cannock Chase. Paths are mostly well-used and in good condition, though signage is very hit and miss and we found one case where the definitive line of a PROW had been made inaccessible by forestry planting.

The next group inspection I am planning is to Blackshaw parish in Calderdale, near to Hebden Bridge. I will be contacting all inspectors in the area, and anyone else interested, to invite them to join me.

There is plenty of scope for more group inspections, so existing footpath inspectors, why not consider the idea. Maybe you want some help to cover the paths in one of your parishes, or you would like to inspect a parish where we do not have an inspector. If you are interested please contact David Gosling on A04@pnfs.org.uk.

12 September led by Shirley Addy ~ The inspection of **Parbold**, West Lancashire was originally set for 29 August but no-one expressed any interest. I later arranged that Simon Worrall, Jim my husband and I would inspect the parish a fortnight later. We parked on the large layby on the A5209 and inspected a few paths on the way to the canal where Simon would meet us after he inspected several paths near the station. Afterwards, the men walked the PROWs north of the A5209 whilst I did those south of this road. Parbold is a small and compact parish with easy walking so both parties were able to complete all of its paths by 12.30 pm. After walking a total of 12 miles we rested our feet at the Carter and Miller pub. It was an enjoyable and sunny day and it was a pleasure to explore an area that was new to me. We were rewarded by a harvest of apples from a roadside box and sloe berries from a hedgerow lining a footpath.



I plan to hold a group inspection in Hoghton, Chorley in January or February. More details will be announced by email in the new year. Join us and enjoy a walk whilst volunteering for the PNFS at the same time.

If you would like to lead a group inspection contact davidgosling@pnfs.org.uk.

Rambling with a mobility scooter

In order to find out more about the way in which ramblers with disabilities access the footpath network in England, I spent a morning with Barry and Marian Andrews. Barry has limited mobility and uses an off-road mobility scooter to go wheeling in the countryside. His wife, Marian, is his companion and helper though Barry is keen to be as independent as he can. They are both very active members of the Disabled Ramblers charity and spend a lot of time finding and publicising routes that are accessible to wheelers as well as organising rambles.

Barry on his off-road mobility scooter



We met at the National Trust car park in Bickerton on the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge and Barry led the way down to the road and then up the track to Maiden Castle. The first obstacle was a gate but it was one with a double latch so it can be opened easily from the scooter from both sides and then will close automatically. This is a simple and inexpensive attachment which can make all the difference for access.

The track was reasonably smooth, and the scooter had no problem with the slope. With a maximum speed of 4 mph and a long battery life, the scooter was well able to cope with the path to the top of the hill. We were all able to enjoy the stunning views to the north and west with clear views of the two Liverpool cathedrals and the Welsh hills.

The scooter can cope with slopes and some rough terrain but clearly not steps. Thus, we were not able to continue up the steps to go north along the Sandstone Trail. But this did not matter; Barry had been able to get to the top of the hill and to enjoy the views. He accepts he cannot go everywhere and that there are limitations to where a scooter can go.



Gate with a double latch

What I learnt from my time with Barry and Marian was that whereas I tend to plan circular walks to cover a particular area or hills, people with restricted mobility often like a ramble that takes them to a particular destination, like Maiden Castle with a stunning view and then they can come back the same way.

Therefore, when inspecting footpaths, it is important to consider each section separately rather than the whole route. If part of a path leading to a particular vista or landmark is accessible, it can still be used even if the section further on is not.



The view from Maiden Castle

(This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.

Attribution: Espresso Addict)

On the way back to the car park we took a different route which had no steps, but the surface was rough and uneven as during the winter water had flowed down it and the sandstone had been eroded. Barry managed to traverse it, but he had to go slowly and take care. Erosion is always going to be a problem in this type of terrain and remedial work is needed to keep the route accessible. It was a National Trust footpath rather than a public right of way so is their responsibility.



Maiden Castle summit ridge

I found the experience very enlightening, and it has provided me with a different perspective on inspecting footpaths. It is important that if there are ways in which a footpath can be made more accessible to those with limited mobility, such as fixing a double latch on a gate, then this should be recorded and passed on to the local authority. Equally if a footpath includes steps or stiles then this could be indicated as not suitable.

As our website states, "PNFS promotes the interests of all footpath users ... whether they are ramblers, runners, dog walkers or just strollers, we're here to help each other." Perhaps this wording should also include wheelers who deserve all the help they can get to enjoy the countryside.

Richard Vickery, Area Officer for Cheshire East (Southern section)

Another day in the life of an octogenarian signpost officer

S508 - all photos by David Morton



31 July 2025

Start 9am: Using my car to reach Clough Farm near Nether Booth, Edale, then my ex-rental mtn/eBike, I attended to six signs between Hope Cross and Win Hill and two back in the Edale Valley; namely 13/20, 14, 21, 25, 122, 508, 519. Due to the very rough and steep slopes of Jaggers Clough bridleway, I found it harder than expected, fell off the bike once (unharmd) and had to ford the Jaggers Clough stream on foot. It's years since I last walked that way, so I'd forgotten those obstacles.

Later the bike was blown over several times by gusts, when parked at signs, and a locked gate forced me to walk the final km to S025 at Win Hill. Luckily I found a better way down another bridleway leading to Edge Farm and met the Twitchill Farm farmer John Atkins en route. John helped us to erect the signs in 2016.

I spoke to many potential recruits to PNFS while I was "on the hill". As a result I ran out of time and didn't get to 509 on the north side of Win Hill. Nor did I touch up the white lettering, as it was too windy to use QAD paint. I repainted the logos with ordinary Humbrol paint and removed or painted over stickers and tags.

I was pretty knackered by the time I got home at 6pm and later in the evening. I was lucky to just get seriously painful cramp in one leg, not both. I staggered to the kitchen and drank two tumblers of water, which did the trick.

I think I'll use the ebike again to tackle 509 and 408 from Ladybower dam, when I have fully recovered. Oh, and I must remember to drink more water and perhaps just use the ebike for trips to Taylor House, shopping and the library! ☺

David Morton, Signpost Officer



On the buses

I was a little apprehensive when Traveline suggested four buses to reach Bradwell on a Saturday morning in June. Trent Barton to Alfreton, Stagecoach to Matlock, Trent Barton to Bakewell and finally Andrews to Bradwell. All went to plan.

Walk started with a good climb leading to a very pleasant walk across Abney Moor. Another steep dip and climb south of Abney Grange to cross the dry stream marking the border into Foolow parish. Here I met a problem, path closed due to unstable ground. As usual no alternative route, so make up your own. I managed to stay on rights of ways for a change to arrive at Foolow. A quick pint in the Bull which was awaiting more customers than a gentle walk across fields to Eyam. Here I met more folk than anywhere else on the walk.

I had plotted the footpath passing the plague cups for the decontamination of coins but never having followed Mill Lane I decided at the last minute to take that route. No off-roaders and no people. Stoney Middleton chip shop busy as usual as I passed by.

I had eaten half my lunch on the bus before the start. Another climb along a path marked on the map as a road. Onto a well manicured path at the end of which was a fine view across to Curbar Edge and a seat where I ate the remaining lunch.

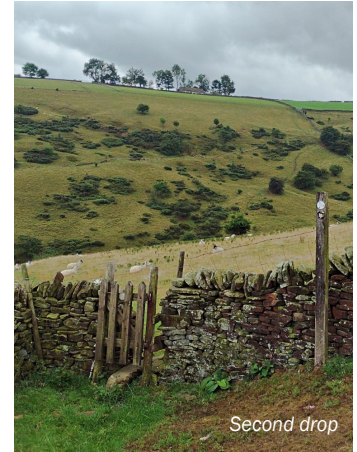
The path across Calver Low was challenging to locate but with some minimum backtracking I made it to the road. Here another privately mown verge offered a safe and easy link to the road into the village.

Another change of plan was a surprise I was feeling whacked. So I abandoned another climb and headed for the riverside path leading to Baslow. I was also aware of the hourly bus and no inviting pub to pass the time. All went well. The double deck electric Stagecoach arrived just a few minutes late and made a direct run into Chesterfield. It managed a good connection to the Comet allowing time for a drop off and pint at the Tupton Tap and still home an hour before planned.

Ken Brockway, on holiday from inspections



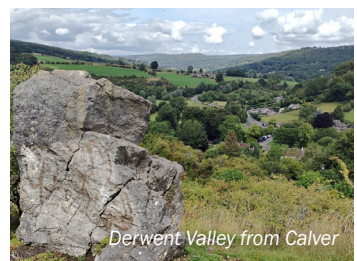
Bradwell-Hope



Second drop



Path closed



Derwent Valley from Calver

S542 Hassop



In early August, I repainted 542, between two failed visits in pursuit of new signpost locations near Monyash in the White Peak and Bradfield in the Dark Peak. I took my car down some scarily rough and narrow roads, but to no avail.

David Morton, Signpost Officer

Len Chadwick *Addendum to article on the Pennine Way in Signpost 85*

In the last issue of *Signpost* I speculated whether L Chadwick, who was a member of PNFS in the 1960's, was the Len Chadwick who carried out preliminary reconnaissance work on behalf of Alfred Wainwright for his 1968 *Pennine Way Companion*. My thanks go to Peter Williams who got in touch to say that he knew Len, who was a shorthand typist and the founder and leader of the Kindred Spirits Fellwalking Society based at Dobcross. Len had a great knowledge of the Peak District and surveyed the Edale to Calder Valley section of the Pennine Way on Wainwright's behalf.

Peter believes it is likely that Len would have been a PNFS member in the 1960's. So it seems beyond reasonable doubt that L Chadwick and Len Chadwick were one and the same person. So we have a confirmed example of how one of our members contributed to the Pennine Way. My thanks go to Peter for providing this information.

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

Confusion and clarification



Photograph of William Clough from commemorative booklet 'Kinder Scout public footpath opened May 29th 1897'

In 1877, a little guide about Hayfield and Kinder Scout was published that contained six rambles that included two routes to Edale Cross including a ramble from Hayfield to Edale Church and a walk via Carr Meadow (Glossop Road).¹ Unfortunately, *The Guide to Hayfield and Kinder Scout*, that was edited by William Walker, Farlands, Kinder, resulted in a loss, to the newly formed Hayfield and Kinder Scout Ancient Footpaths Association, and committee members were disappointed when WH Smith & Son declined to stock the publication in their bookshops.² How different it would have been if the aims and objectives of the society had been better supported, the footpath guide had sold more copies, and more people had subscribed to the society. Regrettably, as funding declined, the officials and members, of the society, failed to complete all their plans but William Walker believed that the footpath guide was a worthy experiment, so he compiled a new edition that was published in 1880. The new and revised edition, called *Kinder Scout with the footpaths and bridle roads about Hayfield*, contained numerous illustrations and Leo H. Grindon contributed details about 'The Flora of Kinder Scout'. Walker had a new edition of the guide published at his own risk, without profit and some loss, because he believed it would provide clarification and help many tourists to explore and appreciate the region. The esteemed William Walker, died in 1899, at Southport, and he must have been pleased when the Peak District & Northern Counties Footpaths Preservation Society, now known as the Peak and Northern Footpath Society (PNFS), was established, in 1894, and a path from Hayfield to the Woodlands was opened, in 1897. If he had lived longer, he would have been proud of the achievements of the PNFS because the Peak District & Northern Counties Footpaths Society was built on the foundations that he had created with his friends.

Baddeley (1887, opposite p62), in a guide to the Peak District, included a map of 'Buxton, Castleton, Kinder Scout, &c.', adapted from the Ordnance Survey by Bartholomew & Co., that showed several paths to Kinder Downfall including a path from the Snake Inn to Ashop Clough and a route from Hayfield and Upper House.³ Although, it was stated (Ibid, p45) that: 'There is no authorized track, the scenery, except during the descent on the far side is monotonous, and there is the risk of being stopped by the gamekeepers.'⁴ Many ramblers, who visited Hayfield, wanted to climb Kinder Scout and appreciate superb views from the plateau and visit Kinder Downfall but it was stated (*Manchester Courier*, 1887, p5) that: 'The smoke of Manchester and neighbouring towns can be tasted on the Moors about Woodhead, and even on Kinder Scout, the highest part of the Derbyshire Peak.'⁵ Numerous walkers also wanted to follow a path from the Snake Inn to Hayfield that had been closed by landowners and Garside (1895, p7) in a letter, that was reprinted, in the *Stalybridge Reporter*, after originally being published in the *Manchester Guardian*, explained: 'On page 60 [of a guide-book published by the Hayfield and Kinder Scout Ancient Footpaths Association in 1880] the road is plainly marked on the panoramic sketch-map [of] Mill Hill as the old pack horse road to the Woodlands and Sheffield. With this evidence it is plain that the committee existent in 1877 had considered the question, obtained evidence, and if supported would have brought the matter to an issue.'⁶

Unfortunately, after much had been written about Kinder Scout, in various guide books and newspaper articles, many excursionists, who visited the area, were still confused about public access. Although, arrangements that were implemented by landowners, before *The Guide to Hayfield and Kinder Scout* was published, in 1877, clarified the issue. For example, H. M. (1875, p8) in the *Glossop-dale Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter*, in a letter that was originally published in the Manchester Examiner, mentioned that when he arrived at Hayfield Railway Station, he was given a sheet of paper that explained that Kinder Scout was strictly preserved and that trespassers would be prosecuted.⁷ In addition, numerous signs had been secured, to various gateposts and trees, to reinforce the message. Unfortunately, as time passed by, and the number of excursionists increased, the distribution of information, at Hayfield Railway Station, was discontinued and many tourists, who arrived in Hayfield, lacked guidance about public rights of way. After the death of Sir James Watts, in 1878, his son, who was also called James Watts, inherited the Kinder estate. Unsurprisingly, he was also reluctant to allow numerous ramblers to cross his property. Although, keen walkers could write to Watts and request a permit, to visit Kinder Downfall, but permission was not always granted.

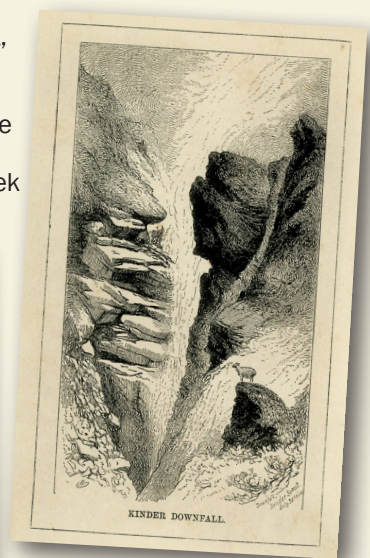
Before the Dore and Chinley Railway opened for passengers, in June 1894, some ramblers approached Kinder Scout from the Snake Road, or through Hayfield village, and many intrepid walkers started the ascent from the Snake Inn. For example, it was reported (*Glossop-dale Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter*, 1889, p5) that: 'The members of the Padfield Field Society enjoyed a very pleasant ramble to the "Snake," the direction taken being over the hills, on Sunday. Dinner was partaken of at the Snake Inn, after which the party wended their way to Kinder Scout, on the top of which a short meeting was held. Here Mr. Arthur Heywood named a number of plants, the collection of which had been made on the journey.'⁸ Some guide book writers encouraged walkers to climb to the Kinder plateau and Leyland (1891, p38), for example, in a description of Kinder Scout, stated: 'Strangers who propose to make the ascent, which they may best do from Hayfield, below the western slope, will do well beforehand to ascertain the condition of the moor, and to be prepared for difficulties with gamekeepers, and they may find it an advantage to provide themselves with a guide.'⁹ It is possible that some excursionists, who wanted to visit Kinder Downfall obtained permission from the landowner, or employed a guide at Hayfield, but many ardent walkers, who decided to explore without a guide, made their own way and followed paths used by gamekeepers, shepherds and shooting parties.

It was reported (*Glossop-dale Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter*, 1894, p8) that: 'The "right of way" over Kinder Scout seems to be agitating the minds of many tourists just now, but none of them seem to know where e' are. It would be of great service to the visitors at large of any of our Hayfield historians or worthies could solve the difficulty by offering their views, but even these seem very limited. Several suggestions have been offered upon the point, but at present no definite solution to the matter has been afforded.'¹⁰ Many excursionists were also encouraged to visit Kinder Scout after they had read *The History of David Grieve*, by Mrs. Humphry Ward, that was published in 1892. The evocative descriptions of the area drew many people to the region to see the places described in the novel and appreciate the rugged and dramatic scenery. The place was greatly publicised and many visitors were determined to explore and risked being stopped by gamekeepers. Many excursionists were probably deterred by steep climbs, or signs erected by landowners, but some ardent walkers ignored the signage and continued their rambles. Verax (1894, p7) in the *Glossop-dale Chronicle and*

North Derbyshire Reporter in an article, about Kinder Scout, that was originally published in the *Manchester Guardian*, stated: 'It has no attraction for the ordinary "pic-nic." The steep ascent and the absence of any prominent features are enough to keep away the crowd; not those who find walking itself a pleasure, and who in the course of their rambles seek for solitude, refreshment, and repose will go there again and again.'¹¹



Woodcut of signs displayed on Kinder Scout from 'Kinder Scout with the Footpaths and Bridle Roads about Hayfield' published 1880.



Woodcut of Kinder Downfall from 'Kinder Scout with the Footpaths and Bridle Roads about Hayfield' published 1880.

Public concern, about a disputed path from Hayfield to the Snake Road, continued and it was reported (Ibid) that: 'Every year as summer comes round the question of the right of access to Kinder Scout is raised in the papers.'¹² Regrettably, the issue was difficult to resolve because the owners, and renters of the moors, were very protective of their shooting rights and reluctant to compromise.

Ron Braddock, Member

¹ Walker. W. [Edited by] (1877) *The Guide to Hayfield and Kinder Scout*. Manchester: John Heywood.

² *Hyde & Glossop Weekly News and North Cheshire Herald* (1877) 'The Ancient Footpath Association.' – Annual Meeting', 15 September, p7.

³ Baddeley, M. J. B. (1887) *The Peak District of Derbyshire and neighbouring counties*. London: Dulau & Co.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ *Manchester Courier* (1887) 'The water supply of towns', 20 September, p5.

⁶ Garside, L. (1895) 'Kinderscout', *Stalybridge Reporter*, 1 June, p. 7.

⁷ H. M. (1875) 'Hayfield. Kinder Scout Preserved', *Glossop-dale Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter*, 12 June, p8

⁸ *Glossop-dale Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter* (1889) 'Padfield. Sunday Ramblers', 6 September, p5.

⁹ Leyland, J. (1891) *The Peak of Derbyshire*. London: Seeley and Co. Limited.

¹⁰ *Glossop-dale Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter* (1894) 'Hayfield Notes', 20 July, p8.

¹¹ Verax (1894) 'Access to Kinder Scout', *Glossop-dale Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter*, 27 July, p7.

¹² *Ibid*.

John Fisher, our Fault Reports Handler, forwarded me a Path Checker report in May. A member of the public had encountered a problematic stile while walking near Lockerbrook Outdoor Centre in the Derwent Valley. The top rung and platform of the stile were missing, and barbed wire now filled the gap, making it dangerous to use.

This particular stile was in one of my parishes, Hope Woodlands, and unusually, it was on a Permissive Path (PP) rather than a Public Right of Way (PRoW). Nevertheless, this stile is very important, because it enables access to open moorland and eventually leads to one of the wonders of the Peak District, Alport Castles.

Strictly speaking, PPs fall outside the remit of PNFS, but considering its importance, I decided to follow up the fault, and see if I could get it resolved. I contacted the Peak District National Park (PDNP), and after a few emails, I received some promising news. The stile was within the High Peak Estate, owned by the National Trust, and the problem had been reported to them.

Towards the end of September, I contacted the PDNP for an update. Their initial response was, 'Let me check', closely followed by, 'Good news, stile repaired'. A few days later, on a very sunny autumn morning, my partner and I drove out to the Derwent Valley, parked alongside the Ladybower Reservoir, close by the War Memorial and headed up the hillside towards the aforementioned outdoor centre. Lo and behold, the stile hadn't been repaired; it had been completely replaced, and was now in perfect condition



Before



After

Hope Woodlands is the largest parish by area (8383 ha) in the Peak District, despite only having 31 PRoWs, however their total length is over 53 km! Its location within the upper Derwent Valley also makes it one of the most popular. Many visitors confine themselves to the roads and tracks around the Ladybower, Derwent and Howden reservoirs, so even on the busiest of days, it's relatively easy to get away from the crowds and enjoy a peaceful walk up on the moors, just as we did when we checked out the stile!

Mel Bale, Trustee and Membership Secretary



Signpost Report

Prospects and Signpost Donations

I am disappointed to report that I have only erected two new signposts in the last fourteen months. Signpost donations are also unusually low. The society already has funding for new signposts, especially in parts of the PNFS catchment where the society is underrepresented, such as West Yorkshire, especially Todmorden, Hebden Royd, Ripponden and Holme Valley. Our signposts play an important role in attracting new members. If anyone has suggestions for a new one, please contact me at signposts@pnfs.org.uk. A list of considerations regarding the location of new PNFS signposts can be found at pnfs.org.uk/spc

On a positive note, I have recently had some new proposals; two in the White Peak, where admittedly, we already have many and four in Cheshire East, from footpath inspectors Chris Davies and Richard Vickery. In late July I made a visit on spec, found the landowner and got his consent for one at Mobberley Hall Farm. It is earmarked for a plaque in memory of feisty, former footpath inspector and walk leader Eileen Leonard, who died in March three months before her 90th birthday. I visited the two sites in the White Peak in August, but decided not to proceed.

Following a site-visit on 3rd September with Richard Vickery, who is liaising with Richard Ankers of Cheshire East re a path diversion, we now hope to place two signs on the South Cheshire Way at Brinepits Farm near Audlem in the oddly named parish of Coole-Pilate. Chris D's hopes of one or two signs at Arley Hall were eventually dashed by the owner's refusal.

Our Vice Chair David Gosling has suggested several spots around the town of Stafford, which he knows well. He is planning a group inspection soon as the next step.

New Signpost

S661 was erected on 4 July at Chapel en le Frith railway station, donated by Chris and Kath Sizeland to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the town. The Friends of the station were very helpful in gaining consent from Network Rail and Northern Trains. The station is very well kept, with posters of surrounding views, a view-point indicator and a blue plaque in memory of Driver John Axon GC and Guard John Creamer, who died in the crash there on 9 February 1957.

Lost and Found

S332 at Chanderhill remains missing, believed stolen.

Maintenance

Thanks for help are due to Vic Shannon, Jonathan Robbins, Richard Parke-Davies, Steve Brown, Peter Knight, Dave Brown, Simon Worrall, Tim Lewis, John Harker and Judy Gathercole and Chad Wilkinson. I apologize for any omissions.

June - Cleaned and/or touched up: 383, 2, 19, 29, 357. 280 on Kinder Rd repainted by Steve Brown.

July - Cleaned and/or touched up: 458, 322, 13/20, 14, 21, 25, 122, 508, 519; graffiti removed from 342 by John Harker and Judy Gathercole.

August - Cleaned and/or touched up: 542, 34/6/7/8, 43, 78, 330, 543, 610, 212, 263, 288 and 641. Retrieved 242 at Strawberry Hill, Marple Lake, for SB&PC. Graffiti removed from 339 by Wirral CP ranger.

September - Cleaned and/or touched up: 481, 484 and 146 at Hr. Crompton and Saddleworth GC; 410 graffiti removed by Jonathan Robbins (see below); 5, 216 repainted



**S410
graffiti**

On 12 September, while on holiday, Steve Brown, who lives in Disley, reported 410 needed attention. As it is a long trip from Stockport to Ilkley, I emailed our member Jonathan Robbins for help. Jonathan lives in Shipley and, at my request, he had already fitted a replacement "Join Us" plaque to 410 in March 2024. I suggested surgical spirit for the graffiti and/or dark green paint. To my amazement he completed the job the following day, the 13th, and sent photos showing the difference. If we awarded medals, I would nominate him for one! Ditto Steve Brown - I have lost count of how many PNFS signs Steve has repainted!

David Morton, Signpost Officer



Walkers safety and cattle

PNFS has been contacted by Dr Jerry Alderstone who is coordinating COWS (Concern over walkers safety), a voluntary group which has emerged from a website Killer Cows (<https://killer cows.co.uk/>). The new group has been set up by victims of cattle attacks to raise awareness and improve the safety of members of the public using public rights of way in the presence of cattle.

The following is an edited version of an article by Jerry.

“COWS has gathered data from members of the public who have experienced cattle attacks whilst on public footpaths in England and Wales. They have recorded 980 incidents since 2017. Of those 103 respondents reported having broken bones, concussion requiring hospital observation, punctured lungs, rupture of internal organs, coma or death.

The more seriously injured victims were:

- more likely to be walking with a dog (69% v 52%)
- more likely to be alone (53% v 41%)
- more likely to be in a field with visible calves (34% v 19%)

So, while no herd and no cow should be considered to be safe, we can conclude that people who walk alone with a dog through a field with calves are more likely to suffer more serious injuries when attacked.

This data collected by the group has debunked several of the assumptions which underpin the advice provided to the public and land occupiers who keep grazing cattle. The two main assumptions which our data challenges are that cattle attacks are rare and that the presence of dogs is a significant predictor of an attack.

The data suggests that hundreds or possibly thousands of cattle attacks occur every year on public rights of way throughout England and Wales. The severity of attacks ranges from a frightening experience to death. Dogs are present on only 50% of those occasions. This would suggest there is no statistical evidence that the presence of a dog increases the likelihood of an attack. The data does suggest, however, that the presence of a dog may be linked with increased severity of the injuries sustained by one subject to an attack.

Every attack by cattle has the potential to result in a fatality. We only need to consider the relative size of an average cow – around 600 kg, with that of the average walker – around 75 kg, to realise that it is perfectly possible for a cow to kill a human by accident. Much of the advice issued by organisations such as DEFRA, NFU, HSE, Ramblers Association and local councils, with the intention of reducing injury by cattle, is not of practical use. The most damaging and fundamentally flawed assumption, which is always highlighted in such guidance is that cattle attacks are rare – they are not, as the data held by the group shows.

Some of the advice is not realistic. For example, walkers are told to ‘assess the mood of the herd’, but the average walker cannot tell whether a cow is angry until it starts to move towards them. Neither can walkers easily assess the composition of the herd, especially from a distance.

Walkers are also advised to give cattle a wide berth, but this is often not possible, as this picture shows.

The keeper of the livestock would seem to be best placed to judge the risks posed by his/her cattle, but the number of agricultural workers killed or injured by cattle every year suggests that even people who work with livestock struggle to predict the intentions of cattle

The only sure way of preventing attacks by cattle upon users of rights of way is to separate cattle from walkers at all times.

A well-maintained stock fence not only keeps cattle away from walkers, but also keeps dogs away from cattle – reducing the risk of stock worrying and the transmission of *Neospora caninum*. The cheaper alternative of electric fencing is effective at controlling cattle but less effective at controlling dogs – though does have the huge advantage of being moveable and endlessly reusable.

Erecting ‘danger’ signs warning of cattle in fields crossed by a right of way is a pointless exercise for many reasons. The signs are often permanently erected even when the field is empty. The implication of the signs is unclear – does it mean that one should not use the path – in which case this breaks the law as it is effectively obstructing a public right of way (a criminal offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980).

The COWS team are always available to discuss our research and thoughts with any interested parties in pursuit of making our public rights of way safer for all who use them.

To contact the group, email cows.safety.group@gmail.com.”

PNFS welcomes comments about the issues raised in this article.

David Gosling, Vice Chair (A04@pnfs.org.uk)





The Postal Paths: Rediscovering Britain's Forgotten Trails and the People Who Walked Them.

Alan Cleaver 2025 Pub: Monoray (Octopus Publishing Group)

Alan Cleaver, a journalist and author, living in Cumbria, chanced upon the term 'Postman's Path' whilst talking with a farmer in the village of Caldbeck in the Lake District. Up until the introduction of postal vans, these paths had been made by postmen and women who covered miles of distance as they delivered mail to villages and farmsteads across the country. Some farmers even built what became known as postman steps into dry stone walls to prevent the postie knocking over walls as they sought more direct routes through fields from farm to farm.

This early conversation ignited a series of thoughts for the author. 'What precisely were these postal paths? Was it a Cumbrian phenomenon or did they exist all over Britain? Were they all created specifically for postmen and women? And were they created officially or just the product of an informal agreement with the local farmer?' (p4)

The answers to these questions, and many others, forms the basis of this well researched and intriguing book. As the author states, 'The possible combination of my two loves – posting letters and walking – was too good to ignore.' (p5). Embarking on his research, he comes to realise that, 'no postal paths has ever been given legal protection despite many dating back hundreds of years or being connected with important aspects of our country's history.' (p18)

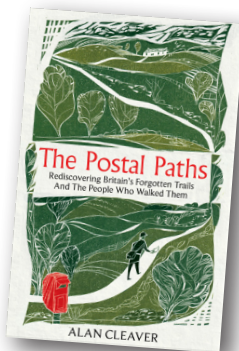
Interspersed with archival material, interviews with families of postmen and women and pictures of individuals, the book is testament to the lengths these posties were prepared to go to deliver the mail. Now that post vans have replaced foot pedal and in some cases hoof methods of transport, there is a concern that many of these old ways will be forgotten and lost. It is the author's intention to re-awaken interest in these paths and encourage people to follow them thus keeping their history alive.

Some of the routes are named after individuals, whilst other paths are part of local knowledge, and their existence has been passed down through families and history groups. The internet and Google proved fallow ground for research at the outset and as Cleaver says, 'it is astonishing that hundreds if not thousands, of rural postmen and women walked more or less the same route every day of their working lives and yet 50 years after most rural posties hung up their bags, it is so difficult to find their routes.' (p80)

That so much personal history has been uncovered is testament to the author's desire to keep the memories alive and re-establish the routes to make them more widely known. One note of regret he provides is the wish that he, 'had started 30 or 40 years earlier while more rural posties were still alive.' (p115). There is enough information to enable one to follow the routes outlined here and the stories recounted would enhance the enjoyment of each one. This is a delightful book.

At the end of the book is a Further Reading list should you wish to further explore the history of the Post Office.

Pauline Williams, Member



Hannah Knowles
- Eskdale



William Ramsey
- about to cross
the beach

Pub Closures

Walkers who enjoy visiting pubs during or after a walk need to be increasingly wary. No longer is the Ordnance Survey's welcome marking 'PH' a guarantee, even on the most up-to-date maps. There has been a trend over recent years, especially since the pandemic, for pubs to be closed down. This is particularly the case for the more rural pubs, which are the ones that we walkers are most interested in. Here in the Western Peak we have lost three popular places in this year (2025) alone. These are :

Ship, Wincle
Shady Oak, Fernilee
Navigation, Bugsworth

Over the previous decade many more have been lost, some still being shown on the maps. A list (not exhaustive) would include :

Cat and Fiddle, A537 to Buxton
Stanley Arms and Crag Inn , both in Wildboardclough
Highwayman, Rainow
Fools' Nook, A523 to Leek
Travellers Rest, Flash Bar
Royal Hotel, Hayfield
Miners Arms, Adlington
Duke, Burbage (Buxton)

No doubt there are others. Two which survive at the time of writing are in Rowarth and Combs. For these and many others elsewhere, use them or lose them!

John Fisher, Assessor



Staffordshire Anslow FP31

Here's something you don't see every day along a footpath

Photograph by Ken Brockway

Membership Matters

It is now almost a year since our Five-Year strategy was launched, so now seems a good time to share an update on the progress of some aspects of it. At the beginning of this year, a small group of Trustees met to agree on how to begin its implementation. It was agreed to establish 3 sub-committees to progress the strategy's 'Strategic Priorities', see link below. These have now been established and cover Finance, Infrastructure and Inspection, and Growth and Engagement (G&E). The latter is chaired by me and has the following responsibilities:

- Develop a membership retention and recruitment plan
- Seek to improve the society's diversity
- Increase the number of active volunteers
- Review the geographic area covered by the society
- Review all forms of communications with members
- Develop and implement a publicity strategy
- Maintain and enhance the society's websites

Each sub-committee consists of a minimum of two Trustees and three or four other volunteers. They meet at least four times a year and have delegated powers. This means some decisions and actions can be taken and carried out without being referred back to the Management Committee for approval.

This new structure has the potential to make a real impact. However, the G&E sub-committee needs one or two additional members, ideally one of whom would take up the much-needed role of Publicity Officer. It has been over seven years since the society last had one, and it is a position that we urgently need to fill. If you are interested in putting your name forward, please email me at membership@pnfs.org.uk. The Trustees will arrange training and support as required.

A key part of the society's overall strategy is to encourage more people to become actively involved in the work of the society. We have a core of very dedicated and hard-working volunteers, but in some areas, they are stretched too thinly and important work either gets delayed or not done at all. Again, if you feel that you can help, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Finally, please join us at our forthcoming Half-Yearly Meeting in Sheffield on Saturday 15th November. There will be plenty of time to talk about the aims of the G&E sub-committee and share your ideas with me and my fellow trustees.

Note: you can read and/or download our strategy document via this link pnfs.org.uk/5ys
Mel Bale, Trustee and Membership Secretary

Salesbury FP30

In May 2025, I was informed by Cllr Maggy Howells, chair of Salesbury Parish Council, Ribble Valley, that she had made progress in her efforts to solve long-standing problems on Salesbury FP30 which runs from near Ashes Farm to Sykes Farm at the A59 road. She wrote: "I wanted to let you know we are closer to having the above footpath reopened at long last! I have been in discussion with Lancashire County Council (LCC) PROW Officer Stephen and Huntroydes Estate (landowner) and an agreement in principle has been made to install duckboards and 2 new stiles/gates. The duckboards will make the boggy ground easier to traverse whilst the new gates will replace one failed stile near to Sykes Farm and the main stile causing the obstruction that is encased in a holly tree and now drops into the brook. Huntroydes want to check with the tenant farmer, but I have spoken to them and they have no objection. LCC are proposing to do the work later this year.

During my first inspection of this parish in March 2016, I had reported to LCC a damaged stile at a stream that had a step at waist height and was overgrown by holly so it was impassable. In June 2020 I inspected the parish a second time and found that the stile was still dilapidated and the path is still obstructed, so I reported this a second time to LCC. A look in late December showed no progress.

Photographs (right) taken by Maggy just before work commenced show the dire condition of the stile and her partner proving that the footpath was impassable due to the thick and claggy mud. Shortly after this photograph was shown, he accidentally stepped out of his stuck wellington and fell flat on his face!





In August 2025 LCC completed the work. Here are their photographs. A metal gate now replaces the stile and a long boardwalk covers the boggy ground. Four waymarkers with clear yellow caps were fitted between this section and the gate in the field fence above Sykes Farm.

As a result of Salesbury Parish Council's efforts in improving its public rights of way, FP30 is now a joy to walk on. After avoiding this footpath for years, it is like having a new one. LCC are to be congratulated on their excellent work. Salesbury is a lovely parish and this revived footpath will surely enhance both residents and visitors' enjoyment of its countryside.

Shirley Addy, Ribble Valley Footpath Inspector





A walk from home

I had been expanding my area of walks, exploring new locations but this resulted in more travel than walking time. Slow Ways had been a theme but there I had reached the limit of bus travel for a day walk. It was time to renew acquaintance with paths closer to home. Okay not from home but only a ten minute bus ride to Alfington a favourite location where paths via the churchyard make a rapid transition from town to turf.

Having plotted a circular route I opted for a clockwise direction which makes the churchyard a final. So the exit was via Alfington Hall through what remains of green space that once surrounded the hall. Local Authority ownership continues to use the park for 'essential services' while 1960s such use is now fenced and boarded awaiting, who knows what. Crossing the road Alfington FP21 is enclosed between development so I guess I made the right choice to get this over with early on.

Into a field of cattle where the path is diverted by fencing around the field edge to our advantage because here cattle have severely poached the field which looks like the Somme. The recently installed boardwalk is a great help over ground already wet after rain following the long dry summer. An old section of the board on Swanwick FP1 (see photo) has collapsed planks and is ready for renewal.



It's now gentle downs and ups with a climb to Coneygre Farm passing the site of a Roman Road which served the nearby Fortlet on Castle Hill, all confirming there are good views from here. Dropping into the valley I crossed over the River Amber then under the North Midland railway still busy with trains between Derby and Sheffield.

South Wingfield bridleway 26 (see top and right photos) offers a pleasant well used ancient track. I pass close by Wingfield Manor but disagreement and vegetation make the remains invisible and inaccessible to the unaware traveller. The three excellent conversion on the fringe of the village compensate in some way for earlier disappointment.



I avoid the village using footpaths to the west across easy walking pasture with attractive stone squeeze stiles, modern wooden step stiles and others less easy to locate. The former remind me how long folk have walked these ancient paths. At Brook Farm a new house of modern architecture stands alongside the path. I don't recall what was there but the map shows a structure so perhaps a radical barn conversion.

Appropriately no 'Walkers Welcome' signs as I struggle to find South Wingfield FP7 onward to Hollybush Farm. A fairly brief area of arable fields all with a harvested crop of maize and much activity muck spreading so my nice clean boots get their first test for the onset of winter.

Around Wessington I'm back into pasture so perhaps it's time to hit the long grass for a boot polish. I wonder if more houses in this ever expanding village will help support the pub and chip shop and force the provision of better public transport, I suspect not. It's been too long, I have forgotten the wonderful old buildings, one has a date stone 1673 (see photo), as I pass through Roadnook Farm on Wessington FP16.

A concrete slab and padlocked metal cover intrigue as well as proving a low seat for a lunch stop with a great view from Brackenfield FP12 into and across the Amber valley.

Occasional trains whizz by as I sit in the warm sunshine, otherwise the spot is peaceful. I ponder the structure and can only surmise it may be access to a water pipe from Ogston reservoir.

The footpath passes under the railway and the fallen tree reported by Bill in August had been cleared. Then a second crossing of the infant River Amber its flow now controlled by the reservoir. The map marks ponds although little is evident, these originally retained water for Higham Mill also no longer apparent from our path. All I note of interest / amusement is a very overgrown greenhouse, now almost lost in undergrowth.

A tour of footpaths around Higham and Shirland avoids too much walking along a busy bit of road. A short section of that same said road passes the imposing gates to Hallfield Hall. A Derbyshire gate shortly leads to muddy pasture perhaps with the name Hallfield Field, we know the path as Shirland and Higham FP34. On that short section of road I had crossed over to a gate which offered one last look at the pleasant countryside through which this walk had taken me.

The final stage took me across a recently ploughed field, more mud on boots than a golf course, cropped grass with no cleaning qualities. This plush course and county club has developed on the site of the former Shirland Colliery. The track then footpath make a gentle descent to cross the Alfreton Brook then Alfreton FP19 climbs across more pasture before the church tower comes into view to confirm the walk is complete.

In days gone by, after such a good and enjoyable walk, I would want to keep going. I never wanted to turn round or do the same walk again, it was always to keep going and see new sights but that was yesterday, Today twelve miles was enough and I'm pleased to make for the pub and bus home.

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector



PNFS walks

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



- 12 November** (Short) PAUL EASTHOPE 07759 653 354 pepnfs@gmail.com
GLOSSOP CIRCULAR WALK. 8.5 miles A low level circular walk into the Longdendale valley via Padfield walking around Valehouse Reservoir. Returning on the Trans Pennine Trail to Hadfield, then waking via Bankswood, Higher Dinting and back to Glossop.. Train from Manchester Piccadilly at 09.33 am to Glossop WALK STARTS AT 10.10 am. SK13 8BS
- 26 November** (Long) Walk Leader Required kensmith4rj@icloud.com Long walks are usually 9-12 miles long. Please email your walk details to kensmith4rj@icloud.com
- 10 December** (Combined) UDO POPE 07717 802468 udo.pope@ntlworld.com
COMBINED CHRISTMAS WALK, details to follow
- 11 December 2025** (Short) - Walk leader required. Short walks are usually 5-9 miles long. Please email your walk details to rossmyd@gmail.com
- 18 December 2025** (Long) - Walk leader required. Long walks are usually 9-12 miles long. Please email your walk details to kensmith4rj@icloud.com
- 7 January** (Short) STEVE GREENBANK +44 7801 715186 Details to follow. PR1 8AP
- 8 January 2026** (Short) - Walk leader required. Short walks are usually 5-9 miles long. Please email your walk details to rossmyd@gmail.com
- 29 January 2026** (Long) - Walk leader required. Long walks are usually 9-12 miles long. Please email your walk details to kensmith4rj@icloud.com



Hathersage short walk on 10 September 2025.
Photograph by Ross Myddelton

Signposts: behind the scenes

S342 Rivelin, Sheffield



Judy Gathermole removing graffiti in July 2025. The sign is in the memory of her partner Bob McHale
Photographed by John Harker



S520 logo repainting



David Morton, Signpost Officer repainted one of the numerous logos on PNFS signposts that need regular touching up or re-painting.