



Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

**ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2003
HANDBOOK**



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The cover photograph shows the Monday morning Team at Taylor House

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Derek Seddon

Chairman, Derek Seddon is now reconciled to handing over the reins. Derek is also editor of the Society's well respected newsletter 'Signpost' and he looks back on 2003 with mixed feelings.

The most relevant comment I can make about the PNFS in 2003 is that we survived. In the absence of a president and secretary, their work was divided between the rest of us at Taylor House and most of it was completed.

Adrian Littleton, still active though no longer in an official position, completed the mammoth, self-imposed task of re-organising our footpath files. These now occupy about half the previous space and leave us room to expand without, as yet, having to spread into the garage. He has now turned his attention to sorting our collection of old maps. Surplus OS maps from outside our area will be offered to members attending the AGM in April and again we are much indebted to Adrian and his dedication to the Society's interests.

The lack of senior officers reached crisis point at the end of 2003 with the pending resignations of both chairman and vice chairman at the fast approaching April 2004 AGM, but with no replacements in sight. The situation changed quite suddenly with the appearance of David Bratt (photo right) as a volunteer for the chairmanship and Ray Spoor who offered his services as vice chair. Both are highly competent, of proven ability in the

Society's service and come recommended for your vote. Of course, the democratic process still applies and we look forward to receiving the names of any other contestants for these two posts and for those of Secretary and President.

In 2003, the new form of Annual General Meeting held on a Saturday morning followed by a free buffet lunch, then by a general discussion was acclaimed a success by those attending. It will be repeated in 2004, when one topic for discussion will be: 'Council Meetings ~ should they be abandoned?' The question is prompted by the steadily falling numbers of those turning up to help run the Society's affairs. September 2003 holds the sad record with just five members present, three of whom were officers; ten is an average turnout, not many out of a membership of 850 or so. We have tried to make meetings more accessible by making them open to all members, allotting three minutes to any member who wishes to raise a pet topic, also by paying travel costs incurred. But we are still faced with a downward trend. One option is to restrict meetings to the AGM and rely on *Signpost* for communication to and from the membership. Please give some thought to the problem and let us know



your opinions either at the AGM, by post or by phone or e-mail.

After a long drawn-out process, we finally consulted the members on the subject of downsizing ~ reducing the area of the territory in which we have a footpath interest. The result, though a close one, came out as a vote in favour of reduction, the number of voters being a small proportion of the total membership. A move to a recruitment campaign was suggested instead with a trial project in Staffordshire. Unfortunately this has had to be deferred as the member involved has family and other commitments. Perhaps someone else would care to take it on in another area?

At Taylor House we are always willing to consider any ideas. One being implemented is to attach a small plastic plaque to our signposts giving the PNFS address, 'phone number and website in the hope that this, our greatest medium of advertising, will draw in some new interest. Our third computer was installed in the autumn thanks to the expertise of our IT team of Bob Dumbarton and Peter Rhodes. The effect on the large backlog of unrecorded footpath faults was immediate. In came Hilda Bowler to assist Peter and in no time they had cleared the lot. Hilda's husband, Peter, is also a welcome recruit

to the band of regulars who do the assessing of diversions on a Monday morning. Reg Boot mans a computer on Monday afternoons keeping the membership list up-to-date. All these cheerful technocrats are essential to the Society's smooth running.

Sadly, I must record the departure from Taylor House of two particularly long-serving assessors, Charles Peers and Percy Hutchinson, two friends who were energetic signpost erectors until age took its toll. Turning their hands to assessing, both were a valuable part of the Taylor House team for many years. Now, within a few months of each other, both have had to retire because of ill health. We miss them and wish them all the best.

I have been greatly assisted by June Mabon who has taken on the assembling of the Annual Report & Accounts with her usual efficiency. And where would I be without the devoted loyalty of my Vice Chairman, Eric Kime? He anticipates when I'll need him and what I'll need him for and is always ready at my elbow. Both of us have enjoyed our time with this friendly crew but realise it's time to make way for someone younger, with better hearing and short-term memory. We are delighted to have found two such ideals in David and Roy.

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VICE CHAIRMAN

Eric Kime

Eric Kime brings a lifetime's experience to bear on the running of the Society. His is the long view as he nominates his success of the year.

Looking back over the last two years I ask myself what has been really important for the Society. We had a long debate about 'downsizing' (reducing the sphere of our activities) with strong feelings both for and against, eventually dropping the idea in favour of a recruitment campaign to increase our inspector coverage. We gave our support where some local authorities, with police backing, wanted to put gates on back alleys to prevent crime, although here again there were voices that said no public right of way should ever be closed.

These issues in my opinion however had nothing like the impact of the introduction of our newsletter *Signpost* which is now sent out three times a year free of charge to all members.

For this we have to thank our chairman, Derek Seddon, who edits the newsletter and to Peter Rhodes who typesets and produces the final version for the printer.

We knew that Derek was a photographer but he has also proved himself very good with words. Everyone I have spoken to agrees that *Signpost* is of absorbing interest and the general impression is that it has had a significantly unifying effect, making our members feel that they belong to a very worthwhile organisation. Derek's description of his walk along Hadrian's Wall must have made some of us think about doing the same. He did not undertake it simply to find material for *Signpost* but one joker remarked that if he is short of something to write about he can always try Land's End to John O'Groats.

With the early issues, getting some 800 copies packed and posted was hard work but it is now much easier with the printer agreeing to do everything including the posting.

Although Derek is stepping down as chairman, we are all glad that he is willing to carry on editing *Signpost*.

The Society's Slide Lecture

The Society has recently updated its Slide Show presentation. Organisations interested in including in their programmes of events this show of the history, work and present day activities of the Society should contact the Chairman.



The Society is consulted by highway authorities and others about proposed changes affecting public rights of way. A large part of the work of volunteers at Taylor House is assessing and responding to this consultation.

The Assessor Team at Taylor House has traditionally worked on Mondays and Peter Crofts, a very experienced member of that team, describes this work and invites you to join it.

**CONSULTATIONS
and ORDERS
Peter Crofts**

A well established routine for dealing with proposals from highway authorities for changes to the footpath network is followed on Monday mornings throughout the year. Most of the resulting correspondence is dealt with on Monday afternoons.

The large majority of changes proposed to rural paths are diversions and these are referred to the Society's appropriate footpath inspector. Depending on his/her advice, the proposal is either accepted or becomes the subject of negotiations which may be protracted but generally result in sufficient improvement to reach a mutually satisfactory compromise. A small but time-consuming number of path closures are proposed and generally contested, possibly to the stage of a public inquiry. Fortunately, footpath creations are much more common than proposals for closures and are always welcome.

The situation with changes to urban paths is rather different. Many are trivial, small deletions of parts of pavements (in one case of an area smaller than the sheet of A4 paper on which it was proposed) or closures of cul-de-sac paths which have arisen from redevelopment, and are not commented on.

More controversial to some are proposals for 'alleygating' ~ the fitting of metal gates to back passages in mostly nineteenth century estates, often initiated and generally desired by residents because of the anti-social and sometimes criminal activities which such passages afford. Although these back-alleys were intended for use by residents and tradesmen, they may have acquired right of way status and can accordingly be closed only if it is accepted they are not needed for public use. Since they do not usually have any attraction for walkers, the Society has decided not to oppose their closure unless, exceptionally, a cross passage appears to be a useful route to a school, railway station or bus stop. Other isolated urban paths which, after inspection, are found to be well-used are defended vigorously and may proceed to a public inquiry or magistrates court proceedings.

There have been valuable additions to the Assessor Team but we could do with more recruits since we are all getting older. Members who are or have been involved in outside work for the Society as footpath inspectors or signpost erectors (as several of our present assessors have been) are particularly useful. But any members who can attend fairly regularly on Monday mornings will be welcomed with open arms.

COURTS & INQUIRIES

Roy Spoors

Roy Spoors is the Society's Courts and Inquiries supremo; he travels to the four corners of PNFS territory representing the Society's view at public inquiries and other formal adjudicating forums. He has summarised the year's activities and gives those of us without a grounding in footpath law, an insight into the whys and wherefores of objecting to or supporting changes proposed to public rights of way.

The first half of 2003 was a relatively quiet period with no public inquiries or magistrates court hearings attended. But the latter part of the year has involved the Society in three public inquiries and each had an interesting aspect to it.

Dukinfield 27

October saw an Inquiry into what is an urban footpath running between four private houses but connecting to a main road and other local footpaths.

The Society was objecting to the confirmation of a 'stopping up' order brought under s257 of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act. Other objectors were the Ramblers' Association, the Open Spaces Society and a cross section of local people. Our objection was based on the fact that this was a heavily used footpath and an important connection for schools, bus stops, a medical centre and for onward connection to Dukinfield 28 and 29. The order had been made by the local Council, against the advice of its own officers, mainly for the benefit of the owners of the four properties bounding the path.

Although planning approval for incorporating footpaths into gardens is being used increasingly by councils as a ploy, once the process gets to a public inquiry any planning matters are deemed to be outside the terms of reference. The decision in this case will depend on the relative weighting given by the inspector to the advantage gained by the four property

owners being offset by the disadvantage to the general public caused by the 'stopping up.' The decision will be delayed considerably as the public inquiry had to be adjourned until January 2004 because the Council had not met its statutory requirements; United Utilities plc had an outstanding objection regarding access.

Holmesfield 30

Held in November this public inquiry was fascinating for several reasons. Firstly, the Society was supporting the confirmation of a Diversion Order brought under s119 of the Highways Act 1980. The objectors were the Parish Council, the Ramblers' Association and a group of eight local residents. This bridleway is a rural one in an area of outstanding landscape and believed to have a history as a packhorse trail going back a couple of centuries.

The route is a 'hollow way' so why would the Society be supporting a diversion? Well, in recent years this bridleway had been subjected to serious surface erosion caused by running water and particularly in the area of the proposed diversion it was down to bedrock. In addition, the route was dangerously narrow at a number of points and the local council was claiming that it was prevented from doing any maintenance work by lack of money. The Society felt that there was a real safety issue for walkers coming into contact with horse riders at points where there was just not enough room to pass.

This situation was further complicated by the use of the route by motor cyclists who were, and are, claiming higher rights with a separate application for a Modification Order under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

For the inquiry, of the three possible tests, the decision will hinge primarily on 'enjoyment of the path as a whole.' The Society felt that the considerable amenity value of walking an ancient route was, in this case, outweighed by the poor surface, poor drainage and the narrow areas likely to cause conflict with horse riders and motor cyclists. Although this was a finely balanced decision it was felt that we should support the confirmation of the Diversion Order.

At the public inquiry the presence of three barristers led to some long winded legal arguments and guaranteed that it lasted for two very long days. For the aficionados, one of the legal arguments centred on the concept of 'functus officio' which is the principle of when is a decision taken, is it correct and at what point can it not be reversed but the process must start again from the beginning? Fascinating stuff!! The inspector's decision is eagerly awaited.

Heckmondwike 27

Originally, this footpath had been part of a group of four to be added to the Definitive Map, primarily with user evidence. The other three orders were confirmed without objection, but Heckmondwike 27 was the subject of objections from local residents and Heckmondwike Grammar School, one of whose playing fields is bounded by the proposed footpath.

The Council originally also supported this Order but, following an internal dispute with their own Education Services

Department, decided to take a neutral stance at the inquiry. A rare happening!

The Society supported the confirmation of the Modification Order and, although accepting the well documented issues with footpaths crossing school premises and playing fields, felt the Council could fence or secure the playing fields. In any case, Heckmondwike 27 is an important link in the group of four paths and adds considerably to the convenience and enjoyment of the general public.

The Future

Annual reports are about the past year but this is one of the few opportunities that exist to talk about the coming year. So please look upon this as advance notice of next year's report.

The Society covers a large geographical area and our membership and our footpath inspectors are not distributed evenly. Inevitably this affects the ability of the Society to be effective in all areas and our response and attendance at public inquiries and magistrates courts is patchy.

An excellent idea put forward by two members was to establish a 'flying squad' of interested footpath inspectors. This would not be too onerous but, if the inspectors were prepared to complete two inspections outside their area, would have a very positive impact. It would allow the Society to comment much more effectively and consistently across all of our geographical area whilst the inspectors involved would have access to some very challenging and interesting situations.

Raising the activity level in some of our more remote areas would help to increase the credibility and the perception of our Society. If you are interested and you would like to join the 'flying squad' then please just contact any of your officers.

MATTERS from the MINUTES

This selection of memorable minutes is taken from the records of Officers and Council meetings throughout the year.

January

- we seek a volunteer to determine a procedure for finding 'Lost Ways'
- the debate on 'downsizing' continues
- Shutlingslow ~ PNFS/RA plaque refixed after vandalism

February

- building society sponsorship of our *Signpost* newsletter will not continue
- we are pleased the printer of *Signpost* has taken over the labelling and posting
- we buy a replacement for our ageing photocopier
- representatives needed to serve on various Access Forums

March

- vehicle mileage expenses rate increased to a realistic level
- insurance of the Society's trustees against personal liability needed
- Chairman thanked for his efforts in reducing the signpost planting backlog

April

- Chairman and five members attend official opening of Derwent Heritage Trail at Chatsworth Hall (see photo below)
- a combined scanner, printer and colour copier for maps purchased
- no further action to be taken on 'downsizing'; we concentrate on recruitment
- successful AGM and buffet lunch followed by general discussion
- EGM approves changes to constitution relating to officers and trustees

May

- we have to consider our policy on 'alleygating', the gating of back alleys to prevent crime (see photo opposite)
- Chairman attends meeting of residents and police at proposed gating site
- we are opposed to any change of name for the Cown Edge Way



At the opening of the Derwent Valley Heritage Trail at Chatsworth L to R are Derek Seddon, Maurice Deakin, Jack Burling and Ian Ray

June

- additional computer needed to allow training of new office volunteers
- Cown Edge Way: memorials to Leslie Meadowcroft and waymarking cannot go ahead until impassable stretches put right

July

- our exhibition stand is to be refurbished and a new set of photos of the Society's work is being assembled
- midweek walks are being well supported
- circular walks favoured
- an enthusiastic Courts & Inquiries Officer is appointed and gets to work

August

- attendance at recent Council meetings is disappointing
- four new volunteers (three for outside work) have come forward
- Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society propose a North Cheshire Way from Wirral to Lyme Park; we offer general support

September

- there is an overload of work in dealing with footpath reports and a computer literate typist is needed to assist
- charge for memorial signposts increased due to greater cost

October

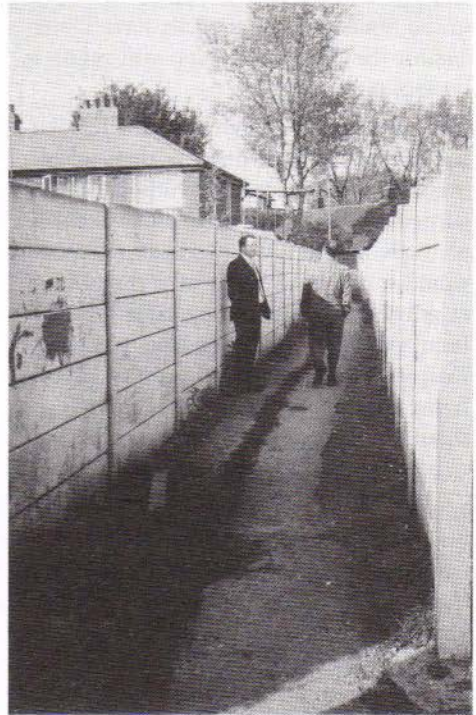
- we make strong objection to a proposed wind farm north of Bury
- additional computer is installed, should lead to clearing of footpath faults backlog

November

- system of cordless telephones fitted at Taylor House to replace faulty old equipment
- lack of progress on Leslie Meadowcroft memorials regretted

December

- there is a welcome prospect of filling some officer vacancies



An alley in Gorton, Manchester, proposed for closure as a site of alleged drug dealing. The Society did not object

**ENVIRONMENT
SECRETARY
Derek Seddon**

Once again in 2003 the Society's Environment Secretary and Chairman were one in the same person ~ Derek Seddon. So, pausing only to change hats and draw breath, Derek summarises the year's activities.

Our opposition to the siting of wind farms in open country continues. Objections were sent to both Rossendale and Rochdale councils against the proposed siting of 26 one hundred metre high turbines on Scout Moor above Edenfield and I joined the protest march on behalf of the Society. Both councils have voted against the proposals which will probably go to a public inquiry.

Our policy on wind farms is now crystallised into total opposition to their installation in open country and National Parks particularly if the masts or their network of roads interfere with footpaths. We would tolerate the siting of a single mast to provide a power supply to an isolated farm, provided it did not inconvenience footpath users but we believe that, if wind farms are to be approved at all, they should be in industrial areas or offshore.

We appreciate the government's desire to adopt sources of power independent of fossil fuels but remain unconvinced that the output of electricity produced by those 'farms' proposed at present can justify the permanent desecration of the countryside. Nor, for many years, will they offset the expenditure in power required for the production and installation of the mass of steel, concrete and tarmac involved in each site. We maintain that a much more vigorous national campaign to seek ways of economising on the use of electricity is needed. Meanwhile, news comes of another wind farm proposal on the moors above Denshaw, near Oldham.

We have held discussions with highway authorities in Manchester regarding one side-effect of the CRoW Act. Now local authorities can apply to close off alleyways in urban areas to combat criminal or anti-social activities. Some members believe we should not be bothering with ginnels in cities when our real concern should be with footpaths in the countryside; but at least we have established that Manchester will not close off any alleys unless over 90% of the residents on either side approve. We will have to take the Council's word that this is so as we do not have the manpower to investigate the validity of every proposal (Manchester had over 40 in the last batch). But their assurance seems to give the necessary security against unwanted closure and we hope this principle will be followed in other cities.

Negotiations with Lancashire County Council resulted in a satisfactory conclusion to the Cycle Track debate which raised the problem that cycle tracks do not have definitive status. We now have the CC's assurance that a footpath converted to a cycle track under the new legislation would remain definitive, thus keeping its protection in law even after being designated for dual use. We are recommending this interpretation to other authorities.

The Society was well represented at the inauguration of the Derwent Valley Heritage Trail at Chatsworth in April 2003. It was heartening to be there when a new 55 mile stretch of country was opened to walkers.

SIGNPOST MATTERS

Fred Ogden

The Society has a continuing need to plant and refurbish its distinctive signposts. In the past a Signpost Officer and Signpost Officer (Administration) have undertaken this work but in 2003 there was only an Administration Officer. It is imperative that the Society attracts a volunteer to the Signpost Officer role since many of our old signposts are deteriorating through lack of regular maintenance.

Fred Ogden, our Signpost Officer (Administration), deals with negotiations with landowners and sponsors over the siting of new signposts. Fred describes what has been achieved in 2003 in the way of new signpost planting.

New signs erected

<i>Ref No.</i>	<i>GR</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>details</i>
SP281	021889	Rowarth	New Mills RA
SP282	715156	Turton	ITT
SP285	058878	Hayfield	In memory of Arthur Buckley
SP286	702171	Turton	PNFS
SP287	707163	Turton	PNFS
SP288	022787	Fernilee	Manchester Associates re Frank Higgins
SP289	107890	Rowarth	Marple District Rambling Club

New signs to be erected

SP290	015989	Tintwistle	Bill McGuinness
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Repairs & maintenance

SP14	145864	Edale	Trafford Walkers imo Derek Kenworthy
SP54	015890	Rowarth	Refurbished

Our SP alongside the Macclesfield Canal on Lyme Handley 3 has been removed after reports that it might lead walkers into danger where part of the path had been carried away by a landslip. Stockport MBC have proposed a diversion which we hope will be completed soon. A new SP will then be planted further up the canal towards High Lane.

The memorial signpost(s) to our late President, Leslie Meadowcroft, intended for the Cown Edge Way, have been put on hold after a spate of vandalism on the existing signs along the route. We are now looking into the possibility of a suitable site elsewhere.

A word here to convey the Society's gratitude to Bill Johnson for his years of dedicated service as Signpost Officer. He is no longer able to carry the posts over hill and dale as he did (often on his own) in the past, but continues to do the joinery work of fixing plates and memorial plaques to the posts in our Taylor House workshop. The Society now employs a landscape gardener to carry the signs in his van and plant them on site. In the last year or so, Derek Seddon and helpers from affiliated clubs have assisted in this work. We need someone to take over the co-ordination of this vital activity as well as taking responsibility for the upkeep of old signposts.

FOOTPATH FAULTS

Peter Rhodes

Part of the PNFS work that brings the Society into contact with both its members and the public is dealing with faults on footpaths and other rights of way. Peter Rhodes looks after the work of recording information about faults on rights of way, the subsequent reporting and chasing up rectification action by local authorities. Peter gives an overview of what happens.

At Taylor House we receive reports about footpath problems from our inspectors, Society members and members of the public. Most arrive by post but an increasing number come via e-mail. The receipt of all reports is recorded in the Society's post book and if the report arrives via e-mail then the message is acknowledged via e-mail as well.

After recent discussions about ways of improving communications it is hoped to have printed postcards that will acknowledge reports sent by 'snail mail'.

We are only too aware that it can sometimes seem as if reports sent to Taylor House disappear into some kind of 'black hole' never to reappear. We are therefore developing our systems to try to overcome this justifiable complaint from the past.

The first job is to identify the footpath by establishing the correct local authority, civil parish and path number. Fortunately most inspectors provide us with this information but this is seldom the case with members of the public as they have no real means of knowing. This means a search through our large definitive maps to come up with the information, a process that is often time consuming.

The next stage is twofold. Firstly the information is summarised and placed on our computer database. We also enter for later use a date six months ahead. Fortunately the computer sorts the database automatically so information is easy to retrieve.

Secondly, if the problem is easy to describe (eg missing signpost) then similar ones are collected together for each local authority and a standard letter sent. If the description of the problem is more complex, the original report is photocopied, omitting the originator's name and address, and this photocopy is sent to the local authority with a covering letter.

When the local authority replies, the reply is dealt with in a number of ways. Initially many are just acknowledgments and this is recorded on the database. If more detail is forthcoming the letter is photocopied and the copy sent to the relevant inspector so that he/she may update their records. If the problem is said to be 'cleared' the record for that footpath is copied onto an archive database and the original deleted.

However, some local authorities are slower than others at dealing with footpath faults. To be fair, many are short of resources and some urban areas do not prioritise the correction of faults, unlike certain rural areas where tourism is an important part of the economy. Nevertheless, it is frustrating to note that 53 missing signpost problems currently on our database in a relatively small area are not due to be replaced until the financial year 2005/2006!

For those who like statistics there are currently just over 1000 footpath faults on the database which are yet to be resolved. There are also just over 300 faults that have been cleared up and placed on the archive file.

However, each month we send to all local authorities a printout from our database. This is a list of those problems in their area that are unresolved after six months. At the same time a new 'chaser' date is entered on the computer some six months hence for yet another reminder if this proves to be necessary.

Peter Rhodes and Hilda Bowler carry out all this footpath faults work on Monday mornings at Taylor House. Peter had been dealing with the footpaths faults work single-handedly until Hilda joined him in mid-2003.

Hilda quickly made a significant contribution to this valuable work of the Society and Peter would like to place on record his grateful thanks to Hilda for the improvement she has brought.



SP285 at Hayfield erected by walking friends of Arthur Buckley

SP281 at Rowarth, on the path to Hayfield, being planted by a large party of helpers from Marple clubs



An invitation ~ waymarking workers wanted

In the spring of 2004 a concerted effort will be made to waymark the whole of the Cown Edge Way with the usual yellow arrows.

Members able to offer some of their time to helping with this project are invited to phone Steve Slater (RA) on 0161 427 7582 or Keith Wykes (PNFS) at Taylor House or 01625 618 164. Thanks in anticipation to all volunteers.

MAPS, MAPS and MORE MAPS

When PNFS bought Taylor House, one of the largest tasks undertaken by the more practical DIY volunteers was to line the inside walls with flexible storage shelving.

But what do we keep on these shelves? Here is a glimpse of the inside of Taylor House and what makes the Society tick.

A first time visitor to Taylor House could be forgiven for thinking they had walked into a military high command maps' room. Maps hang from walls, maps sit neatly stacked and indexed on shelves, files are filled with local authority planning applications and orders maps. Definitive maps show footpaths, bridleways and RUPPs (road used as a public path); parish path maps are coloured and complete with suggested walks. Decades old maps in pristine condition identify definitive paths with a clarity and detail often missing from their modern day equivalents. Present day issue maps are painstakingly maintained with diversion and extinguishment information. You name it and Taylor House probably has it on a map.

Information is the bedrock of an organisation like PNFS and our collection of maps, ancient and modern, is one of the richest seams you could wish to find. The information in our maps and the effort put in week after week to maintain those maps must be put to the best possible use by the greatest number of people. And this is where you, dear member, affiliated society or simply interested reader can help to maximise the value of the Society's collection of maps. When walking for a day out, walking to the local post office, walking the dog or the grandchildren, you can direct your feet towards definitive paths that the PNFS and partner organisations work hard to preserve.

Pay us a visit at Taylor House or contact us by e-mail, letter or phone and we will help you to identify which paths are definitive.

Or you may be a PNFS footpath inspector irked by problems such as deciding which side of a hedge a path runs and you would like to use 6" scale maps for inspection work. At Taylor House we have some old maps which you are welcome to borrow for the duration of your inspectorship. Most of the 6" maps showing numbered paths are of Greater Manchester boroughs ~ Bury, Trafford, etc.

Few of these spare maps have been maintained during the 40-50 years of their existence, so you may need to compare them with the up-to-date maps maintained at Taylor House and pencil in closures, diversions, post 1955 housing estates, the M60, etc.

If you are interested in borrowing such maps, please ring Adrian (01625 528256) and arrange a meeting with him at Taylor House to inspect the maps which are available, select those which are useful to you and update them.

At the April 2004 AGM, the Society will be giving away OS maps surplus to the Society's requirements ~ mainly out of area ones.

Bob Dumbarton looks after the recruitment, training and ongoing management of the Society's team of footpath inspectors and agents. He recalls his initiation into the work and explains what an inspector's role involves.

**ROLE OF AN
INSPECTOR**
Bob Dumbarton

When I decided to offer my help to the Society in late 2000, I was interviewed by Adrian Littleton who described how the role of a footpath inspector would benefit myself, the Society and the general public. What a very good job he did too, as I imagined myself striding the footpaths of Cheshire righting the wrongs of wicked landowners, using my machete to clear jungle undergrowth, rebuilding bridges, fighting back rampant farm animals and ensuring no path would be closed or diverted.

The role of a footpath inspector is certainly not mundane, the walking alone is a reward in itself, but there is also a level of inner satisfaction when a fault is found. But what to do about the fault? At its simplest level, a small amount of vegetation overgrowth around a stile or along a small section of path can be dealt with by a few snips of your secateurs ... do you always take yours when out walking?

When it comes to more serious problems, then a Fault Report to Taylor House is necessary. Many faults reported are due to wear and tear but there are the rare occasions of landowner confrontation which have to be handled with an element of tact. Raised voices or worse never resolved a problem. Level headedness, common sense and the noting of all facts are all the Society requires. These are then passed to the authority responsible for resolving the dispute. The correction of faults does not happen overnight or even in months but we learn to be patient.

The inspector is also involved when there are footpath diversions and closures with comments and recommendations on such changes being requested by the Taylor House assessors. This information is used when replying to the appropriate local authority with either the Society's objection or 'no comment' to the amendment.

The Society's agents also undertake this last role. Generally an agent is responsible for an area where there are no footpath inspectors but he/she does not undertake the fault reporting aspect of a footpath inspector's work.

This brings me to the issue of recruitment. At the time of writing, the Society has 64 footpath inspectors and seven agents. Derbyshire and Cheshire are reasonably covered by our inspectors and agents but many parts of Staffordshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire are poorly represented. I am available on Monday mornings to discuss these roles and raise the familiar cry for additional volunteers to help fill these positions.

Finally, a word or two to our footpath inspectors and agents ~ many thanks for the work that you undertake on behalf of the Society We undertake to contact you when faults are resolved or footpath amendments require comment but you may feel there are times when communication is a little sparse. If this is the case, why not visit Taylor House or phone us to discuss how you are getting on and if you have any particular problems.

The Society's value has increased by 19.6% (£40,103) in 2003 to £244,591; this compares with a 9% : £21,053 increase in 2002. Please refer to *Balance Sheet & Funds* statement on the following pages. Full reinvestment of total *Funds* has transformed the *Balance Sheet* in accordance with the notes below.

Notes on Balance Sheet

Fixed Asset

values are £63,058 net of depreciation (2002 : £60,725) and reflect significant capital item purchases, namely ~

- Personal Computer system
- two photocopiers
- Digital camera, e-Trex Summit GPS (Global Positioning System) and related software; these will be used in accordance with guidelines to be issued post AGM after the Signpost Officer elect and officers have formulated procedures to ensure its optimum usage. The capabilities of this system are being trialled. The aim is to record accurately the condition and positions of our c230 signposts before undertaking maintenance work.
- Cordless telephone system at Taylor House able to access Answerphone messages remotely
- a new colour printer at a cost of £89.99

Long Term Investment

values at £117,285 (£46,236 in 2002) represent substantial movement, namely ~

- upon redemption, reinvestment of £1,011.10 Nominal value 2.5% Index Linked Treasury Stock in £2,870.10 Nominal Value 3.5% War Stock
- purchase at year end of £92,620.58 Nominal value 3.5% War Stock
- the acquisition at £5,566 probate value of 5,518 Invensys 25p Ordinary Shares *in specie* from the estate of Miss Mary Chambers deceased: year end Market value was £1,007.

Short Term Investment

values at £67,184 have decreased substantially due to reinvestment of short term bank investments in the long term investments outlined above.

- at a stroke not only was Society policy to reduce *Hampshire Trust 12 month Notice Deposit a/c* holdings achieved but also the more pressing problem of reducing all banking investments to below £35,000 was solved, so reflecting Financial Services Authority 2001 set revised deposit protection arrangements maxima criteria.
- at the year end, 12 month notices remain in force re £28,983 of the *Hampshire Trust 12 month Notice Deposit Account* value of £31,784 (£36,784 excluding £5,000 minimum investment).

Debtors

£3,954 (£2,492 in 2002) comprise ~

- £3,026 Tax refund provisions
- £384 Hampshire Trust Class A Preference Share dividend for the quarter ended 31 December 2003
- £280 signpost invoice donations
- £257 Bank of England in respect of 3.5% War Stock 29 days interest prepayment
- £7 Trustee's expenses prepayment

Creditors

£192 (£49 in 2002) comprising ~

- £92 *Garden & Landscape Solutions* re placement of SPs Nos. 54, 281 and 289
- £92 members expense claims (2 No.)
- £6 advance subscription for 2004/05

BALANCE SHEET as at 31 December 2003

figures are £

	2003	2002
ASSETS		
Fixed		
Freehold property at cost	60,153	60,153
Furniture, fixtures & fittings	1,704	531
Computer equipment	1,201	41
	63,058	60,725
Investments		
Long Term (at market value)		
Government Stock	89,090	19,588
UK equities	28,195	26,648
	117,285	46,236
Short Term		
Hampshire Trust 12 Month Notice Deposit	36,784	77,523
Cafcash High Interest cheque	29,850	23,123
Royal Bank of Scotland • Current	150	150
• Bus. High Interest	61	861
Skipton BS Matured Instant Access	100	100
Leeds & Holbeck BS Charityline	100	100
Cash & postages float	139	103
	67,184	101,960
Debtors	3,954	2,492
Badge stock on hand	77	95
Total assets	251,558	211,508
LIABILITIES		
Funds	244,591	204,488
Ten year membership suspense	4,645	4,898
Five year membership suspense	2,132	2,073
Creditors and advance subscriptions 2004/5	190	49
Total liabilities	251,558	211,508

Keith D Wykes

Treasurer, Trustee and a Principal Officer

15 February 2004

FUNDS of the SOCIETY as at 31 December 2003

figures are £

Fund name	2002	donations	transfers	expenditure	2003
General	168,464	1,249	15,381	(8,217)	218,399
transfer from I&E a/c			41,522		
Defence	20,448	55	4,029	(73)	24,459
Signpost	1,708	1,627	(1)	(2,477)	857
Memorial Funds					
LG Meadowcroft	664	50		(88)	626
H E Wild footbridge	250				250
Closed funds					
MIRR	10,849			(10,849)	--
Development	2,105		1,334	(3,439)	--
	204,488	2,981	62,265	(25,143)	244,591

notes

General Funds of the Society have increased by 29.6 %: £49,935 (2002: 10% : £15,510) including £41,522 contributed by the *Income & Expenditure Account* surplus.

- The **Defence Fund** benefited by donations and transfers, in the main from the *General Fund* in accordance with Society policy of maintaining the *Defence Fund* balance at 10% of total fund balances; additionally it is Society policy to charge all *Courts & Inquiries* related expenditure to the *Defence Fund*; in this regard minor expenditure has been incurred.
- Greatly increased activity in signpost planting has resulted in increased expenditure to £2,477 (£1,310 in 2002). We now utilise an outside contractor to help us with the use of his van and this has removed completely the backlog of signs which we had at the start of the year. Donations of £1,627 (£1,241 in 2002) have gone some way to offset the expense but the current balance of £857 is insufficient to meet our obligations to maintain our existing signposts.

So the pleas are ~

1. for able bodied persons to occupy the officer post of Signpost Co-ordinator together with Assistant
 2. for that Signpost Co-ordinator to be the lead organiser of a team fully staffed by volunteers
 3. to debate these signpost issues at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.
- Both the **MIRR** (*Matured Investment Revaluation Reserve Fund*) and **Development** funds were closed at the year end. The *MIRR Fund* was closed for technical accounting reasons after consulting the Honorary Examiner, Mrs E Hudson. The *Development Fund* was closed as it had become overdrawn in the year, requiring a transfer from *General Funds* of £1,334 upon closure. For some years it had been closed to new donations as its purpose ~ that of acquiring Taylor House, computer, office equipment, furniture and fixtures & fittings is now fulfilled. Such fixed assets to a value of £3,439 were acquired from the *Development Fund* during the year.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE for the year ended 31 December 2003

INCOME	2003	2002	EXPENDITURE	2003	2002
General Income			Taylor House:		
Legacies	39,888	10,693	•Running costs	2,172	2,454
Donations	2,981	2,599	•Depreciation	949	943
Gift Aid and tax refunds	1,346	1,381	Travel	1,501	1,715
Advertising	382	390	Newsletter	995	1,078
Newsletter sponsorship	--	1,000	Annual Report	905	748
Affiliation service	100	95	Computer consumables	225	405
Sundry	17	286	Grants	--	482
Grants	--	415	Stationery & printing	502	645
Total	44,714	16,859	Commission charge	286	--
less transfers to			Postages	549	667
Funds statement	(2,981)	(2,599)	Photocopying (net)	200	211
			Telephones	199	278
			Maps	115	245
			Newspapers & publications	52	46
			Insurances & subscriptions	1,363	324
			Meetings	1,258	60
			Sundries	28	44
Total General Income	41,733	14,260	Total Expenditure	11,299	10,345
Investment Income	6,336	7,973	Excess of Income over Expenditure		
Subscription Income			Transfer to Gen Funds	41,522	16,583
Annual	1,525	1,584			
Ten year transfers	1,121	1,178			
Five year transfers	957	854			
Junior	4	4			
Affiliations	1,145	1,075			
Total Subs Income	4,752	4,695			
Total income	52,821	26,928		52,821	26,928

Income & Expenditure Account - notes

- The **annual surplus** of £41,522 compares very favourably with 2002's surplus of £16,583.
- In the main this may be attributed to the substantial increases in *Legacies* (£29,195) and *Donations* (£382) but this is partly offset by the loss of *Newsletter Sponsorship* (£1,000) and a reduction in *Investment Income* of £1,637 (reflecting general interest rate declines and our accumulation of resources in lower interest rated *Short Term* accounts pending reinvestment in higher interest rated *Long Term* accounts).
- Our interest bearing investments achieve rates between 0.25% and 6.1% gross
- **Subscription income** of £4,752 (2002: £4,695) is bearing up well relative to the reduction in members since 1998. The success of the recently introduced *Five Year* membership category is plain to see but the slight reduction in *Ten Year transfers* income should sound a warning for the future. Hopefully distribution of the revamped Membership Leaflet will stem this reduction.
- **Expenditure** at £11,299 (£10,345 in 2002) has risen sharply (9%) mainly as the result of introducing a new Meetings cost head, significant increases in insurance costs, and increased mileage rates payable (from 17p to 30p per mile).
- A one off **Commission charge** of £286 has been incurred relating to our *Capital Investment* purchases
- The 2003 figures for **Travel & Meetings** are not to be compared with the 2002 figures
- **Meetings** covers all costs associated with meetings, ie travel, room hire, AGM catering costs, subsistence, etc.
- It is pleasing to note the reductions in expenditure costs heads for Taylor House running costs, Newsletter, Postages, Stationery & Printing, Computer consumables, Photocopying, Telephones and Sundries.
- It is equally pleasing to note the increases in expenditure cost heads Newspaper & Publications and Maps.
- All members and all members of affiliated organisations are reminded that a 20% discount is obtainable on all map products (whether for Peak & Northern or personal use) purchased via Chartech International Ltd.
Such maps include Laminated All Weather (including personal inserts between the lamination if required) international (including atlases) and computerised.
Members should quote **PNFS01** when ordering from Carol or Kim at Chartech, telephone 01433 621779.
Payment may be by invoice or credit card. All Peak & Northern map purchases may be claimed for via expenses or they can be invoiced directly to the Society.

Independent Examiner's Report

to the Trustees of the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

I report on the accounts of the Society for the year ended 31st December 2003.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts (under section 43 (3)(a) of the 1993 Act);
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act);
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act; and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Elizabeth Hudson ACA

3rd March 2004

Bradley Fold, Woodford Lane, Newton, Macclesfield

Ernie Sutton looks after the year long task of keeping in touch with members, collecting membership fees, welcoming new members and maintaining membership statistics for the Society.



As I have reported on previous occasions, this time of year brings me to the most upsetting part of my job, having to report once again a reduction in our numbers.

Over the past 12 months we have welcomed 21 new members but it is with sincere regret that I have to report that we have lost eight members who have passed away, these will be sadly missed. No fewer than 57 members have failed to renew and only in a few cases have we been informed of the reason ~ age, change of circumstances, removal from the area.

By the time our members read this report I am hoping, as do my fellow officers and the volunteers at Taylor House, that the situation has improved. Steps are being taken to revise and distribute an information leaflet giving details of the history and work of the Society. I have already received quite a few replies to the appeal in the *Signpost* newsletter for help in distributing these leaflets which will of course incorporate a Membership Application Form.

Once again let me say how much I do, along with my fellow officers, appreciate the interest and support given by all our individual members and the representatives of our affiliated societies.

The following table plots our membership numbers over the last five years ~

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Annual	318	298	306	316	275
Ten year	556	468	428	388	353
Five year	117	146	180	177	193
Honorary Life	11	14	14	15	15
Junior	3	3	3	2	2
total	1005	929	931	898	838
Affiliates	85	85	84	81	83

AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS

Alderley Edge, Wilmslow & District FP Society	Heaton Reddish U3A	RA North & Mid Cheshire Area
Altrincham & District Rambling Club	HF Bolton Group	RA Oldham Group
Ashton-under-Lyne & District Walking Club	HF Bury Group	RA Sheffield Group
Barlborough Parish Council	HF Nottingham Group	RA South Yorks & NE Derbyshire Area
Barnsley	HF Warrington Rambling Club	RA Stockport Group
Mountaineering Club	Ladybrook Valley District Scout Club	Rochdale CHA Ramblers
Bayhorse Homewatch & Residents Association	Leek & District FP Preservation & Rambling Group	Romiley Townwomen's Guild Walking Group
Blackbrook Conservation Society	Littleborough Civic Trust	Rucksack Club
Bolton CHA Rambling Club	Longdendale & Glossopdale FP Preservation Society	Sale U3A Walking Club
Buxton Field Club	Macclesfield & District Field Club	Sheffield Clarion Ramblers
Buxton Rambling Club	Macclesfield Rambling Club	Sheffield Co-op Party Rambling Club
CAE ~ Rambling Club	Manchester & District Retired Teachers Assn	Sheffield U3A Walking Goup 'A'
CHA Manchester Rambling Club	Manchester Associates Rambling Club	Shirland & Higham Parish Council
CHA Mansfield	Manchester Field Club	Stockport & District Federation of TWGs
CHA Nottingham Rambling Club	Manchester Pedestrian Club	Stockport East Area Bridleways Association
CHA Oldham & District Rambling Club	Manchester Rambling Club	Stockport Field Club
CHA Sheffield (B Section) Rambling & Social Club	Marple Community Council	Stockport Rambling & Social Club
Cheadle Hulme & Bramhall Natural History Society	Marple District Rambling Club	Stockport Walkers
Cheshire Tally Ho Hare & Hounds Club	Marple Naturalists	Sutton-in-Ashfield Rambling Club
Club AZ Walkers	Mid Cheshire Footpath Society	The Mellor Society
Crescent Ramblers Northwich	Northwestern Naturalists Union	The Moorsiders (Urmston) Rambling Group
Derby Nomad Ramblers	PC Solved Ltd	The Scramblers Rambling Club
Derbyshire Footpaths Preservation Society	Pennine Wayfarers Rambling Club	The Wayfarers Rambling Club
Derbyshire Pennine Club	Poynton Rambling Club	Toc H Matlock
Eccles Rambling and Social Club	RA Bolton Group	West Lancashire Footpath Group
Eyam Village Society	RA Congleton Group	YHA Central Region
Geriatrics Group	RA East Cheshire Area	YHA Stockport
Hanliensian Rambling Club	RA Manchester Area	
	RA New Mills Group	