

SIGNPOST

The newsletter of the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

Taylor House, 23 Turncroft Lane, Offerton
Stockport SK1 4AB Tel: 0161 480 3565
Fax: 0161 429 7279 Reg Charity No:212219

October 2003
Number 11

mail@peakandnorthern.org.uk

www.peakandnorthern.org.uk

From the Chairman

At the risk of sounding monotonous, I must ring the warning bell once more. Since my appeal in the last 'Signpost' for a volunteer to take on the vital post of the Society's General Secretary, I have not had a single reply.

Since Eric Kime and I stated last April that we would not stand again as Vice Chairman and Chairman, six months have gone by and still there is not a movement in the ranks to indicate that someone might come forward to take on either position. Any member -or a group of friends, perhaps- who feels able and willing to have a go at one or all three of these vital jobs will be given a hero's welcome at Taylor House. Whoever and wherever you are, if you feel inclined to take it on, you will need to step forward *now* to give yourself a running-in period before taking over next April. Otherwise, the prospect for this one-hundred-and-ten-year-old Society is dire. We will not be able to continue the work we do for the walking community if we are short of three key officers.

What is particularly frustrating is the fact that the PNFS is a going concern. We have just bought our third computer and enthusiastic volunteers are coming in to work on it or engage in other aspects of our business. The Indians are fine, it's the Chiefs we're short of. Can I appeal once more for a group of willing members to help us out?

SPREADING THE WORD

Would any Member, willing and able to approach their local library

or Information Centre to ask them to display copies of our Membership leaflet, please let either Derek Seddon or Ernie Sutton know at Taylor House. We will be very happy to send you a supply with our grateful thanks. Please let us know where you place them so that we can update them whenever necessary.

A PLEA FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

This is the first time I have used the Newsletter as a means of contacting and reminding those Members who have not (as yet) renewed their Membership. There are still quite a number from whom I would like to receive this renewal.

Ernie Sutton

ADVERTISEMENT

PNFS member in Hazel Grove, Stockport has for sale an ELDDIS 12 ft, 2 berth caravan, 1982. All fittings, good condition, kept in garage. 2 gas bottles, wheel clamp. £50 to a member.

Tel: 0161 456 8570.

THE PROPOSED RAILWAY FROM MATLOCK TO MANCHESTER

Maurice Deakin attended the Consultants' Presentation at Derbyshire County Council Offices, Matlock. He reports:

Scott Wilson, the Consultants outlined their findings

1. A 50mph single track hourly passenger service, or
2. A 75mph double track

Plus a possible freight service

7 new stations needed.
50mph more likely than 75mph due to gradients and curvature.

Single track system not suitable for hourly service.

6 new structures required including major bridge construction at Rowsley and Millers Dale.

None of the timings quoted are quicker than existing rail routes via Stoke or Sheffield.

There is no great passenger demand at present.

Buxton station is "single ended" and is impractical for through working.

It is not feasible to have a through train at Buxton.

By-passing Buxton involves using the existing mineral line from Millers Dale to Chinley. Not economically viable.

Environment: Landscape is a serious consideration. Monsal Dale pathway system is currently subject to further study. No alternative route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders has been identified.

Maurice's summary: The serious environmental constraints, plus those of major engineering and operational nature, coupled with a perceived limited use make this project doubtful. Costs have yet to be arrived at but are expected to be £100 million. I have stopped being concerned about the destruction of the Wye Valley at present!

MASTS ON THE SNAKE

There have been several applications for the erection of telecom masts on Peak Park and National Trust land, which the local authority has refused except for Police use. Last June the Inspector allowed an appeal by O³ for masts along the Snake Pass. We expect that this will result in similar applications by

other companies.

BLOWING IN THE WIND

The PNFS has written to oppose the application for a Wind Farm of 26 turbines on Scout Moor between Whitworth and Edenfield. Each turbine will be 100 metres (327 ft) in height to the top of its blades. A network of 5 metre wide roads will be put in to service each one. The Rossendale Way and the Rochdale Way cross the site.

Another proposed site is at Orton Scar, near Tebay, just outside the Lake District National Park

Meanwhile, Alnwick District Council in Northumberland has refused an application for three 60 metre turbines on a site by the A697, on the grounds that they would have an adverse impact on an area of high landscape value. The applicants appealed but, in what is seen as a landmark judgement, the Inspector agreed with the council, ruling that the masts would loom above the intimate landscape of the Edlingham valley, dominating the small fields.

Professor David Bellamy calls

the turbines 'silver satanic mills' and, with an eye on the subsidies payable to their operators, farms for making a lot of money out of the taxpayer - up to one billion pounds a year by 2010.

The government has announced plans for 3000 towers to be placed in groups off the coast, but these moorland sites should not be allowed to ride in for permission on the back of those offshore.

We still maintain that a concerted effort to educate industry, business and the public towards the idea of conserving electricity and improving efficiency would be cost-effective.

At the moment, the sole concern of power companies is to sell electricity. They are not in the business of saving it. Only last week we were urged to cut down our wasteful lighting so that we can observe the night sky. But will anyone do it?

-oo-

GOING TO THE WALL



The announcement struck me as the most exciting happening in the walking world this year. Something I'd wanted to do since boyhood. Casually, I said to my friend Chris "Have you heard about the new Hadrian's Wall Path?". "Yes" he said "I fancy doing it" and as simply as that I knew I had a project for my 80th year (with a stripling of 60).

A phone call to the Wall information office produced a mass of leaflets on accommodation, walks for motorists, days out for the family, guided or not, plus the route for the full monty from coast to coast. Another, different list can be found on the RA Website, plus masses of information on the internet about the country and history of the Roman wall district.

I expect the hard men will do it in a long weekend, but at the cost of missing the fascination of browsing in the many museums, puzzling out for yourself how this astonishing construction worked and looked to both soldier and barbarian. We chose to do it in seven days from Wallsend to Bowness on Solway, 84 miles, plus diversions to Vindolanda (round trip 3½ miles) and Lanercost Priory (3).

A few keen types were camping-a young man's game, we thought. The problem, they reported, was a lack of official camp sites and an almost total lack of shops between Newcastle and Carlisle. You can buy food in Hexham, Corbridge and so on but they are some miles off-route, which counts when you are carrying a pack full of gear. A back-up party in a car is a great help, of course. We had thought of using the bus which runs from Bowness to Newcastle to do our sightseeing, but the service closed down on September 14th - the day before we started, so we did it all on foot without difficulty, but somewhat slower.

The walk has already proved very popular and people from around the world have been alerted by the extensive

publicity. Perhaps by next year the entrepreneurs among the locals will have opened up a few shops and more B&Bs. There is a great shortage of the latter in the middle bit from Vindolanda to Birdoswald, but, having re-joined the YHA after 50 years, we had a pleasant stay in the Hostels at Once Brewed and Greenhead. The food was perfectly satisfactory (and you don't have to wash up now), but if you fancy a wider choice there are pubs within easy reach of both.

MAPS: Most useful is Anthony Burton's National Trail guide to the Hadrian's Wall Path, Aurum Press, £12.99. Comprehensive and detailed descriptions of the route and its many points of interest, all covered in segments of the 2½" OS maps reproduced in colour. You could get by with this alone, but the Harvey map 1:40,000 covers the whole path in 6 strips, good for planning and handy to unfold as you walk. The OS Explorer OL43 Haltwhistle to Hexham is fine for the central area and if you intend exploring north and south of the wall, but the Harvey is more convenient. As well as the publicity, an enormous amount of money

(Lottery and Euro) has been spent on setting up this World Heritage Site. There are several score 5-step ladder stiles (be warned!), dozens of kissing gates, hundreds of signposts, so it's easy to see where the money has gone and presumably in compensation to the co-operative landowners. Potentially muddy stretches are protected by Peak District style mill flagstones, while the rest is delightful close-cropped turf.

"You're going east to west?" queried a fellow walker who had just done it the other way. "You'll be against the prevailing wind all the way" And so we were, but in mid-September it was never a problem. A group in a pub at Heddon warned us of the terrors of the switchback hills to come but we found that none proved a deterrent to anyone who has done time in the Peak District. Some are steep but



they are all short. If you have the time, before you start the walk, a visit to South Shields on the other side of the Tyne and reached by the efficient Metro rail link, is rewarding. There is an on-going excavation of the Roman Fort of ARBEIA, with its modern museum and full-sized replica of a fort gateway to help you visualise how the ruins you are about to see would have looked in their prime. Cross the Tyne by the ferry - a holiday trip in itself - and travel to Wallsend by the Metro.

We started our walk with an inspection of SEGUDUNUM (Wallsend), another excavation, another first-class, hands-on museum (feel the weight of a chain-mail shirt!). It has its own viewing tower, made like a ship's flying bridge, by Swan Hunter whose shipyard is next door. Off we went, following



On Windshield Crag - the highest point

the riverside walk along the Tyne. The Wall itself, through Newcastle, has long since been obliterated by the growth of the modern city, whereas the diversion along the river is constantly interesting and a credit to the planners. The noise and pollution of the vanished shipbuilders has been replaced by 13 miles of quiet contemplation with a bit of modern excitement in the middle as you pass under the famous Tyne bridges. They say the salmon are coming back up the river.

After 15 miles you reach Heddon on the Wall where you first see a decent section of the wall. B&Bs are in very short supply here.

We walked around

HOUSESTEADS the most complete Roman fort in Britain, without going in, being short of time, but made up for this the next day by visiting VINDOLANDA, a Roman town where we took in copious amounts of information, marvelling at the finds out of ditches, latrines and bath houses until we could absorb no more and tottered out to stretch our legs alongside the wall itself as it rolls over the wild hills.

In truth, the mid-section which runs alongside the B6318 is not as wild as it might be. Certainly, the view to the north is wild enough, but the sound of invisible cars going by 30 yards to your left lessens the feeling of being alone against the elements. But soon the road

swings away and the wall and the walker is left to swoop its exhilarating way over hill and cliff, valley and lough with only the birds for company. Beyond Carlisle the land levels out. You wander through farmland and tiny villages whose Peel towers and fortified farmhouses tell of a more turbulent past when the Scots and the Armstrongs were about. Finally, by the Solway mud flats you are warned to check the tide tables to avoid the high tides that bring the sea sweeping in across the road. A place of wide expanses and huge skies to bring to an end a memorable experience. I can recommend it, whether you do the whole thing or piecemeal - it's all accessible now.

INFORMATION OFFICE:
01434 322002

P.S. In 1801 Will Hutton did it at the age of 78. But he walked from Birmingham and walked home when he'd finished.

Derek Seddon

ROY SPOORS, our new Courts and Inquiries Officer, recently Attended a conference at the Inspectorate's Headquarters in Bristol. He reports.....

New for Public Inquiries —
'Consistency Guidelines'
Issued

The Planning Inspectorate has recently issued a set of 'Consistency Guidelines' for use by their Inspectors at Public Inquiries called under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Although the document is aimed primarily at their Inspectors it is clearly a valuable tool for anybody preparing a submission under this Act. This new document provides advice on case law and also on the hierarchy of documentary evidence that is often submitted. Unfortunately because documentary evidence is often both unique to the Inquiry and subject to different interpretations it can never be more than guidance.

The process of making changes to rights of way of all categories has been regulated by a number of Acts of Parliament but the policy guidance, circulars and the interpretation of case law has never been clear or comprehensive. This has resulted in quite regular inconsistencies being reported from different Public Inquiries even when on the face of it the issues and evidence presented

were similar. These new 'Consistency Guidelines' are intended to reduce the number of such complaints and to provide more transparency in how Inspectors arrive at their judgements. Equally important to the Planning Inspectorate is to explain what this new document IS NOT,

- ◇ an authoritative statement of case law
- ◇ a definition of an absolute hierarchy of proof
- ◇ a complete or exhaustive statement prescriptive for Inspectors

This last point means that the Inspectors will still hear only the evidence presented to them and form their own views at each Public Inquiry so still expect plenty of debate in the future; Inspectors are only human after all.

Copies of the new 'Consistency Guidelines' can be found on the Planning Inspectorate website and will also be available at future Inquiries. They do make informative reading, in a reasonably concise form, for anybody with an interest in public rights of way, please have a look at them if you get a chance. Web site:

www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk

**WHO DOES WHAT AT
TAYLOR HOUSE?**



PETER CROFTS

(Home telephone number 0161 427 1888) exercises a general supervision of the Monday morning team of Assessors who examine all mail received from Highway Authorities during the previous week which deals with proposed path creations, diversions, or closures.

Three Assessors comment on each proposal and reach a collective decision which, in many cases is that no comment is necessary.

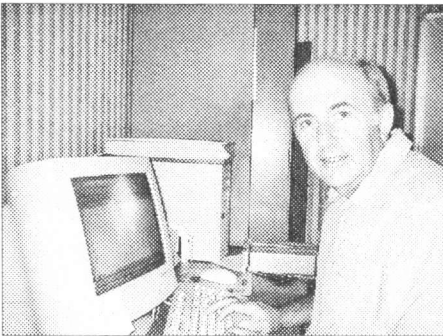
Peter then drafts letters about those proposals which do present problems, both to Highway Authorities, usually making a holding objection. and to Inspectors enclosing a copy of the letter and plan

received and asking for their advice on what the Society's action should be.

The Inspectors reply determines whether a holding objection is confirmed or withdrawn. If an objection is confirmed, further correspondence involving Taylor House, the Highway Authority, and the Inspector continues until the matter is resolved.

When Peter is absent, all the above processes are carried out either by DENNIS ROWLINSON or by NORMAN EDWARDS.

-00-



BOB DUMBARTON

Role and Responsibilities

Control of emails which arrive on the Society's account. Initial 'thank you' reply to all emails.

These printed emails then pass to normal post logging. Control of all matters on computer front, utilising Peter Rhodes for Web Site matters and Tame Computers for software and hardware updates.

Ensuring backup of PNFS files taken on a weekly basis, with disks being taken off site.

Providing documentation of all computer processes are kept up to date. Liaising with all Inspectors - allocating and amending parishes when necessary.

-00-

ADRIAN LITTLETON

Legal Advisor

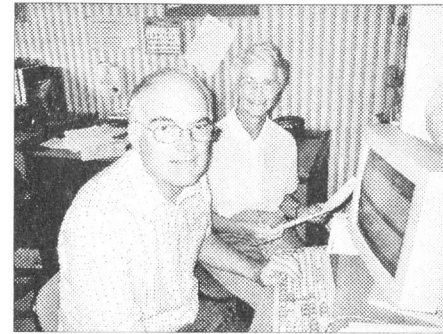
Status- this is not an officer post; by invitation the holder attends officer meetings but does not vote at them.

1. Providing legal advice on matters associated with the Society's functions to any officer or member who seeks it; but primarily to officers.
2. Training Inspectors, assessors and other members in the legalities

and practicalities of tasks which they perform, or are about to perform for the Society.

3. Reorganisation of the Society's filing system- with assistance from numerous colleagues.

-00-



PETER RHODES

Footpath Faults and Obstructions.

Receiving reports from Inspectors, members of the Society and the general public of footpath faults.

Entering these reports onto the Society's computer database and informing the relevant local authorities of these problems in their area.

Logging responses from the local authorities onto the database and sending a photocopy of any correspondence to the relevant Inspector.

Sending a 'chaser' letter each month to local authorities with a printout from the database of faults that have not been resolved in their area for at least six months.

Removing 'cleared' problems from the main database and archiving onto another.

With the acquisition of a new computer at Taylor House Peter has been ably assisted by HILDA BOWLER who can be seen in the photograph learning the system.

Peter also compiles the newsletter on his home computer from articles provided by the editor as well as maintaining the Society's web site.

-00-

And finally :-

Is this the area's oldest signpost— or do you know better?



This signpost was photographed on a recent walk near Arley Hall in Cheshire. It reads:

**NO CARTWAY SAVE ON SUFFERENCE HERE
FOR HORSE AND FOOT THE ROAD IS CLEAR
TO LYMM HIGH LEGH HOO GREEN & MERE**

BRIDLE ROAD ONLY.