

SIGNPOST

The newsletter of the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

So, it's already December in my first year as your Chairman--and as I read somewhere --so much to do--so little time to do it in--very apposite when you are as impatient as I am !.

In our PNFS we are moving forward, gathering momentum, gaining members, planting new signs, and getting our name about in the public domain, BUT and, for every 'and ' there's a 'but',-- it's now time to move forward where its crucial to what we are about--that is the arena of Footpath Crusading--which my very able colleague and Vice-Chair, **Roy Spoors**, will spearhead.

We are talking here of Footpath Obstructions, Footpath Faults, Footpath Diversion proposals and Footpath Extinguishment proposals. We are going to turn the heat up--gradually and professionally. The whole process of how we receive, process, disseminate and store information coming into us at Taylor House is under review. We will be more efficient as a result of it- and punch our weight with the Highway Authorities.

We had an excellent, well-attended, high input and output Inspectors Conference last month and have already responded on changes we (as Officers) are making. Thanks indeed to those new volunteers who are making some of the new intentions a reality with regard to communicating with our Inspectors.

Now to a crying need. We have operated for some years without a Business Administrator--the work gets spread amongst a number of us and at times items get double or no attention. We need one of you out there to handle, on Mondays (when Taylor House is alive and buzzing), our incoming correspondence, e-mails, and stored and new phone calls. Handle means deal with or pass on to those who will. The BA will convene meetings and prepare Agendas (Officers-monthly, Council-currently quarterly inc the AGM). The BA is a key player in an organization such as ours, the lubricant that makes the wheels turn. The rest of our Management structure is in place and functioning BUT would do it so much

better if the last piece of the jigsaw were to step forward. Is it YOU??. Please call me on 01925 762472, for any clarification or reassurance.

And finally may I wish you and yours a most happy Christmastide and a stunning 2005. Kindest regards.

David Bratt

All members please note: A message from the Treasurer

The Society now has one main bank account at CAF Bank, a subsidiary of the Charities Aid Foundation. Our account in the name of Peak & Northern Footpaths Society is addressed at CAF Bank, Sort Code 40 52 40, Account No 00000907. Members paying subscriptions by standing order should make sure these are the details being quoted, **not** the Royal Bank of Scotland. To be doubly sure I will be writing individual letters to those members already using standing order payments. If any other "annual" members or affiliates would like to use this method to pay subscriptions (the advantage is that you don't have to remember when they are due, your bank will do it for you!) please let me know and I'll gladly send out the paperwork.

One member has asked when subscriptions are due so I think it's worth reminding everyone that officially it's "within one month of each AGM". Recent AGM's seem to

have been held in April and next year's will be too, so if you want to simplify it put a note in your diary for 1st May.

Gift Aid is another subject to be considered. The Charity Commissioners require our trustees to "collect in full all money owed or due to the charity, including tax and rating reliefs". If you are able to but haven't registered for Gift Aid an opportunity has been missed; less money is available to the Society and the Government has made a saving at your expense!

But the good news if you do register we can claim back to April 2000! An extra 28p for every £1 you paid to us! That's £2.80 for every £10! and registration couldn't be much easier, just contact me or **Ernie Sutton** and we'll get the paperwork to you.

Barry Starkie

Council Meetings -All Members Invited

The next Council Meeting will be at Taylor House Offerton at 7pm on Thursday 20th January 2005.

The Society's ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at the MASONIC TEMPLE Bridge St. Manchester commencing at 11.00 on Saturday 23rd April 2005. There will be a FREE BUFFET LUNCH. Please book your place with Eric Kime, 35 Buxton Lane Marple Stockport SK6 7QL Tel: 0161 427 1082

Mid-week Walks

Wed. 27th October Standedge Tunnel Circular Leader Eileen Leonard

26 people out on an indifferent sort of day. Very wet underfoot with a 'ford' of a stream near Marsden really requiring water wings. Otherwise nothing untoward to report.

November Walk Leader David Bratt (for PNFS)

A party of 30 gathered on time at Stalybridge station at 10.00am, the great majority came by train (Man Picc and Man Vic) with a few by bus car and foot.

This being my first lead for the combined PNFS/Manchester RA Wednesday group I was particularly keen to welcome all. After that Keith lost no time in distributing our new member leaflets--before we got off the station!! Stalybridge--a mix of both impressive and decaying examples of architecture- was strolled through and on to the towpath of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. After Millbrook and 2

grassy hill climbs and a short section of the Pennine Bridle Way we set sail in earnest for Swineshaw Moor and the eagerly awaited location by GPS of GR SE 00000 00000 where the photo was taken. It's also the confluence of the SJ/SD/SE/SK grid squares. A peg in the ground 2 yards away from our position showed where my RA friend Geoff Hill had previously located the spot--proving whilst the PNFS and RA are very close together--we are separate entities. Another explanation could be recent movement of the Swineshaw tectonic plate.

We crossed between the Swineshaw reservoirs and contoured Lees Hill. Some bought serve-yourself eggs at Hollinworthall Farm, the PNFS sign no. 198 was admired, then it was off to Roe Cross and some roadwork--necessitated partly by two fields being found hippo friendly but quagmirely impassable on the reccy. Early Bank Road was then used (thanks Trevor) after I judged the



November Wednesday Walkers pose at Grid Ref SE0000000000

footbridge intended was too rough going--Mea Culpa--same beastly stile had to be recrossed. My only saving grace had been thankfully two distributions of sugared wine gums. Thanks to all for your company. Weather tolerable. Finish time 15.20, 10 miles, 3 stop strategy, (4 including the station bar).

Forthcoming Wednesday Walks

29th December Cheadle Hulme to Poynton Leader **Jeff Lewis** Tel:0161 766 4683. 9.36 train from Piccadilly.

26th January 2005 Chelford Circular Leaders **Peter & Hilda Bowler** Tel: 01625 432426. 9.02 train from Piccadilly. 09.50 start from Chelford Stn. Car Parking in cattle market down Dixon Drive. Coffee & biscuits at Nether Alderley Village Hall, lunch at Stag's Head 10 miles.

23rd February Alderley Edge Circular Leader **Bob Dumbarton** Tel: 0161 439 8750. 9:36 train from Piccadilly.

30th March Rainow Circular: Leaders **Peter & Hilda Bowler** Tel: 01625 432426. 09.45 bus from Macclesfield. Walk starts at 10.01 from Smithy Lane Rainow. Lunch at Highwayman. 9 mls.

27th April Lostock to Hindley. Leader **Jeff Lewis** Tel: 0161 766 4683. 9.51 train from Piccadilly. 10 miles.

**COULD YOU LEAD A WALK?
PLEASE CONTACT JEFF LEWIS.**

Lively Inspectors' Conference 2004

Over sixty people attended the Conference held at Styal Mill on 3rd November 2004 and the overwhelming majority of the feedback was very positive. Everybody seemed to enjoy the day and certainly a considerable amount of important work and discussion was completed. Lunch was an adequate buffet and there seemed to be plenty of chat and meeting up of old friends and acquaintances.

The agenda for the day was set to try and give a good mix of formal presentations and group discussions at tables of about six delegates. After an introduction from **David Bratt** the morning covered an update on footpath legislation and particularly the CROW Act 2000. There was a lot of interest in footpath obstructions and the options available to get them removed. So the presentation given by **Terry Norris** on the new section 63 provisions was very well received and led to a number of important questions later in the day.

The rest of the morning was given over to group discussions on the important tasks of updating both the 'Inspectors' Handbook' and the 'Assessors' Handbook'. Both of these documents are due an update and many helpful suggestions were made about content, structure and how to get the best use from them. These sessions have led directly to the Officers agreeing that a new PNFS Handbook will be issued combining both handbooks with loose-

leaf sections added to cover checklists for footpath changes and PNFS policies. This new handbook is currently being compiled and it is aimed to release it as early in 2005 as is possible.

After lunch the Conference was delighted to welcome **Tom Partridge**, who is Rights of Way Officer for Pendle B.C. and he was joined by **Shirley Northcott**, our agent for Lancashire[part]. Tom gave some valuable insights into the working of his Countryside Access Forum and it was really interesting to see how valuable Tom believes it is in his day-to-day responsibilities. Shirley sits as the PNFS representative on Tom's forum and she shared her view of Tom's work and the forum.

As we all know the PNFS signposts programme has been given a new lease of life this year so it was pertinent that **Keith Wykes** gave an update on just one part of the activity, the project to accurately record and locate the nearly three hundred signs that we have out there. This project has now listed all of our signposts and recorded them by parish with a GPS location; a PC system using electronic maps means that for each parish we can for the first time be sure about where our signposts are ! All Inspectors were asked if they would like, or be able, to help with the ongoing work on maintenance and reporting on the condition of our signposts. A number have

volunteered to extend their work into this area as they complete their inspections, an excellent result.

The afternoon group discussions saw a number of different topics being discussed by each table and then feedback given to the conference. All of the topics were current and important to the future priorities to be given by the Society to what type of work we undertake and how we set about meeting our aims and objectives. The topics were,

- * What type of Society do we wish to be in the future?
- * Do Inspectors want to take on more responsibility?
- * How do Inspectors want to be kept up to date?
- * What do Inspectors want to contribute to the signpost programme?
- * Should the PNFS have a policy covering Common Access Land?

All of the groups provided very valuable comments and suggestions on all of these topics and subsequently the Officers have discussed fully all of the implications and agreed an action plan to make the appropriate changes. Just one cautionary word, there is a huge amount of work now identified to be done but, the people in Taylor House are the same as they were before, so inevitably it will take time. The commitment is there and it will be done as quickly as the resources available to us allow it.

The Conference concluded with a very

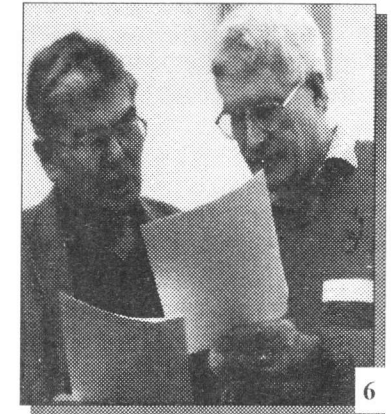
The Inspectors' Conference 2004



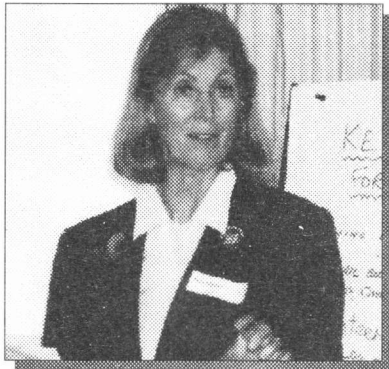
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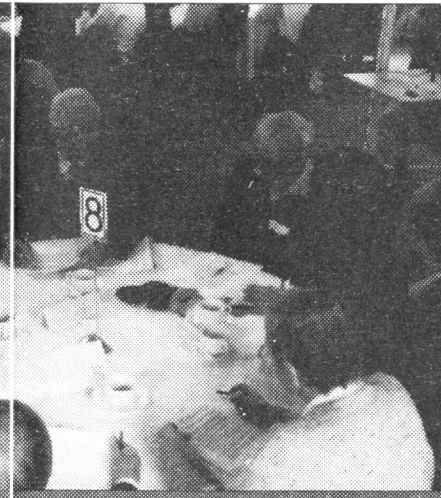
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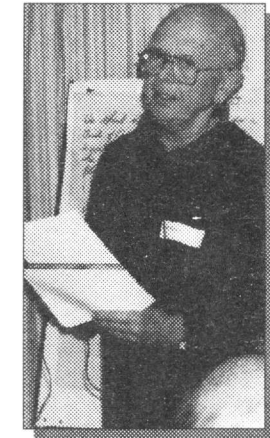
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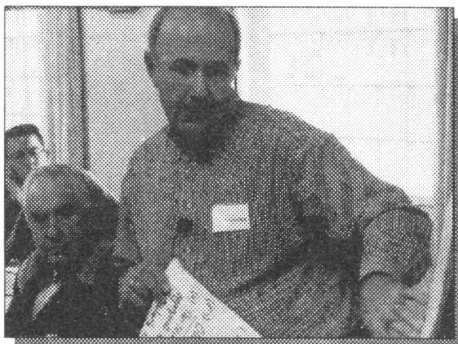
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1. The groaning board at the lunch break.
2. June Mabon putting her group's points.
3. Bob Dumbarton discussing suggestions.
4. Roy Spoor addresses a full house.
5. Workshop tables full of thinking people. Peter Crofts supervises.

6. Singing from the same hymn sheet

Adrian Littleton and Keith Wykes

7. Frank Wetton delivers his group's ideas
8. Closing the Conference: Roy Spoor thanks Tom Partridge, the key speaker. In background Shirley Northcott, David Bratt, Terry Norris



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lively 'Question and Answer' session and, although it went on for more than an hour, it still felt as though the delegates would have liked longer! One topic that we came back to was the new section 63 provision and how the Society should use it. This is important because there are cost implications to the Society if an order does not succeed at the magistrates court; we will issue a policy covering this as soon as we can. In the interim, it was stated that all possible uses of a section 63 order must be approved by Taylor House before even the Form 1 is sent. Obviously this does not prevent any member from using section 63 as an individual, but it must mean that if you do this then the Society will not be liable for costs.

So, as was said at the beginning, the conference was lively and the Officers were very appreciative of the effort put in by the delegates throughout the day and, in a number of cases, with help since. It was encouraging to see the dedication of our Inspectors first hand and there is no doubt that the Society has a wealth of experience and talent to call upon. The Officers did listen carefully and as a result a number of changes have already been agreed and there will be more to come. Please though do not expect everything to happen immediately, it will take some time for the benefits of the changes to be felt.

Final word on conferences is that most of the delegates felt that a frequency of every one or two years would be about right. So it has been decided to try for our next one in 2006, see you then.

Roy Spoons.

SNIPPETS

We are pleased to welcome John Merrill, renowned long distance walker, as a new member.

The Society opposed the installation of two 95 metre wind turbines on Causeway height, near Blackburn. They were refused by the Planning Committee. We are represented at the current Public Inquiry in Rochdale into the proposal to erect twenty six 100 metre high turbines on Scout Moor near Edenfield. The Inspector is expected to deliver his report in mid-summer 2005.

Patricia Thomas reports: "On Friday in Chisworth I almost fully rescued a sheep trapped with barbed wire around its neck, using my secateurs. I called in the farmer and during the rescue I suggested he put in a through-step for his stile. He agreed like a lamb. An inspector's day can be very rewarding."

DOGS and CATTLE

Some confusion may arise from the latest notices put up by the Peak Park Authority on the edge of Access Land. They state:

"Keeping your dog on a short fixed lead will prevent disturbance to livestock and wildlife - this is a legal requirement when near farm animals and from 1st March to 31st July".

The Welsh Countryside Commission

states much the same, but then adds: "If a farm animal chases you and your dog, it is safer to let your dog off the lead - don't risk getting hurt by trying to protect it." We feel that this is sensible advice. A dog (unless old and infirm) will usually outrun cattle but if you hold on to it the cattle may come for YOU.

DOVEDALE

Derek Seddon's article in the last issue of Signpost raised a number of questions. It is fair to say if one area within the Peak Park could arouse walkers emotions it is Dovedale. Most of us having memories going back many years, in my case 50+years. But 50 years on more people than ever are visiting Dovedale, this increased influx of visitors has given the Peak Park and the National Trust problems that need to be addressed. The safety of the day-tripper, access for the less able and disabled in wheelchairs and conservation- issues, which did not exist 50 years ago. I do not envy them the task for there is no right answer to the above issues and no doubt there will be a lot of opposition. What is proposed to address the above? The current bridge near the car park will remain, a new bridge with wheelchair access, will be provided near the steppingstones, the steppingstones will not be affected in anyway. The above will give safe access via the Staffordshire side of the Dove for the day-tripper and the less able and disabled in wheelchairs. A proposal will be made to close the footpath on the Derbyshire side of the

Dove running alongside Thorpe Cloud to address the erosion of the riverbank and no doubt this will attract considerable opposition. Fortunately for me my responsibility stops at the Staffordshire side of the Dove.

Recreational walkers will still be able to use this side of the riverbank as Thorpe Cloud is access land, but it is hoped for conservation reasons that the day-trippers and recreational walkers will avoid this side of the riverbank. We should not be over concerned about this proposal as our access up the dale remains and we can still use the steppingstones or the Derbyshire side of the riverbank.

Harry Scott Staffordshire Agent for the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

SIGNPOST MATTERS

Keith Wykes, Signpost Maintenance Officer, brings us the latest.

Following the Inspectors Conference, we now have eight inspectors who have agreed to keep an eye on the posts in their patches, to add to the nine volunteers who form the maintenance team. **Barry and Janet Clark** have inspected and photographed 45 signs. **Frank and Brenda Wetton** have been busy identifying the nine SPs in their parishes. This all helps to keep our records of the condition of our signposts up to date so that their

maintenance can be planned. Work in progress since the last Newsletter includes 5 SPs and 2 memorial plaques have been replaced; 4 new SPs are awaiting planting; 10 SPs have been repainted and maintained; 80 'Join Us' address plates are now fitted and 75 SP reports have been submitted. Grateful thanks to all!

We still need maintenance volunteers to keep our stock of 300 structures up to scratch. Materials and equipment are supplied from Taylor House, including a battery powered drill, Digital Camera and GPS instrument. Looking ahead to spring, if you are able to offer your services on a regular or individual basis, please contact Keith on 01625 582 380 or keithdw@aol.com

We are considering fixing a Toposcope (panoramic indicating plaque) on Nab Hill, Bollington GR SJ94000 78845 (this is what a GPS reading does for you). At

933 feet the hill affords a 360 degree panorama of the Cheshire plain and the Western Pennines. The Society hopes to provide a suitable record to the memory of **Miss Mary Chambers** who left us a very generous bequest in her will. Suggestions of other sites suitable for the erection of a toposcope, particularly in our outer reaches, would be welcome.

THE LESLIE MEADOWCROFT MEMORIAL BRIDGE which will be erected over a stream in Tom Wood, Chisworth as a joint effort between the PNFS and Derbyshire County Council is held up at the moment by the boggy nature of the land nearby, badly affected by the recent rain. We are advised to let things settle down before approaching with heavy equipment, but we'll keep you informed of developments.



The Production Line at Taylor House

Web site updates

In order to keep members up-to-date with news from Taylor House we are endeavouring to update the web site every couple of weeks. Our web address www.peakandnorthern.org.uk

Internet sites of interest

Those of you with access to the internet might like to look up the following sites.

Cheshire County Council have a large database relating to Public Right of Ways and other items of interest. The address is:

www.cheshire.gov.uk/countryside/prow/index.html

Lancashire County Council also have a web site which may be of interest to members which they describe as

Maps And Related Information Online

The address is:

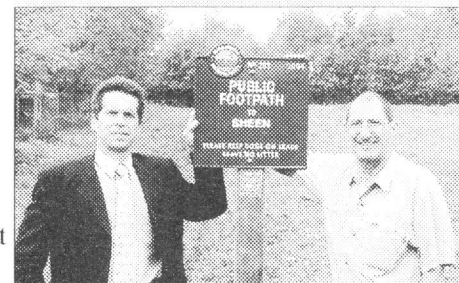
[Http://mario.lancashire.gov.uk](http://mario.lancashire.gov.uk)

If any reader has another site which may be of interest to PNFS members please let me know and I will place details in the next Signpost.

Peter Rhodes

The following report by Leslie Jackson appeared in the **Uttoxeter Post & Times** on November 4th 2004:

Path group to put up 200 new signs



Jim Mathers, site director of Dairy Crest at Hartington cheese factory and David Bratt, chairman of Peak and Northern Footpath Society with the first of 200 footpath signs the society is hoping to erect.

A special inauguration ceremony of a new footpath sign was held in Hartington last week.

The new signpost, which has a distinctive and colourful cast direction plate, indicates the path which runs from land adjacent to Dairy Crest's Hartington cheese factory to Sheen village. It was the first of 200 signposts that the Chairman of the Peak and Northern Footpath Society David Bratt has set his organisation to erect over the next three years.

Many of the proposed new signs will be erected by Society volunteers in the Staffordshire Moorlands and Derbyshire.

Mr Bratt said: "The new signs will be good for landowners and good for walkers. We are here to help walkers in Staffordshire and Derbyshire.

This signpost is special as it is the first of our target of 200 and is a result of a partnership between business and countryside"

Mr Bratt thanked Jim Mathers, Dairy Crest site director for giving permission to erect the signpost on its land.

The footpath society has been running for 110 years and is a registered charity run by volunteers.

The society employs footpath inspectors throughout the area it serves and is consulted on major issues concerning rights of way and by local

authorities at the planning stage of developments.

PNFS RUCKSACK BADGES

I am sure everyone will agree with me that publicity can be a very useful tool in letting as many people know of our existence and what our aims are. With this in mind may I draw your attention to the fact that we have available Rucksack Badges at the very reasonable price of £2.00 each, including postage.

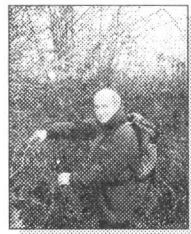
Please let me have your orders with remittance (Cheques made payable to P & N Footpaths Society) either to Taylor House, 23 Turncroft Lane Stockport SK1 4AB or to my home address 1 Crossfield Grove, Marple Bridge, Stockport SK6 5EQ.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Ernest Sutton.



the footpath was obstructed.....



...but **Bob Dumbarton** had his secateurs.....



...and the path was made passable again.

On Sunday 12th December.....