

SIGNPOST

Newsletter of the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

Number 17

July 2005

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Where to begin--there is plenty to say! I'll start with the AGM which was a resounding success with some sixty-seven members present (forty-three in 2004). In particular **Lorna Meadowcroft** was there and made some telling contributions to various debates. I have to believe she and Leslie were in their time a pretty potent combination. All Officers and Trustees were re-elected. Members approved by a substantial majority (three opposed) the replacement of the previous Council (All members) meetings with a half year report/debate day meeting in Manchester in October. The need to consider the revaluation of the Taylor House property was acknowledged. After lunch various policies on Wind Farms (and like structures), Open Access and s63 (Obstructions) were debated and approved. Many favourable comments were made both at the AGM and subsequently about our new style/colour Annual Report. Likewise *Signpost*, now also with colour, was found to have more impact.

Our membership just reached 1000 in April--if you are still due for renewal please do so as we want new members now joining to be additional and not replacements! Thank you.

May saw immense signpost planting activity with some ten new and refurbished placings. Two work parties in particular did sterling deeds -the first planting three



New Signpost No: 300 (see below)

around Lyme Park (one donated by **Jerzy and Margaret Matuszewski** to commemorate 35 years of marriage). The second group put in three and a marker post near and in Tom Wood in just two hours--Guinness Book of Records please note! The highlight here was the planting of SP number 300- it has only taken one hundred years to get there but now the pace is hotting up!

Also in May we commissioned two new substantial footbridges at Greasley Hollow, Wincle which PNFS have funded for Cheshire HA and the Macclesfield Express recorded the event. This bridge initiative found special favour with member **Stanley Spearing** (93) who wants to introduce his family to walking in this area that he so loves.

The new members leaflet is up for renewal after the old one from Palmer Publishing Inc. well served its cause and **June Mabon** will lead a team of three (**June, Andy Overton and Peter Coughlin**) to execute the project. It is very pleasing to report an influx of new volunteers to Taylor House viz **David Tattersall** (email processing), **Peter Ritman** (resolving computer issues) and **Ted Wolfe** who enthusiastically turns his hand to anything and for good measure will take over some of **Maurice Deakin's** Inspector responsibilities. Thank you Maurice for all you have done for the Society. We also have four other new Inspectors coming on board via the **Hilda Bowler** finishing school namely **Harold Addie, Peter Allinson,**

Christopher Green and Lewis Chuck. Sadly we lose **Philip Harris** (Bolsover) due to family commitments. **Anne Palmer**, our Minutes Secretary has just relinquished her post due to just far too busy and hectic a life! Anne has made a first class contribution to the Society and will be greatly missed at Officers' Meetings. So we urgently need a replacement to take the minutes at our monthly/bimonthly meetings- shorthand or fast writing an asset! -with the minutes then written up in draft form on a home PC. Officers' meetings are on Fridays at Taylor House from 09.30 to at the latest 12.00. You could use the August 05 meeting as a trial run -if interested kindly call me at home- 01925 762472.

Please don't forget our walks programme is up and running--last Wednesday of every month--please see walks list for July-Dec 2005 and turn up if able--leaders now sought for walks in 2006.

And finally, kindly note your Chairman occasionally does go for walkies--and plans with two or three other PNFS members to undertake the Tancat Challenge at the end of July. The walk is from Tan Hill, N Yorks (the highest pub in the UK) to the Cat and Fiddle (second highest pub) through much of our territory--the height drop is but 40 feet (1730 to 1690)---but that's after doing 126 miles in 6 days and climbing 20,000 plus feet. Show your support please by enrolling just one member (each!)--now that would make it all worthwhile!

Kind regards **David Bratt.**

WIND FARMS : NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The Inspector's Report on the Public Inquiry into the proposed Scout Moor Wind Farm, north of Bury, is very fair but bad news for the opponents of the scheme. The recommendation is that permission be granted for 26 turbines 100 metres high, plus two anemometer (wind speed) towers, admin offices, access tracks and hard standing areas. All cables must be underground. Work is to commence within 5 years. The permission expires in 25 years from the date of the first electricity passing to the grid. After that time all elements of the development above ground (including access tracks) must be removed and the land restored. Presumably the concrete block 13.5 metres square at the base of each of the 26 turbines will remain in the ground, perhaps covered with turf. Note the word 'tracks'. These access roads have to be capable of withstanding the weight of the large crane required to lift the turbines into position. Apart from this, I feel the report is very fair and accurate. The Inspector records his respect for those opposing out of a genuinely-felt love of the countryside. He is dismissive of the arguments of the three local authorities which opposed the scheme. The section which is most of interest to the PNFS states: "The moors will still be accessed by foot or by horse right up to the turbine bases. For the less agile, the unfenced tracks linking the turbines may also increase accessibility and make the moors more inclusive. For those who

appreciate the emptiness of the plateau, that pleasure will, however, be lost. For those on long distance walks or rides, they will have a different experience, but not one, I judge, that would necessarily stop them from using the western Pennines for recreation."

Other points: "Turbines will be on smooth columns with a matt finish. Open lattice work towers encourage the perching of birds. Horses should not have a problem as the turbine blades will be visible from a distance such as to allow approaching animals to get used to them."

We must now wait and see if our fears are groundless and if the government's drive for wind generation is justified. Meanwhile, Manchester Council has proposed that four large turbines be installed on buildings in the city and are encouraging developers to include turbines and solar panels in all housing projects. If you want to go it alone, British Gas has announced their production of rooftop turbines for use on individual houses. BG quotes an installation price of £1,500 for a 1 Kw (that's one kilowatt) job which will operate in a 3mph wind. They are not thought to need planning permission, but when I rang Stockport Council for confirmation I was told no policy decision had been formed.

Derek Seddon

ERRATA IN ANNUAL REPORT

Apologies for the following errors or omissions involving our Agents/ Inspectors as follows:-

1. p.21 Macclesfield B.C.
Agden, Ashley, High Legh, Little Bollington, Mere, Millington, Rostherne, Inspector **Graham Redford** 5 Pinewood Bowdon Altrincham WA14 3JQ 0161 928 8075

2. p.25 **Brian Lawrence** under Kirklees also covers the parish of Huddersfield. Kirklees is a M.C. not a M.B.C.
p29 Wakefield is a M.D.C. not a M.B.C.

3. p 27
Harry Scott as Agent also covers :-
Newcastle Borough, City of Stoke on Trent, East Staffs District, Stafford Borough, South Staffs District, Lichfield City, Litchfield District, Cannock Chase District, Tamworth Borough and Burton on Trent Borough.

NEW PNFS POLICY STATEMENTS

The Officers have been working on drafting a number of 'policy statements' and have so far completed five, these cover,

- ◇ Proposals to alter the Rights of Way Network
- ◇ Alleygating
- ◇ Section 63 Orders (also includes section 56 Orders)
- ◇ Common Access Land
- ◇ Windfarms (also includes mobile phone masts etc.)

A number of these were discussed and endorsed at the recent AGM and now is a good time to start making all members aware of the statements and, of course, please feel free to let the Officers know if you have any comments.

Over the next couple of issues of 'Signpost' all of these policy statements will be covered but, limited space means that only two or three can be covered in each issue. Also the policy on alterations to the Rights of Way Network will need a full article on its own. So to get things moving here are the first three 'Policy Statements'.

Alleygating

Alleygating is a specific type of activity that has been undertaken within urban areas to try and reduce criminal activities of various types by gating a number of passages, rear roads or roads within a given area. Although the CROW Act 2000 enacted s118b within the HA 1980 to cover extinguishment of rights on a public highway within specially designated areas of high risk it is expected that alleygating will still be seen, though on a less regular basis.

The Society will not oppose an alleygating proposal providing,

- ◇ *the majority of the local residents are in favour,*
- ◇ *the footpaths to be closed do not form part of a network with links to other local*

footpaths.

- ◇ *the footpaths to be closed are not important links for local people to amenities like schools, shops, bus stops etc.*

Common Access Land

Now that Part 1 of the CROW Act 2000 is seeing the implementation of the rights of access to common access land it is important for the Society to make its position clear on a number of aspects.

The general principle that the main attraction of common access land is the right to roam freely is accepted by the Society. The question therefore of new footpath provision in such areas is considered by the Society to be something that would be looked at on a case by case basis. This would also apply to new footpath provision at the points of access where currently none exists.

The Society would also look into any reports that it receives concerning closures of common access lands where such closures have either not been listed or are outside the permitted reasons for closure. The Society will not have a policy of inspecting or reporting on common access land as part of its normal activities.

Wind farms (and like structures)

The Society is always concerned to try and balance the conflicting requirements of the need to increase the

proportion of renewable electricity supply with the impact on both the landscape and the footpath network.

The primary consideration will always be whether a proposal is believed to have a significant impact on the footpath network. The Society will therefore look at each proposal on its merits and consider each on a case by case basis.

These general principles will apply,

- ◇ *how close are the turbines to any footpath?*
- ◇ *what affect does the proposal have on the quiet enjoyment of the footpath and its associated landscape?*
- ◇ *are there any incidental proposals e.g. Inclosure Act sections involving common land?*
- ◇ *do the proposed access roads cause further problems with the footpath network?*
- ◇ *what are the plans for restitution once the expected lifespan of the turbines expires?*

Please let us have your comments or suggestions.

Roy Spoor,

Vice Chairman

Our Chairman's July Walk.....



It all starts here. Tan Hill Inn, Keld, North Yorks, The highest pub in Britain



..... and ends here at the Cat and Fiddle on the Cheshire/ Derbyshire boundary. 126 miles in 6 days. Climbing 20000 + ft.



The new footbridge at Wincle paid for by the Society and erected by Cheshire CC.



The scene at the PNFS AGM



David Bratt reported a dangerous stile at Rostherne. TWO DAYS LATER this handsome kissing gate was in place!

Surprises in Yorkshire

Two surprises revealed themselves in a walk through Bronte country in West Yorkshire. Perhaps one wasn't new to many members but it was new to me— a signpost finger in Japanese, avid readers of the Bronte sisters' novels are frequent visitors to the moors that provide their inspiration....



...the second was our first encounter with one of the new stiles installed by Bradford Council— made of black recycled plastic. We were impressed by the firm, strong construction and the elimination of splinters. The makers claim that the stiles will have a life span of a least four times that of wood, being rot and algae proof.



PNFS WALKS PROGRAMME JULY--DECEMBER 2005

Kindly check all rail/bus times are valid at date of walk.....

WED JULY 27 MIDDLEWOOD STATION start 10.00

Man Piccadilly 09.37. Leaders **Peter and Hilda Bowler** to meet train .Then leaving Nelson Brickworks CP 10.15.Walk 9 miles. Bring Lunch .Any queries please call 01625 432 426.

WED AUG 31 MOBBERLEY STATION walk starts 11.00

Man Piccadilly 10.24 . Leader **Judith Halman** to meet train.
Walk 10 miles. Bring lunch. Any queries please call 01565 633316.

WED SEP 28 GATHURST STATION walk starts 10.45

Man Victoria 09.57 (or Man Picc 09.44 and change at Salford Crescent.) Leader **Vince Joyce** to meet train. Walk 10 miles. Bring lunch. Any queries please call 01942 603626.

WED OCT 26 BROADBOTTOM STATION walk starts 10.15

Man Piccadilly 09.47. Leader **David Bratt**. Walk 10 miles includes visit to Tom Wood. Bring lunch. Any queries please call 01925 762472.

WED NOV 30 HIGHER POYNTON (Boars Head bus stop)

Stockport Bus Station bus 191 at 09.45. Leader **Jean Arnett**. Walk starts at 10.15(car parking nearby). 10 miles-some uphill. Bring lunch. Sorry but no dogs. Any queries please call 0161 487 4264.

WED DEC 28 CHEADLE HULME STATION walk starts 10.15

Man Piccadilly 09.50.Leader **Jeff Lewis**. Walk 10 miles. Bring lunch. Any queries please call 0161 766 4683

Signpost News

Our next batch of signposts to be erected will be just short of Belmont reservoir and the team will be grateful for any assistance. If you can help please contact **Fred Ogden** on 0161 449 9674.

ADVANCE NOTICE - COUNCIL MEETING

As agreed at the AGM, Council Meetings are now held only twice a year - the AGM in April and the second meeting will be at 10.30am on:

SATURDAY 29th OCTOBER 2005 at the FREEMASONS HALL, QUAY STREET, MANCHESTER.

On the Agenda will be the usual Officers' Reports, followed by a FREE BUFFET LUNCH, a Question and Answer session and debates on any relevant topic.

It is intended that *SIGNPOST*, this PNFS Newsletter, will be the vehicle for relaying information to members and, we hope, for the members to convey to the Officers their ideas, fears, approval or dismay at the way the Society is going. Please send your comments to the Editor, Derek Seddon, at Taylor House or at home at 54 Schools Hill, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 1JB, Tel 0161 428 6137

We want to know what YOU think.

THANK YOU

A word of thanks to those members who responded so quickly in sending me their subscriptions after receipt of the renewal letter. There are still a good number who have not yet paid and I hope that this message will act as a reminder to those concerned.

By our constitution subscriptions are due within one month of the AGM. This rule is quite straightforward as regards the Annual Members, but there is confusion amongst a few who are five or ten year Members. I will try to clarify the situation. If on looking through the Annual Handbook one of these members sees the date 2005, that means we will expect the person concerned to pay their subscription within one month after the AGM held in 2006. I was receiving phone calls last April/May (2004) from people saying that they had not received their renewal notice, and pointing out that their membership expiry date given in that year's Handbook was 2004. I had to reassure them that their

membership would not lapse, providing that they paid the subscription within one month after the AGM in 2005.

Ernest Sutton
Membership Secretary

THE NORTH CHESHIRE

WAY -nearly there

Our companion group, the Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society are near to completing the arrangements for their proposed NORTH CHESHIRE WAY which will run from Disley via Alderley Edge, Knutsford, Frodsham and Helsby to Chester or the coast, through 31 different parishes for 10 miles.

Waymarking is proceeding with the help of Cheshire County Council and the Way should be open by late summer 2005. For more information see the Mid-Cheshire website www.mcfs.org.uk or phone the Secretary on 01606 883815.

Ring TRAVELINE 01244 602666 for details of the Sandstone Rambler and

Gritstone Rambler buses which offer linking or return services.

Another useful bus route to stately homes at Tatton, Dunham Massey, Tabley and Arley will run every Sunday and Bank Holiday until 11th September.

Details from BUSYBUS 0870 8741 800 or www.busybus.co.uk

PEOPLE

We regret to report that our members **Harold and Marjorie Heatherington** of Gatley were both killed in a collision on Styal Road.

Jim Wild, who recently retired from the post of Inspector for Disley etc has now also given up his valued job of marking up footpath changes at Taylor House. He suffered a tumble down a bank on the Middlewood Way which put him in hospital for a spell. He's better now but has decided to spend more time with his family. New arrival **Ted Wolfe** is busy trying to keep up to

Jim's high standard with the maps.

We are pleased and proud to welcome **John Merrill**, very long distance walker and author of many books on the subject as a member of this Society.

News from Cheshire Public Rights of Way Unit

Congleton Footpath 41

This footpath is open and once again available to walkers. Vegetation that was of jungle proportions has blocked this valuable footpath link for a considerable number of years. This slightly sunken path between Brook House Lane and the Macclesfield Canal follows a field edge below an old railway embankment and then goes through a wonderful old woodland to a bridge over the canal. From now on, this path will be on Cheshire's regular maintenance programme to keep the vegetation under control.

-oo-

**THE LESLIE MEADOWCROFT MEMORIAL BRIDGE
in TOM WOOD, CHARLESWORTH**



**The DEDICATION will take place on WEDNESDAY
20th JULY 2005 at 2PM.**

To the many friends whom Leslie gathered in his 50 years of service to the Footpath movement: please assemble to remember him and his work at **TOM WOOD FARM, WOODSEATS LANE, MARPLE ROAD, CHARLESWORTH near GLOSSOP**. Car parking in the farmyard by kind permission of the owners, Mr and Mrs Michael Wade.

For the benefit of those who are not quite as spry as they once were the Society's memorial plaque to LGM will be dedicated at the farm by the President, Derek Seddon, after which it will be fixed to the bridge in Tom Wood itself. We hope that this arrangement will allow as many as possible of Leslie's friends to take part.

All are welcome.

The Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

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