

# SIGNPOST

Newsletter of the Peak and Northern  
Footpaths Society

## WANTED

## CLOUD WALKERS

IF

before 1996 you walked along the  
Cheshire/Staffordshire boundry near Congleton  
between the hill called the Cloud (or Bosley Cloud) and  
the ancient Bridestones

AND

you have not already made a statement about that walk  
to PNFS, RA or Cheshire County Council

PLEASE TELEPHONE

Adrian Littleton 01625 528256 and tell him

## TO THE ADVANTAGE OF ALL WALKERS

## **RAMBLINGS FROM THE CHAIR**

You are perhaps wondering what the front cover is about and I will give an abridged version of the story after a short report on the AGM.

A sure sign of the health of a society is the number of members who turn out for the AGM. With 100 members in attendance on Saturday 25 April we are clearly a very healthy society. The annual report, accounts and minutes of last year's meeting were approved, and with no other nominations all officers named on the agenda were elected to office. David Brown fills the previously vacant post of Vice Chairman. Alistair Taylor replaces Alan Postill as Treasurer, whilst Alan takes on the newly created post of Compliance Officer

With the main business of the AGM concluded, I gave a presentation on the charitable work the Society undertakes and how we demonstrate the benefit we provide to the public in our report to the Charity Commission. These benefits include the loan of £6,000 to aid the purchase of the "Isle of Skye", our latest bridge at Sun Wood, Kirklees and the new path "The Dell" at Eccleshall. All of which are covered in detail in this newsletter.

I then went on to outline the claim for Congleton path 82, the subject of the front page "wanted" poster. This will be a landmark for the Society as we will be committing a serious amount of money (£14,000) in support of the claim. What follows is a brief description of the work of the Society, regarding this path, over some 70 years.

During the decade before World War 2, the Cloud and the Cloud Plantation, east of Congleton, were of great concern to the Society after the paths on them were closed by their owner, Lord Egerton, who asserted that they were

not public rights of way despite the fact they had been much used by local people, railway excursionists and Primitive Methodists (who met on the Cloud). By 1937 the Society and the local authorities had negotiated an agreement with him which restored the public rights to use several paths on the Cloud and its Plantation. After 1945 these became definitive and the land over which they ran was transferred to the National Trust.

Neither this agreement nor the creation of the definitive maps clarified the status of the path which runs inside Cheshire East along its boundary with Staffordshire and connects Rushton Spencer (Staffs) path 50 to path 51. This delightful path enables walkers to travel between the Cloud and the Bridestones along a grassy ridge. Inclusion of this path will open up a number of opportunities for circular walks which are not available today.

Alan Soper, an RA member, asked to research our files. Later he made a claim for this missing link. This claim was rejected by Cheshire County Council, but following an appeal to DEFRA the council made an order to add the path to the definitive map and has done so.

Earlier this year Alan approached our trustees for support for this claim. As the case is complex and strongly contested we sought the opinion of Stephen Sauvain Q.C. Meanwhile the landowners - with several supporters, including Lady Ann Winterton MP - caused their solicitor to object to the council. A public inquiry will be held, at which Cheshire East will be neutral and the case for confirming the order will be presented by Alan Soper and the Society. No doubt the objectors will be

robustly represented.

Following a full debate at the AGM, the members present gave their full endorsement to the trustees' recommendation that the Society instruct counsel to present the case. Whilst there are already a number of witnesses who walked the path, the more that come forward the greater the chances of success at the Inquiry. So if you did walk the path before 1996 do get in touch with Adrian.

I'd like to finish by blowing the trumpet for the good work carried out by the Hayfield Civic Trust and extend the invitation to celebrate the restoration of the kissing gates on the Snake Path. As many of you will know the fight to secure the Snake Path for all walkers was the

first major victory for the Society and the kissing gates are an integral part of the heritage of the path. Unfortunately the ravages of time had taken their toll, and despite remedial work funded by the trust, the gates were getting into a dangerous state. The easy option would have been to replace the gates with a modern alternative. The trust did not take this easy option; rather they applied for funding from the "Lottery Awards for all" and High Peak Borough Council's "going local" fund. The gates have now been lovingly restored.

If you would like to join me at the celebration on Bank Holiday Monday, 25 May, details are in the walk programme on page 7

#### **Dates for your diary:**

New Mills One World Festival	20 June
Cheshire Show	23 & 24 June
Marple Locks Festival	05 July
Half Year Meeting	31 October

## **BRIDGES**

In spite of a very wet autumn and a diabolical winter, three new bridges have been completed. Footbridge B25 at Sun Wood, our first footbridge in Calderdale, is described elsewhere in the newsletter

Our first two footbridges in Bradford have been installed recently. The bridges (B26, Grid Ref SE 101435 and B27, Grid Ref SE 101436) are both on Keighley footpath 275 north of East Morton. This path follows an area of woodland known as The Glen. Walkers had to scramble across tributary streams at two locations, which was certainly awkward and sometimes impossible. As a condition of the funding, the path has been improved by the local authority and makes a lovely area above the reservoir more accessible.

I am grateful to Terry Norris, who suggested these three locations and ensured they were carried through to completion with his boundless enthusiasm. Handover ceremonies are being organized and may feature in a future edition of Signpost.

The Committee has approved expenditure on a footbridge in Strine Dale, north-east of Oldham, and two footbridges for Wakefield Metropolitan Council at Ackworth and North Elmsall. We are also working with Derbyshire County Council and the National Trust on a 'landmark' footbridge in the Longshaw Estate, near Grindleford.

*Neil Collie*

## SIR MARTIN DOUGHTY - AN APPRECIATION OF HIS LIFE

Sir Martin Doughty died of cancer on 4 March aged only 59.

Through recent years of illness he remained very effectively in post as Chairman of Natural England. In earlier times he had been the Head of the Peak District National Park and Labour leader of Derbyshire

County Council. In political and public life he was no staid philosopher but a pragmatist who practised politics and management as "the art of the possible".

The Guardian described him in its obituary as "the Architect of Modern British Conservation" which is an immense and deserved accolade

His deputy at Natural England said of him "he could always see the bigger picture yet balanced this with a ferocious tenacity to get things done. Our country is a better place at every level for his contribution to public life."

The dictionary definitions of "doughty" include "steadfast, courageous, resolute and valiant", all qualities that Martin possessed in abundance. Truly he was Doughty by name and doughty by nature.

He was born and bred in New Mills and was living there at the time of his death. He felt passionately about New Mills and involved himself in many projects to its betterment, including the most impressive Millennium walkway (made of stainless steel) and also the installation of the Archimedean screw to generate power

for the Co-op supermarket from the flow of the river Goyt.

Martin was knighted in 2001 for services to local government. He was also a most enthusiastic proponent of public transport and again did not just talk the talk but got things done.



of course a Vice President of our Society and would just now like to recount a little from the three occasions I met him.

Soon after he became chairman of Natural England we invited him to meet the four trustees at Taylor House. We were not sure if we would be too lower given his very

demanding business diary, but he came. Never having met him before our next concern was how approachable and down to earth would a Knight of the Realm be. No worries on either score when early in the meeting he responded to a comment with the immortal words "that's a load of \*\*\*\*\*". In discussion we raised the ring-fencing of Rights of Way Improvement Plan monies from central to local government; he in turn raised the visionary possibility of not just landowners being able to propose diversion orders but also prescribed societies like ours. That would be novel but could be of great value in some special situations. Think of those mud and muck-ridden farms where a diversion would be a joy!

Let us wait and see what comes of these ideas.

Clarke and I next met Martin at the New Mills One World Festival and he kindly had his picture taken - later printed in Signpost - with the first of many new recruits we gained that day.

Most recently we met with him to celebrate the installation of the three new PNFS signs he had most generously funded - on condition of course they were in and around New Mills. He turned out clearly not in good health, on a foul day and the reporter at the Gowhole Farm sign greeted him as a long-lost friend with "Hello Martin, how

are you batting?" Later we went to have a glass of beer together and mentioned the Archimedean screw. No question about it - we had to see it and he would come too, despite the drop down to the river and the steep climb back.

He leaves many lasting testaments to his deep love of the environment with the coastal access path project he personally led yet to come. But come it surely will - and it ought to be named the Doughty Way.

Sir Martin Doughty was a man of the people and a man for all seasons.

*David Bralt*

## **FORGOTTEN HERO- OF THE DELLS ECCLESHALL STAFFORDSHIRE**

On Saturday 18 April 2009 Harry Scott, Area Officer for the County of Staffordshire, represented the Society at the opening ceremony of a new footpath in the Parish of Eccleshall known locally as "The Dells".

"The Dells" is a tree-lined track leading into open countryside, making a good connection with the wider footpath network. A total of 60 walkers turned up to celebrate the opening of the path, including local Councillors and the County Councillor.

Many elderly residents of the village remembered walking "The Dells" in their school days. In fact one resident did walk to school using the footpath. Unfortunately this path did not go onto the definitive map in the 1950s. So in the late 1980s Bob Brooks, a Peak & Northern Footpath Society Inspector, with the help of Derek Taylor, the then General Secretary, made a claim to add "The Dells" to the definitive map. This year the claim was successful. Staffordshire County Council made the



order to add "The Dells" to the definitive map. Bob Brook is one of the P&N forgotten heroes; he made several claims for new footpaths. Unfortunately Bob is no longer with us to see the outcome of his hard work, but the Society plans to erect a signpost at the "Dells" to celebrate his work.

## **PNFS WALKS PROGRAMME**

For all walks: check all rail or bus times near the date and bring lunch.

All walkers joining a PNFS-led walk should wear appropriate clothing and are responsible for their own safety. Walk leaders reserve the right to exclude people from the walk without giving any reason for that decision.

### **SHORT WALKS**

#### **Wednesday 10 June**

Leader: David Bratt (01925 762472)

Risley Nature Reserve. 6 miles. Flat.

Manchester Piccadilly 10.22 to Oxford Rd then depart 1044.

Walk starts Birchwood Station at 1105.

#### **Wednesday 8 July**

Leader: Clarke Rogerson (0161 749 8412)

Circular walk. 6 miles. Some hills.

Hollingworth Lake, Rakewood and the moors.

Manchester Victoria 1100. Walk starts Littleborough station at 1130.

#### **Wednesday 12 August**

Leader: Peter Vickers (0161 748 8135)

Hebden Bridge circular. 5.5 miles.

Manchester Victoria 1045. Walk starts Hebden Bridge station 1130.

#### **Wednesday 9 September**

Leader: Peter Burns (01744 893432)

Ramsbottom circular including Peel Tower. 7 miles.

Tram from Manchester Victoria 1000 to Bury.

Then No 485 bus at 1030 to Ramsbottom.

Walk starts Ramsbottom station 1100.

### **LONGER WALKS**

#### **Wednesday 27 May**

Leader Vince Joyce ( 01942 603 626)

Whaley Bridge circular, 11 miles. Hilly.

Manchester Piccadilly 09.52 (Stockport 1005)

Walk starts Whaley Bridge station 1040.

#### **Wednesday 24 June**

Leader Dave Brown ( 01663 733236 )

Buxton to Whaley Bridge linear. 10 miles. Hilly.

Manchester Piccadilly 0952 (Or 199 bus Stockport Bus Station 0935).

Walk starts Buxton station at 1055.

#### **Wednesday 29 July**

Leader Bill Minshall ( 07771 985846)

Kidsgrove circular. 10 miles. Undulating.

Manchester Piccadilly 0948. Walk starts Kidsgrove station at 1035.

### **Wednesday 26 August**

Leader Geoff Errington ( 01773 827041)

Grindleford Circular. 11 miles. Hilly.

Manchester Piccadilly 10.45 Walk starts Grindleford station 1145

### **Wednesday 30 September**

Leader Peter Gunn (0161 291 9372)

New Mills to Edale linear. 12 miles. Hilly

Manchester Piccadilly 0945. Walk starts New Mills Central station at 1020.

### **SPECIAL WALK**

#### **Monday 25 May**

A celebration of the restoration of the kissing gates on the Snake path with the theme of “the real beginning of the right to roam”.

Meet at Hayfield War Memorial at 1000. The minimum route will be 2 miles, but for those wanting more exercise Dave Brown (01663 733236) will lead a continuation walk over Kinder Scout totalling 11 miles, 2,500 feet.

Manchester Piccadilly 0845 to New Mills Central. Then no 61 bus at 0930.

### **ISLE OF SKYE**

On Tuesday 10 March Adrian Littleton and myself visited Hunshelf, near Barnsley, to hand a cheque for £6,000 to the Parish Council. This money, part of the G H B Ward legacy, enables the Parish to complete the purchase of the land called the Isle of Skye, so named for its terrain and wildlife

The land in Green Moor was bought for £33,000 pounds in 2006 by nine members of the community when it was put up for auction by a private owner. Councillors and fund-raisers

have worked tirelessly to raise the money and this final donation will enable them to pay back the parishioners.

I'm sure Adrian will agree with me that our investment in this project is a landmark (pun intended) for the Society. We had the pleasure of walking the site with David and Wyllan Horsfall (pictured with Adrian at the toposcope already erected on the land). I am sure many people are going to take great pleasure in walking this land, which has been denied to them for so many years.

Clearance of barbed wire and removal of signs prohibiting access is already underway. A celebration is planned for 1 August (Yorkshire Day). David suggested the possibility of PNFS leading a walk up to the site on the day.



*Clarke Rogerson*

## WARTON CRAG

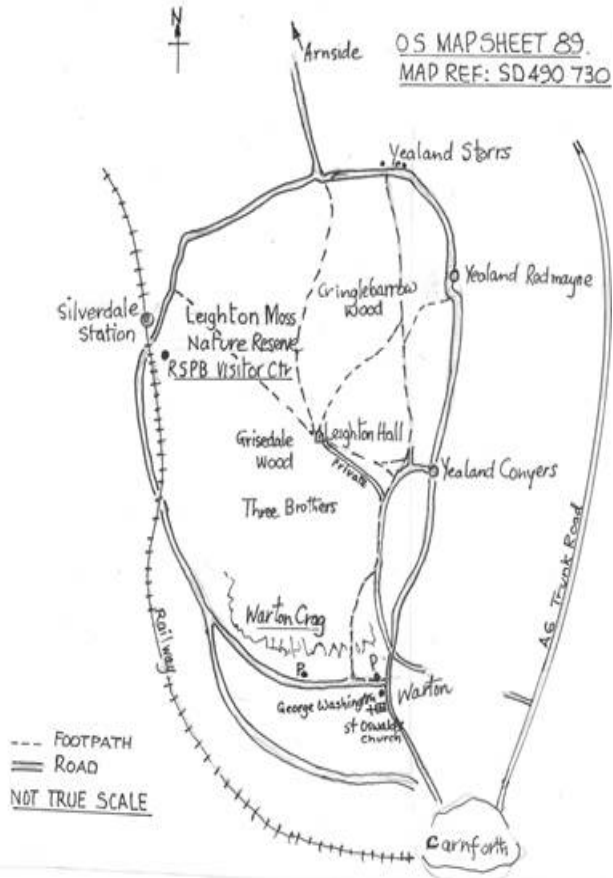
This area near Carnfort is an excellent place to walk. A prominent limestone woodland on its height and it slopes down to the RSPB nature reserve Leighton Moss. There are extensive panoramas from the crag - Morecambe Bay and the Kent estuary nearby; the Lakeland Fells to the North; and Ingleborough with the Yorkshire Dales to the East as a backdrop.

There are so many good walks to choose from that, rather than my giving directional advice on a particular or better for you to select yourself to match the weather conditions and your ability on the day. Referring to O.S. map sheet 89, and locating NGR.SD490730 will put you in the centre of the area shown large size, but not to scale, on this map.

Before, during or after a walk starting from one of the car parks there are four places of interest you could visit:

- St Oswalds Church which has connections with the former American President George Washington.
- The George Washington Hotel, next to the church, for refreshments.
- Leighton Hall, the historic home of the Gillow furniture making family. Open to the public at set times and days
- RSPB visitor centre. Set opening hours.

All the walks in the area are easy to follow with prominent way marking, stiles and kissing gates.





## PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES

The EU common agricultural policy provides for subsidies to farmers to support their activities by means of the single payment scheme administered by the Rural Payments Agency. This results in annual payments of £2 billion a year to farmers in England. As a condition of receiving the full payment farmers are obliged to meet a number of requirements to maintain their land in 'good agricultural and environmental condition'. This is known as cross compliance.

One of the requirements is of particular interest to footpath workers. This is GAEC8 which provides that all visible public rights of way on the farmer's land are to be kept open and accessible. This includes any right of way which would be visible if the farmer had not breached the law. The obligation is to comply with highways legislation. This means not to disturb the surface so that it becomes inconvenient to pass over it or to wilfully obstruct free passage along it. Stiles and gates must be maintained in a condition that makes them safe and reasonably easy to use, where maintenance is the farmer's responsibility – which is normally the case. The surface of a cross-field path must be made good within 14 days of the first disturbance if sowing a crop or within 24 hours in all other circumstances. The minimum width of the reinstated path should be 1 metre in the case of a footpath and 3 metres in the case of a bridleway. The route of the reinstated cross-field path should be indicated to members of the public. Field-edge rights of way should never be cultivated and should be maintained to similar minimum widths as cross-field paths.

These requirements are monitored by the Rural Payments Agency, who operate an inspection regime. The Agency aims to

inspect 1% of farms in receipt of agricultural subsidy each year. This amounts to some 11,000 visits. The inspector is given a dossier about the farm, which includes information derived from the OS map about all public rights of way on the land. This enables the condition of all footpaths and bridleways to be checked to see if there is compliance with GAEC8. Breaches will be reported to the Highway Authority for enforcement action and if the breaches are serious there may be a reduction in amount of subsidy paid. Some 25% of farms inspected are selected at random, the remainder on the basis of a risk score which is derived in part from information available from other agencies, such as English Heritage (if there are ancient monuments) or Natural England (if there is a site of special scientific importance) or local authorities. The last mentioned means that the Agency can act on referrals from public rights of way staff who encounter serious and persistent breaches of GAEC8.

You can find out whether a farmer is receiving a subsidy by searching the DEFRA website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/singlepay/index.htm>. This can be searched by post code or the name of the farm. You may well be surprised by the amounts being paid out. If you know of a farmer who is in receipt of a payment and is seriously breaching his obligations under GAEC8, this should be reported to the appropriate Highway Authority. The Society website gives full details of how to contact all such authorities in our areas. The public rights of way staff can then take the matter up with the Rural Payments Agency. Alternatively the breach can be reported directly by letter to Customer Services

Centre, Rural Payments Agency, PO Box 1058, Newcastle on Tyne NE99 4YQ or by email to [csc@rpa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:csc@rpa.gsi.gov.uk) Grid references should be given.

It would be wildly optimistic to expect quick results from using this avenue of complaint. However, I am sure that few farmers would welcome an inspection from the RPA, which will involve a

detailed examination of their practices with regard to stock movement, use of fertilisers and pesticides and many other aspects of farm management. The threat of a referral may just be the factor that turns belligerent resistance into reluctant co-operation with the local authority.

*Terry Norris*

## THE REAL WORK OF THE SOCIETY

A few extracts from the files of just one officer give a feel for the amount and complexity of work that the Society processes every month.

**Bolton** - Westhoughton 112 - Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO). Public Rights Of Way (PROW) staff have had another meeting on site with landowners. Bolton will provide three new stiles along route. When this work is complete the land owners are willing to dedicate the path as public. This will render a DMMO application unnecessary. Am content to leave matters in hands of PROW staff to progress. DMMO application in abeyance for the moment.

**Lancashire** - COL 193 - Application to extinguish path not needed for public use. The owners of the mill through which the path passes have now approached Lancashire CC [Pendle Council do not have delegated powers] to make a gating order on the basis of anti social behaviour and crimes facilitated by the path They are seeking gating for 24 hours every day of the year. Gates have been erected across the path by the owners of the mill. These have been closed at night. This initially led to enforcement action by Pendle Council following complaints to PROW staff. The matter has now been considered by a Council committee who

have directed the officer to cease enforcement action as LCC have indicated they will be making a gating order. Also, the Council do not wish to take any action against the interests of a important local employer. I have spoken to the officer concerned - he does not consider it would be helpful for the Society to serve a 130A notice.

**Lancashire** - Silverdale 14, This path has been obstructed where it passes through the gardens of Brown's houses. The only alternative is to walk along the foreshore, which involves clambering over slippery rocks. This problem has existed for some 12 years. The matter has been referred to me by our agent Mike Dearden. A site meeting has taken place with two solicitors from Lancashire Highways and a PROW officer. I attended along with Mike Dearden and a representative from the RA. There is a drafting error on the definitive map, in that it shows the line of the path in an impossible position, i.e. passing through a sea wall and then along the foreshore but stopping short of the adopted highway to the east. The survey card produced at the time of the first definitive map states that the path passes "in front of the cottages". The owners contend that this means in front of the sea wall and

along the foreshore. All present considered this was not a sustainable interpretation. It was agreed that the way forward was for the Council to put forward an application to delete the section of path shown in error on the definitive map and at the same time for the Society to make an application for a DMMO to add the path to the map in its legally correct alignment. This application would be supported by user evidence from before 1996, when the present owners blocked off the path to be claimed. Lancashire will assist in providing evidence from their records. Mike has now started to collect statements using Lancashire's standard form and a common map provided by the Council. Silverdale 14 was

intended to be part of the route of the Lancashire Coastal path, As a result of the owner disputing the line of the path the route of the coastal path has had to be diverted inland. Walkers are missing a beautiful section of shoreline. Thus this matter is well worth pursuing.

**Cheshire** - Lyme Handley 3 - Attempt to revive and modify diversion proposal withdrawn by Council. In view of the high cost of the proposed bridge on the route of the diversion Neil has been exploring alternative ways forward with staff from Cheshire County Council. It appears possible to reinstate the original route at the side of the river obviating the need for a new bridge. This is being progressed.

## SUN WOOD

This footbridge (B25, Grid Ref SE 128277) in Sun Wood, near Shelf in Calderdale is in a delightful area of woodland and replaces an earlier structure which had been swept away some years ago. It is on a well used path and Calderdale Metropolitan District Council has made considerable improvements to the path as part of the conditions of a substantial donation from the Society to cover the cost of the bridge and abutments. Work has been carried out on the stream banks adjacent to the bridge to avoid any scouring problems. The hardwood footbridge has been completed to a very high standard and blends in well with the surroundings. It is a great advertisement for the Society and our first footbridge in Calderdale.



Rachel Finney, the Rights of Way Team Leader with Calderdale Council said "The footpath which passes through such attractive woodland, is close to the Calderdale Way and is an important link towards Shelf and Northowram. We consider this project an excellent example of partnership working between the Council and local user groups.

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