

SIGNPOST

**Newsletter of the Peak and Northern
Footpaths Society**

Number 26

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**PNFS members meet under the statue of Harold Wilson
outside Huddersfield station at the start of the August walk**

Chairman's Report

Sad to say but this will be the last Signpost -well at least for those of you who have not yet renewed your 2007 membership but all is not yet lost as a cheque to Taylor House for £6 (single) or £10 (joint) will keep you on the mailing list and more importantly demonstrate your support for our remit to protect northern footpaths.

The restructured positions reported in the last issue are working to great effect. **Clarke Rogerson** as acting Vice Chairman has brought in the virtues of vigour, enthusiasm and fresh thinking. The Courts and Inquiries Officers viz **Harry Scott, John Harker** and **Terry Norris** are a formidable triumvirate in bringing forward footpath Faults and Obstructions on their respective territories to the monthly Legal Events Review for the panel to determine what, when, where and how we fight to right wrongs. The Society has no greater cause.

On Nov 24th (see note on p3) we will hold our Half Year Meeting to appraise the membership of progress since the AGM and debate matters such as the level of subs for tabling at next year's AGM -the principle of an increase having already been agreed at this year's AGM. Clarke will present the Trustees thinking on the subject.

Membership stands currently at 1370 boosted by the 34 new members we signed up at the New Mills One World Festival (see photo on p10)

With regard to the substantial legacy left to the Society by **GHB Ward** the Officers have decided that half (ca £18,000) will go into a project to directly benefit walkers (eg a bridge/bridges) in the Hallamshire area of Sheffield and the balance will be treated as Income for the benefit of the Society as a whole. **John Harker** Area Officer for Sheffield will recommend suitable projects for consideration.

The bridge over Gigg Brook Compstall has been handed over to Stockport MBC at an on site gathering on July 9th. The bridge was most generously funded by our member **Dr David Miller** in the name of PNFS and the Stockport Express carried a photo and report. (see note on page 7).

Donated Signpost 322 in Delamere Forest, Manley, was dedicated on Sunday Sep 2nd with many members of Altrincham and District Rambling Club present to honour their late President **Stan Davies** in whose name the post has been erected. His son Ivor gave the dedication address (see photo p10).

The Area Officers in the pilot group met with Clarke and myself to review progress against pre-set success criteria of the New Ways of Working and concluded it was well worthy of full adoption. We are now considering the next phase of roll out.

We send best regards to **Jim Wild** who is in hospital with heart related problems and hope he will be soon up and about again.

At the forthcoming Half Year Meeting I anticipate being able to detail progress on the succession plan which is now very close to fruition, this involves positional changes effective at next year's AGM -subject of course to the membership present then so voting!. Hope to see you in November.

Kind regards

David Bratt

**The PNFS
HALF-YEAR MEETING
will be held at the
BRITANNIA HOTEL, Dialstone Lane, Stockport
on
SATURDAY 24th NOVEMBER 2007**

**Programme
10am Assemble tea/coffee biscuits
10.30am Start of Business
12.30pm Buffet Lunch (free to members but donations on the day
appreciated)**

**To reserve your place please book with David Bratt
01925 76 2472**

**as soon as possible but no later than 17th November
The 192 buses run along the A6 every few minutes
from Stockport or Hazel Grove**

New POYNTON walk

Poynton Parish Council have produced an A4 leaflet describing details of a 12 mile walk using rights of way around the Parish boundary. The walk is divided into four shorter sections which you can try as a sample. Leaflets are available from the Civic Hall in the central car park. For further advice ring **Wendy Fermor** on 01625 872 362.

Walk Reports

Long walks

25th July Hadfield, Leader **Vince Joyce**. 9 members out in mixed weather along the Longendale trail up to a misty Bleaklow, Doctors Gate and down to Glossop. 10 miles.

22nd August Huddersfield. Leader **David Bratt**. 10 out in good weather. Assembled under the statue of Harold Wilson, visited Castle Hill, returned along the Huddersfield canal. (photo page1)

26th September Wilmslow Circular. Leader **Brian Summerscales**. 12 out on a bright & breezy day. Followed the N. Cheshire Way south to enter the N.T. Alderley Estate at the Hough, then east to Hunters Pool, entertained by a fly-past of 4 herons. then across Mottram Hall Golf Course and the Bollin and past Top of the Hill Farm. Back to Wilmslow along the north side of the Bollin.

Short walks

18th July Newhey to Littleborough. Leader **Peter Vickers**. 10 out on a less than perfect day. Judging by the one photo we have it looks like there was a competition to impersonate **Nicholas Crane**. **Eileen Vickers** certainly deserves a prize for her effort.



15th August Flixton Leader **Clarke Rogerson**. A staggering 24 people out on this walk to celebrate the Society's anniversary. Starting at Flixton station, the group set out for Flixton House where Clarke explained about the battle in 1826 which resulted in the formation of the Manchester Society for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths.



Where it all began. Flixton House Manchester

Then on to Flixton Church and the start of the disputed Bottoms Path now alongside the railway and through Urmston Meadows to follow the Mersey to the Bridgewater Canal and our route into Manchester. At the 6 mile point, the normal length of a short walk, a decision had to be made: end the walk by returning from Trafford Station or continue for another 3 miles to the former YMCA building in Manchester, the



Under the plaque at the former YMCA building

birthplace of the PNFS. It was a flat walk and a sunny day and the vote was in favour of continuing. So that is how the short walk ended at 9 miles with us posed under the plaque commemorating our anniversary. A few people surprised themselves at walking so far and at least one is thinking of tackling one of our long walks.



12th September Shaw to Newhey. Leader **Martin Riley** (photo right). 13 out on a sunny day over some of Martin's problem paths, one of which led to a dismantled footbridge. The picture shows Dianne walking the plank. We continued over part of the Crompton circuit on little-used paths. On the final leg Martin showed us his latest successes. On the June walk he had shown us two blocked paths, one in Rochdale and one in Oldham but only 100 yards or so apart. Martin had met the RoW officers for both areas and the photo shows what can be achieved. If any Inspectors can beat this super-quick clear up of similar faults please let us know at Taylor House.



Walking the plank- a possible PNFS bridge site?

SIGNPOSTS & BRIDGES

New Footbridge at Gigg Brook, Werneth Low

A new footbridge has been completed on the south side of Werneth Low. It was suggested by **Dr David Miller**, a leader of a local footpath group in Heaton Moor and a member of the PNFS. Dr Miller was concerned at the lack of an acceptable crossing of the Gigg Brook which spoilt a lovely circular walk with magnificent views of Werneth Low. He said "There was a plank across the stream (with no handrail) which could only be reached by sliding down a steep, muddy bank". More than one walker had arrived at the stream on his (or her) backside! Dr Miller contacted the PNFS to get something done about it - and offered to pay for a new bridge. The PNFS was delighted with this initiative and worked closely with Stockport Council Rights of Way team who arranged for the construction of the new bridge in co-operation with BTCV (British Trust For Conservation Volunteers). At the formal handover to the Stockport RoW Team, **David Bratt**, PNFS Chairman said "We are very grateful to Dr Miller for his generosity and for the help and support we got from the landowner **Mr Joe Lloyd**, BTCV and Stockport Council in this project which has made a significant improvement to the footpath network. We hope it will be enjoyed by many walkers in the years to come".



Dr Miller (far left) on the new bridge with the old one on the right

SIGNPOST CHALLENGE update

To date no one has claimed the prize so the challenge is still wide open to anyone who has not yet started. Thanks to **Gill Davies** an error has been corrected on both the Google Earth Files and the text document listing our signposts. Gill had looked at the Picture of sign 219 and wrote to tell us the description was wrong. The sign is dedicated to her father **Ted Spencer**. A quick check of the file found a few more errors In the descriptions of some signs in the 287 to 311 range. The files have now been updated and if anyone was confused please accept my apologies. I can confirm that the Grid Reference for the affected signs was correct so any challengers should not have been wandering too far out of their way

Clarke Rogerson

UPDATE ON SIGNPOSTS

Although your officers receive regular updates I thought it appropriate to inform the general membership of the progress taken place over the last 18 months. As we now have something approaching 300 signs it would be a full time job to visit them all in any one year but we try our best in the never ending battle.

In 2006 well over 150 SPs were visited for inspection, cleaning, painting etc and five or six others that needed attention due vandalism, theft, animal damage or just plain “old father time”. Eight tubular posts were replaced, six new posts planted and two way markers planted.

In 2007 so far, over 100 SPs have been visited for general maintenance and four tubular posts replaced,

Three new SPs planted, one way marker, and nine posts replanted for various reasons. With a further seven to eight new posts in the pipeline we are kept very busy.

Highlights were:

4th Jan 07 replacing Tubular SP170 at Lydgate, our most easterly.

11th July 07 planting the new SP322 in Delamere Forest, our most westerly. Our area of coverage is widening all the time.

The 29th August 07 re-planting SP98 on Rushup Edge, a lovely day and a fantastic effort by all who turned up. The site is over a mile from the road. The old cast iron sign dated 1939 plus cross plate is very heavy. A special thanks to Clarke for the trolley, without which it would have been so much more difficult. Afterwards we visited the Oddfellows at Whitehough for much needed refreshments, and in glorious sunshine we had a great “team building” session where many interesting ideas for the future of the society were discussed. On a final point I must give a big thank you to **Dave Morton** “the brains in the back room” who does sterling work co-ordinating and planning all the work that goes on out in the field. Once again a big, thank you, to you all.

Ted Wolfe



Using the new trolley for transporting new SP98 on Rushup Edge

Recycled Plastic Posts

The Society has decided to experiment with a 21st-century material for the posts supporting its footpath signs. Recycled plastic is becoming popular within the leisure industry for many applications where wood has been traditionally used. Indeed you may have sat on a recycled plastic bench without realising it! It can look and feel like a hardwood and has none of the disadvantages of wood. It is strong and does not rot and therefore requires little or no maintenance. Recycled plastic is water resistant and is free from cracks and splinters. It is, therefore, suitable for taking the place of our wooden posts; moreover the cost is similar to that of the hardwood oak posts we are currently using.

For the technically minded the product is made from items such as plastic bags and bottles which are shredded to produce fine polyethylene 'chips'. The posts are manufactured from moulds or, increasingly, by a continuous extrusion process with the colour, usually dark brown or black, added during the manufacturing process. More details are available on the web see, for example, our suppliers, at: www.fletcher-contracting.co.uk. We have been assured that the material can be drilled and sawn just like wood, although high speed tools cannot be used in case the material melts! We have purchased two posts and, in the next few months, we will see how suitable they are.

Both posts will be installed as part of our new or replacement signs programme.

So, please continue to recycle those plastic bottles – they could end up as a PNFS post. Are there any volunteers to inspect them in, say, 50 years time please?

Neil Collie

WESTWARD HO!

Signpost 322, our most westerly post, was commissioned on September 2nd in Delamere Forest by the President of the Altrincham & District Rambling Club. It was in memory of their member **Stan Davies** whose son Ivor was present.



PNFS PEOPLE - Changes in Inspectors

Since the last Signpost in July we have appointed **Dee Hadfield** as Inspector for Edlaston and Wylaston in the Derbyshire Dales, and **Harold Addie** has taken on Ringway.

We are sorry to have lost the services of **John Carter** and **Charles Wildgoose** whom we would like to thank for the work they have put in as Inspectors for the Society.

More Inspectors are needed. Please contact Taylor House if you would like to know more about this important and enjoyable role.

Hilda Bowler.



Seen at the New Mills Festival of Light: Left to Right, Sir Martin Doughty Chairman of Natural England, Andy Simpkins, the first of thirty four new members recruited that day and PNFS Chairman David Bratt

Rights of Way Enforcement Policy Forum

The Officers of the Society have decided to host and fund a Forum to discuss best practice relating to Rights of Way Enforcement Policies. Two representatives from each of the Highway Authorities that the Society deals with will be invited to attend the forum. The Society will be represented by the Chair, Vice Chair, all Courts & Inquiries Officers and Area Officers currently in post. Cheshire & Rotherham authorities have agreed to speak at the conference and it is confirmed that a representative of Natural England will also attend and speak at the conference.

The forum is planned for early December and further details will be given at the November half Yearly meeting.



A path through a drainpipe! It is near Bridestones Bosley and hardly seems fit for purpose which we will be progressing.

Longer Walks Programme October 2007 to January 2008

Wednesday 31st October

09.42 Man Picc to Huddersfield 10.15 then local train back to Marsden
11m moorland walk starts from Marsden station at 10.35. Bring lunch.
Leader **Brian Lawrence** 01484 866396

Wednesday 28th November

Man Vic 10.24 to Littleborough. 10.5 m walk starts from station at 10.45. Bring lunch. Walk is Number 4 in leader **Clarke Rogerson's** book "*Walk! The South Pennines*". 1700ft ascent. 0161 749 8412.

Wednesday 19th December (NOTE-- not the last Wed)

Man Picc 10.03 to Cheadle Hulme. 10m mod linear walk starts from station at 10.20. Bring lunch. Walk ends at Poynton station.
Leader **Jeff Lewis** 0161 766 4683

Wednesday 30th January 2008

Man Picc 09.49 to Broadbottom. 11m walk of 2000ft ascent starts from station at 10.20 and ends at Furness Vale station. Wayfarer tickets apply. Bring lunch.

Leader **David Stearne** 01928 735809

Shorter Walks Programme November 2007 to March 2008

Wednesday 14 November

Leader: **Wally Smith** 0161 485 7764

New Mills Circular

6.0miles approx.

Man Piccadilly 10.46hrs walk starts at New Mills Central Station 11.12 bring lunch.

Please check rail times – new timetable starts 8 December

Wednesday 12 December

Leader: **David Bratt** 01925 762472

Knutsford Circular

6.0miles approx.

Man Piccadilly 10.24hrs walk starts at Knutsford Station 11.04 bring lunch.

Wednesday 9 January 2008

Leader: **Clarke Rogerson** 0161 749 8412

Littleborough Circular

6.5 miles, negligible ascent.

Man Victoria 10.24hrs, walk starts Littleborough Station 10.50hrs

Wednesday 13 February 2008

Leader: **David Morton** 0161 283 7824

Marple Circular taking in new bridge and replacement signpost.

6.2miles 905ft ascent

Man Piccadilly 10.46hrs walk starts 11.06 Marple bring lunch

Wednesday 12 March 2008

Leader: **Neil Collie** 0161 440 9424

Higher Poynton Circular

6 miles, negligible ascent

Man Picadilly 10.30hrs, walk starts Poynton Station 11.00hrs.

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