

Magazine of the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

Signpost

Number 82 - Winter 2024



Colwich FP63 Staffordshire,
Way for the Millenium along
the Trent and Mersey
Canal towpath
Photograph by Ken Brockway



From the Chair



Autumn is a lovely time of the year for walking, often with bright blue skies and hopefully some lingering sun to prepare us for the winter. Volunteers at PNFS are busy all the year round but September often feels as if we have renewed energy after the summer. This month the Courts and Inquiries meeting took place at Taylor House, always good to meet in person, even though much of our work can take place remotely. We held our Management Committee at the end of September in Taylor House. The work to maintain public rights of way and improve paths, bridges and stiles is often one of persistence and determination and our volunteers have no shortage of those qualities. It is rewarding to see some real progress after actions have been taken with Highways Authorities. Some of these successes are shared on our website or in *Signpost*.

By the time you see this you should have received a draft of our proposed five-year strategy, for comment. I hope you get chance to read it and feedback. We are aiming to have it ready to launch at the half year meeting on 16 November. This should give us a good platform for action to ensure our society remains effective.

As I often note in this editorial, footpath inspectors are key to our work. Simon Worrall has been doing a great job contacting individuals and clarifying whether they wish to continue. This has inevitably resulted in a reduction in overall numbers, but I am pleased that we have new recruits covering more parishes. If anyone is not yet an inspector but would like to take this on, do contact Simon. simonworrall@pnfs.org.uk

This year is our 130th Anniversary and it was lovely to see that signpost 656 was unveiled on 17 August in commemoration of the foundation of Peak District and Northern Counties Footpath Preservation Society, now the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society. I was unable to attend but David Morton, our amazing Signpost Officer and David Gosling, Trustee and Vice Chair, were there and you will see the write up of the event in this edition of *Signpost*.

You may be aware that we are looking for a new Secretary and a replacement Treasurer to support the work of the society. If you feel you have the time, skill and inclination, do let me know.

I hope to see many of you at our half year meeting on Saturday, 16 November in Sheffield. It is usually a good session and opportunity to meet colleagues as well as hearing about the work of your society.

In the meantime, enjoy the countryside.
Kathy Mclean, Chair





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The Society's Half Yearly Meeting

will be held in the Carpenter Room,
Sheffield Central Library on
Saturday, 16 November 2024

Light refreshments will be available from 10:00 until the beginning of the meeting at 10:30

10:30 - 11:30 PNFS current and future activities (details to be announced)

Refreshment break

11:45 Dr Abbi Flint, Research Associate in the School of History, Classics and Archaeology, Newcastle University. Abbi will be talking about the research project 'In all our footsteps: tracking, mapping and experiencing rights-of-way in post-war Britain'

Attendees are invited to bring their own lunch

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

For more details of above and other volunteering roles, go to pnfs.org.uk/volunteer



Help with PNFS signposts

Help is sought in checking PNFS signposts. Below is a list of signposts which are overdue for inspection.



No	Grid Ref	Location
146	SD 98562 05530	Burnedge Lane, Lydgate, W of S'worth GC
316	SE 03412 02031	North end of Chew Res'r dam
274	SK 09115 57882	Manifold Railway, N of tunnel
581	SK 06352 66709	E. end of Hollinsclough Rake, Longnor
191	SK 17361 90920	E.bank of Derwent Res'r, 1km N.of dam.
18	SK 17149 91604	Between Abbey Grange and Bamford House
86	SK 22540 87835	Near Moscar Cottage, Mortimer Rd
332	SK 32998 69961	300m SSW of Chanderhill, Holymoorside
354	SK 10723 46286	nr Softlow Wood,1km N of Wootton, Weaver Hills
578	SK 08572 55578	Hoo Brook WSW of Wetton Mill
579	SK 08653 55604	Hoo Brook bridge, Butterton
247	SK 06426 90098	Junction of William Clough & Pennine Way
323	SK 23083 87880	S.side of A57 at Moscar Lodge
282	SD 71440 15642	Turton Heights, 400m N of New Butterworths Farm, Egerton
350	SK 10064 84729	Highfield Farm nr Upper Booth, Edale
14	SK 14526 86400	Edale Valley Road, 400m NE of Nether Booth
349	SK 10085 84922	Tagsnaze at Highfield Farm Upper Booth, Edale
311	SK 25813 73818	Below Baslow Edge, 1km SE of Curbar
573	SK 33623 72257	Linacre Res'r, Old Brampton
236	SK 10465 72075	Topley Pike, Deepdale, A6 E of Buxton

If you live close to them or walk past them, please check and report to David Morton, Signpost Officer, on their condition, ie is the post or plate loose? Also, to give them a quick wash and to send him photographs in landscape format as jpg files of:

- 1 a portrait of the cast plate
- 2 the signpost as a whole
- 3 its memorial plaque if there is one

Send your report and photographs to David on signposts@pnfs.org.uk.

VACANCY FOR TREASURER

Fellow members. I have been the Society's Treasurer for twelve years. I feel I need to pass on looking after the Society's funds and assets to another member of the Society. The Society is in a very strong financial position. In 2012 our Balance sheet assets were £235,000. They are now £451,674 at the end of August.

We have been fortunate to have received a number of large legacies and donations over the years, our members are also very generous with their donations. We have endeavoured to keep our membership fees low and it is only recently they have been increased, the first increase since 2010.

We have spent since 2010 £105,411 on signpost erections, although we have been fortunate to have a reasonable amount of this covered by donations. We have spent £69,841 on footbridge installations and since 2016 £88,292 on footpath improvements schemes. A total of £263,544.

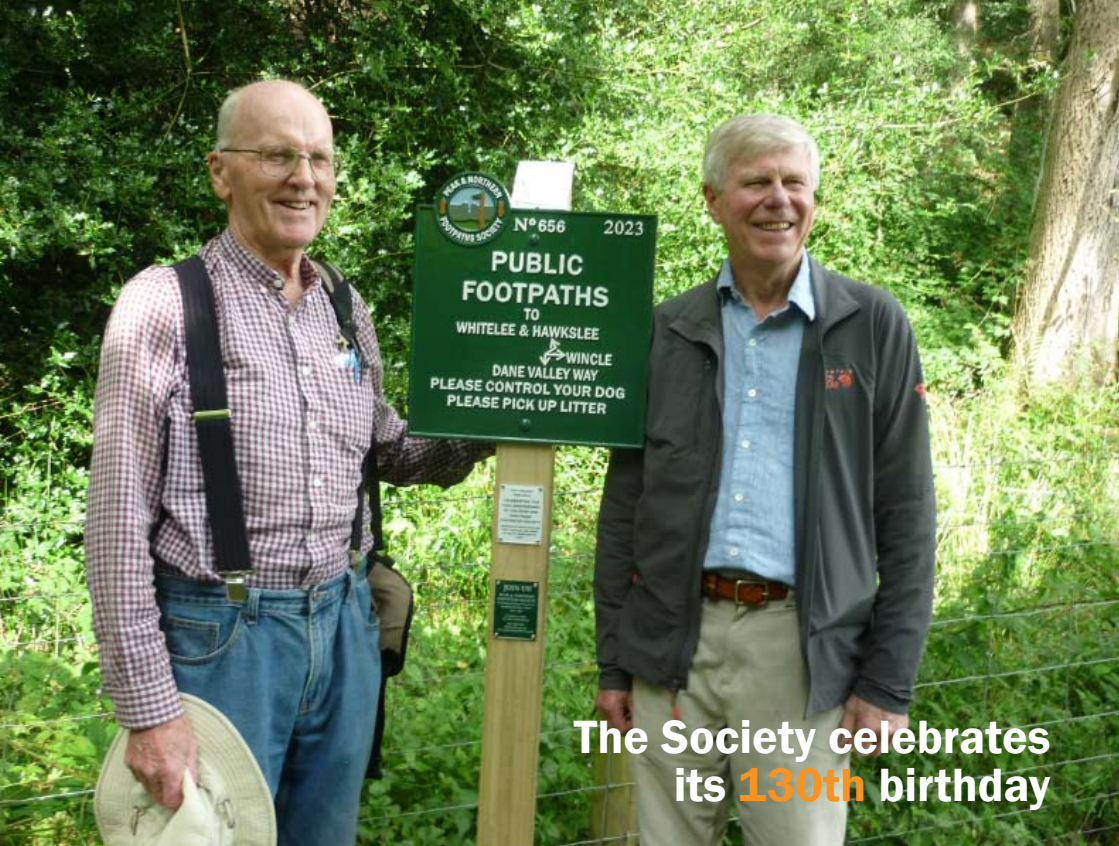
We are looking for a volunteer to take over the position of Treasurer. Bookkeeping experience is essential and experience of Sage 50 accounts package would be an advantage. Full training on how we use Sage 50 will be given.

All the work can now be carried out remotely to the computer at Taylor House, thus only needing to visit Taylor House in Stockport at least once a month to collect any post, few and far between these days, and filing.

It is a senior position in the Society and they will need to become a Trustee. They will need to compile monthly accounts for the Trustees that will be presented at monthly Management meetings mainly held via Microsoft Teams but occasionally face to face at Taylor House.

If any member is interested please email the Treasurer, Paul Easthope treasurer@pnfs.org.uk.





The Society celebrates its 130th birthday

Signpost 656 celebrates the 130th anniversary of the foundation of the Peak District and Northern Counties Footpath Preservation Society, now known as the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society (PNFS). The signpost was unveiled at a short ceremony on 17 August 2024, in a picturesque location beside the River Dane about a mile south west of Danebridge. The signpost is at the junction of Wincle footpaths 27 and 38 at SJ955642.

The ceremony was led by David Morton, Signpost Officer, and David Gosling, Vice Chair of the Society, and attended by twenty PNFS members and family.

David Morton spoke about his enjoyment in overseeing an increase of about 300 PNFS signs since he took up his role in 2008. He commented that this huge increase in the number of signposts now required more attention to be paid to the maintenance of the signs and that more volunteers were needed to carry out this work.

David Gosling said the Society owed David Morton a huge vote of thanks for his work on signposts and went on to remind everyone that the society was formed when a group of very respectable gentlemen in Manchester gathered in August 1894 to protect rights of way starting with the Snake Path between Hayfield and the Snake Inn.





He spoke about the dedicated volunteers in the Society who continue the work of protecting the rights of way network.

The celebration continued at the Wincle Brewery where the local brews were appreciated and enjoyed.

David Gosling, Vice Chair



Doncaster footpath 15 and us



Many years ago, I persuaded the Society to fund a new footbridge in Doncaster (see *overleaf photo - left*).

The story was that locals in the area were accessing the Council owned Sandall Beat Wood Local Nature Reserve, adjacent to Doncaster Racecourse, via an unofficial path from the road and scrambling across a boundary ditch. Said ditch was dry much of the time, but in winter or after heavy rain, was a struggle to get across for the less agile.

I got agreement that the Society would fund the bridge. In return I said that we wanted a dedication of the footpath as public from the road to the woods edge and it's adoption as a highway maintainable at public expense. It was to be added to the Definitive Map as well.

Hence we have a new public footpath Doncaster 15 which is the yellow dotted line in the north - west corner of the "Welcome to...." board.

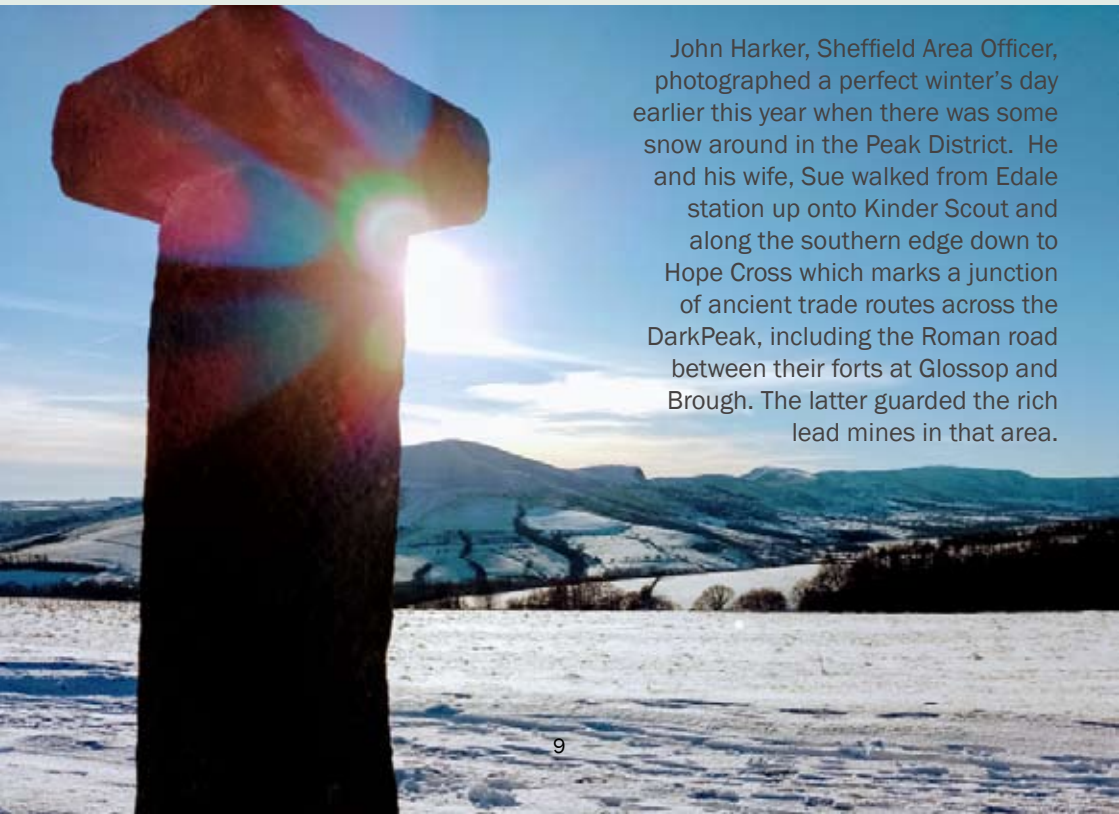
Ironically, given my role in this, yesterday was the first time I've used the path and bridge since attending the formal "handing over" ceremony that we had, all those years ago.



Why this trip down Memory Lane now? The public footpath shown on the same board connecting to the Reserve in the north-east corner is one I walked, or tried to walk, a couple of weeks ago with my partner and again yesterday. It's Doncaster Footpath 1.

There are so many problems on it that I'm now embroiled in trying to sort those out (see *one example of a so-called 'stile' in photoabove -right*). It might involve another request to the Society for funding but that's for the future perhaps?

John Harker, Area Officer Doncaster



John Harker, Sheffield Area Officer, photographed a perfect winter's day earlier this year when there was some snow around in the Peak District. He and his wife, Sue walked from Edale station up onto Kinder Scout and along the southern edge down to Hope Cross which marks a junction of ancient trade routes across the DarkPeak, including the Roman road between their forts at Glossop and Brough. The latter guarded the rich lead mines in that area.



John Hodgson and Nick erecting S653 at Thursbitch, Rainow

Prospects and Signpost Donations

There are no new signposts in prospect, as I have been unable to get the go-ahead from the United Utilities manager for two signposts in Rossendale. This is in sharp contrast to the speed with which we gained consent from the neighbouring manager for the two on Wheelton Moor, south of Brinscall, Chorley. The continued delay is embarrassing as we have already received a donation for a signpost to be erected in Rossendale. My thanks to Simon Worrall for enlisting the help of footpath inspectors and path checkers in the growing task of monitoring and cleaning/clearing our signposts. We have had three donations totalling £1630 from:

- Joan Egan re a modified memorial plaque on S300 in Tom Wood,
- Cheshire Walkers re S531 at Wicken Walls, Flash
- the executor of ex members Walter and Vera Chatterton seeking a new sign in their memory in the New Mills-Furness Vale area.

Total donations so far in 2025 stand at £4835 plus some Gift Aid. Currently the full donation to cover the cost of a signpost is £800.

There have been no suggestions for new signs from trustees or members, let alone contact details for landowners, in spite of the criteria for PNFS signposts previously published in *Signpost*.

New Signposts

Since June the following have been erected

- 653 at SJ 99222 75086 Thursbitch, Rainow F/Ps 1 and 2, with transport provided by the farmer over rough moorland with three of us hanging on for dear life in his quad bike trailer!
- S655 at SJ 95469 64419 on Wincle F/Ps 34 and 37 at Whitelee Farm
- **S656 at SJ 95598 64240 on Wincle F/Ps 34 & 38 by R.Dane at Gig Hall footbridge
- S657 at SD 63345 20826 on Lancs 9-3 55/56/57/31 Ratten Clough ruin, Brinscall
- S658 at SD 63317 20708 on Lancs 9-21 31 at Ratten Clough, Wheelton Moor, B'call

Theft

S385, in memory of Jean Horsfall's mother Esther near Lowgill church was reported missing in February. Subsequent enquiries of Tatham Parish Council and the new landowners have produced no explanation for its disappearance and rapid replacement by a Tatham PC signpost. A replacement memorial plaque has now been made by Paul Spencer Signs of Stockport and by agreement with Jean Horsfall will be attached to 387, which stands about one mile up the valley in the neighbouring parish of Wray with Botton. It is also on Esther's daily route from Higher Thrushgill farm to Lowgill School from 1927 to 1931. Thanks to F/P Insp Hugh Stewart for his help with checking both signs.

Maintenance

124 for Rushup Edge repaired and reinstated

July

- Retrieved 320 from Holcombe Moor, Ramsbottom with help from Andy McMullan. Took it to SPC for shot-blasting and powder-coating then repainted and mounted it on sound remains of original post
- Inspected, cleaned and cleared brambles from 494/5/6 on PF canal towpath above Strines. 494 is badly rotted and needs new upper half. Removed its loose MP for safekeeping.
- Fixed heavy, cast iron plate for 71 to wood repair post using 10mm coach-bolts
- 25 and 519 inspected by Steve Brown; 387 inspected by Hugh Stewart; 382 at Sabden inspected by Shirley Addy; S324/5/6/7 inspected/cleaned by Merrick Iszatt; maintenance required but not urgent; Richard Parke-Davies cleaned and cleared 35 and 36 near Hope

August

- Nigel and Anne Hackney inspected 231/2, 442, 561, 607, 640; Simon Worrall inspected 116, 134, 158, 169, 214, 611, 614; Derek Northin inspected 565/6/7 at Ashover; I repaired 116 near Bowstones again (extra bolt + 1m barbed wire) and touched up 317 at Birch Vale. Mike Brown inspected 142 and 143 near Shutlingsloe.

David Gosling checked 203 at Chew Hurdles; Mike Brown inspected 103 at Sparbent on A54; I variously inspected/cleaned/painted/repainted B9, F8, T2, S55, 103, 110, 120, 159, 341, 525, 536 near Rowarth, then emailed Paul Wetton re repair/replacement of F8, as 3 of its 6 fingers have rotted and PDNP have failed to respond; Reinstated 320 on Holcombe Moor with John H. and Andy McM; 262 near Hathersage inspected/cleared by Richard Parke-Davies; 412 near Trawden inspected by Simon Worrall; 321 at Whiteley Green, Adlington inspected by Mark Kambites;

- **Unveiling of 656 near Gig Hall commemorating 130th Anniversary of PNFS – 20 attended. 366 inspected by David Gosling. 158, 343, 413 repainted by Steve Brown; 417 and 270 on Taxal Edge inspected by Dave Brown; 257 and 537 inspected by Danny Allen; 488 on PW at Blackstone Edge inspected by Steve Brown; 278 at Chinley repainted by Steve Brown; I variously cleaned/repainted/retrieved 278, 377/8, 420, 581/3 at Flagg and Brandtop Farm, DCM. 372 inspected by Richard Parke-Davies; 463 inspected and new MP fixed by Gordon Richards.

Total Signs: 583

David Morton, Signpost Officer



Before and after photos of S158 which stands by the Macclesfield Road at Charles Head, high above Kettleshulme. More good work by Steve Brown of Disley.



The Lost Paths

Jack Cornish, Penguin Michael Joseph, 2024,
388 pp, £20 hardback (softback not yet available)

Jack Cornish was the guest speaker at the PNFS AGM in May, and is Head of Paths at the Ramblers, which must be an excellent qualification to write on the subject. His recent book, *The Lost Paths*, sets out to be 'A History of How We Walk from Here to There'. Ambitious in scope, the 19 chapters include such familiar subjects as pilgrim routes and turnpikes, but also cover topics such as the growth of railways and the effects of the new post-war towns on traditional paths. Some of his material, such as the enclosures of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, may be familiar to any reader with an interest in history, but other topics, for instance the loss of rights of way due to military requirements during the Second World War, are unusual.

The author has assembled a fascinating range of detail, such as the vogue for 'pedestrianism' in the nineteenth century, when large bets were put on improbable feats of walking, such as London to York and back in six days. But his concerns are not only historical, since he discusses the need to make access to the countryside more diverse and welcoming for minority groups. If anything, the reader may feel that he has tried to include too much: it is interesting to know how many bricks were used to build London's first railway (six million) but not really relevant to the stated theme – there's a certain loss of focus.

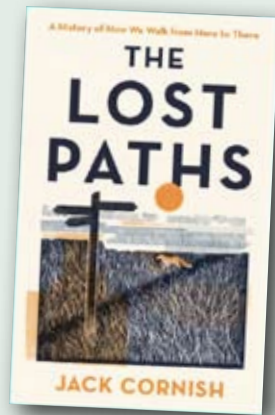
Yet his palette is impressively broad in terms of geography, and Derbyshire readers may enjoy his description of a walk from Cromford to Rowsley via Bonsall Moor, which he undertakes as a recreation of the 'mystery hikes' which were apparently popular between the wars – hikers would board a train for an unknown destination:

'The drama of the landscape hits me quickly. Minutes after stepping off my train, my path takes me along the bottom of a massive cliff face. Trees grow up high, directly out of breaks in the rocks, their leaves rusting and falling to the ground'.

Cornish's own involvement in the walking he writes about is clear, and he effectively balances these personal reports with the more historical details. He is also good at recounting disputes with landowners over rights of way, and sets the inevitable Kinder trespass story in the wider context of the long-standing struggles for access all over this country.

I would certainly recommend *The Lost Paths* to all fellow walkers, though with a couple of caveats. The title doesn't really do justice to the scope of the book, which is much broader than it suggests, and the illustrations – small black and white engravings – add little beyond decoration.

Stephen Bailey, member, Author of *The Old Roads of Derbyshire and The Derbyshire Portway*





*Walkers wearing bowlers at the beginning of the 20th century
(from the author's family album)*

When I taught at a college, several years ago, I mentioned to a group of teenagers that I enjoy walking in the countryside and sometimes wore gaiters; my comment caused much amusement because the students thought I wore garters. I should have mentioned that I had a pair of nice red ones but was reluctant to wear them because they clashed with the rest of my outfit. I was also concerned about walking through fields, when bulls were present, in case they took exception to my apparel. After all, I consider myself to be a very conservative dresser and avoid wearing anything, in the Peak District countryside, that will frighten the wildlife. Also, I would not wear red gaiters when walking through the streets of Manchester. It would not be entirely proper, would it? Although, if I did wear shorts and a pair of red gaiters, during trips to Manchester, I am sure that I would be welcomed in some parts of the city. I am reminded of a discussion with a Derbyshire farmer, in the past, who told me that a couple, who occupied a large house, next to his farm, 'batted for the other side'. I thought this was a rather odd statement to make, in modern times, especially as my wife and I have some very good friends who are 'cricketers' and very nice and interesting people they are too. Anyway, before I trap myself in a moorland morass, to use a rambling metaphor, I will return to a planned route.

It is interesting to consider, how styles have changed over the years. When my mother was a child, she wore clogs until the age of 14 and my father also wore clogs when he was younger. He also continued to wear the same footwear, for many years, when

he worked in the steel industry. I can remember, when I was a child, a clogger had a shop in the town, where I lived, but it closed many years ago when the demand for the hardwearing footwear declined. There was a time, in the past, when the sound of clog irons resounded throughout the cobbled streets of many northern towns and children enjoyed sparking their clog irons on paving stones. A change, in wearing apparel, also occurred with ramblers because many pioneers wore brushed top hats when visiting the countryside. The use of silk hats was mentioned in a lecture, given by Mr. Hawkswell, to members of the Burnley Literary and Scientific Club, before the second world war. It was reported in the Burnley Express, (1930, p. 9) that: 'The love of a country walk, either alone, or with a companion, was, he said, inborn to the Englishman. English literature was saturated with country sights and sounds, but he read that it was doubtful whether a rambling club existed before 1800.' Newspaper readers (Ibid) were also informed that: 'The first rambling club of which Mr. Hawkswell had knowledge in Burnley was the "Top Hat Brigade," the members of which used to tramp the country on Sundays in silk hats.' This occurred during the 19th century, and it must have been a wonderful sight to see the gentlemen following paths and tracks, around Burnley, dressed in tailored frock coats and wearing top hats and polished shoes.

An article, in the *Lancashire Evening Post* (North Westerner, 1932) called these pioneers 'The Beau Brummels of Hiking' and stated: 'The party had another description applied to them: "The Root and Toot Club"; they carried their meals in their pockets and drank from springs and wells by the wayside.' Members of the club took a great pride in their appearance, during regular countryside walks, and they must have avoided rambling through muddy farmyards and fields and probably refrained from walking during inclement weather. Those were the days when ramblers were known for their style and panache; they did not wear shorts, carry rucksacks, or ramble in muddy boots. What would they have thought of bright red gaiters? It was also mentioned (North Westerner, 1934) that: 'The group [included] some well-known Burnley professional and business men.' It was primarily a gentleman's club and was apparently formed to foster a greater interest and understanding of the countryside.

The first organised rambling clubs were established as naturalists' field clubs and members visited the countryside, often in the presence of experts or keen amateurs, to learn more about nature. Unfortunately, for many workers, who were interested in rambling, the founders of many field clubs were often professionals and businessmen so working-class individuals, who did not wear top hats and frock coats, were precluded from membership because of their status. It was several years before the membership of rambling clubs was democratised and groups of people, wearing silk hats, were no longer seen exploring the countryside. The study of fashionable trends, in the rambling fraternity, shows how styles have changed, over the years, from top hats and frock coats to plus fours and shorts.

¹ Burnley Express (1930) 'Walks Round Burnley', 22 February, p9.

² Ibid.

³ North Westerner (1932) 'The Beau Brummels of Hiking', Lancashire Evening Post, 22 September, p4.

⁴ North Westerner (1934) 'They Rambled in Top Hats', Lancashire Evening Post, 4 June, p6.

It was explained in the *Derby Daily Telegraph* (H. P. C., 1935) that a reporter had spoken to Christopher Smith, who was an active member of the Pickwick Rambling Club, at 76 years old. Newspaper readers were informed (Ibid) that: 'I have before me a collection of photographs lent to me by Mr. Smith, whom I interviewed the other day. There could be no better pictorial record of the evolution of the hiker from the bowler to the boater, from the boater to the cap, from tight trousers to knee breeches to flannels; from flannels to plus fours, from plus fours to shorts.' I also found evidence of this transition in a collection of my family photographs showing a group of walkers wearing bowler hats. It is evident, from the picture, that many walkers, at the beginning of the 20th century, were also impeccably dressed. How different it was, in 1966, when I began walking with a school rambling club. In those days, ramblers could purchase ex R.A.F. anoraks from army and navy stores for 52s. 6d. and obtain Bergin type rucksacks, with a 17 in. frame and extra-large capacity, for 79s. 6d. In addition, commando sole type boots could be bought for 59s. 6d. and marching compasses cost 17s. 11d.

When paths and tracks were followed, in the Peak District, with school friends we must have seemed a motley group to passing strangers. Members of the rambling club wore anoraks, that failed to allow trapped moisture to escape, and we donned cycling capes when it was raining. Old trousers were worn, in case routes were muddy, and during strenuous walks, in rainfall, we were often wetter, underneath our anoraks, than on the surfaces of our waxed cycling capes. We may have lacked style and panache, during our rambles, but a great enthusiasm for walking in the countryside was apparent. In those days, we used to travel by train to Hayfield, before climbing to Kinder Downfall, and we returned to the village to enjoy hamburgers in a café opposite to Hayfield Church. We also travelled by train to Whaley Bridge before walking to Errwood Hall, when the Errwood Reservoir was being constructed, and we crossed a narrow metal suspension bridge before it was demolished. After one walk to Kinder Downfall, during a train journey from Hayfield, mist rose from our wet clothes as we travelled in a warm railway carriage. How strange it was to see water vapour rising from our apparel, as we travelled home, it was though strange ethereal powers had been acquired at Kinder Scout.



A rambler in 1933
(The Hiker & Camper, Vol 3 No 11)



A rambler in 1904
(1st edition of Across the Derbyshire Moors by John Derry)

I have often wondered why I am drawn to the Peak District countryside and, in particular, Derbyshire landscapes. Perhaps it is due to the many interesting rambles, and several youth hostelling holidays, undertaken with members of a school rambling club. Alternatively, the attraction may be genetic because my father's family lived in Mellor, at the end of the eighteenth century, when the village was located in Derbyshire. In addition, my maternal grandmother was born in Little Hayfield and her father was born in Ludworth, when that place was also in Derbyshire. The parents of my maternal grandmother occupied a farm at Little Hayfield, in 1881, and my grandmother attended Sunday School at the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Little Hayfield, when she was a child. I often think, when I walk through Mellor, Ludworth and Hayfield, that I am following in the footsteps of my ancestors.

Ron Braddock, Member

⁵ H. P. C. (1935) 'Derby's First Hiker', Derby Daily Telegraph, 1 May, p6.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Mac's Army & Navy Stores (1965) (Advertisement) in Let's Go For A Ramble, Manchester: Manchester Guardian & Evening News Limited, p16.

Imitation PNFS Signpost

Recently I was walking in the Dove valley area and lunched by the village pond here. I noticed this information board by the old village water pump. My eye was caught by the depiction of one of the Society's signposts top right of the information board. It stands outside the public toilet block in the village about 100 yards away.



Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.
John Harker, Sheffield Area Officer



PNFS Short Walk on 10 July 2024

I led a walk from Guide Bridge station, in the suburbs of Ashton under Lyne, to Stockport town centre, via the valley of the river Tame, which historically formed the county boundary between Lancashire and Cheshire. Just four of us alighted the train to access a short section of the Ashton Canal towpath adjacent to the line. My intention was to skirt built-up areas by using green spaces and paths and that was quite successful. A useful link was the recreation ground at Hooley Hill. The name reminded me fondly of Alan Hooley, for so long a stalwart of the Society as Chief Assessor at Taylor House. I took its name as a good omen when I planned my route.

Heading south down the western side of the Tame valley, we encountered a team from Tameside Council doing sterling work rebuilding a long flight of wooden steps up from the road below to the path we were walking on. We chatted awhile before we gradually descended via paths shown as permissive on the map and crossed the Tame over a large footbridge below Dunkirk Farm, another favourable omen I had thought when doing my planning. We were now in Hyde, below the Peak Forest Canal which had been built higher up the eastern slope of the valley. A riverside bridleway, part of the Tameside Valley Way took us into Denton underneath the M67. Another footpath, Denton 36, helped us thread the needle between built-up areas. The price we paid was a footpath hampered by overhanging shrubbery from adjacent houses. This has been reported to Tameside MBC. This brought us into Haughton Green and lunch by the bandstand, erected in 2014 by the local Housing Association as part of the Haughton Green Heritage Trail.

After lunch, we dropped down a wooded clough, through Hardy Wood back towards the river Tame. A large tree blocked Denton FP47 since my recce. The four of us set to with hand tools to get through (see photo). This has been reported to Tameside MBC. We got through, reached the riverbank, and turned west following the Tame as it twisted in loops towards Stockport. We were now on the Tameside Trail according to the map. Is that a different recreational route? Maps are too cluttered with green diamonds in my opinion.

Passing underneath the M60 we arrived at Reddish Vale Country Park. The remainder of the walk followed the valley on a combination of paths and disused railway lines converted to cycle paths. More green diamonds marked the route. Take your pick of Trans Pennine Trail, National Cycle Network 62 and Midshires Way. Another fallen tree had blocked the TPT below Lancashire Hill when I pre-walked the route, but my report to Stockport MBC NFS had seen it cleared by the time we passed by. The final few minutes saw us cross the Tame for the last time, then go under the M60 along a walkway before reaching the confluence of the Tame and the river Goyt to form the infant river Mersey. Journey's end.

John Harker, Area Officer Sheffield

Parish Notes -

Standon, Staffordshire



Hi, I'm Bill and a very new member of PNFS, so it came as a bit of a surprise to be asked to contribute to the Parish Notes in the Signpost magazine. I think the reason being is that I live in Staffordshire, which may be underrepresented compared to the rest of the society area.

To be honest it is only very recently that I discovered that the part of Staffordshire outside the Peak District comes under the area but then I must admit that my knowledge of the PNFS did not extend beyond the green footpath signs which I regularly come across!

I live in Bowers which is one of the four main villages which form the rural parish of Standon. The other villages being Standon itself, Cotes Heath and Cranberry. Standon (SJ 820350) lies in the western part of Staffordshire and is approximately equidistant from Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent. Its rolling landscape is dominated by livestock and arable farming. The parish name originates from the two Old English words of "stan and dun" which means a stone hill and has a population of over 1,000. It straddles the west coast main railway line which runs along the Meece valley. The Meece brook once supported 4 watermills along a two-mile stretch but now only Standon Mill remains which manufactures and retails farm animal feed and pet food – alas no longer powered by water.

The valley is also home to two water pumping stations, the first is Hatton waterworks and chimney built circa 1892 for the Staffs & Potteries Water company, built in the Italianate style and considered to be one of the most decorative pumping stations in Britain. The second is Mill Meece pumping station built circa 1912. Both original stations ceased pumping in 1979 being replaced by two modern, electrically powered stations by Severn Trent Water Authority. Hatton has now been converted into residential homes and Mill Meece operated as a steam attraction by a trust of volunteers.

The twelfth century church of All Saints together with its CofE first school sits in the heart of Standon. An Outdoors Education Centre is based in Bowers. This was originally established in 1885 as a Boys Home for waifs and strays but is now operated by Staffordshire County Council offering a variety of outdoor pursuits to Staffordshire schools. Unfortunately, both pubs, post office and village shop have long gone.

Standon Hall is a Grade II listed building built circa 1910 as a family home for Sir Thomas Anderton Salt of the North Staffs Rail Company. In 1925 it became a TB sanatorium and orthopaedic hospital before being converted into a residential care home in 1983. It is now a wedding and conference centre.

The parish is blessed with 35 public footpaths and 2 bridleways. The majority are regularly used both by local residents and visiting walking groups and I hope one day to see at least one of the PNFS iconic footpath signs in this area!

Bill Twigg, Member



I've been dipping into W H Shercliff's well-illustrated history of countryside recreation in north-east Cheshire called *Nature's joys are free for all* published in 1986. It is a rich mine of information with a useful index. He was a former, active member of several organisations including PNFS and it is very comprehensive in its coverage of outdoor pursuits from the 19th century to the 1980s. I wish I'd known him better when he was alive.

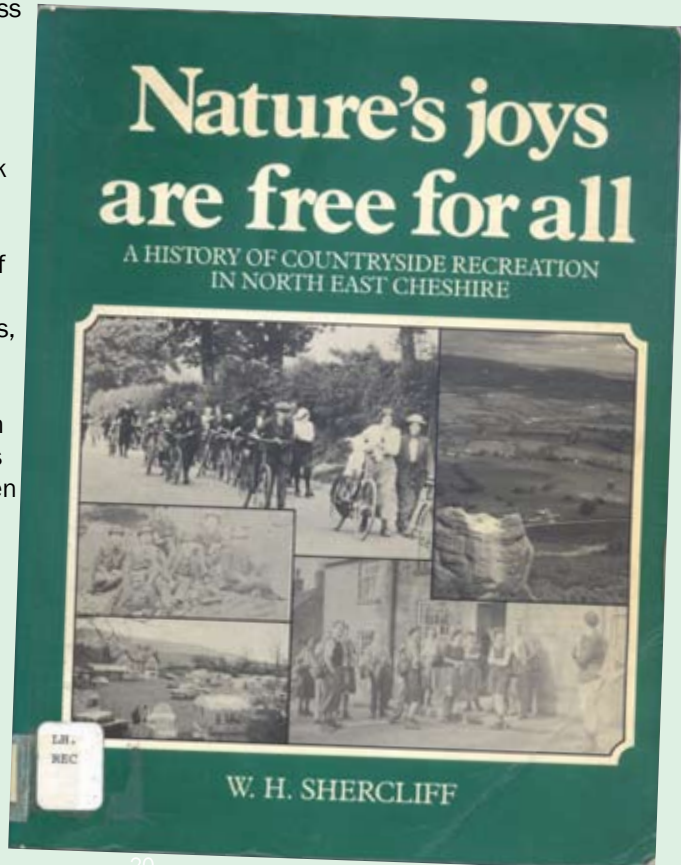
I learned that Errwood Farm was the first YHA hostel close to NE Cheshire. Its life (1931-35) was short as Stockport Water Board's Fernilee Reservoir dam was soon completed. It was succeeded in 1939 by Windgather Cottage, as the only hostel in east Cheshire. Sadly it is now just an expensive, private house and no longer available to hostellers.

Bill's section on the early growth of the several railway companies in our area and their half-day and full-day returns highlights their value in the growing popularity of excursions to the country before car ownership became widespread. In 1844 the Manchester and Birmingham Railway ran trains from Manchester and Stockport to Alderley for a Gala Day on 27 September at Alderley Edge, offering first, second and third class returns from Stockport costing 2/6, 1/6 and 1/- respectively. There is a photo of the poster. The Gala featured the band of the 37th Regiment.

In 1891 a third class return ticket on the North Staffordshire Railway from Macclesfield to Waterhouses and back cost 2/6 or 2/- for a half-day return. There's also a photo of the crowds at the so-called Roman Lakes, Marple, circa 1900.

I learned to row a proper boat there from about 1950, two years after I walked the seven miles from Hayfield to Edale with my dad at the age of six.

There's a copy at Taylor House.
David Morton,
Signpost Officer



Squeeze Stile Calendar 2025



PNFS member, Ruth Watson, having spent a lifetime walking in and around the Peak District, decided to create a calendar celebrating squeeze stiles that are such a notable part of our landscape. She says, "I wanted to pay tribute to the humble squeeze stiles that come in many shapes and sizes. There is usually a stone pillar on either side, some of which are rough hewn straight from the ground while others are carefully "dressed" and made into a matching pair. However, recently there has been a move to replace these historic features of our countryside with wooden gates for easier access."

So, over the course of a year, she and some friends took photos of any interesting stiles they found on their walks. They took so many that it was hard to come up with a final selection for the calendar. It features 15 stiles and Ruth is donating a £100 prize for the first person to correctly identify where each one is.

The calendar is A4 size that opens out to A3 when hanging on the wall with the image above and the month's calendar below with a box for each day in which events can be written. It costs £10, with free P&P. After covering printing and postage costs, all the profits will go to PNFS.

To order: email your name and address with how many copies you want to stilespnfs@gmail.com and Ruth will email back with details of how to pay. Then she will post the calendar(s) to you.

Paul Watson, Member



Greater Manchester's Walking Trail

There are many well established local and national trails that wind their way across the country or around the boundaries of a parish. Some are linear, some circular, connecting locations, points of interest and often pubs! These are often very popular routes for walkers. Some are long distance whilst others just a few miles. Routes can be urban, rural, themed and any combination in between.



Some years ago, a keen local walker, Dr Andrew Reid, thought that communities around Greater Manchester, with its diverse landscapes and industrial heritage, would benefit from a multi-stage walking route. The aims included enhancing public health and reducing the carbon footprint by active travel. Andrew set about exploring possible routes around the area and thinking how he might achieve such an ambitious project.

In 2022 the project took a significant step forward when CPRE (Lancashire, Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester) and the Greater Manchester & High Peak Ramblers became involved. The project was awarded a £250,000 Lottery Heritage Fund grant to enable the route to be further developed, documented, signed, and promoted.

As the project developed several key themes emerged:

- Designed around existing footpaths, parks and open access land
- Connect Greater Manchester's rich natural and cultural heritage
- Green in every way - each stage of the walk should be accessible by public transport
- The route to pass through all 10 boroughs

As a result, the Greater Manchester Ringway walk, as it became known, passes more than 40 grade I and grade II listed buildings including Bramhall Hall in Stockport and Haigh Hall in Wigan. 13 accredited museums, including the Imperial War Museum in Trafford and 14 scheduled ancient monuments. The Ringway also guides walkers through 57 conservation areas, 18 local nature reserves and parts of the Peak District National Park. In all there are 20 stages, totalling 200 miles, ranging from 6.5 miles to 13.4 miles in length and all the stage start of end points are served by public transport.

The anti-clockwise Ringway route falls in to four broad sections each made up of five one day stages, described by the project team as:

- Southern Start Up: waterways and green spaces tracing an almost traffic free route from the centre of Manchester.
- Exhilarating East: exploring the hills that rise above Stockport, Tameside and Oldham.
- Noble North: five fairly challenging stages that connect the south and west Pennines within Rochdale, Bury and Bolton.
- Western Wind Down: a gentle finish along the wetlands, farmland and canals of Wigan, Trafford, and Stretford.

Volunteers have now waymarked the 200-mile trail with white GM Ringway discs all of which contain a QR code linked to the trail's website. The website includes all the information walkers will need including interactive maps, details of each stage's terrain and cafes, pubs and toilet facilities. Each section of the walk now has at least two volunteer Stage Guardians who will promote their stages will local communities and ensure the route is well maintained. Peak & Northern Footpaths Society are assisting the Ringway with fault reporting and assistance with Highway Authority liaison. There are 21 PNFS signposts along the route many of which now have had a GM Ringway way mark nailed to the post!

Recently GM Ringway have teamed up with the Go Jauntily App that includes very detailed instructions, maps of the route, and photos (many of which feature Andrew Reid (or at least the back of him!))

Now that the legwork has been done GM Ringway are setting up a Friends of the GM Ringway group to ensure that the trail continues to be promoted and deliver on its objectives. This will involve volunteering opportunities, fund raising and much more. PNFS will be looking to help in any way it can to support this very valuable addition for the Greater Manchester community. We intend to feature at least one of the stages in the 2025 walking programme. I would encourage you to visit the website to find out more.

GM Ringway website: gmringway.org.

Simon Worrall, Footpath Inspection Coordinator



Bridge B009 Rowarth



Photographs of bridge 9 were taken in August 2024. It honours Harold Wild and is still in good fettle apart from the superficial rot. Its main member is one foot square in cross-section. The bridge dates from 1982 when Harold retired after 62 years of very active service for PNFS, which I think is a record.

David Morton, Signpost Officer



The Society needs you!

As you will have read in the Chair's report the society is seeking a new Secretary. Please read the 'Role Description' below, and if you are tempted to take on this rewarding and interesting job, please send an email to chair@pnfs.org.uk. The role of the secretary is to support the chair by ensuring the society, its managing committee (board of trustees) and sub-committees function smoothly. In addition to the general responsibilities of a trustee, the duties of the secretary are as follows:

1. Prepare agendas in consultation with the chair
 - a. Make arrangements to ensure the smooth running of meetings whether conducted in-person or online
 - b. Receive agenda items from other committee members
 - c. Circulate agendas and associated papers in good time
2. Ensure minutes are taken of all meetings and circulate draft minutes to committee members for review
3. Monitor action logs and ensure committee members complete assigned actions in a timely manner
4. Prepare and distribute agendas and associated papers for all general meetings
5. Prepare and file annual returns to the Charity Commissioner and keep the register maintained by the Commission up to date
6. Monitor legal and regulatory developments affecting the Society
7. Support the onboarding and training of new trustees
8. Take responsibility for matters of good governance of the Society

Person Specification

The secretary should possess the following qualities:

1. Organisational ability (*required*)
2. Able to delegate effectively (*required*)
3. Good communication skills (*required*)
4. Knowledge and/or experience of business and committee procedures (*desirable*)
5. Minute-taking experience (*desirable*)
6. Understanding of Charity governance (*desirable*)

Time Commitment

- You must attend the management meetings held on the last Friday of each month
- Attend the Courts and Inquiries meetings held on the last Friday of each month
- Attend all general meetings (*normally annually*)
- Be able to check and respond to emails in a timely manner (*must have access to own computer and internet connection*)

Repainting S71 and S229



Photographs showing S229 at Low Leighton before and after painting by Steve Brown, and S71 before and after refurbishment by David Morton.

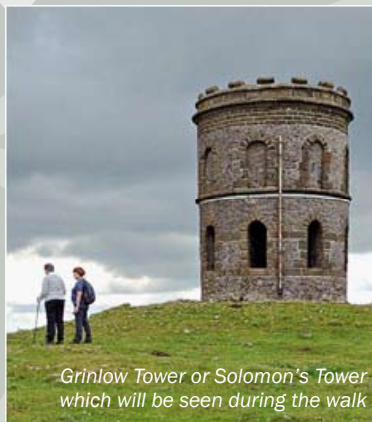


Join us on PNFS's annual Christmas walk on Wednesday, 11 December

Ken Brockway will be leading this year's PNFS combined Christmas short and longer walk in Buxton.

Take the 09:51 train from Manchester Piccadilly, arriving in Buxton 10:54; or TP bus from south arriving 10:45. For other transport, SK17 6AQ. Walk starts when both train and bus have arrived. Meet in station forecourt. The route takes in The Crescent, Pavilion Gardens, Grinlow Tower, a restricted area, Cromford and High Peak Railway, Staden Low, Duke's Drive, Ashwood Park and Wetherspoons.

Walk is 7 miles and expected to finish 14:30. There will be no lunch stop during the walk but there will be short drink breaks. Food at Wetherspoons is an option. Please only phone Ken on the day of the walk 07895 983857.



Grinlow Tower or Solomon's Tower which will be seen during the walk



Fourteen bipeds and three quadrupeds on the Saturday, 10 August walk from Upton to Bidston. Photographed and led by Ross Myddelton.

PNFS walks

IT IS VITAL that attendees check all train times
and pnfs.org.uk or scan QR code for any updates



Wednesday, 11 December – Joint Christmas walk – see opposite page for full details.

Wednesday, 8 January Short - Ross Myddelton 07941 547378

r.myddelton1@ntlworld.com. See website for details.

Wednesday, 29 January Long - Walk leader required.

Wednesday, 12 February Short - Mick Chatham 07792 709198 chathamnick@gmail.com. Littleborough circular. Low level to Summit then over Chelburn Moor visiting the Stanza and Aiggin Stones returning via the Roman Road. 1300 ft ascent and 8 miles. Train from Manchester Victoria 09:36 arriving Littleborough 09:57. Walk starts 10:00. OL15 8AR

Wednesday, 26 February Long - Shirley Addy 07434 897143 text. Whalley to Clitheroe linear walk. 9.5 miles easy. Whalley railway station, River Calder, Calderstones, River Ribble to Fishes and Peggy Hill, Higher Standen Hey Farm, old A59, Standen Hall, Primrose, lodge, River Ribble to Siddows Hall, Edisford Bridge, Low Moor, Clitheroe railway station. Manchester Victoria 09:43, arrive Whalley 10:59. Walk starts 11:00. Return from Clitheroe railway station.

Want to lead a walk?

Contact:

Ross Myddelton (Wednesdays 5-9 miles), r.myddelton 1@ntlworld.com, 07941 547378;

Ken Smith (Wednesdays 9-12 miles), kensmith4rj@icloud.com, 07918 154959



John Harker took this picture of a footbridge, and a PNFS signpost, across the river Dove in the Peak District NP a few weeks ago. It spans the Derbyshire-Staffordshire border just south of the hamlet of Crowdicote.

On the Staffordshire side is S415 giving directions as the footpath beyond the wicket gate branches into three separate footpaths running up the slope away from the river.