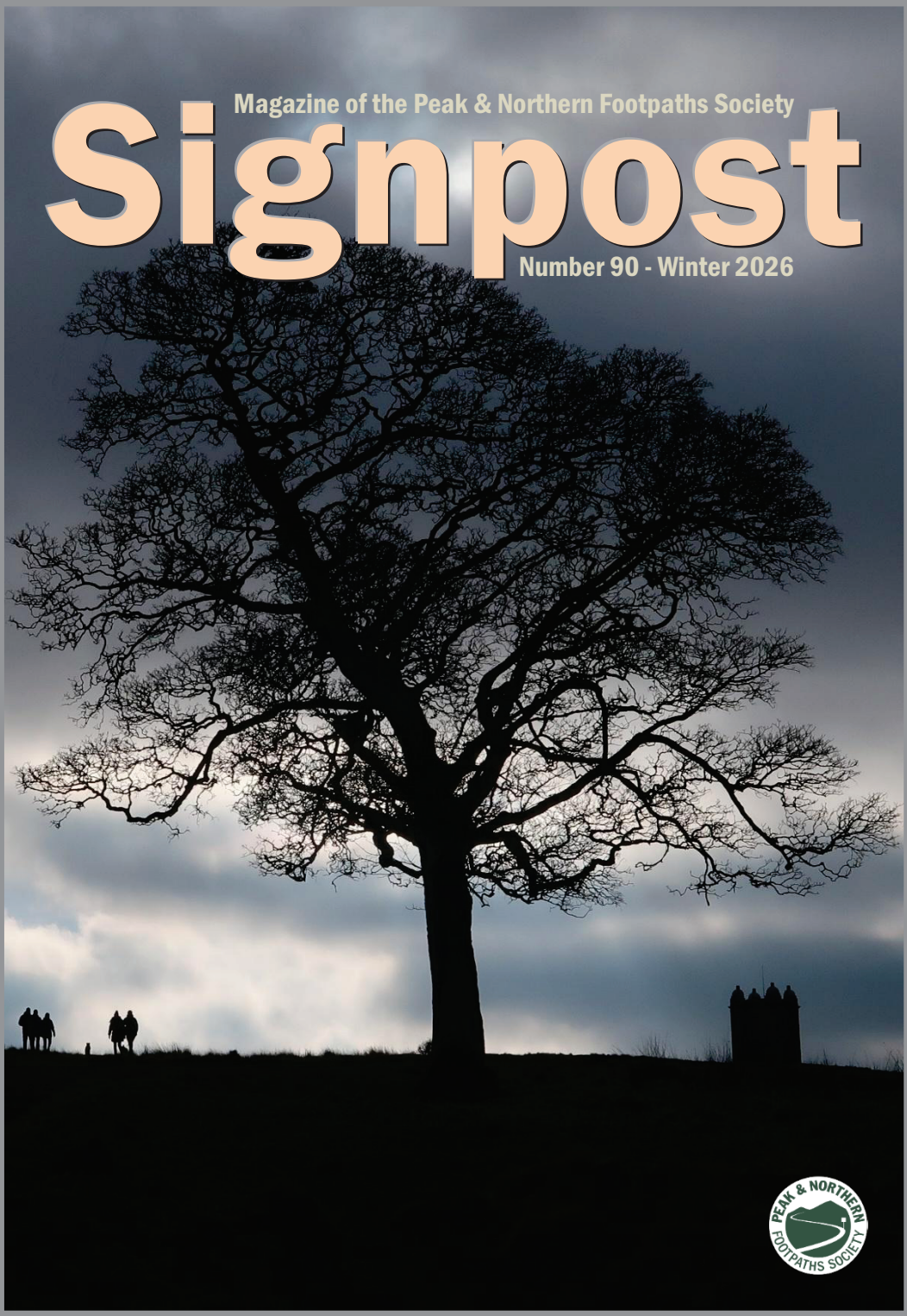
Magazine of the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

# Signpost

Number 90 - Winter 2026



# From the Chair

Kathy Mclean



The change from summer through autumn to winter is familiar, yet increasingly unpredictable. This is an ideal time to get out walking, especially as summers grow hotter. There is real satisfaction in putting on your outdoor gear and walking a few cold miles, knowing that checking the footpaths will benefit other walkers.

The society remains active throughout the year, with several regular milestones. Our next is the Half Year Meeting (HYM) in Sheffield on Saturday, 28 November; further details appear in the magazine. It is a valuable opportunity to catch up on PNFS activities and meet fellow members and volunteers. Although our officers and volunteers report through committees and meetings during the year, Sheffield will give us the chance to share progress on some of our more strategic work.

I hope all volunteers have had time to complete our survey. We plan to report your feedback at the HYM, as your views are vital in shaping the society's activities. We are also considering a survey of all members and will announce it in the magazine.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of PNFS, and I am delighted that more people than ever seem to have offered their help. Thank you to everyone who has come forward; we look forward to making good use of your time and skills.




If you would like to become more involved in the society, please contact Linda Smith (volunteer@pnfs.org.uk). The Trustees also plan to identify more volunteer roles, making it easier to find opportunities that match your skills and interests.

We will soon be seeking another Trustee. If you are interested, please watch for our communications or contact me directly. We are reviewing the skills the team now needs and would ideally like to make the Trustee group more diverse.

I am pleased to report a successful year for signposts, with several new ones installed recently. Thank you to everyone who suggested sites, and to David Morton and his volunteer team for maintaining existing signposts and installing the new ones.

Thanks to the Inspector team, we are now replacing waymarks in the High Peak area of Derbyshire (*see previous issue*), and the work is progressing well. We plan to extend the project elsewhere in the county. Each waymark includes a QR code linking to our website and membership area, which increases our visibility, helps walkers and may encourage new members to join.

I hope to see many of you in Sheffield in November. In the meantime, thank you for your support and for everything you do for the society and the wider walking community.

*Kathy*

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## Fed-up with finding paths obstructed or overgrown?

## Become a footpath inspector for PNFS!

Monitor rights of way on behalf of the Society

- in an area you have agreed to inspect
- at your own pace
- in your own time
- find the paths on our unique database
- record your inspections
- report problems

*Have the satisfaction of supporting the work of the Society and protecting our right to walk public footpaths*

If you are interested contact the Society's Footpath Inspection Coordinator, Richard Davies, by email inspection@pnfs.org.uk

## Watch PNFS's activities on video

David Gosling has posted a video about some of the activities of PNFS in 2025/26. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNCExRV4zjg

*Cover: The Cage, Lyme Park, Disley on the GM Ringway. Photograph by Peter Knights*

# Save the Date

## PNFS HALF YEAR MEETING 2026

MEMBERS • VOLUNTEERS • EVERYONE WELCOME

**Saturday**
**28 November 2026**

**10.00am – 1.00pm**

**Carpenter Room,**
**Sheffield Library**




### Join fellow members and volunteers for the PNFS Half Year Meeting.

Hear the latest updates on the Society's work, meet volunteers from across the region, and contribute to discussions on public rights of way and access issues.

**Meet**
**Learn**
**Discuss**
**Connect**

### Light refreshments provided

Tea, coffee and pastries available throughout the day.

### Everyone welcome

Whether you are a Footpath Inspector, Path Checker, Trustee, Assessor, Signpost Team volunteer, or simply interested in the Society's work, we look forward to seeing you.

FURTHER DETAILS AND AGENDA TO FOLLOW

# Dowlow Quarry paths finally sorted!

*Derek Bodey, Footpath Inspector*

Back in 2012, as a newly appointed PNFS inspector, I accompanied John Harker to a meeting with the then owners of Dowlow Quarry. It was my introduction to the strange world of footpath law. But to explain what the issue was, Dowlow Quarry was opened in 1899. When the definitive map was first drawn up in 1953, and first published 1962, footpaths were drawn on it that had existed for many years. Although by 1939, it is questionable whether FP134 was able to be walked even then (see figure 1).

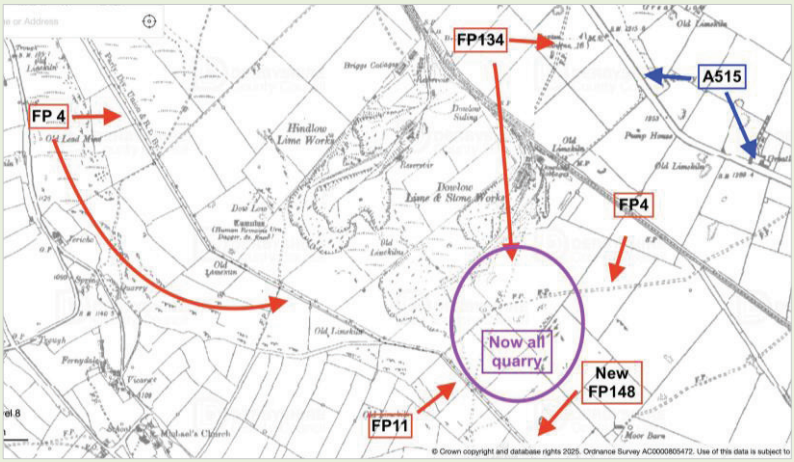
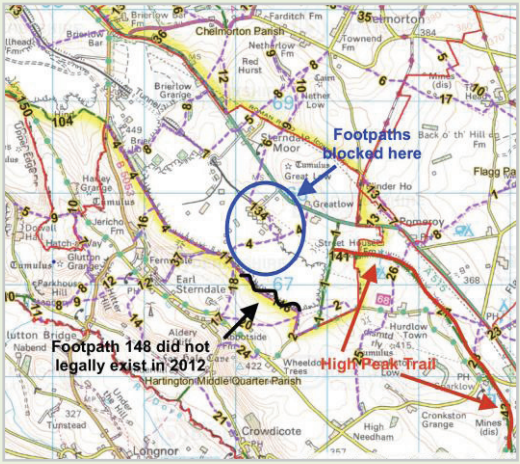
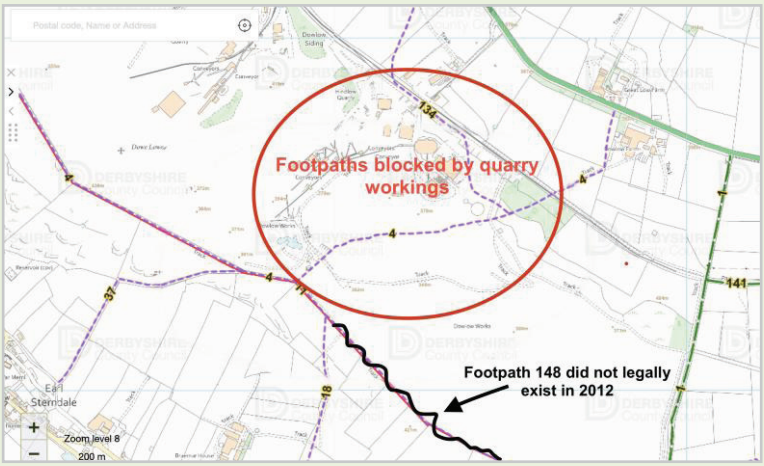


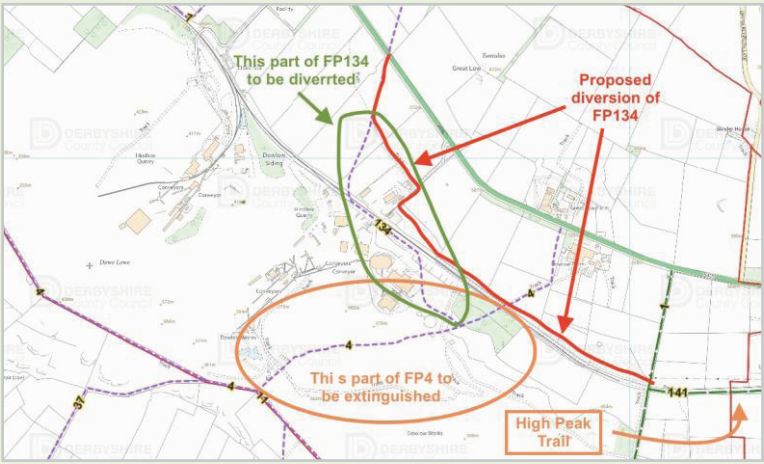

Figure 2 shows the same area from the current OS map. The quarry had much expanded with no provision made for the now disrupted footpaths. This was the situation in 2012.




FP4 was well used up to the point where it turns NE and (officially) descended the quarry face. At this point walkers carried straight on along the top of the quarry face (technically FP11) before continuing to join FP2 at the far end of the quarry. However this section was not an official RoW. The other path, FP134, left the A515 and was quite walkable across fields until it met the railway line. It was not possible to safely reach the junction with FP4 on the bottom of the quarry. It was not legally possible to reach the High Peak Trail by footpath from Sterndale Moor. Figure 3 shows the situation in greater detail.




The 2012 meeting was productive and there was agreement on a solution. This was to legalise the walked route along the top of the quarry to join FP2 and to divert FP134, staying North of the railway line to reach FP1 (figure 4). The Quarry was sold. So I returned some 2 years later to have the same conversation with the new owners and DCC RoW team. This resulted in some action.

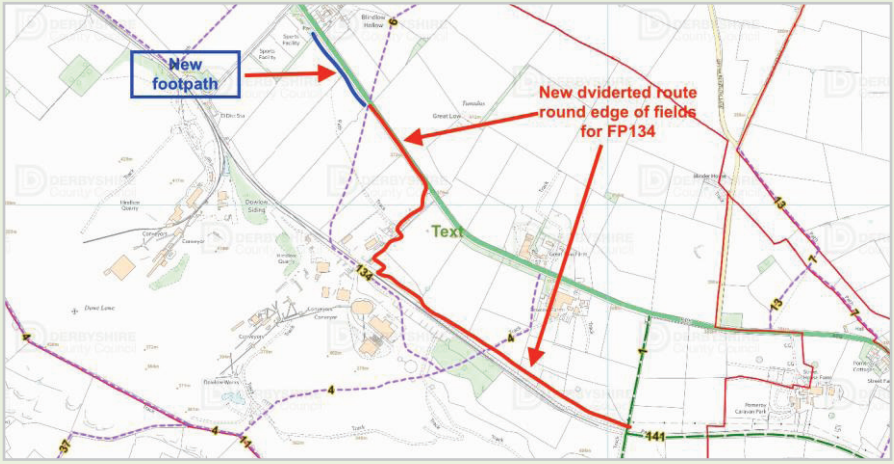



The RoW team discovered that back in 1996 the same conversation had occurred and the same solution proposed. They had even drawn up the order to create a footpath along the top of the quarry (already well walked). They had consulted on it but then failed to publish it! So all they had to do was publish it? Wrong! The order was drawn up prior to the 2000 CROW Act. It therefore was not compliant with current legislation (in particular it did not specify the width of the path). So did they have to start again? A year later, DCC's legal department decided that they could simply publish the order as it stood and FP148 came into existence.

At this point (2015), the quarry created a permissive path along the proposed diversion route. It was not to be compliant with footpath legislation as it had ladder stiles but this did not apply as it was permissive. Walkers could now walk from Chelmorton to Longnor once more. I met up with a member of the DCC RoW team and spent most of a day measuring widths and accurately locating the proposed diverted route in preparation for a draft order. We are nearly there I thought!

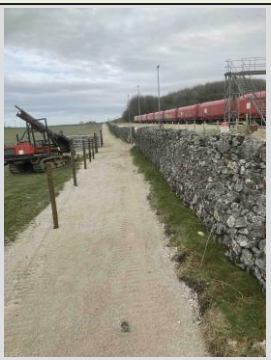
Then the DCC member of staff responsible for cycling, said “the residents of Sterndale Moor have asked if they could have off-road access to the High Peak trail by bike”. The Quarry owners were happy to take this on board as part of their community work, but their tenant farmer was not happy at the prospect of cyclists crossing fields of cows and the loss of pasture the path would cause. Then they sold the Quarry!

So in early 2017, back I went to have a very similar conversation for the third time! The new owners, Breedon, were very keen to sort the issues. They recognised the request from the residents and the needs of their farmer. A new route was planned, accommodating cyclists and, by being slightly longer, keeping walkers and cows apart. This included a new path alongside the A515 from where FP134 emerged on the road up to Sterndale Moor. Breedon were seeking to submit a minerals planning application and the whole package became part of this as a contribution towards the necessary mitigation. The new route is shown in figure 5.




The mineral work was granted planning permission in 2022, part of the delay being caused by Covid. The proposed new footpath with permanent permissive (!) permission to cycle required its own planning application to approve the design. This was granted in 2023 and installation began in 2024 when the ground conditions were dry enough. The result a 2 m wide, crushed stone surface from Sterndale Moor to the High Peak Trail. I compromised on 2m, rather than 3m, since this reduced the land being removed from grazing and I could not foresee significant conflict between walkers and cyclists. Here are some pictures of the result.





Reaching the High Peak Trail





Above: The new path
Left: Beside the railway line

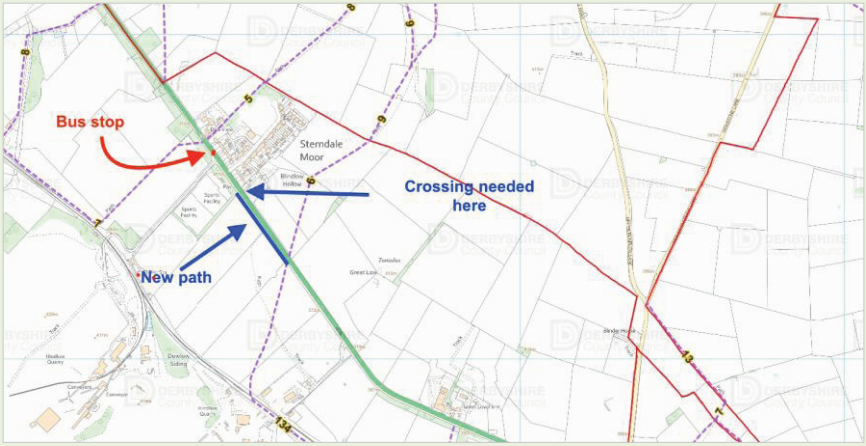


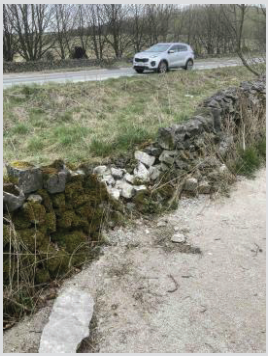
Left: Passing a field entrance

The photos were taken during construction. The path is fully open (and used), although there is some more road signage to go up warning the lorry drivers of pedestrians/cyclists. So a great success and almost the whole story. There remains just one bit more. Breedon's land ends at the village but it is on the wrong side of the A515.

Highways expressed the view that users should make their way to the bus stop, cross the road and then retrace their steps to gain access to the village road. Whilst I agreed that visibility was best there, I was extremely doubtful that folk would in fact do that; they were more likely to cross where they emerged. Eventually a site meeting took place involving RoW team, Highways and the local councillor and your

persistent PNFS officer. This meeting agreed that it was most likely that people would cross where they emerged (much shorter), that visibility was acceptable and that what was needed was a hard-surfaced waiting area with dropkerb on both sides. A short section of path alongside the highway was also required to finish the job. This is of course DCC responsibility (all owned by Highways). Officially they have gone off to "design the crossing". The local councillor is chasing … watch this space.



View across Dowlow



Where the path finishes - awaiting the crossing

The remaining stub of FP4 leading up to the A515 is currently blocked by fences. Breedon have agreed to address this with their tenant farmer but it is not a high priority as until Greatlow is restored, who would use it? The useful bits are now all functioning - come and walk them and be surprised by how big and deep some of these quarries are.

Lastly, I have pushed Breedon to submit all the paperwork to correct the Definitive Map - the extinguishment of a section of FP4, the diversion of FP134 and the creation of the new FP. They have done so and it is now all with DCC. When they get round to processing the orders, OS will then update the map on the next revision - anyone want to bet on when that will be?

# Staying safe around dogs on public rights of way - new PNFS guidance for inspectors

*Neil Davies, Member, and Richard Davies, Footpath Inspection Co-ordinator*

Dogs are a familiar part of life, and for most PNFS Inspectors they are simply another friendly presence encountered on a walk. But recent reports show a rise in situations involving unsupervised dogs, poor owner control, and, on rare occasions, deliberate intimidation. To support volunteers, PNFS has now produced guidance on dog encounters during public rights of way (PRoW) inspections.

The new advice fills an important gap in our safety resources. As the document notes, *"Most encounters with dogs during footpath inspections are routine and pose no risk,"* but a calm, structured approach can make all the difference when a dog is unsure, over-excited, or behaving aggressively.



## Reading the signs

Inspectors are encouraged to pay attention to the dog's body language. Stiff posture, a fixed stare, raised hackles, or growling are clear indicators of tension. Environmental factors also matter. Narrow paths, livestock, or children nearby can increase reactivity. A dog roaming far ahead of its owner may be less predictable.

### How to respond when a dog approaches you

The guidance emphasises simple, practical steps:

- Stand still and turn slightly sideways
- Keep hands low or fold arms
- Use a calm, steady voice

Tone is especially important. As the guidance explains, *"Dogs respond far more to tone than to the actual words you use."* Neutral phrases such as *"I'm just passing"* help keep both Inspector and dog relaxed.

### If behaviour escalates

Should a dog become aggressive, the priority is to avoid escalation:

- Do not shout or run
- Create space using a bag, coat, or stick as a barrier
- Retreat slowly without turning your back
- Move behind a solid object if possible

If an owner is present, volunteers are encouraged to use calm, non-confrontational language: *"Hello - I just want to make sure I can pass safely."* Most owners respond positively to polite, practical requests such as asking them to hold or bring their dog close.

### When not to proceed

Inspector welfare comes first. Volunteers should withdraw and report the incident if:

- A dog blocks the path
- The owner cannot control the dog
- The situation feels unsafe

### Reporting and escalation

All incidents should be reported to the Area Officer and Footpath Inspection Coordinator, including location, behaviour, and any owner details. The guidance also sets out when police or local authorities should be contacted, for example, if a dog is dangerously out of control, an attack occurs, or livestock worrying is taking place.
In very rare cases, Inspectors may come across the serious issue of deliberate obstruction of PRoWs using dogs. In such cases, Inspectors should withdraw immediately, record details, and report to PNFS. The Highway Authority or police may need to be involved.

### Supporting our volunteers

This new guidance strengthens PNFS's duty of care and provides Inspectors with clear, advice. It will be circulated to all volunteers, added to the PNFS website, included in induction materials, and made available as a one-page field sheet.
For many Inspectors, dog encounters will continue to be uneventful. But having calm, practical steps to follow ensures that volunteers feel supported and stay safe whatever they meet on the path ahead.



# Voices of the Peaks ~ Buxton International Festival

*David Gosling*

*These rolling hills, you hold me still,*
*From Hope to Hathersage,*
*And though I've drifted like the rain,*
*I'm coming home again.*

With these words, the Voices of the Peaks ended their premiere of Hannah Brine's choral programme inspired by the Peak District. Every seat was taken at St John's Church on a hot summer's day, 11 July, at the Buxton International Festival. Didsbury Singers, Bollington Singers and High Peak Singers, led by Hannah Brine, and supported by multi-instrumentalist Jenni Watson and Ed Simpson on the piano performed an emotional tribute to the dramatic landscapes, rich history and strong sense of community of the Derbyshire Peak District.

The last of the six musical evocations of the Peaks, entitled These Rolling Hills, was dedicated "In Loving memory of Mike Barnes". Singing in the front row of the choir was Rebecca Baron, Mike's wife and a long-time supporter of PNFS. This musical tribute was a moving homage to Mike who died ten years ago this year.

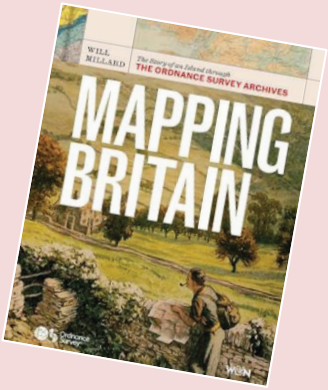
Not only did Mike contribute in many ways to the work of PNFS as a footpaths inspector and creator of our first website, but he also bequeathed to the Society a generous legacy which, following his instructions, is dedicated to funding legal cases. When the Society is faced with legal costs, as we were last year in our successful bid to prove that a right of way exists over Brooks Drive in Hale Barns, Trafford, we draw on Mike's legacy. The music of Voices of the Peaks celebrated his profound connection with the hills in which he lived and which he sought to protect through PNFS.

Choir leader and composer, Hannah Brine, who is also a superb jazz singer created, along with Jenni Watson, this new large scale choral suite to celebrate 75 years of the Peak District National Park. The music sits alongside a wider project to walk the 95 Ethels, capturing the landscapes, personal reflections, and conversations with people connected to the Peaks. Hannah has said that "the project spans nature, heritage, creativity, access, and community and is a celebration of place, people, and the shared human need to connect – to landscape, to history, and to each other". I am looking forward to walking with Hannah as part of this project soon and will share more afterwards.

Singers in the choirs have been creating art, poetry and photography themed around the Peak District in order to capture and celebrate the landscape. These and some extracts from the music can be found in a creative showcase on the fabulous website at https://hannahbrinechoirs.co.uk/voices-of-the-peaks.

## Book review: Mapping Britain

*Mel Bale, Membership Secretary and Trustee*




*Will Millard, published Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2026*

*Mapping Britain* is not intended as a history of the Ordnance Survey. Instead it offers a chronological exploration of British mapping via the organisation's various archives. It is divided into four sections: 'The History of Mapmaking', 'On Trail', 'At Home' and 'This Wild Island'. The book is lavishly illustrated throughout, and I'm pleased to say printed on very good quality paper.

As the title suggests, the focus is firmly on Britain: England, Scotland and Wales. Ireland is barely mentioned, despite being the first country to be systematically surveyed in detail by the Ordnance Survey, in the six-inch survey undertaken between 1824 and 1846. There is, however, a short subsection entitled 'Islands within our Island'.

Will Millard is an experienced writer and broadcaster. He brings an infectious enthusiasm to the book, and his love of maps shines throughout. He has selected a fascinating range of topics through which to tell the story of mapping Britain. The central theme of the book is change: in the role of the OS; in the types and styles of maps it has produced and the methods used to create them; and in their intended audiences and uses.

*Mapping Britain* is a fascinating read, and I highly recommend it. My only criticism concerns the size of some illustrations: despite their quality, the finer details can be difficult to make out. Not for the first time, I wished an ebook version had been included in the purchase price, allowing readers to enlarge the maps and examine them more closely. A longer, more detailed review is available at pnfs.org.uk/os_mapping_britain.




*Latest signpost 668 erected on 18.9.26 by David Morton, John Hodgson, Andy Garland and Linda Smith*

# Signpost report

*David Morton, Signpost Officer and Trustee*

**Prospects, signpost donations and new signposts:**
The two signposts at Brinepits Farm near Audlem are still waiting for the legal department of Cheshire East to sign off the paperwork, as they have since autumn 2025. Meanwhile, thanks to excellent suggestions and active help from several PNFS members, six new signposts have been erected, as follows.
663 at Howlers Knowl farm, near Jenkin Chapel.
664 south of Warslow - suggested by Bill Parke.
665 south of Denby Pottery, south of Ripley, Derbyshire.
666 on Cromford Canal towpath, west of Ripley - both suggested by Ken Brockway
667 north of Chevin Golf Course, Duffield - suggested and donated by David Moreton *(see elsewhere in this issue).*
668 at Little Budworth Country Park, Cheshire West - suggested by Linda Smith, donated by Manchester CHA Rambling and Social Club. It is their ninth donation.
Bill, Ken, David and Linda not only suggested these locations, but also negotiated landowners' consent and the support of local walking groups, then actively helped with their erection.

**Memorial signpost in the pipeline:**
669 in memory of Martin Riley of Shaw, Oldham is ready and will be erected in Dunwood Park, Shaw in good time for the memorial walk planned by Ken Smith on Wednesday 9 December.

## Lost and found

332 at Chanderhill, near Chesterfield was given a new plate on 21 Apr 2026.
001 at Carr Meadow went missing in late 2025. It was replaced by a new and updated signpost in late June 2026 at a spot 25 m east of the original location, where it will be less visible to passing traffic on the main road.
I have no plans to replace 407 at Mixon, as we still have two signs (405 and 406) nearby. This applies equally to 389, which has been knocked down repeatedly at Brennand Farm, Dunsop Bridge, Bowland. We have two other signs (388 and 390) on the same farm.

## Maintenance

**July:** David Hey inspected several signs near Belmont and removed 3 plates (130, 235 and 253), which he brought to me for shotblasting and powder coating (SPC) at SBC then highlighting by me.
I renewed our supply of softwood posts. The price of oak ones is four times greater. Variously cleaned, repainted, reposted 102, 368, 414, 367. Reinstated 403 at Weston Underwood near Kedleston with John H, after erecting 665 at Denby.
**August:** Cleaned 256 and 423; took 336 and 549 for SPC; retrieved 278 from Flagg; repaired 317 above Birch Vale. Helped by David Hey collected and reinstated 130, 235 and 253. Linda Smith and Andy cleaned/repainted numerous signs.

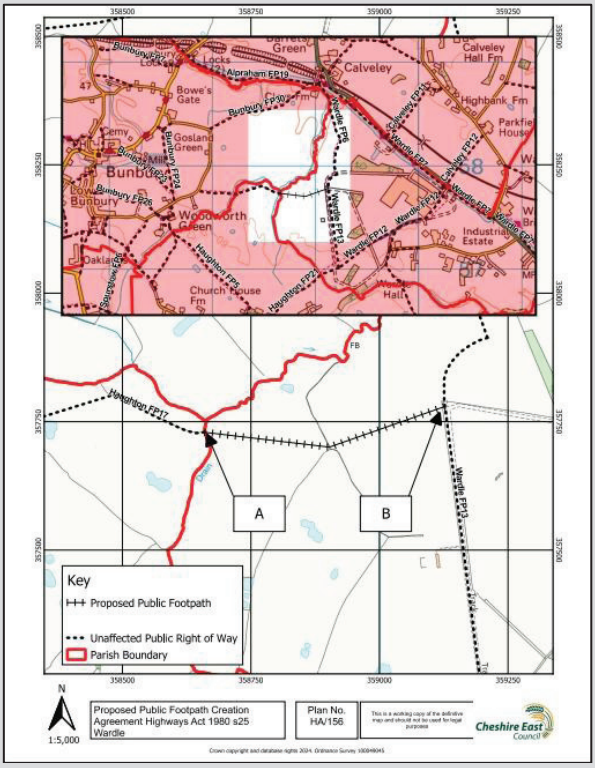
Fingerpost 8 at Bullshaw Farm below Lantern Pike has been damaged again and moved out of position. Last year its six fingers had rotted and were either ready to drop off or were illegible. I contacted PDNP and Derbyshire's Pennine BW officer and managed to get two new fingers made, which I collected and fitted in December. In April trustee Tim Lewis inspected the sign for me and found 2 or 3 older fingers had disappeared and the post had been moved several yards and propped by a blocked gate. I contacted Richard Pett of PDNP. He has kindly offered to get a new signpost made and repositioned. I sent him photographs and sketches of the six fingers and am hoping for the best.
Thanks again to the many members of the society who have helped me this year, including Linda Smith and Andy, Ken Smith, P Knight, T Lewis, D Gartside, D Bodey, H Everett, C Evans, B Hadfield, R Thorpe, P Marshall, A Cooper, D Moreton, R Davies, D Hey, I Tate.

**More suggestions would be most welcome, particularly after the "Gap Year" of 2025, when only two were erected. We used to average twenty per year. Considerations re new signposts are printed on page 25 of the 2025 Annual Report.**

# Wardle new footbridges and new footpath

*Nigel Howe, Improvements Officer*

I was approached in November 2024 by Cheshire East Council regarding a proposal to form a new footpath. A landowner in the Parish of Wardle had offered to sign a creation agreement under section 25 of the Highways Act 1980 to create a new public footpath. The proposal would see a new footpath link the current cul-de-sac of Bunbury FP31 and Haughton FP17 with Wardle FP13. See map below.




The aim was to form new links in the public rights of way (PRoW) network identified through consultation on the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan. By linking the cul-de-sac footpath to the rest of the PRoW network, the proposed new footpath would offer additional circular route options for local users in the Bunbury-Haughton-Wardle-Alpraham area, including links to the towpath of the Shropshire Union Canal. When travelling in a westerly direction, the proposed new footpath would offer views across the Cheshire countryside to the Sandstone Ridge landmarks of Beeston Castle and the Peckforton Hills.

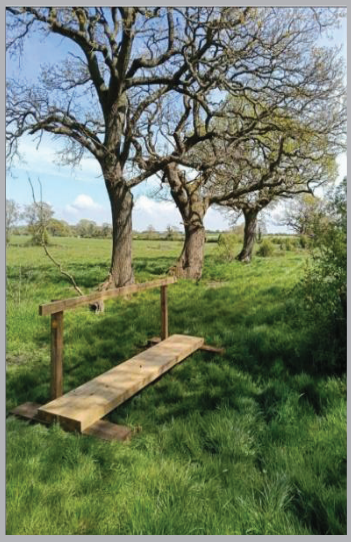
We were approached by Cheshire East for funding for 2 new bridges, one 4 metres long and one 5 metres long with gates. A proposal was put to our Trustees

and approved. This was an exciting project to be involved with, as the opportunities to create new footpaths are very rare.

Cheshire East then commenced the necessary documentation to form the new footpath. It was initially approved by the Highways and Transport Committee, followed by drafting and signing of the agreement by all parties. However, during construction of the new footpath, it was discovered that an additional sleeper bridge was required. This was brought to the attention of PNFS for additional funding, again this was approved by our Trustees. The project was finally completed in June 2026.









# Boggarts and bludgeons

*Ron Braddock, Member*

In 1872, inclement weather, during spring and summer, probably curtailed the plans, of many excursionists and keen ramblers, who had travelled to Hayfield to see Kinder Scout. Instead, many visitors strolled to Hayfield fair to see various livestock and stalls, before joining others in a warm and welcoming public house. It was reported (*North Cheshire Herald*, 1872, p2) that: 'On Saturday last the annual May fair for the sale of cattle and other live stock was held, when, notwithstanding the cold winds prevailing, there was a large attendance of farmers and sightseers.'(i) Cattle, including sheep, lambs and pigs, were displayed, and visitors could inspect two mowing machines and purchase goods from various stallholders that sold gingerbread, pottery and toys. Entertainment was provided at the Royal Hotel, by a singer and a pianist, and this must have been appreciated by many residents and visitors who sought protection from the inclement weather. Recreation was also provided, at the George Inn, and newspaper readers were informed (Ibid) that: 'A roaring trade was driven at almost all the "Publics," the intense cold, aided by the rain and snow which fell, driving most of the visitors into more hospitable quarters than the street.'(ii) Regrettably, the weather, in Hayfield, was also inclement in July, and it was explained (*North Derbyshire & North Cheshire Advertiser*, 1872, p8), that: 'The weather at this place on Sunday afternoon was very wet, and had the effect of keeping many people at home who would doubtless have otherwise attended their respective places of worship, or viewed the beautiful scenery with which the neighbourhood abounds.'(iii)



In 1872 the residents of these picturesque cottages may have seen a champion clog walker

Although many excursionists, and keen walkers, may have cancelled outings to Kinder Scout, because of the inclement weather, it did not prevent a champion clog walker from visiting Hayfield, much to the delight and surprise of several inhabitants, who were quite amazed to see him dashing through the village. Competitions actually existed, at the time, for athletic men to walk 50 miles, in the shortest possible time, and the dedicated athlete probably hoped to set a new record for this achievement. The gentleman, was obviously a keen participant in a demanding sport that attracted several enthusiasts. Champion clog walkers were evidently admired and respected, by the general public, because the resolute athletes confronted difficult challenges and were determined to succeed.

Newspaper readers were informed (Ibid) that: 'On Saturday morning, some of the inhabitants were startled by seeing an individual in linsey shirt, embroidered cap,

and “tights” come rushing into the village at a mad pace, and after going as far as the bridge, suddenly turn and dart back again as though he had a whole legion of boggarts at his heels.’(iv) The amateur athlete, was occasionally mentioned in newspaper articles and was highly regarded for his endeavours, although many residents of Hayfield, were probably unaware of his achievements. It was explained (Ibid) that: ‘It eventually oozed out that the man styled himself “Professor Poplin, the champion clog walker,” and that he was making a pretence of walking 50 miles in 10 hours, the course being from New Mills to Hayfield and back.’(v) Why Professor Poplin chose Derbyshire roads to set a new record is unknown but Poplin, who came from Thirsk, Yorkshire, travelled around the north of England attempting to set new records for his sport. Another report (*Glossop-dale Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter*, 1872, p5) provided more details about this energetic gentleman and stated that: ‘On Saturday last Robert Poplin the great champion clog walker performed the feat of walking 50 miles in 10 hours the distance being from New Mills to Hayfield …’(vi) In order to complete the attempt, he visited Hayfield several times during the day and generated more interest every time he returned. When he arrived at Hayfield, at 7.30 am, he caused little attention but, at 8.40 am, several intrigued bystanders had collected to witness his arrival. He visited Hayfield 7 times to complete his undertaking and visited the village for the last time about 5.50 pm. It was also reported (Ibid) that the wet weather may have affected his performance but: ‘… we have no doubt the walking paid after all for we hear there was a good sum collected for him, and as he stated he hoped to please the fancy which we think he did.’(vii) Professor Poplin was evidently pleased with his endeavour although other clog walkers often challenged his records.



*In 1872, Professor Poplin visited the centre of Hayfield several times*

Excursionists, who frequently visited Hayfield and Kinder Scout, knew that their plans could be disrupted by inclement weather so in May and July, 1872, many visitors probably enjoyed a brief stroll around the village instead of exploring the Derbyshire countryside. It was explained in an article, specially written for a newspaper about ‘Kinder Scout and the Woodlands’ (*Derbyshire Times*, 1872, p3) that: ‘A result of the mountainous character of the district is that the climate generally is much more cold and variable than in the Eastern and Southern portion of the country, and the annual rainfall, from its being the first high ground that intercepts the rain clouds from the western seam is far greater than it is in districts to the east and west of it …’(viii) Newspaper readers were also informed (Ibid) that: ‘This, which is often such a grievance to the tourist, together with the great elevation of the county, and the prevalence of severe storms of wind, render the climate for a great part of the year cold and unkindly.’(ix) Excursionists and keen ramblers, who ventured to Kinder Scout when the weather

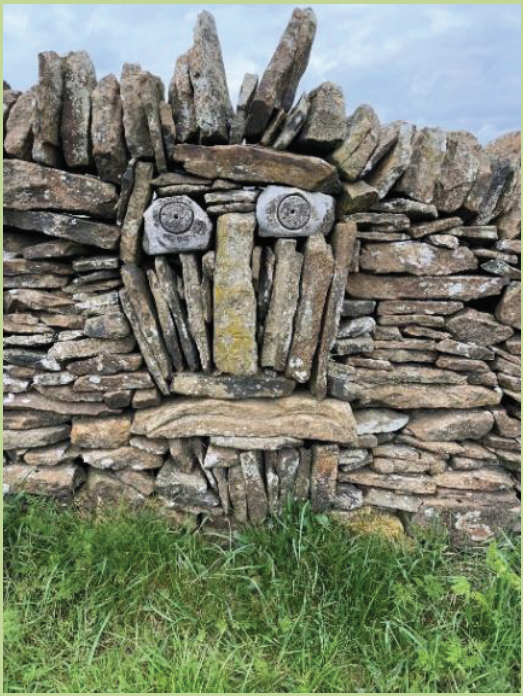
was inclement, had to be well prepared because conditions, on the bleak plateau, could be treacherous. Apparently, some Hayfield residents were prepared to take tourists to Kinder Scout but the names of these experienced guides are unknown. It is possible that Luke Garside, bookseller and newsagent, provided tourists, with the necessary details and Joseph Walton, of the Royal Hotel, may have also provided tourists, who bought drinks and meals, with some names. It was stated (Ibid) that: 'There is no necessity for guides to the summit, though there are men at Hayfield who will gladly conduct the nervous pedestrian, or a party of tourists, for a small gratuity. But the guides offer another suggestion worthy of remembrance. The start should be made early in the morning, after a very substantial breakfast. Every man should be provided with a stout walking stick, and a well filled sandwich box.'(x)

The possibility of hiring a guide to take individuals or groups, to Kinder Scout, was not widely publicised so many tourists made their own way to the plateau, after asking basic directions, or following details provided in a recently published guidebook. Unfortunately, many excursionists and keen ramblers, who planned to visit Kinder Scout, were often misled by information contained in various guidebooks and newspaper articles. A Manchester gentleman (1872, p2), who wrote to the Editor of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, explained that he had walked, with other ramblers, towards Kinder Scout and stated: ''Here there was a small stone fence, over which we stepped and held on our way for perhaps 200 yards when our further progress in that direction was barred by two individuals who ordered us off the "grounds," not deigning to inform us by what authority they did so. Wishing to avoid a disturbance, we turned and recrossed the fence, intending to try the passage of the hill from some other point.'(xi) The ramblers were determined to follow a route along the Kinder plateau and decided to avoid observant gamekeepers and make another attempt. They noticed a party of walkers, consisting of between 20 and 30 people, walking along the edge of Kinder Scout, without restriction, so they took another chance to reach the summit. Unfortunately, as they proceeded, a whistle was sounded that suggested that they had been spotted by members of the distant party or patrolling gamekeepers. Shortly afterwards, the ramblers were surprised by two dogs that leaped towards them, jaws agape and howling, and circled them before two gamekeepers arrived. Newspaper readers were informed (Ibid) that: 'The one who got up to us first seized me by the coat collar and gave me a severe thrust with his bludgeon below the chest. This almost doubled me up, and I felt at once broken in body and vanquished in spirit. Another of our party fared after a similar fashion with the other keeper, and the result was that we were literally beaten and hunted down the hillside.'(xii) Regrettably, the unfortunate event was not given the press coverage it truly deserved although the letter, of the Manchester gentleman, was reprinted in the *Buxton Advertiser* and the *North Derbyshire & North Cheshire Advertiser*. Unfortunately, a prominent headline, such as 'Ramblers assaulted by gamekeepers,' was not used to describe the event. Evidently, a report about ramblers being assaulted by gamekeepers, on a private moorland estate, was apparently unnewsworthy. This was the situation that faced many excursionists and ramblers who wanted to visit Kinder Scout. Some visitors found the rough terrain, on the moorland area, challenging and discovered that aggressive gamekeepers were dangerous too.

References
(i) *North Cheshire Herald* (1872) 'Hayfield', 18 May, p2.
(ii) Ibid.
(iii) *North Derbyshire & North Cheshire Advertiser* (1872) 'Hayfield', 13 July, p8.
(iv) Ibid
(v) Ibid.
(vi) *Glossop-dale Chronicle & North Derbyshire Reporter* (1872) 'Hayfield', 13 July, p5.
(vii) Ibid.
(viii) *Derbyshire Times* (1872) 'The High Peak of Derbyshire. 1. Kinder Scout and the Woodlands', 20 July, p3.
(ix) Ibid.
(x) Ibid.
(xi) Manchester gentleman (1872) *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 30 August, p2.
(xii) Ibid.

# A hidden smile in a high peak wall

*Richard Davies, Footpath Inspection Coordinator*



Every so often, a walk in the High Peak reveals something small and delightful. On a recent inspection day, I noticed a dry-stone wall with a quietly crafted "face" built into the stones. Two rounded eyes, a long nose, and a neat slab for a mouth. Most walkers would pass it without ever seeing it. I can imagine the dry-stone waller leaving their creative touch as a personal signature, added during a long day's work. Because the stones match the surrounding gritstone, the feature blends perfectly into the landscape, waiting for someone observant enough to spot it.

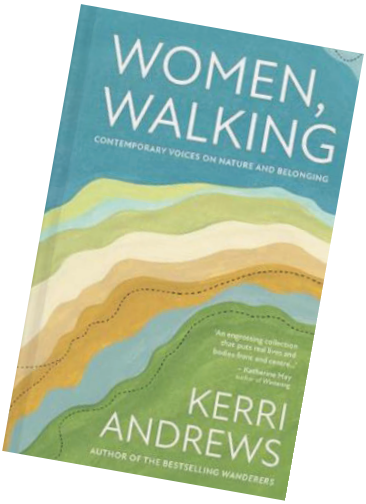
## *That's one way to get stoned*

It's a reminder that the countryside isn't only shaped by weather and geology, but by the hands, and humour of the people who care for it. If you've spotted something unusual, delightful, or just plain puzzling on your rambles, why not share it in *Signpost*? Photographs etc can be emailed to editor@pnfs.org.uk or Path Checker app 'Place of Interest' Report.

# Book review: Women Walking: Contemporary Voices on Nature and Belonging

*Pauline Williams, Member*

*Kerri Andrews, published by Batsford, 2026*




Kerri Andrews, director of creative writing at University College Cork, is an editor, writer and walker. This new publication is a collection of work by ten writers with different experiences of walking, what it means to them and how it influences their creativity. In the introduction we are invited to regard walking as, 'a way to access the inner wellspring of creativity'... that quietens the 'din of everyday life and its endless concerns and chatter so that something deeper can come to the fore' (p2).

The chapters focus on a range of walking including long distance footpaths, mountain climbing, urban walking, local walks and walking as a person with disabilities. Each contribution provides a nuanced exploration of what the experience of walking can achieve from understanding landscape, coming to terms with bereavement and loss to reclaiming space and relearning to walk because of serious illness.

We follow Harry Josephine Giles as she climbs Cruachan Beann to, 'shake my bones. To see what I see. To win the summit. To learn the landscape. To be alone with my thoughts' (p10). Gail Simmons reflects on the different walks she does from her mother's house in the Chilterns where she keeps walking boots that are, 'an old pair, their soles worn flat from years of walking ... but their only stories are on the gentle footpaths that lattice the hills and valleys' (p60). This is in stark contrast to her main pair of boots that live with her in North Yorkshire. These she uses when undertaking long-distance walks. Both types of walking provide time for reflection. Following the 'old pathways around my village, I'm most certainly walking rather than hiking' (p77). Hiking, 'implies something more strenuous, through rougher terrain or over longer distances' (p77). Both types of walking help her to come to terms with the grief experienced after her father's death.

The focus for Anita Sethi's walking is Manchester. During the third lockdown of the Covid pandemic, she explores the city at night setting out at midnight when, 'walking at such an hour can be both terrifying and terrific, with the streets eerily empty and only my own shadow for company.' (p82). Whilst walking Sethi reflects on the history of the huge warehouses and 'the lives of those whose labour enabled Manchester to become rich from cotton' (p87).

Helen Mort writes about her experiences in Greenland when, 'I sense a line of poetry, iambic, regular. I start mouthing the words to myself, silently glad that I am not being observed' (p167). For Kate Davis walking can be a struggle. Davis caught

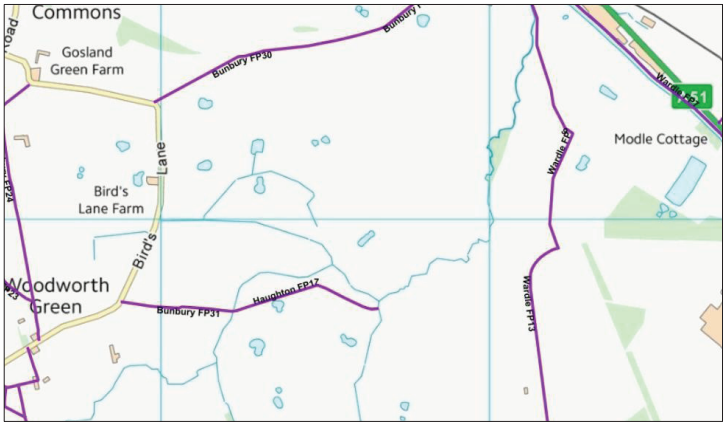
paralytic polio as a small child and whilst she can walk, 'I just can't do much of it without stumbling and falling' (p188). Her chapter takes issue with the numerous images of, 'lone enraptured males and females demonstrating just how easy it is (p191). This is a powerful rebuttal of the sanitised, commercial image of the active outdoors that does not recognise any other way of being and living. Her response to the question, 'Why does walking matter?' (p191) is, 'of course it does. But walking matters more when you can't do it. Or if like me, you can't do it properly' (p192).

Each chapter provides us with far more than just the act of walking. They go beyond the oft-quoted advice to 'go outdoors to experience the healing effect of being in nature'.

I haven't covered every contributor to this book, but each writer has a very personal response to the walking they do and how it has helped shape them as individuals through their creativity. This has been earned. Walking is not regarded as a cure-all, and it's not treated as a sop that will cure all ills. It is, however, a fundamental aspect of who these writers are and on reflection who we all are. Reading about how walking inspires these writers has been a pleasure, providing a glimpse into other worlds and ways of thinking.

## Erratum - A cul-de-sac no longer

In Richard Vickery's article, *A cul-de-sac no longer* in the previous issue of *Signpost*, the wrong map was shown on p26. The editor is happy to correct this error by reproducing the correct pre-24 June 2026 map which shows the cul-de-sac. Apologies to anyone who got confused.




*Definitive Map, pre-24 June 2026 (Cheshire East)*
*© Crown copyright 2026 Ordnance Survey. Media 026/26*

# The King Charles III England Coast Path National Trail

*Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector*




*Urban explorer on roof of Lords Line shell*



Mel will tell or has told us how much of the KC3 passes through the PNFS territory but here I take a look at a section in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Well it was Humberside so I start in what is now once again, Lincolnshire.

*Under the Humber Bridge Barton upon Humber*

For members who do not have a problem with heights I would highly (pun intended) recommend a 2.5 mile hike along part of the E2 European Long Distance Route across the Humber Bridge. Start on the south bank underneath the bridge, also the start point of the Viking Way through Lincolnshire to Oakham in Rutland. There is a connection there with two political groupings that failed. Strangely there is still a Humberside Police Force and Leicestershire is still the Force in Rutland.

There is a path on the east and west side of the bridge but only one may be open when you visit. There is no charge to walk or cycle over, now £2/car I'm told. There is also the option for a free ride, for most PNFS members, using their bus pass. The 350 and 250 link Barton-upon-Humber and Hessle.

I have in the past mentioned Slow Ways so after a look at the OS map my next port of call is usually the Slow Ways website. This was in fact my introduction to the KC3 as I looked for walks from our short stay in Hull. Fairly unusually there is only one Slow Way route Hessle to Hull and it follows the Humber Estuary. Most of it is also designated the Trans Pennine Trail, Yorkshire Wolds Way and now KC3.

Soon after leaving Hessle it's trapped between the tidal Humber and the A63. The Slow Way reviews, there are thirteen, report concern about the wooden fence which offers the only protection from the traffic, I gave this stretch a miss.

For an evening walk I set out from our city centre hotel heading west. My once trusty OS map shows a footpath north of Albert Dock (Hull FP26) plus a potential link

onto the KC3 to return. This was the first of too many closed paths that I was to encounter. I see another possible link further west, will that be available?

Fortunately it was (Hull FP27). Not the most inviting location, derelict and graffiti covered warehouses, interesting but a bit intimidating especially when I spot an urban explorer on a roof looking like 'Another Place' by Antony Gormley. A rotting walkway crosses derelict lock gates but no need to cross, phew! Leaving all that behind the path is trapped by fenced dock warehouses one side and water the other, or at low tide, mud. It's not the most inviting public right of way and I can't imagine King Charles being invited to inspect this part of his path (Hull FP28).

After a good mile I spy steps ahead and anticipate a bridge over the dock entrance. The steps approach the end wall of a warehouse then a walkway continues over the roof of the warehouse and eventually down the other end. What an amazing solution to keep pedestrians separated from the forklifts and dock traffic below. Back down at ground level the path crosses lock gates and finally returns to the real world of streets and houses.



*Rooftop - spot the King Charles III public footpath*

# Membership Matters

*Mel Bale, Membership Secretary and Trustee*

I am happy to report that membership numbers are relatively stable on the moment. Many of our new members have joined to become Footpath Inspectors, so thanks are due to our Inspectorate team of Richard, Linda and Danny.

The Editor and I are continuing our Parish Council recruitment campaign, progress is slow but steady. The initiative has resulted in an invitation to address a conference of Cheshire East Parish Councils about the work of PNFS and Rights of Way law. My fellow Trustee, Chad Wilkinson gladly accepted the invitation, and has told me that his talk was well received. As a result, several Parish Councils have recently affiliated to the Society. Great work Chad!

# Lopping S245

*David Morton, Signpost Officer*

Recently I had been lopping the holly obscuring S245. This signpost stands on a currently closed footpath near Throstlenest Farm, Lyme Handley. On 10 September it was reported to me as missing by a member who took a photograph of it from the barrier 20 feet away. My heart sank, but overnight I remembered when I last pruned the holly surrounding it. I paid a visit, but couldn't see it from the farm lane. However, a few minutes of pruning the three years of new growth and it was revealed in good working order as can be seen on the photographs. S413 at the back of Stockport Golf Course also gets badly overgrown with brambles, etc and currently needs a good trampling. **Members are encouraged** to pitch in with secateurs and boots in the fight against rampant vegetation swallowing our signs.












# Marple FP78

*Ken Brockway, Member*

This will be old news to our Greater Manchester members so I write it for my own enjoyment and our wider membership. In July I took a linear walk from Romiley to Chinley, more on that in a future Signpost. The walk started along the Peak Forest Canal as far as the junction with the Macclesfield Canal all known to me from boating adventures. Leaving the canal my route followed a recreational route, diamonds on the OS map. I know not which route it was as there are so many in that area. It's an enclosed path and in places fairly narrow, so when I met other users I, or they, had to stand aside. After crossing the railway, along which I had travelled to start my walk, the path turned to follow alongside the line. There is a gentle descent with a stone wall between me and the line and a railing protecting me from a steep drop. The path continues to descend and the stone wall soon dominates to one side. The firm earth path suddenly ends and I'm on a sort of bridge, a treetop walk, hanging from the side of the stone wall with a substantial drop below me. I would have to pay admission for a similar treat elsewhere. Finally the path turns and I'm back on a real path.



Inspection of OS maps shows how challenging it must have been to build the railway on the steep cliff side. The rail line is at 400 ft while the River Goyt just a few yards away at Bottom's Bridge is at 300 feet. The contour lines are packed in a small space shown as woodland. I haven't found an OS map before the railway arrived at Marple in 1865 but https://www.marple.website/ offers this quote "From Marple North Tunnel the line had to cling to the precipitous sides of the Goyt valley - almost sheer cliffs in places, to reach Strines" Marple FP78 offers clear evidence of that challenge.

# S664 at Warslow

*David Morton, Signpost Officer*




S664 was erected at Warslow on 30 July. Bill Parke and his wife Gail were involved throughout. John Hodgson is our long-serving contractor who does the bulk of the hard, physical work.






# Parish notes: Alstonefield, Staffordshire

*Bella Aime*

Alstonefield lies in the limestone country of the White Peak, close to the Derbyshire border. Set on high ground between the valleys of the Dove and the Manifold, it is a Staffordshire parish with an especially attractive combination of village buildings, farmland and access to the surrounding dales.

The village rewards a little exploration before setting off on a walk. Its conservation area reflects a settlement shaped by agriculture, with limestone buildings and the spaces between them contributing to its character. Here, the village and its surrounding fields seem parts of the same landscape rather than separate attractions.

St Peter's Church provides a particularly rich connection with the past. The Grade I listed building contains stonework dating from the twelfth century, with rebuilding and additions from several later periods. Fragments of carved Anglo-Saxon crosses survive inside, evidence of a religious history predating the present church. It is therefore more than a single medieval building: it preserves traces of many generations of worship and craftsmanship.



The churchyard deserves attention too. A local recording project has transcribed the legible inscriptions from more than 730 headstones and memorials in the church and churchyard. The oldest recorded headstone is dated 3 April 1518 and commemorates Anne Green.

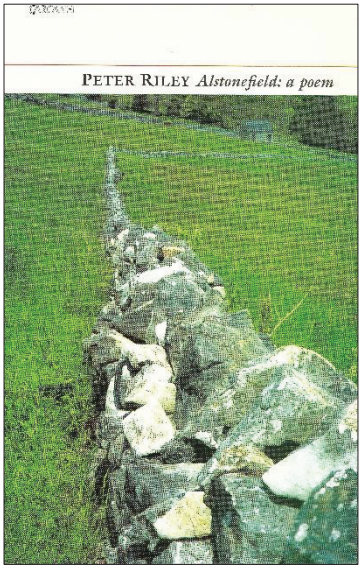
Walking has a particularly strong place in the life of Alstonefield. One unusual example is the annual **Leaden Boot Challenge**, which began after thieves stole lead from the roof of St Peter's in 2010. Faced with a bill of around £10,000 to re-lead the roof and improve its security, villagers organised several fundraising schemes, including a demanding walking event around the parish.



The result was a 26.2-mile walking and running challenge involving some 4,800 feet of ascent and descent. Starting and finishing at Alstonefield, its route makes a great circuit through the surrounding country, taking in Milldale, the Dove valley, Ilam, Throwley, Grindon, Wetton Mill, Ecton Hill, Hulme End, Sheen, Hartington and Beresford Dale before returning to the village. The original church appeal succeeded, but the challenge continued and has since raised more than £45,000 for local causes. Its name, the **Leaden Boot**, neatly combines the theft that prompted it with the likely condition of the legs of anyone completing it.

Less strenuous walks offer the same contrast between open upland country and the enclosed limestone scenery of the Dove valley. Milldale lies less than a mile southeast of the village, making it a natural destination for a walk down towards the river. Circular routes can link Alstonefield with Milldale and Dovedale, allowing the village to serve as a starting point for exploring both sides of the Staffordshire-Derbyshire boundary. The return uphill is part of the pleasure: leaving the river behind, the landscape opens again into fields and wider views.

Alstonefield has also inspired an unusual literary response. The poet **Peter Riley** made the village and its surrounding landscape the subject of his book-length *Alstonefield: A Poem*, published by Carcanet in 2003 after an earlier, shorter version appeared in 1995. Written in ten-line stanzas, it is not a narrative poem so much as an extended lyrical meditation in which walking through the limestone countryside prompts reflections on memory, history, work, music and the possibility of peace.




Riley, born in Stockport in 1940, spent ten years living in the Peak District and developed a strong attachment to Alstonefield, returning repeatedly to a place whose combination of challenge and serenity fascinated him. In the poem, the movement of the walker through the landscape is accompanied by the movement of the mind. Rural beauty sits alongside humour, wordplay and an awareness of poverty, mortality and the disturbances of the wider world. The result places Alstonefield within a long English tradition of writing in which landscape becomes a means of thinking about life in its many forms.

A visit to Alstonefield can combine a walk with time spent looking at the village and church - and perhaps, for the literary-minded walker, reading a little Peter Riley. The parish's appeal lies in the relationship between paths, farming, buildings, history and landscape. The Leaden Boot Challenge demonstrates how strongly that landscape remains part of village life, while Riley's poem shows how a walk through the same country can become something more: a way of thinking about place, memory and our own passage through it.

*Church Image: Copyright https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/ Neil Theasby*

# PNFS walks

IT IS VITAL that attendees check all train times and pnfs.org.uk/walks for any updates



All walks are held on Wednesdays

**11 NOVEMBER** (Short) Sue Davies 07967 035784 suekercher@hotmail.co.uk. Hathersage circular 7 mile walk from Hathersage Station, following the Derwent to Grindleford Bridge, then up to Padley Chapel and returning to Hathersage. Mostly track or path with some road walking. Train from Piccadilly 09:47 Train from Sheffield 10:14 Walk from Hathersage Station 10:45 (or when train arrives). S32 1DT.

**25 NOVEMBER** (Long) David Gosling 07841 647275 davidgosling@pnfs.org.uk. 11 miles and 835 feet of ascent, from Stockport Railway Station, via Reddish Vale, Haughton Vale, Peak Forest Canal, Woodley, Romiley, Far Benfield, Compstall, finish at Marple Railway Station. The is a varied walk with only short sections of road walking, level for the first half and then has some modest ups and downs in the second half. 10:14 train from Manchester Piccadilly to arrive at Stockport 10:23. WALK STARTS AT 10.30 SK3 9HZ.

**9 DECEMBER** (Long and short) Ken Smith 07918 154959 kensmith4rj@icloud.com.

**PNFS Martin Riley memorial Greenfield to Shaw walk**. Please note that this walk has been deferred until after a PNFS Signpost dedicated to Martin has been installed. The landowner has already given permission to install. This is a combined long and short walk 9 miles. Walk details to follow.

**13 JANUARY** (Short) - Walk leader required.
**27 JANUARY** (Long) - Walk leader required.
**10 FEBRUARY** (Short) - Walk leader required.
**24 FEBRUARY** (Long) - Walk leader required.
**10 MARCH** (Short) - Walk leader required.
**24 MARCH** (Long) - Walk leader required.

If you like to lead a walk, contact Ross (short walks) on rossmyd@gmail.com, or Ken (long walks) on kensmith4rj@icloud.com.




*September's short walk starting from Plumley station. Photograph by Ross Myddelton*




## S667 on the Midshires Way near the Chevin Golf Course, Duffield

*David Morton, Signpost Officer*

John Hodgson and I erected this on 15 September, helped by the donor, member David Moreton, and his friend Nick.

