

Magazine of the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

Signpost

Number 87 - Spring 2026





From the Chair

Kathy Mclean



We said goodbye to 2025 and welcomed 2026 with a frosty cold spell over New Year. As I reflected on the year just gone, I felt positive about the achievements of PNFS in 2025, as you will see in this edition of *Signpost*.

Our Half Year Meeting in November was a chance to meet with members but also review progress against our strategic aims and we were able to describe a number of areas where we have achieved our goals or are at least on the way. There is still a great deal more to do, for example around succession planning for key roles and some of our more ambitious plans around membership and publicity as well as the constitution and legal form of the society.

Ensuring the footpaths are maintained and where unusable brought back into use is a key objective for PNFS, there were some truly brilliant examples of this last year, you will see these described in more detail in the magazine. Martin Hampar, one of our Courts and Inquiries Officers, had a successful outcome from his experience seeking to get a footpath reopened at a public inquiry. He described the process at the Half Year Meeting. Derek Bodey and Ken Brockway have set out two more fantastic examples. The message that 'persistence pays off' feels important. Well done to all the volunteers who have helped to improve our walking network for the public, without this detailed and tenacious endeavour it seems likely that some footpaths could easily be lost forever.

David Morton, who as you know is our Signpost officer, works with a small team and does a brilliant job of maintaining signposts and adding to their number. It is especially sad when signposts are damaged or even worse, removed. Unfortunately, Signpost 1 has disappeared. A search is underway, in which everyone can help, and publicity more generally is being generated to improve the potential for recovery. We must wonder what motivates someone to damage our silent ambassadors.

From time to time, I like to mention the less visible work which volunteers do. John Fisher receives and reviews the reports made through the Pathchecker app. He passes these on to the relevant inspectors who can inspect and report the faults. This is a valuable service, which is on my mind because between Christmas and New Year I received two of these reports from John. I was able to visit one straightaway, allowing early reporting to the Highways Authority.

As the days get longer, heralding spring with warmer weather, we can all hopefully enjoy the footpaths we protect.





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Annual General Meeting

ADVANCE NOTICE

This year's AGM will be held

on Saturday, 16 May

at Central Hall, Manchester

Full details will appear in the next issue of *Signpost* and pnfs.org.uk/agm

CORRECTION: On the rear cover of *Signpost* 86, Judy Gathercole's surname was mis-spelt. The editor apologises for this error.

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING WITH PNFS?

For more details on volunteering roles, go to pnfs.org.uk/volunteer



Cover: Nether Haddon FP9 from Haddon Hall
Photograph by Ken Brockway

Half Year Meeting Central Library, Sheffield

15 November 2025

David Gosling, Vice Chair

Storm Claudia played havoc with train timetables resulting in cancellations and delays across the north. The weather undoubtedly affected the numbers able to attend the Half Year Meeting, but just over 30 brave souls attended.

Kathy McLean, Chair of the Society, began the meeting with a summary of where we are with the Five-Year Strategy. We have successfully appointed a new treasurer, Martin Pugh, but the Society remains short of Courts and Inquiries officers and Area Officers. John Harker wondered if the name which included 'courts' was misleading and off-putting since we are almost never in a court room. Ideas anyone?

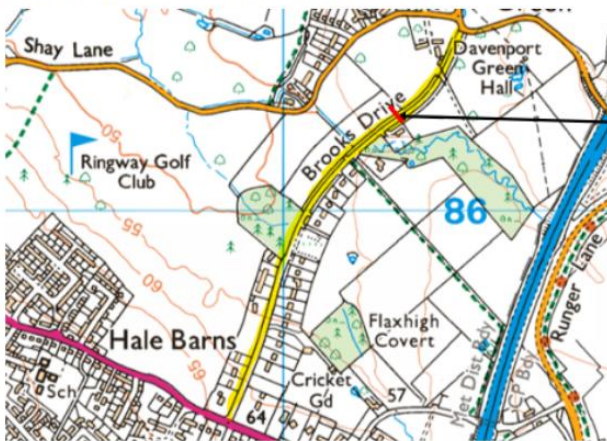
Publicity, social media and marketing continue to be areas where more help is needed to promote the work of the Society and recruit new members and volunteers. Can you assist?

Progress has been made with establishing sub-committees to support the management of the Society. The Finance Sub-Committee has met twice and so has the Infrastructure and Inspections Sub-Committee.

PNFS is currently an unincorporated charity which means that it operates under its own rules for a charitable purpose, without being a separate legal entity like a corporation. This means the trustees are personally liable for the charity's debts and liabilities and cannot enter into contracts or own property in the charity's name. There was strong support for the proposal that the Society considers becoming an Incorporated Charity.

David Gosling gave a report on recent bridges and footpath improvements and also alerted the meeting to the call for evidence statements from anyone who has walked the path through Styal Woods, a National Trust property near Wilmslow. The path has been closed since NT dismantled the Giant's Castle Bridge. If you walked this path before 1998 please contact Roger Thawley at GiantsCastleBridge@gmail.com.

Brooks Drive (Hale Road to Thorley Lane)



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2025 Ordnance
Survey. Media 034/25

Martin Hampar reported on a recent successful claim for a right of way on Brook's Drive, Hale, Trafford. The route, which had been used for many years by walkers and cyclists, was obstructed by a fence erected by residents of Brook's Drive in 2019. Martin collected evidence statements and made a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) application in 2020. The application was finally reviewed at a Public Inquiry in July 2025.

PNFS used its legal fund to employ a barrister to defend our case. We were successful and we are now waiting for Trafford Highway Authority to remove the fence. This was a great victory for the Society and the meeting thanked Martin for all his hard work.

Before: Gate and Path



After: Offending Fence



Another successful DMMO was reported by John Harker. An application had been made to recognise a path in Sprotbrough, near Doncaster, back in 2008. We were up against Graham Kirkham, a very rich landowner, but he recently withdrew his objection so the path, now known as Sprotbrough 22, has finally been recognised after 17 years!!!

This demonstrates the importance of our Society claiming and defending unregistered rights of way from Hale in Greater Manchester to Sprotbrough in Doncaster. Rhoda Barnett reports that he next struggle against private landowners is likely to be in Buxton - watch this space.

Our guest speaker was Morag Rose, founder of the Loiters Resistance Movement in Manchester, a lecturer at Liverpool University and author of the recently published book, *The Feminist Art of Walking*. Morag wants to draw our attention to aspects of walking that we may have missed. She is not interested in how many miles we have walked, or what pace we have walked at, but what we have noticed and experienced. She brings a perspective that is feminist and multi-layered.

She is interested in walking as a personal act which connects us, as sensory beings, to a place or places. She draws our attention to the many different ways of walking - loitering, meandering, stomping, strutting, striding - and how we can make walking meaningful.

She notes how people's different physical abilities and disabilities affect their walking, and draws our attention to the political implications of where we go and how we get there.

Walking can be a political act, an act of resistance to the ways in which the modern privatised and commercialised world is organised and imposed on us, particularly within



cities. Walking can also be a creative

activity. Morag illustrated this point with reference to a number of feminist walking artists who encourage playfulness in walking.

Morag thanked the Society for its support in the successful defence of Ralli Quays in Salford and the on-going claim for a right of way in Pomona Wharf.

After a sandwich lunch a dozen or more PNFS members set off with Morag on a loiter around central Sheffield. Despite the cold and wet weather the group were able to enjoy Morag's commentary and some extracts from her book.



Why? "Stories and streets matter"



- One tactic
- Not radical
- Connections
- Digital when we can
- River Irwell
- PSPO



Note: PSPO (Public Spaces Protection Order)

Persistence pays off

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector



FP27 (left) - Wrong. The long time overgrown and unused stile plus finger post both in the wrong location.
FP27 (right) - Correct. This shows the now unlocked and easy to use gate plus a well walked path beyond.

In May 2022 a path alongside the lower River Dove, Norbury and Roston FP27 was reported to Derbyshire County Council (DCC), no finger post from the road and many obstructions along the way. The then ROW inspector replied "I inspected the public footpaths yesterday and can advise that there was a stile within the hedge nearer to the county boundary that provides access along the public footpath with no need to climb over the locked gate. It (the stile) was covered in vegetation which I have now cleared."

I replied that the DCC online map showed the path down the track sloping gently to the gate so why did the finger post and stile offer a different route down a steep bank? A further reply from the DCC inspector "Thank you for the information. If you believe that the Council's mapping is incorrect please do not hesitate to report this matter and our Mapping Team will investigate this further". More delaying tactics so lets investigate ourselves. The path at the time of the 1950 survey was in Staffordshire but DCC did have the survey result which was supplied. It clearly described the route down the track to a stile by a locked gate.

November 2022 PNFS submit a report to DCC offering evidence that the path went down a slope to a gate, as shown on their online map. In April 2023 DCC finally agree that the path is down the slope to the locked gate. "This clarifies the position so I will therefore contact the landowners with a view to installing unrestrictive access and fingerpost where the locked field gate is currently installed."

October 2023 the site was again inspected by PNFS, no change. July 2025 again inspected and again still no change. A request was made to the Courts & Inquiries Officer to serve a s130A Highways Act 1980 (HA 80) notice on DCC, meanwhile we made contact with DCC to warn them that we were getting very concerned about the delay. The delay and excuses continued, so on 24 September the s130A notice was served. A response to the notice was received on 17 October, stating that on 10 October DCC had served a s143 HA80 notice on the landowner to secure the removal of the obstruction. On 29 October a message was received stating "The obstruction has been removed, and way markers have been attached to the gate post. The fingerpost will need to be removed, and another erected in the correct location."

In the meantime, temporary notices have been posted to assist locals who believed the path to be in a different location.”

A PNFS inspection was carried out three days later and found, for the first time, undergrowth had been cut back to reveal a stile and finger post at the incorrect location, plus the promised signs directing locals to the now unlocked and easy to open gate that for years evidence of use confirmed they climbed. The rediscovered stile showed no sign of recent use. Thanks to the Courts and Inquiries Officer Rhoda Barnett for support to get this path open.



Signpost FP1 stolen

David Morton, Signpost Officer

After 120 years of service, signpost 1 has been stolen from its spot close to the A624 at Carr Meadow, north of Little Hayfield. In 1963 the plate was reposted on a length of heavy-duty angle iron. In 2020 the plate was shot-blasted and powder-coated, then fixed with shear-nuts

to the steel post and it was re-painted again by Steve Brown in 2024. In 2020 the iron plate was so heavy that I press-ganged a passing cyclist into helping me carry and lift it into position.

I visited the spot on 20 December, a few hours after receiving an email from a hiking couple, who asked me where it was. I spoke to a helpful man, who lives nearby at Carr Meadow cottages, then to the farmer at Spray House Farm. Both confirmed that it had disappeared 6-8 weeks earlier, so it's odd that it wasn't reported sooner. I gave my contact details to both, in case they hear anything about it.

I am surprised and dismayed at its disappearance. Please keep your eyes and ears open, in case it appears on Antiques Roadshow or eBay. In due course it will be replaced with updated wording, referring to both the Bridleway and the Public Footpath. David Gosling contacted the BBC with this news - see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2pvld881do>.



Message to COWS

Russ Baker, Member

Following David Gosling's article, *Walkers safety and cattle*, in the previous issue of *Signpost*, I emailed Concern Over Walkers Safety (COWS) with my observations. These are reprinted here.

I read with interest the short version of your research concerning the danger of cows to walkers, as published in the *Signpost* magazine for PNFS members. I am an older experienced walker who now generally walks alone over green footpaths in Derbyshire & North Staffordshire. Most of the areas I walk are in fields often on little used paths. Most fields in my walking area are used for grazing not crop production. I was brought up in a small rural community in North Derbyshire but not having close farming connections. I am not per se frightened of cows.

My experience of walking in fields with herds of traditional milking cows without calves is generally without any incident. I respect the animal and give them as much space as possible. I do carry a walking pole which gives me a feeling of some safety. With calves I give even wider space. Any incidents I have had are with herds of castrated bullocks which locally are referred to as steers or stirks. These animals previously shot at birth are now in large numbers reared for meat. It is my observation that they are not treated as well as cows and can often be seen seeking food from areas where there is little grazing. It also appears to me that they roam as herd creatures all year-round where traditional cows are generally inside during the winter months.

These animals are totally unpredictable and my rules for dealing with traditional cows does not work with them. I have never been hurt by them although there have been recent occasions where I have been frightened by their herd behaviour such as them following me closely even after me turning to face them, waving my stick and shouting. My observations suggest there are large numbers of these animals which is a fairly new concern. While they are generally not as large as milking cows they are still a substantial size and can run faster.

I appreciate that my thoughts are observation based and generally not evidential but in my opinion these animals are much more of a threat to walkers than traditional cows.



A temporary obstruction on Myerscough FP31
Photograph by Ken Brockway

The struggle for the Bottoms footpath, Flixton, 1826-27

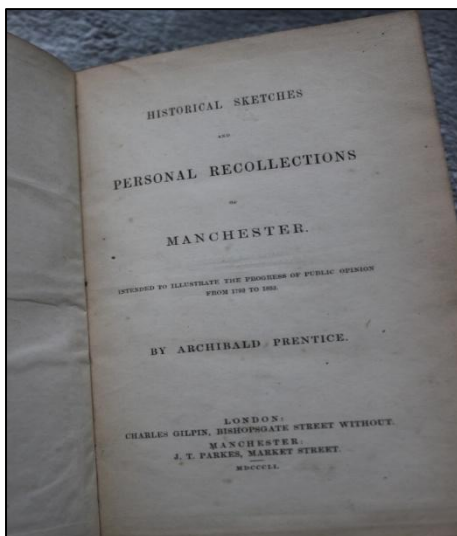
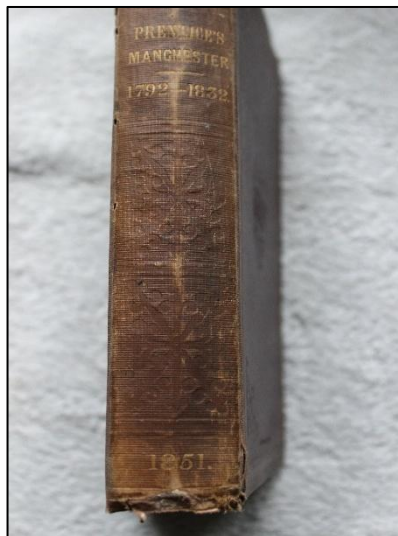
David Gosling, Vice Chair

The triumph of an ancient law over the grasping and monopolising spirit of modern times

It is well known that The Peak District and Northern Counties Footpath Preservation Society (the original name of PNFS) had its Inaugural Meeting on 16 August 1894 in the Young Men's Christian Association Hall, Peter Street, Manchester.

What is less well-known is that there was a predecessor society, which transferred all its funds to the new Society in 1894, and that this previous Society traces its origins to events in 1824-1826 - 200 years ago. This was the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths.

We have an account of the events leading up to the formation of this Society by a Manchester journalist **Archibald Prentice**, who wrote a book published in 1851 as **Historical Sketches and Personal Recollections of Manchester**. Here is the first edition published by Charles Gilpin, London 1851



Personal Recollections of Manchester Archibald Prentice, 1851

Archibald Prentice recounts, from his own experience, what happened in 1826, when a landowner of a small estate in Flixton, a few miles south west of Manchester, took the law into his own hands to block off a right of way which passed over his land. Prentice labels the landowner 'Vegetable Wright' and describes him as one of the 'tyrants of the field', that is 'men who imagine that that which runs through theirs must needs be theirs'.



Archibald Prentice

The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths was formed by an alliance of Manchester professionals and merchants to support local folk who resisted Mr Ralph Wright's infringement of their right to walk the 'footways' over Wright's land.

The story has many echoes with modern infringements of walkers rights which PNFS is in the business of resisting. Prentice begins by describing the early years of the industrial revolution when Manchester was often covered by a pall of smoke from its factories and mills. 1826 was a particularly bad year in which there was a great deal of hardship and destitution among the poor. Prentice points out that despite the grim conditions that the working class endured in the city, they had the opportunity to walk freely in the fresh air of the delightful countryside within a few miles of the grim industrial area.

(In 1826) The volumes of smoke which continually issue from factory chimneys, form a complete cloud over Manchester, certainly make it less desirable as a place of residence than it is as a place of business. But, to counterbalance the disadvantage, (citizens) have the privilege of walking unrestrainedly through the fine fields of the vicinity and avail themselves of the right of footway through the meadows and corn fields and parks in the immediate neighbourhood.



Mr Ralph Wright's House, Flixton as it is today

Prentice makes it clear that "these fields and parks" are "open" to the people escaping their industrial miseries as if they were his own land "to have and to hold". He describes how Vegetable Wright aspired to emulate richer landowners by creating a small parkland in his 15 or 16 acres at Flixton. So he levelled some hedges only to find that this inconveniently revealed the "vulgar part of his neighbours coming between the wind and his nobility". So,

acting as a petty "tyrant of the fields", Ralph Wright set about shutting up a right of way across his land. Thinking that, because he owned the land, he could prevent the public from crossing his property, without a court order, he stopped and diverted one routes and ploughed up a footway and sowed oats across it.

Prentice describes how a farmer in the parish sought to get a court order to restore the right of way: *Mister Samuel Wood, a farmer in the parish, who was unwilling to leave the world worse than he found it, and assisted by his neighbours, broke down three of the obstructions that had been put up and restored the original road to the public by treading down the oats.*

In 1824 he obtained another order: this was appealed against. Another order followed. But then as now, using the courts was an expensive business and some support was needed.



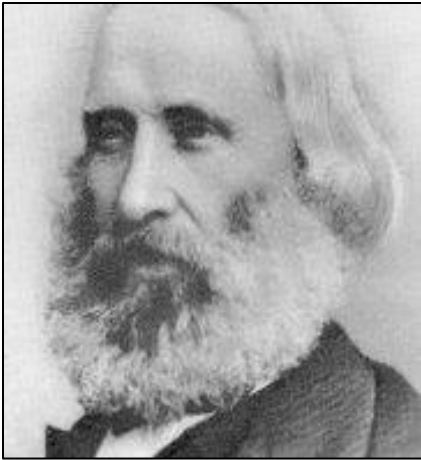
Map of Flixton 1826 showing the Bottoms footpath

All this was attended with expenses which were too heavy to be born buy a few persons of the class of country farmers. It was desirable that some Association should be formed for the purpose of preventing this and similar encroachments, and removing from individuals the persecution to which they might be exposed in resisting the encroaching spirit of powerful country gentleman .

A meeting was accordingly held in the town Hall, 15 November 1826, at which was formed a Society for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths. Prentice names the committee which included Manchester's reformers and liberal gentlemen including Robert Hyde Greg (founder of Styal Mill), John Edward Taylor (founder of the Manchester Guardian) and Joseph Armstrong (locomotive engineer), Thomas Heywood (antiquarian).



Left: Robert Hyde Greg, Founder of Styal Mill
Right: John Edward Taylor, Founder of The Manchester Guardian



Joseph Armstrong, railway engineer

Prentice describes this group of Manchester gentlemen as: *A pleasant association this of Tories, Whigs and radicals and one which in the successful results of its resistance in many attempted cases of encroachment spread amongst the country gentleman a wholesome terror of transgressing against the right of the poor to enjoy their own without anyone to make them afraid.*

With the support now in place of men “holding at least as good a station in society as Ralph Wright” the local inhabitants set about recovering the privileges of which they had been deprived for two years by using a saw to cut

through the unlawful obstructions. Prentice describes his delight as ‘a higher pleasure’ in seeing how an ancient law could triumph over what he describes as the “grasping and monopolising spirit of modern times”.

Vegetable Wright fought back, roping in his friends, who were also magistrates, to sign a court order to stop up the paths. It took one more appeal to a higher court, the quarter sessions’, to get this final injustice removed.

The contests cost the appellant £600, and was equally expensive to Mr Wright but he did not desist and on 14 September 1827 four orders were signed by Rober Fielden and James Brierley stopping up the paths. The residents of Flixton entered another appeal.

It was tried at the quarter session on Monday, 29 October 1827 ending in “the final discomfiture of Mr Wright, but at a cost of £750 to the spirited vindicators of public privilege.”

There is so much in these events of the early nineteenth century which ring true to modern ears. In PNFS. We are only too aware of property owners who acquire a country property - these days it might be a barn conversion - only to find the inconvenience of having a public footpath across their land. They might stop up the path and hope no-one will challenge them or that the local authority will not want the trouble or the expense of a legal battle. It is not unknown for them to form an alliance with parish councillors who are friends of the property owner (as happened in Silverdale) to support the claim that there is no right of way or that the public footpath goes somewhere a distance from the property owners house.

Just as in 1826, when the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths came to the aid of local people in their struggle to exercise their right to walk the public footways by providing financial and legal aid, Peak and Northern Footpath Society provides the same service today. Successes, such as the restoration of the coastal path at Brown’s Cottages in Silverdale, testify to the continuing need - in modern times as in 1826 - for our Society to defend walkers rights.





Signpost Report

David Morton, Signpost Officer

Photograph: David Morton after repairing S242

Prospects and Signpost Donations - The two signposts at Brinepits near Audlem are still in prospect, pending completion of paperwork by Cheshire East's legal department. My last report appealing for suggestions in new areas evoked a swift response from the treasurer of Halifax Rambling and Social Club re the Calder Valley. His committee were due to discuss it at their November meeting.

One of our new trustees, Bruce Westwood, has suggested a spot in Calder Vale, which is in Lancashire on the western side of Bowland. I phoned and spoke to the former clerk to the Parish Council and a young woman at the nearby mill. Bruce will pay a visit soon.

Meanwhile I phoned the farmer at Crowgutter near Ipstones, Staffs and he consented to a new signpost 500m south of the farmhouse on the Staffs Moorland Way. S645 was erected to the north-east of the farm in October 2023. I have asked a nearby footpath inspector to take a look at the location to confirm its suitability.

I contacted David Gosling re prospects at Stafford, but he reports none so far.

Members are again asked to send me their considered suggestions. A list of "Considerations re the Location of New PNFS Signposts" can be found on page 12 of Signpost 85 or on the website, at pnfs.org.uk/news/plocs.

New Signpost - S662 will be erected soon on FPs 25/26/74 at Mobberley Hall Farm in memory of our former feisty member, footpath inspector and walk leader Eileen Leonard. Eileen died in March 2025.

Lost and Found - S332 at Chanderhill remains missing, believed stolen - a new plate will be made.

Maintenance

Thanks for reports, photos and help with maintenance are due to Steve Brown, Vic Shannon, Roger Marks, Tim Lewis, Paul Marshall, John Orson, Paul Easthope, Ross Myddelton and Dave Brown, Peter Knight, Richard Parke-Davies, Chris Davies, Simon Worrall, Shirley Addy and John Potter. My apologies for any omissions.

September - 166, 334, 345, 432, 482, 635, 172, 351/6, 451/2, 580, 258, 359 were inspected/cleaned/touched up. 145 at Claypits Rd, Kettleshulme was repainted by Steve Brown.

October - 242 had new half post and was shot-blasted and powder-coated by David Morton. 357/8, 430, 393 maintained by John O and Paul M. 597, 80. 134, 182, 207, 214, 246, 652, 187, 24, 27, 39, 472/3/4, 33, 642/3, 120, 35, 172, 34, 104, 143, 178, 189, 269, 288, 329, 641, 646, 653, 661, 194/5/6, 608, 131, 123, 192, 297, 299, 300 were inspected/cleaned/touched up. Plates 332 and 662 were taken to SPC for shot-blasting and powder-coating. Plates were ordered for 662 and 332, 27, 57/57x on Haggsdale, Ladybower were repainted by Steve Brown. An "Ostdeutschland" sticker was removed from 25 on Win Hill, then 408 and 509 touched up by David Morton (rashly using eBike).

November - 249 taken for SB&PC. 208 finger removed and corroded bolt replaced; 266, 301, 119, 185 touched up; photos of 618/9, 620/1 from Shirley Addy. 311 by Baslow Edge reported fallen by John Potter - repair arranged for 1 Dec. Plates 662 and 332 collected and highlighted.

December - Vic Shannon and I, with help from the retired farmer David Thorp, repaired 311 on Baslow Edge using a wooden repair post.



October 2025
short walk led
by David Morton
at S214 Todd
Brook

Rothwell that ends well?

John Harker, Courts and Inquiries Officer for Leeds

If you are unfamiliar with urban Leeds, as I was before I assumed the role of the Society's Courts & Inquiries Officer covering Leeds some years ago, Footpath No 1 (Rothwell) can be easily overlooked as you head for more enticing areas to walk in, such as Airedale or Wharfedale.

Footpath 1 (FP1) will never win any awards for the most scenic public path, not even in Rothwell itself. It threads its lonely way between industrial premises, business parks and vacant brownfield sites. Confined by boundaries, as in a straightjacket, it is victim of the problems that invariably accompany such paths. Up growth from the unsealed surface, overhanging vegetation from adjacent sites, litter and a general air of neglect and abandonment. As if that is not bad enough, the footpath is blocked deliberately in two places by fencing as the photos show.



FP1 from Pontefract Road end

FP1 from container depot end



FP1 from Wakefield Road

Nonetheless, the footpath could and should provide an off tarmac route for walkers between nearby housing estates and the towpath of the Aire and Calder Navigation. This popular walking and cycling route links the city centre in one direction and open countryside in the other. I have walked

from Leeds railway station down the towpath, past the Royal Armouries Museum and on towards RSPB St Aidan's and RSPB Fairburn Ings many times. Footpath 1 would allow walkers from urban south Leeds to link into that walking corridor.



The Highway Authority, Leeds City Council, is well aware of the problems affecting Footpath 1. The condition surveys done by volunteers on behalf of the Council in 2008 and 2016 recorded them. There were also working parties of volunteers from the Leeds Ramblers' Group who cleared under and overgrowth from the footpath. Chris Davison, Barnsley Area Officer, reported the various issues in a private capacity, and had a lengthy dialogue with the PRoW Manager about getting something done. This interchange kept the 'pot boiling' so to speak, but severe financial issues affecting Leeds Council, as it does with many Local Authorities, meant that Footpath 1 was very low on the Highway Authority's priority list.

Last year (2024), Leeds resident and Society Inspector Andrew Harter, and I decided it was time to apply a bit more 'pressure'. The first step was a Freedom of Information request to Leeds Council asking for all the details of the work done by the Highway Authority to deal with Footpath 1, including details of any enforcement action considered or acted upon. Extracts are included in this article.

Given the ongoing workload as a Society Officer, I had to put the case on a 'back burner' for a while. A public inquiry in Leeds about a different public footpath preoccupied me but on 7 November. I sought and obtained approval from the Courts & Inquiries Committee to take the first step in the journey of legal proceedings against Leeds Council. Society policy is to send a "Letter Before Action" giving the recipient a fixed deadline to explain the delay in dealing with an issue. If we feel that any response is unsatisfactory, the Society has the option to take further legal action. This led to a response from a PRoW officer that explained the lack of an Enforcement Officer had led to a backlog of such cases and that the PRoW Manager who Chris Davison had dealt with, had now retired and his replacement wasn't due to start the job until February 2026. The reply ended with a request for a site meeting, to which we agreed.

So, on 2 December Andrew and I met two Leeds Council PRoW officers on site. Walking the affected sections of Footpath 1 was impossible really. We could only view the deliberate obstructions erected, at two points close to the paths junction with a road, and peep through gaps in fencing to see the overgrown state of the enclosed sections of path. Photos give an inadequate sense of how badly this path is either "out of repair" i.e. the surface of the path is not fit for public use, or obstructed by manmade blockages or natural ones like overgrowth.

FP1 from Skelton Grange Road end



The Council Officers explained the dilemma they faced. Without a specialist Enforcement Officer, action to resolve a number of other obstruction issues in the borough as well as this one, had fallen to an Officer carrying out other duties. She was on a steep learning curve, not having any experience in enforcement. We were asked if we could hold off on further legal action until the new PRoW Manager had started work in early February (he was working his notice with another Highway Authority in Yorkshire). Some action was ongoing. Land Registry details had been gathered to find who the offending landowners were, and colleagues on the Planning Authority side of the Council were looking into whether planning laws had been broken

when one of the adjacent businesses had been granted planning permission for an extension of the site abutting the path.

Andrew and I were sympathetic to the problems that the existing staff had to deal with, and Leeds City Council is far from the worst Highway Authority I've ever dealt with. We agreed that the Society will hold off from further proceedings until the new PRoW Manager 'has his feet under the desk' and is brought up to speed on issues in the borough, not just Rothwell Footpath 1. However, as I said to the two Officers on site, the Society will be expecting to hear from Leeds Council what they intend to do to make Footpath 1 available for use again in 2026. If we aren't satisfied that the path is going to be reopened within a reasonable timeframe, then we still have further options available to us.

Those options include, amongst others, sections 56 and 130a of the Highways Act 1980. The former is used if any part of the surface of a public highway is considered to be unfit for the use it is put to at all seasons of the year. The relevant Highway Authority is legally responsible for ensuring the satisfactory state of the surface. If they fail to carry out this duty, we can seek redress at the local magistrates' court for an Order to the Highway Authority to repair the highway shown to be "out of repair". Interestingly, the lack of resources, financial or otherwise, is not a defence that a Highway Authority can use if the case reached a magistrates' court, or a higher court. Established case law is on our side on that particular point.

Section 130a, introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, gives any member of the public the leverage to demand that a Highway Authority takes enforcement action to get obstructions removed by the person causing said obstructions, or for that Authority to remove the obstructions themselves and send the offender(s) an invoice for the work needed to remove them. If this doesn't happen, then we must apply to the local magistrates' court for an Order to be issued to the Highway Authority to carry out its statutory duty to assert and protect the public's right to unobstructed use of the public highway.

So the saga of Footpath 1 is an ongoing one, which I hope to bring to a successful conclusion, with or without the need for the Society to wield a 'big stick'. We can if it's considered essential, as the Ramsden Road Byway in Kirklees case proved some months ago thanks to the effort put in by a fellow Courts & Inquiries Officer, Andy Leader. So, tune in again folks for an update on this saga in a future episode of "Signpost".

Feedback on Pub Closures

Russ Baker, Member

On the article, Pub Closures, on page 21 of *Signpost* 86, I can give the contributor John Fisher some good news that the Duke at Burbage, Buxton has reopened. I still miss the Quiet Woman at Earl Sterndale with its characters behind and in front of the bar, as well as an excellent pint of Marston's Pedigree.

Hartington Upper Quarter FP67 - persistence pays!

Derek Bodey, Area Officer, High Peak, Derbyshire

On 28 August 2017, I reported to Derbyshire County Council (DCC) that this footpath had an issue - there was no means of crossing the fence where the path left the broad track and descended to cross a stream (and the Derbyshire/Staffordshire border). Interestingly, old maps (fig 1) show there was originally a crossroads at this point, with a path descending to Blackclough. Although the stile is still there and it could be easily walked, this section did not make it onto the Definitive Map.

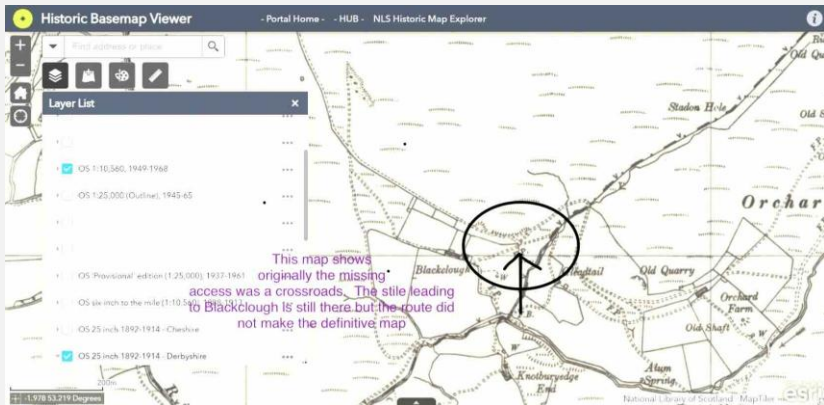


Fig 1 - 1821 map - © Crown copyright 2025 Ordnance Survey. Media 034/25

What did make it onto the Definitive Map is shown in fig 2.

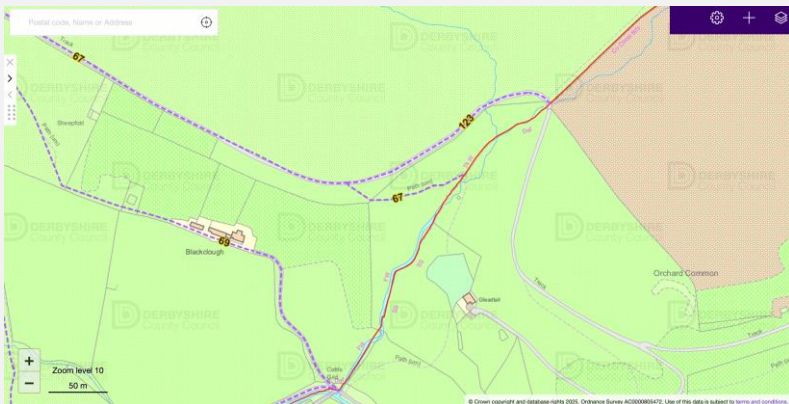


Fig 2 - © Crown copyright 2025 Ordnance Survey. Media 034/25

FP67 and most of FP123 are part of the Dane Valley Way. FP67 continues through the field boundary downhill to the stream that forms the border between Derbyshire and Staffordshire. This part is less popular but still used as can be seen from the photographs on the next page.



Fig 3 (left - looking up from the stream)

Fig 4 (above - the Staffordshire side)

There was no assistance in crossing the small stream but this was not really an issue. What was much more of a problem was the lack of any means of crossing the wire fence. This resulted in walkers using the drystone wall corner to round the fence; the wall did not appreciate this and slowly collapsed (fig 5). In spite of trying to encourage the Peak District National Park rangers to take it on, nothing really happened until December 2023, when I received an email from the RoW officer who told me:

"I can confirm that my colleague was in liaison with the landowner last year under your enquiry reported on 18/03/2022 as FS-CASE-409219273. A note was recorded on the enquiry which said that the landowner was reluctant to reinstate a structure at the locality at the time due to concerns with the terrain and slope and the overall stability of the structure going forward. They also consider that the route of HUQ123 which links with Quarnford 35 is a safer alternative"

Fig 5

I find it amazing that this should be recorded as if it answered the query! No wonder, we have difficulties with paths if landowners are able to decide which legal routes we should walk! Fortunately, the RoW officer did not leave it there. By June two further visits had been made and a letter



sent to the landowner - this was ignored. At this time, Rhoda Barnett, asked for and was granted permission from our Courts and Inquires Committee to send a letter before action and, if necessary, to serve notice on DCC. The letter was duly sent and resulted in a meeting with the Head of Service. Because work was being undertaken with the landowner, we agreed to delay serving notice to allow time for DCC to stir the landowner into action. In December 2024, we received the following from the RoW team leader:

“After quite a bit of effort to engage the landowner, and following a couple of productive phone calls, the Inspector has now arranged to meet them on site in early January. We are clear that the obstruction will need to be removed, but would like to get results through informal means if possible. If that fails, then rest assured we will serve Notice.”

The meeting in January was snowed off. I visited in March to check on progress and was greeted by a new simple stream crossing but no gate. So progress of a sort. The “bridge” was provided curtesy of the Stoke and Newcastle Ramblers. Thank you!

Another site visit in August, nothing new so I emailed the RoW officer and received the following in response:

“The landowner's agent (Savills) was in contact with me on Monday to explain that their appointed contractor has had work commitments elsewhere. They will be visiting this week to quote for the works. They assured me that things should progress quickly after the quote is received. They are aware that the notice period has long lapsed and that enforcement will be the next step.”

Fig 6



Holidays intervened for the PNFS volunteers and it was into the Autumn before a reminder “letter before action” was sent and just as Rhoda was about to serve the section 130A notice, she received an email, which read:

“I have found out this morning that the obstruction was removed last Thursday. A gate has been installed as agreed with DCC PRoW. It will be checked, and as long as it complies with the current British Standard, we will move to complete the process of authorising it under Section 147. Thank you for your patience.”

The gate has been checked and authorisation under section 147 is now being given (gates/stiles etc are technically obstructions on the highway and have to be authorised by the highways authority). The new gate!

Fig 7



My reflections on the saga are:

- persistence really is necessary
- If DCC used their powers, it would often turn out to be, not only quicker, but also cheaper in spite of the notice costs involved.
- From a volunteers point of view, the worst bit is the lack of any real feedback without constant prodding - if progress reports were offered by DCC, I think it would help officers by reducing the email chasers that are otherwise sent in the no news vacuum.

On to the next one!

Heath and mud

Sarah Calcutt, Member

“Wading through heath and mud to Wuthering Heights”
Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 1847

I remember reading about moorland when I was younger. It was conjured for me through the pages of gothic novels long before I'd walked across a heath. *Wuthering Heights* specifically sparked ideas of a wild terrain, a place where the veil between worlds is thin, and where the pull of exploration is simultaneously called forth and warned against. In these stories, elements of the supernatural weave together with the rough nature of the land, and characters are met with more than challenging ground when they step into the untamed moors. They face ghosts, folkloric beasts, and often reflections of themselves that they'd perhaps rather not own.

I had a formed expectation of moorland (or at least the idea of it) before I found my love for the Peak District National Park, and although it encouraged my initial visits, it did not live up to what this land would come to mean to me.

When I was in my early 20s, I was travelling by train along the line that runs between Manchester and Sheffield. From my window seat, I admired the contours of Kinder Scout (unknown to me by name at the time) and as we passed through Edale Station, I began to make plans to return to walk. On my next day off from work, I travelled back along this trainline – only in this instance, I stopped at Edale and walked up into the village. At the time I had no local knowledge or real understanding of where I was visiting, but now when I think back to where I walked, I am fairly confident that I climbed Grindslow Knoll. A photograph of me from this day captures windswept hair (self-dyed Pillar Box Red), and a massive smile that lit up my whole face. I look absolutely ecstatic. This was the first time that I had made a conscious plan to head out and walk in the Peak – to travel into the National Park with the sole purpose of climbing a hill. It sparked something in me that has not yet been extinguished, and that I haven't fully replicated in other areas of the country that I've walked in since. In the cauldron that brews my love of walking, the Peak District is an inimitable ingredient.

I began to visit more places on the eastern side of the National Park – these being the easiest for me to reach from my home in the north-west of Sheffield. Stanage Edge and Higger Tor quickly became firm favourites, and were my first introduction to the qualities offered by the Dark Peak that would begin to deepen my connection with this land. I watched the heather bloom, and I used gritstone boulders as stepping stones to bridge the boggy peat after rainfall.

“Through heath and mud”. This phrase returned to me as I began to learn about the Dark Peak, and became synonymous with an image in my mind of a Payne's Gray sky looming over a carpet of pinks, purples and russet browns.

I soon found that I was walking quite often, and falling into a pattern of returning to the same areas regularly. Although we will never fully know a single location due to its changing nature, I was keen to learn more about the 555 square miles of the Peak District outside of the pocket that I'd so far explored.

On Christmas Eve 2021, I walked up to the top of Win Hill, and stood at the trig point that sits as a crown on its rocky summit. I decided to walk to each of the 88 Trigs that we have in the National Park, using them as a catalyst to find new places to walk in. This project led me all over the Peak, and I became more familiar and confident with considering my location amongst the hills that surrounded me, taking care to identify and name the tors that I could see and learning their silhouettes. I began to learn about the characteristics and qualities that the different areas of the National Park would offer

me. I walked 538 miles (866 km) to bag the 88 Trigs, and the project took me until April '24 to complete.

During the challenge, I was photographing and then writing about my walks on social media, with an idea that through doing this, I might be able to encourage and enable someone else that was looking to explore areas that would be new to them.

At this time, I was also teaching myself a new craft. I was learning a relief printmaking technique: lino printing. I've enjoyed this since I first picked it up, and I found that each step of the process offers a different type of reward. The prints that I was making followed my growing love of the Peak, and an interest in history and folklore. I was very blessed that some friends of mine who run a zine (somewhere between a magazine and a book) invited me to create some prints for one of their issues. I remember the feeling that I had when my copy arrived, and I looked down and saw something that I had carved and printed there in front of me on paper. I don't naturally find it easy to say that I am proud of myself, but in that moment, I was beaming.

Soon after this, I decided that the Peak and the opportunity to have something in a zine was something that I wanted to share with others. I thought about what had originally inspired me about these lands, and "heath and mud" instantly volunteered itself as a title. I wanted it to be a collaborative project, where people could share what this place means to them. Photography, artwork, creative writing, walking routes, local folklore... however this place resonated, there'd be a space amongst these pages. I also wanted it to support the National Park; for it to put back into this land that offers so much to so many. I decided that once I'd covered the printing costs generated by having the zines made, anything more than that would be donated back into the Peak District.

The *Heath and Mud* zine now has 3 main issues and one "mini zine", and in total (as of 26 December 2025) £5,006.13 has been donated from sales. This includes £1,585.12 donated to the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society, which also has an article in the first issue.

Issue 1 of *Heath and Mud* was printed in April 2024, and since then, as well as the donations, I have celebrated other milestones connected to the zine. An invitation to discuss it on BBC Radio Sheffield was an incredible opportunity, and an article in the Sheffield Telegraph made me feel a way that reminded me of seeing my prints in my friend's zine. Most importantly, I have met some wonderfully talented people, who share my passion for the Peak. Many have experienced the same feeling as me, that there is something specific and unique about this National Park that we haven't found to be replicated in other areas.

There is an old Latin phrase, "solvitur ambulando", which translates as "it is solved by walking". With the Peak District, this has been literal for me on many occasions, and it is so warming to know that I'm hopefully able to make a difference (even if small) to my spiritual home. I feel it in my bones if I've been away from it for too long.

I'm currently working on Issue 4 of *Heath and Mud*, which will have a focus on the White Peak. When I am getting ready to start a new issue, its theme is announced, and there is an open call for anyone that would like to be involved in or contribute to it. If you ever have anything that you'd like to share and have published, you are very welcome to join us in these pages.

You can find *Heath and Mud* online at: www.heathandmud.co.uk. There's also links to a contact form if you'd like to get in touch, and a mailing list if you'd like to keep up to date with news on donations and publications. Announcements are also made on Instagram here: @heath.and.mud.

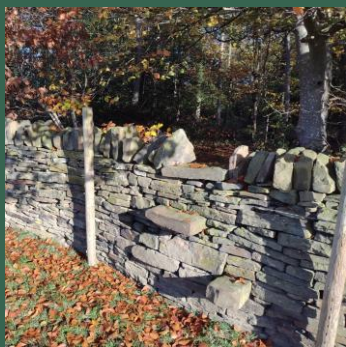
See you at the Standing Stones.

Skepen

Ken Brockway, Inspector



Gunthwaite and Ingbirchworth
FP13



Gunthwaite and Ingbirchworth
FP8

It's a nice ride out of Sheffield on the twenty nine, one a day, to Holmfirth. For me, a new tour of the city passing the Northern General Hospital and on via Chapeltown. We pass through Wortley, an attractive village, worth a walk start point to explore another time. Today I drop off the twelve seater bus at Penistone railway station to start my Slow Way walk.

It's a warm dry Autumn day although there had been rain so the ground is wet. I make a gentle climb to the church, then it's soon traffic free along a wide path (BR26) that crosses Wentworth Road (FP77). Closed to traffic by bollards it looks as if it offered an unwelcome town bypass. My bridleway passes Water Hall and crosses the River Don on a bridge with private drive and segregated narrow footpath, good job the gate was unlocked for the woman with the pram.

Crossing a main road I join an attractive walled track (BR62) with good views and worn uneven stone flags, they look slippery so I tread with care. The Slow Way takes footpath (part of FP17) across a ploughed field, I guess this is ignored by most walkers preferring to stay on the quiet lane.

At Gunthwaite Bridge I cross into Gunthwaite and Ingbirchworth parish and meet both the Penistone and Barnsley boundary walks but ignore both. From Near and Far Broad Oak the cross field path (FP8) is again invisible so I pass this and a faulty stile to our inspector. The plotted Slow Way misses the path through the wood. I spotted the stone stile over the wall so stayed definitive. Good to note that the barbed wire here, reported by the inspector, has now

been made safe. A broken stile step takes me into Kirklees from Barnsley.

The Dunkirk Inn might offer a break, it's about half way. From here on while locals may ignore the landmark, as a visitor I'm eager to find that perfect picture dominated by Emley Moor tower, I fail. Briefly joining the Kirklees Way it might be tempting to follow that route into Skelmanthorpe and miss Denby Dale but the plot does offer an attractive crossing of the River Dearne from (Denby Dale FP115). The route appears to take the narrow recorded path (FP61) alongside Wither Wood while it's far better to enter the wood. From here it's a well walked track (BR112) to meet estate roads at Skelmanthorpe which Wikipedia and Dr Who star Jodie Whittaker tell us is known as Shat.



It's nearly always a pleasure to explore new paths and this was no exception. A mix of pasture and arable fields plus quiet lanes along well signed paths. Some woodland and good views after ascending the constant up which must have corresponding downs but were unnoticed. A most enjoyable walk.

Denby Dale FP115

Ipstones FP22 damaged stile

David Morton, Signpost Officer



In early December 2025, Storm Bram brought some very strong winds. While walking along Ipstones FP22 en route to signpost 380, I came across this dramatic scene. A yellow waymark has survived (bottom left photograph). Most of the dry-stone wall had fallen into the "shell-hole" left by the root ball. The signpost was safe and sound 100 metres north (bottom right photograph).



Group inspections report



19 November led by Ken Brockway ~ We started from **Barton under Needwood**, an interesting village in Staffordshire with many substantial dwellings no doubt home to brewery management escaping from Burton upon Trent. Signs soon inform us that our paths, plus some permissive, are on the Dunstall Estate. We did a tour around some well used and very pleasant sheep pasture then headed off to follow the Cross Britain Way. Not sure how this recreational route manages to pass from Barton FP23 to Dunstall

FP23 but it does. Dunstall BR6 and 7 offer a delightful perambulation through Old Hall parkland with a footpath passing the mill pond to the church.

Here we found a perfect spot for lunch and a brass plaque inside offered me a connection to home. The building had been funded by a bequest from Charles Arkwright, fifth son of Sir Richard Arkwright of cotton spinning fame at Cromford Mill near Matlock. Climbing to Springs Barn Farm we meet our first fault, a defective stile first report by AN Other in July and still not resolved. The paths change to arable fields but the soil while wet is not claggy. The approach to the road passes a collection of abandoned vehicles some of collectable interest including a Morris Minor and MG. We cross the road onto an Other Route with Public Access (ORPA) which is adopted so has footpath rights. A well walked bridleway leads down to Tattenhill church.

A brief encounter with the National Forest Way leads into the Bass Millennium Wood perhaps the only reminder of that huge brewing empire now taken over by Molson Coors. From here on, like the Bass empire, things crumbled, Branston FP0.532A was waymarked into an interpretable tangle of bramble briars and finally vanished beyond a security fence of a huge housing development site. We pressed on, foolish or determined, I know not which. We headed for a dead end bridleway, well dead end except it was shown on OS as progressing as a cycle track. This was walkable but showed no sign of recent cyclists. It ended at another housing site fence. A scramble up a bank and over a fence, barbed wire top cut by a previous visitor, I believe this is Shobnall FP6 which made a link into Saini Woodlands. We then followed roads into Burton passing the tarnished brass sign for the registered office of another asset stripped brewery, Marstons.



Perhaps we should have done more pre-planning. A retrospective look at the Staffordshire online map showed changes to the network. However even the unaffected

paths were still obstructed by development so we were lucky this time to reach journey's end. Just two faults to report and much updating to the FID removing and adding paths. Plus another blow to OS where the online map, expected to be the most up to date, fails to show walkable paths. Thanks to John and John for their companionship and support.

Shirley Addy, Lancashire ~ No group inspection was held in this area since my previous report. It is planned to hold a group inspection in Wrightington, West Lancashire in March/April. If you are interested in joining it, contact Shirley Addy on shirleyaddy@pnfs.org.uk.

17 November led by David Gosling - Blackshaw Head, Calderdale ~ Jenny Sibbons, Tim Lewis and I walked over 20 paths in Blackshaw Head, near Hebden Bridge. On a bright sunny day a successful group inspection added new data to the PNFS Footpaths Inspections Database. In this attractive wooded area of the Calder Valley, an obstructed bridleway (BLA80) and an unofficial diversion (BLA34) were identified as well as some minor faults. Mostly the paths in the area were found to be in good condition for walkers.

A video report on this group inspection can be found on the PNFS YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIDxAJHCyWY>. Subtitles are included.



INTERESTED?

There is plenty of scope for more group inspections, so existing Footpath Inspectors, why not consider the idea?

Maybe you want some help to cover the paths in one of your parishes, or you would like to inspect a parish where we do not have an inspector. Anyone can set up a group inspection, but if you want help contact Simon Worrall or David Gosling via the email address inspections@pnfs.org.uk.

Peak District boundary walk

Andrew Flack, Member



It began as a post-pandemic project. What should my walking mate Paul and I do to get back on the walking trail? A friend had given me the handbook for the Peak District boundary walk which he had won in a raffle and never expected to use. I also had a book on my shelf about walking the boundary a different way and so an idea was born. It's a 200 mile walk and, as it says on the tin, runs as close to the boundary of the National Park as possible. It isn't terribly well-publicised and it isn't marked as a

long distance path on the OS maps, but it is very well waymarked with a green circle at all the important points.

Officially it starts at Buxton and is split roughly into 10-mile end-to-end stages, but we started in Beeley, nearer to home. It naturally involves some logistical challenges, mostly involving two cars because public transport is not widespread in most of the areas covered. Around Buxton we used the bus on a couple of occasions and a taxi on three others. Starting from our homes just south of the National Park in Ashbourne and Etwell, all but one of the stages were accessible for day walks, and for that one we had an overnight in Holmfirth for the two most northerly stages.

The walk is terrific, taking you from limestone to gritstone, forest to moorland, through villages and towns, across rivers and streams and past ancient sites. It gives glimpses of everything that the Peak District National Park has to offer and views way beyond, including frequent sightings of Manchester and its region to the west and on the eastern side, Sheffield and its surrounds. And the route was regularly punctuated with PNFS signs!

The highlights were manifold, but included the beautiful Chee Dale and its stepping stones; the perhaps toughest stage with three climbs up to Shutlingsloe, Tegg's Nose and White Nancy; the view after a lengthy moorland trek over to Chew Brook and Chew Road; a diversion to the station bar at Stalybridge (along with a few other bars to complete stages and sample the local beers!); several reservoirs and the Victorian water control features above Marsden; and perhaps the overall favourite, the wonderful, tumbling Wyming Brook on the edge of Sheffield. On a few stages we were joined by other friends and on one notable occasion by Paul's son, visiting for Christmas from the USA. We started in October 2020, suffered a further lockdown, and finished in February 2022, when a small group of us celebrated at The Royal Oak in Millthorpe.

It was all memorable and almost 4 years later, we constantly refer back to the joys of the walk. Since then we've walked the Leicestershire Round, the Dark Peak Way, the Robin Hood Way and most of the Staffordshire Way. All have their points of interest, but none of them can compare with the Boundary Walk. This autumn we have embarked on the Peak Way Walk, which officially starts and finishes in the home of PNFS, Stockport, but actually passes my back hedge in Ashbourne and so that is where we started. It covers some of the ground of the Boundary Walk but mainly is in an inner circuit of the National Park and has so far also had plenty of highlights. There will be many members of PNFS who have walked around the boundary, I'm sure, but for those who haven't, give it a go, it is utterly memorable.



Heading to Marsden (above)
White Nancy, Bollington (left)
PNFS signpost (below)

Photographs by Andrew Flack



Wakes and wanderings

Ron Braddock, Member

In 1857, when the second edition of *Black's Tourist's Guide to Derbyshire* was published, Hayfield and Kinder Scout were not listed in the index. Similarly, Kinder Scout was only briefly mentioned by James Croston (1862) in *On foot through the Peak* and by Spencer Hall (1863) in *Days in Derbyshire*. Although, *Black's Tourist's Guide to Derbyshire* (1864) and *Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Derby, Notts, Leicestershire and Stafford* (1868) contained more details. Many excursionists travelled by carriage through Hayfield, towards Kinder Scout, and continued on foot whilst others ascended from the Snake Inn. Did they want to see Kinder Scout because the highest part of the moor is 2087 feet above mean sea level? Or, was it an opportunity to see the impressive Kinder Downfall and witness spray, from the River Kinder being blown back, over the Kinder plateau, when strong winds blew? Alternatively, was it a chance to see a mermaid at the Mermaid's Pool after hearing a story about a beautiful mermaid that occasionally appeared? Every visitor to Kinder Scout probably had a different reason to visit the moorland area, because there was little to see and visit, in Hayfield village, except a church, pleasant refreshment rooms, and several licensed premises and shops. Although, some visitors who travelled by train from Stockport to New Mills, and by horse drawn vehicles to Hayfield, must have experienced Wakes festivities in the village. Newspaper readers were informed (*Glossop Record*, 1860, p3) that: 'Sunday being fine, and Hayfield being noted for the immense quantities of beef and strong beer annually provided for their greatest festival, the town was on this occasion well filled, there being many visitors present, who, no doubt, did ample justice to the good cheer provided for them.'

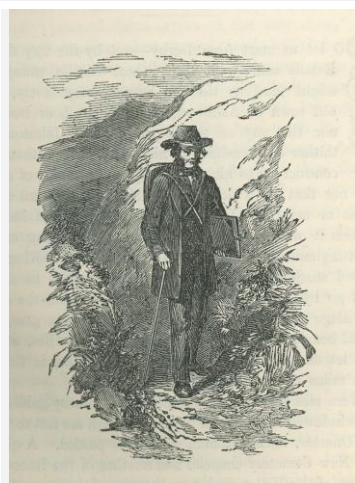
It was mentioned in an article, about Kinder Scout, (*Hyde & Glossop Weekly News and North Cheshire Herald*, 1861, p4) that very few ramblers climbed to the Kinder plateau. An absence of walkers, may have been due to the fact that the area was 'strictly preserved' or that scarcely any guidance had been published about the region. Also, from 1861 to 1865, inclusive, the American Civil War was raging and the resultant cotton famine, in England, affected many cotton manufacturers and their employees. Nevertheless, a few enterprising individuals continued to explore and described their journeys to Kinder Scout in newspaper articles or mentioned them in books about their travels. Fortunately, details about weather conditions and the terrain were provided, for intrepid explorers, and it was reported (*Ibid*) that: 'Although accessible either across Glossop Moor or from the Hayfield-road, it appears not to be as much known, or frequented, as its merits deserve; and, indeed, there is something of danger and difficulty in the ascent - danger, lest a mist should suddenly come on and obscure the view; and difficulty, from the peculiar character of the ground, the long heath often concealing holes into which the traveller unconsciously falls.' In particular, misty conditions may have deterred some excursionists from climbing Kinder Scout, especially if they undertook a ramble without a map and a compass. The author of the aforementioned article (*Ibid*) also mentioned that: 'A cottager informed us that he once wandered for hours upon Kinderscout [sic] unable to find his way home.'

Langford (1862, p93) also described a walk to Kinder Scout, that he undertook from Castleton and Mam Tor, with a least one other companion and explained that: 'It was a wild and difficult walk: the way being blind, ie, having no path, we had to trudge on as

seemed best, and most likely to reach the desired height.' He also wrote (Ibid) that: 'The view from the height is not very extensive, the top of the hill being a broad plain of boggy land, which in wet weather must be almost impassable. Far as the eye can reach there seems nothing but drear barren desolation - bog succeeding bog in endless succession.' Langford and his companion(s) continued to Kinder Downfall, proceeded to Edale, and returned to Castleton. The walkers did not follow a clear and defined path, when they climbed Kinder Scout, and were not stopped by gamekeepers during their ascent and descent. Surprisingly, from 1863 to 1868, inclusive, very few newspaper articles were published, about Kinder Scout. Although, from 1860 onwards, cotton operatives, shopkeepers and many other workers, from Manchester and neighbouring towns, were encouraged to visit numerous places in Derbyshire.

During the period July 1860 to September 1861, inclusive, Croston, using a pseudonym Peverel, wrote over 20 articles, under a general heading of 'A ramble in the Peak of Derbyshire,' that were published in the *Manchester Courier*. Croston provided details of his travels and he described places such as: Castleton; Chapel-en-le-Frith; Chatsworth; Eyam; Haddon Hall; Hathersage; Stoney Middleton; and Whaley Bridge. Croston subsequently included these articles in a book called *On Foot through the Peak* that provided excellent information for tourists. In 1860, rail passengers from Manchester, who wanted to visit Buxton, travelled to Whaley Bridge and continued to Buxton by coach but, in 1863, an extension from Whaley Bridge to Buxton was opened. The new railway line to Buxton provided better facilities, for Manchester residents, to travel and explore more of the Derbyshire countryside. Once at Buxton, excursionists could book carriage rides to many scenic places including those described by Peverel.

Croston must have encouraged many readers, of the *Manchester Courier*, to travel to Derbyshire for picnics and pleasant rambles and to appreciate the varied landscape. In addition, books such as *On foot through the Peak*, by James Croston (1862), and *Summer rambles in Cheshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire*, by Leo Grindon (1866) were very popular and sold many copies. The opening of Hayfield Railway Station, in 1868, also created a new opportunity for many people to visit the Peak District and appreciate beautiful and impressive scenery. The railway also enabled Hayfield residents to travel elsewhere during a Wakes holiday and it was reported (*Hyde & Glossop Weekly*



Wood engraving of 'A Peak Tourist' from *Days in Derbyshire* (1863)



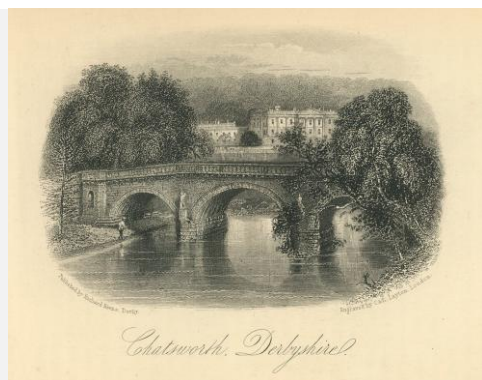
Wood engraving of 'Haddon Hall - The Eagle Tower' from *Days in Derbyshire* (1863)

News, and North Cheshire Herald, 1869, p2) that: 'The people living in towns may find a pleasure in visiting Kinder Scout, but those who have lived at its foot all their lives prefer, when the opportunity occurs, to go and see some distant and noted town.' The effect was that during a Wakes holiday many residents of Hayfield left the village and numerous excursionists travelled to Hayfield and visited Kinder Scout. The Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company (MS&LR) constructed a branch line to Hayfield, and the MS&LR capitalised on their investment and promoted Whitsuntide school trips. An advertisement (*Manchester Courier*, 1869, p1) stated: 'The Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company is prepared to enter into arrangements with the Superintendents and Conductors of Day and Sunday Schools for excursions to the attractive places of Hayfield, Kinder Scout, New Mills, Strines, Marple, Romiley, Woodley, Mottram, Wortley, and other favourite places of resort, on very liberal terms.' The MS&LR were keen to encourage excursionists to visit Hayfield and Kinder Scout and one can only wonder what Sir James Watts, the owner of Kinder Downfall, thought about the railway company encouraging more people to visit Kinder Scout.

Excursionists flocked to Hayfield to enjoy refreshments, pleasant walks, and to appreciate the splendid countryside. For example, it was reported (*Hyde & Glossop Weekly News, and North Cheshire Herald*, 1869, p3) that: 'On Tuesday last about

60 teachers and friends of Oldham visited Hayfield. They arrived by train at half-past eight o'clock in the morning, and calling at Mr. Henry Redfern's Refreshment rooms, partook of excellent fare which was served to them.' It was also explained (*Ibid*) that: 'Afterwards the party took a view of some of the charming romantic scenery, for which Derbyshire is remarkable, but more especially the rugged wilds of Kinder Scout.' Unfortunately, for the owner of Kinder Scout and other landowners, a metaphorical gate had opened allowing thousands of visitors to explore the countryside around Hayfield, and proprietors quickly implemented measures to prevent trespassing. Hayfield residents had waited for many years for a branch line from New Mills to be constructed but some landowners and farmers may not have fully realised the consequences. It was succinctly reported (*Glossop Times*, 1869, p5) that: The prospect of a railway at Hayfield has been cajoled for upwards of twenty years, by two rival companies, and the development of its natural resources have been prevented, and it has also raised a screen before its beautiful scenery.' Newspaper readers were also informed (*Ibid*) that, at Whitsuntide, excursionists visited: 'Kinder Scout, Kinder Cavern, Jacob's Ladder, The Mermaid Pool, [and the] Town Hall (Hayfield).' Unfortunately, the MS&LR did not inform excursionists that Kinder Cavern and the Mermaid Pool were located on 'strictly preserved' moorland and that ramblers required a permit before they explored Kinder Scout.

If anyone would like a list of references used for this article, please email me on ron_braddock@yahoo.co.uk.



Steel plate engraving of 'Chatsworth, Derbyshire' from *Days in Derbyshire* (1863)

Letter to the editor - Half year meeting

Ken Brockway, Inspector

With regret, I have to admit that the early agenda for the Half Year meeting did not inspire attendance. Poor weather on the Friday made matters worse and resulted in a low attendance. I was therefore pleased I'd made the effort and was pleasantly surprised to be greatly encouraged by reports and our speaker.

I can acknowledge that it's a challenge to teach old dogs new tricks so this old dog is delighted to see another younger face become a Trustee, welcome Bruce. Like it or not, for the sake of the Society we all love, we must embrace new ideas. Our Chair Kathy and the team have achieved some goals of the Five Year Strategy with more to come.

For the remainder of the meeting I could easily detect a Lost Ways angle. Martin's update and good news report about the definitive map modification order for Brooks Drive Trafford was a real moral boost which needs to be publicised, flying the flag for the good work done by PNFS. Although perhaps that can wait until Trafford have had the fence removed.

David Gosling reported on Giants Castle Bridge on the Bollin Valley Way at Style. A well used and promoted path and river crossing but now highlighted that it's only permissive so impossible to bring any legal pressure for reinstatement. Persuasion and public opinion appears to be moving things in the right direction but still a long way to go and no alternative definitive paths in the area.

Our speaker, Morag Rose, then reminded us that most cities still have no definite map so urban walking space is constantly threatened by the ever changing city landscapes.

All this made me wonder if our PNFS path inspections have the wrong focus. The definitive paths that we inspect already have a good degree of protection. Okay there are issues but we often have legal powers to take action and any changes to the network need to follow a formal process of which PNFS is a consultee. Should our efforts be transferred onto those unrecorded paths, paths that we and many others use and enjoy that may suddenly be stolen from us by action or inaction of landowners?

I suggest we should widen our inspections and offer two areas for attention. Giants Castle Bridge prompts me to highlight well used permissive paths, a delicate subject as action could result in total loss. The second is ORPAs (other routes with public access) as shown by green or red dots on OS maps. A long story for those who don't know the background, these routes should already be adopted highway but highway staff are only interested in roads so getting action can be a challenge. These routes often remain unsigned and in arable areas can be ploughed out and invisible. Adding them to the definitive map would help promote use and offer us a legal route to get things done. Could the FID also show ORPAs?

More work, I acknowledge, but many definitive paths rely on unrecorded paths. It's therefore in our interest to check the map when out walking to see if that favourite or newly discovered route is really protected.

A more standardised rights of way admin system is long overdue

David Moore, Member

Walkers in England and Wales may well appreciate that we have a world class rights of way system which is the envy of other countries, despite its many deficiencies. Administration, maintenance and development of it however has a long way to go to catch up with a 21st century



where it has become second class to highways which overwhelmingly cater for the motor car, often with little consideration of pedestrian movement.

The management of the footpath system should be fairly uniform across the country, but we have an arrangement where each county council runs its own unique version, generally tailored to inadequate budgetary constraints for the problems it faces. Local government however is now allegedly facing changes, with a move away from county and district councils to smaller unitary organisations which embrace all local services and are hoped to improve efficiency and accountability for all.

Where will this leave a division of county council rights of way functionality? You may shudder to think. It ought nevertheless to be an opportunity for all the new councils to adopt more standard systems and practices, based on the best currently available.

The question however is where do you find the best? I approached artificial intelligence in the form of ChatGPT with the issue. Unsurprisingly it had difficulties and came up with the following answer.

“Unfortunately there’s no clear ‘winner’ county for having the best rights of way (RoW) admin system in England. It depends a lot on what you mean by ‘best’ (maintenance, accessibility, user satisfaction, quality of mapping, etc). But I can highlight some of the top contenders and trade-offs, based on current evidence — plus why it’s hard to pick a single ‘best’ county.”

It went on, with caveats, to list the three current counties of Leicestershire, Bath and NE Somerset, and Surrey - based heavily on Rights of Way Improvement Programmes and National Highways Public Satisfaction Surveys.

We badly need a government initiative to investigate rights of way administration and roll out a national problem app on the lines of the PNFS Path Checker which would go some way to indicate where maintenance funding at least was most needed.

Photograph by David Moore was taken some years ago on a now-accessible path between the English Heritage sites of Bolsover Castle and Sutton Scarsdale Hall in Derbyshire.



GROUP INSPECTIONS - See elsewhere in this issue.

Below walks are held on Wednesdays.

11 FEBRUARY (Short) - Ross Myddelton 07941 547378 r.myddelton1@ntlworld.com. Wilmslow to Mobberley linear walk of between six and seven miles via Lindow Common to Mobberley. Catch the 10:06 train from Manchester Piccadilly arriving at Wilmslow at 10:30 when walk starts. Return is by train from Mobberley SK9 1BU.

25 FEBRUARY (Long) - Udo Pope 07717 802468 udo.pope@ntlworld.com. Hadfield circular walk. Train from Manchester Piccadilly at 09:33 arrives at 10:15. 9 to 10 miles, approximately 400 m ascent/descent. Walk starts at 10:20 SK13 1AH.

11 MARCH (Short) - John Alexander 07598 835431

john@alexanders62.plus.com. Frodsham circular walk. 8.5 miles taking in Frodsham Hill and Helsby Hill, along the mostly wooded edge overlooking the Mersey valley, with views which include the Clwydian Hills in Wales. Total ascent 1,250 feet, with a few short steep ascents. 09:44 train from Piccadilly, arriving Frodsham 10:29. Walk starts from the station at 10:30 WA6 7DN

25 MARCH (Long) - John Mooney 07514 219563 mooney_je@yahoo.co.uk. Whaley Bridge to Disley linear walk. 09:51 train from Manchester Piccadilly arrives at 10:33. 9 miles, walk starts at 10:35 SK23 7AA.

8 APRIL (Short) - John Fisher 07432825624 johnfisher560@btinternet.com. Macclesfield circular walk of 7.5 miles from Macclesfield station with 650 feet of ascent in short stages, non-steep via Sutton Parish, Hollins, Langley, Gritstone Trail and Macclesfield Canal. Train from Manchester Piccadilly leaving at 10:14, Stockport at 10:24, arrives at Macclesfield at 10:40 where the walk begins. SK11 6JP.

29 APRIL (Long) - Walk leader required - contact 07918 154959 or kensmith4rj@icloud.com. Long walks are usually 9-12 miles long and start and finish at railway station(s).

6 MAY (Short) - David Morton 07858 915321 signposts@pnfs.org.uk. Whaley Bridge circular walk of 6.3 miles with 820 feet of ascent. Take the 09:51 Buxton train from Manchester Piccadilly arriving at Whaley Bridge at 10:33 then starting from the railway station and visiting Overton Hall Farm, Fernilee Dam and Shallcross Wood finishing at The Shepherds Arms for refreshment options, returning by train to Manchester. SK23 7AA

27 MAY (Long) - Walk leader required - contact 07918 154959 or kensmith4rj@icloud.com. Long walks are usually 9-12 miles long and start and finish at railway station(s).

November 2025 long walk
Glossop. Photograph by Ross
Myddelton





S28 to Bugsworth

Photographs by David Morton, Signpost Officer show before and after a touch-up given by himself.

