

Magazine of the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

Signpost

Number 89 - Autumn 2026





From the Chair

Kathy Mclean



Change is a constant in our lives, seasons move on, but we have had more days of extreme heat than average this summer. Walking long distances becomes more of a challenge but I know we continue to get out when we can. I am sure the weather will be more autumnal as you read this autumn edition of Signpost.

PNFS is also constantly changing, building on its long-established roots and purpose. In May we held our Annual General Meeting, which was well attended and certainly felt like a full room at Central Hall Manchester. After the business of the AGM, when our annual report and accounts were received, we heard two great speakers, Richard Hawksworth, Chair of the Ringway Association and Nick Thompson, President of CPRE. Richard talked about the GM Ringway which is going from strength to strength. At an earlier stage in development, the Liverpool Ringway is a project which PNFS is actively supporting, financially and in practical ways. This is a great opportunity for increased publicity for PNFS. We look forward to hearing about the progress.

Hearing your feedback is vital to the society to develop and thrive. In this edition of Signpost you will see notice of a volunteer survey in the Autumn. Do respond so that we can hear your views.

It is always heartening to learn about and support new innovations, usually generated by our members and volunteers. One which is going really well is a pilot in High Peak, volunteers are replacing missing or damaged waymarks with new ones which have a QR code embedded which takes walkers to the PNFS website. The main aim is to improve waymarking for walkers but hopefully advertising the society and gaining some new members at the same time.

One of our strategic aims relates to succession planning and increasing key volunteer roles. I am pleased to report that we have had a number of people expressing interest in roles such as Courts and Inquiries Officers. We are hopeful that this will lead over time to more people being willing to learn the role, alongside our current fantastic Courts and Inquiries Officers who do their best to cover a huge geography. One of the ways new volunteers can get more involved and understand the work of the Society is by becoming a footpath inspector. Again, we have a stream of interested people, being supported by our footpath inspector's co-ordination team. If you have joined recently, welcome and thank you.

Keeping up with inspecting parishes, especially if you have a number of large parishes, requires commitment. I was reminded of this recently as I set out to walk one of my parishes and realised it was going to take three times as long as I had allowed! But there is a satisfaction in knowing you have walked the paths and reported any issues, even though the response may not be rapid.

We will let you know about any upcoming meetings, but in the meantime, I hope you enjoy this edition of Signpost, with thanks to all contributors and Shirley Addy who edits the magazine.



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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: Fly agaric on Eyam FP15 over the wall from Eyam Youth Hostel
Photograph by Ken Brockway

Rothwell that ends well? update

John Harker, Courts and Inquiries Officer for Leeds

Signpost 87 Spring 2026, pages 16-18, saw me outline the case for legal action concerning this urban footpath in Leeds.

I served a notice under section 56(1) of the 1980 Highways Act on Leeds City Council on March 29th. The notice I sent is shown below. This is the opening step in getting this "out of repair" footpath brought back to usability.

PNFS Reference:- LE-ROT-1

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

Sir/Madam,

To:- Leeds City Council

TAKE NOTICE that I, JOHN HARKER

C/o Peak and Northern Footpaths Society, Taylor House, 23 Turncroft Lane, Offerton, Stockport SK1 4AB, claim that the way described in the SCHEDULE here to is a highway maintainable at the public expense.

AND TAKE NOTICE that portions of the said way, firstly the length between SKELTON GRANGE ROAD at SE3295.3094, and 50 yards short of the junction with HAIGH PARK ROAD at SE3283.3063, being a distance of 450 yards or thereabouts is out of repair,

and secondly the full length between PONTEFRAC T ROAD at SE3253.3062, and WAKEFIELD ROAD at SE3197.3069, being a distance of 800 yards or thereabouts, is out of repair.

AND TAKE NOTICE that I hereby require you, pursuant to subsection (1) of section 56 of the Highways Act 1980 to state:

- a) whether you admit that the said portions of the way is a highway maintainable at the public expense, and
- b) whether you admit that you are the authority liable to maintain the said portions of the way.

Dated: 30 March 2026

Signed: John Harker
Courts and Inquiries Officer (Leeds)

The reply that I received from the Highway Authority on 22 April is below. This means that the Highway Authority acknowledge that Footpath No 1 is a highway maintainable at public expense and that Leeds is the body responsible for that maintenance.

I write in reference to your email dated the 29th March 2026. Leeds City Council's response to your Highways Act 1980, Section 56(1) notice is given below.

1. According to our Definitive Map and Statement, the highway known as Definitive Footpath ROTHWELL 1 is a highway maintainable at the public expense.
2. Leeds City Council are the body responsible for the maintenance of this footpath.

The work required to undertake a proper repair will involve substantial vegetation clearance from the surface of the path. No work will be undertaken during bird nesting season. Any essential vegetation clearance will not commence before September 2026.

This information constitutes the necessary reply to your s56(1) notice.

The reply from the PRow section Manager states that clearance won't begin until after the bird nesting season is over. Fair enough, we aren't seeking to upset our feathered friends.

Come 30 September, we'll see what has actually been done to clear the surface of Footpath No 1. If nothing has been done, then the next step is to find out why, and if dissatisfied with the answer, initiate the next step. A visit to the Magistrates Court, should that be the Society's decision. It proved necessary with Ramsden Road in Kirklees. Maybe news travels between Local Authorities?

Watch this space.

SIGNPOST OFFICER WANTED

training offered

- I am still looking for a successor, who is willing and able to devote a lot of time to the job.
- Ideally they should live close to Taylor House garage, which serves as a workshop and store and is close to several suppliers.
- A suitable car is required to transport new signs or those needing posts replacing and to visit other signs needing maintenance. There are close to 600 signposts, which need maintaining, are spread across a wide area and date from 1905. A mileage allowance is paid.
- Woodworking, painting, IT and social skills, plus the help of Footpath Inspectors and other members, are all needed.
- In return you get a great variety of experiences in many pleasant places across north-west England at a time of your own choosing.
- Contact me if you are interested at signposts@pnfs.org.uk

David Morton, Signpost Officer

Have your say: PNFS volunteer experience survey coming this autumn

Richard Davies, Footpath Inspection Co-ordinator

This autumn, PNFS will launch a short Volunteer Experience Survey to help us better understand how we can support everyone who gives their time and expertise to the Society. Whether you are a Footpath Inspector, Path Checker, Signpost Team volunteer, Assessor, Courts & Inquiries Officer, Trustee, or contribute in any other capacity, your insight is essential. The survey takes around five minutes to complete. You can choose to remain fully anonymous, or you may leave your contact details if you would like a follow-up conversation.

Why we're running the survey

PNFS is powered by volunteers with a wide range of skills, from inspecting paths and maintaining signposts to providing legal expertise, governance, and specialist assessments. Each role brings a different perspective, and we want to understand how well we are supporting you in the valuable work you do. The survey will help us learn more about:

- **How clearly you feel your role is defined**
- **Whether our training and guidance meet your needs**
- **How well our communication is working across all volunteer groups**
- **What helps you feel supported and confident in your role**
- **What motivates you to stay involved with PNFS**

If you'd like to explore any of these themes in greater depth, you're encouraged to do so in the survey. You might choose to expand on areas such as role clarity, training needs, communication, support, or motivation - whatever feels most relevant to your experience. Any reflections you offer will help the Society understand how best to support you and meet your needs more fully.

What you can expect

The survey has been designed to be:

- **Short and simple** - about five minutes commitment
- **Anonymous by default** - unless you choose to share your details
- **Relevant to all volunteer roles**
- **Focused on real experiences, not form-filling**
- **Action-driven** - results will directly inform improvements in 2026 and beyond

We will share a summary of the findings in a future issue of *Signpost*, along with the steps PNFS will take in response.

Your voice shapes our future

From the volunteers who walk miles of footpaths to those who represent PNFS in legal matters, manage governance, assess structures, or maintain our iconic signposts, every contribution strengthens the Society.

This survey is a way for us to listen, to take note and make sure we're supporting you in the right ways. Whether you've been with PNFS for a few months or many years, your perspective matters.

When and how to take part

The survey link will be emailed only to all active volunteers in early autumn and shared on the PNFS website. Please take a few moments to provide us with your thoughts, experiences and suggestions.

HAVE YOUR SAY: PNFS VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE SURVEY

— COMING THIS AUTUMN —



Help Us Improve Your Volunteering Experience!

- ✓ Share Your Thoughts & Ideas
- ✓ Takes Around 5 Minutes
- ✓ Anonymous & Confidential

Survey Link Coming This Autumn!

www.pnfs.org.uk/survey

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

Uninspected signposts - can you help?

Below is a list of PNFS signposts that need inspecting. They have not been checked for three years. If you would like to help, David Morton Signpost Officer would be very grateful.

Once you have checked and cleaned the plate and any plaque with some water and a cloth, please take photographs of the logo, plate with plaque, and the entire signpost in its environment, along with notes about the condition of plate and post; and email them to signposts@pnfs.org.uk.

Type	No	Inspected	Status	GridRef	Location
S	574	21-Dec-22	OK	SJ 99082 65768	Gradbach campsite
S	530	21-Dec-22	MR	SK 01282 66995	200m NE of Springhead Farm,Flash
I	5	07-Mar-23	OK	SJ 943 878	E of Stockport Golf Club on Cown Edge Way
S	368	08-Mar-23	MR	SJ 95400 83867	400m SE of Middlecale Farm,Lyme Handley
S	367	08-Mar-23	OK	SJ 94773 83683	Barlow House Farm, Green Lane, Hr. Poynton
S	102	11-Mar-23	OK	SJ 96198 84500	Farm Bridge,Coppice Lane at Bollinhurst Brook, Disley
S	644	24-Mar-23	OK	SK 05414 84062	Andrews Farm, Chinley Head
S	460	27-Mar-23	MR	SK10700 53320	Beeston Tor Farm, Manifold Trail
S	524	27-Mar-23	OK	SK 10385 53953	Manifold Way at bend by Beeston Tor Farm
S	89	22-Apr-23	MR	SK 03022 88398	Firbob Cottage, Little Hayfield
S	549	09-Jun-23	OK	SJ 99576 95423	Mottram church cemetery
S	414	13-Jun-23	OK	SJ 93563 85481	Bollinhurst Brook, Hazel Grove
S	206	22-Jun-23	MR	SJ 93676 85426	100m W of Parkgate Farm, Norbury Hollow
S	532	07-Jul-23	OK	SK 01440 67190	Wicken Walls
S	243	07-Jul-23	OK	SK 01571 67149	Footbridge 150m NW of Far Brook, Flash
S	275	07-Jul-23	OK	SK 02129 94823	N.East side of Dinting Junction.
S	629	09-Jul-23	OK	SD 81738 35116	N of FB over R.Calder, Padiham
S	245	21-Jul-23	MR	SJ 95025 82390	SE of Throstlenest Farm, Lyme Handley
S	125	25-Jul-23	OK	SK 07898 81077	SE side of T junction in Bagshaw
S	302	03-Aug-23	OK	SK 00896 67112	0.3km SW of Wicken Walls, Flash
S	309	03-Aug-23	OK	SK 01061 66962	0.5km W of Wicken Walls; 300m SW of Cocket Knowl
S	60	16-Aug-23	OK	SK 11612 90535	0.5km E of Snake Inn on Roman Road
S	68	16-Aug-23	OK	SK 17169 83562	Entry opp Woodruffe Arms, 50m N of A6187, Hope
S	544	27-Aug-23	OK	SJ 83287 81352	Lindow Common NW corner

Harthill with Woodall Footpath 25

John Harker, Area Officer Rotherham

I achieved a minor success recently with this footpath near the Chesterfield Canal at Kiverton Park in Rotherham. On a walk with my wife we found this footpath, cutting a corner between two roads, impossible to walk due to heavy under- and overgrowth. This is often what happens when a footpath gets fenced in between a field boundary and a fence erected to keep walkers, literally, on the straight and narrow. A swift email to Rotherham Public Rights of Way quickly led to the path being cleared, at least for the time being. The structure visible in the photos is a stable block on a site used as a horse and pony rescue centre. A noble endeavour that had an inadvertent downside for walkers.



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*Before photographs of
Harthill with Woodall
FP25*



*After photographs of
same footpath*

Marking the Way Forward: PNFS Launches High Peak Waymark Renewal Trial

Richard Davies, Footpath Inspection Coordinator

Across the footpaths of the North, a quiet but important transformation is beginning. PNFS has launched an ambitious new initiative to refresh and modernise waymarking across the region, which started with a focused trial in the High Peak. The **Waymark Project** aims not only to improve navigation for walkers but also to raise the Society's profile and strengthen its volunteer network.

For years, inspectors have reported the same recurring issue: waymark discs, once bright and clear, have faded, cracked, or disappeared entirely. Weather, vegetation, and time have taken their toll. Now, thanks to a generous sponsorship from **Fitzpatrick Woolmer Design**, PNFS has taken a decisive step forward. The company has produced and supplied **500 high-quality replacement discs**, each featuring a clean, modern design and a QR code linking directly to the PNFS website.

The QR code is an invitation for walkers to learn about the Society, join as members, or volunteer as inspectors. In an era when countryside organisations must work harder than ever to attract new supporters, this small disc carries a big message.



Before (left) and after (right)



The discs carry a QR code that will direct walkers to the PNFS website with the intention of encouraging new members and volunteers.

Working With Local Authorities

A crucial part of the project's success lies in cooperation with local authorities. While PNFS is ready to begin the High Peak trial, the Society recognises that local authority approval is required before any replacement discs can be installed. These authorities, who benefit directly from clearer, safer, and better-maintained paths, are expected to appreciate the value this brings to walkers.

The hope is that the approval process will be unencumbered, allowing the trial, and any future regional rollout, to proceed smoothly and without unnecessary delay. A seamless partnership will ensure that walkers experience the improvements as quickly as possible.

A Simple Task with a Big Impact

The High Peak trial is built around a straightforward idea: empower existing inspectors to replace defective waymarks during their routine inspections. It requires only a few extra items in the rucksack - a handful of discs, a small hammer or screwdriver, and a couple of nails or screws. The process is intentionally simple:

- **Replace damaged discs** when encountered—bleached, broken, missing, or unreadable.
- **Record the location** using a grid reference or, ideally, the Path Checker App.
- **Report the update** to the Local Authority, copying PNFS so the Society can track demand and plan future rollouts.

This reporting step is crucial. By gathering data on how many discs are replaced, and where, PNFS can build a clear picture of the scale of deterioration across the region. That evidence will guide decisions about expanding the project further.

Before and After: A Visible Difference

The transformation is immediate. A faded, barely legible disc becomes a crisp, bright marker pointing the way with confidence. In some cases, inspectors may overlay the new disc onto an old one fixed firmly to a stone or concrete post. In others, they'll remove redundant nails or screws, tidy up the post, and ensure the arrow points unmistakably in the correct direction.



Before



After

Guidance for Inspectors: Getting It Right

The Trustees have issued clear guidance to support volunteers:

- **Remove old discs carefully** or overlay when appropriate.
- **Use the two pre-drilled holes**—and a third if needed—to secure the disc firmly.
- **Check the direction** from a walker's perspective before fixing.
- **Tidy the post** by removing or driving in old nails.
- **Clear vegetation** to ensure visibility.
- **Send feedback** to help refine the trial before wider rollout.

These steps ensure consistency across the network and uphold the high standards PNFS is known for.



Before



After

A Trial with Regional Potential

The High Peak trial was just the beginning. The plan is to extend the Waymark Project across the entire PNFS region, potentially refreshing thousands of waymarks and strengthening the Society's connection with the walking public.

For now, the Trustees are calling on inspectors to take part, share their experiences, and help shape the future of waymarking. Each replaced disc is a small act of stewardship, one that keeps the countryside accessible, enjoyable, and clearly signposted for all.

For further information, comments or to provide feedback, please contact waymarks@pnfs.org.uk.

20 years of minute taking for PNFS

David Gosling

Anne Summerfield has been taking minutes of PNFS meetings (Trustees, and Courts and Inquiries) for 20 years. She is an important part of the team which organises PNFS and has acquired a wealth of experience over the time she has been doing the job. I had the idea of asking her to write about her experiences and below is her account.

It was August 2005 when I received a phone call from Mr David Bratt enquiring about whether my company offered the service of taking minutes at meetings. This wasn't something I normally did. My usual kind of job was typing documents such as reports, essays or books and I was office-based. However, I agreed to attend the next meeting and give it a go. I have to confess that it was rather daunting as I'd never taken minutes before. I didn't know the names of the people speaking so initially my notes cryptically described them as 'man in blue shirt' etc and I had to phrase the minutes that 'it was said ...' until I could put names to faces. The even bigger challenge was trying to understand the discussions involving legal terminology - I had no idea what was meant by definitive maps, Modification Orders, byways, TROs, Public Inquiries, Section 56 and 130A Notices, etc. Twenty years later, I have gained a clearer understanding of the Society's work but am still unfailingly impressed by the expert knowledge of legislation shown, particularly by the Courts & Inquiries Officers.

I recall being amazed to hear of 'thousands of signposts going out every month'. It took some time before I realised these were references to the magazine *Signpost*, not physical signposts! Another error that still makes me smile was that, embarrassingly, I once typed some minutes which referred to the countryside being full of PoWs (Prisoners of War) instead of PRowS (Public Rights of Way) - only one letter missing but a very different meaning!

So what has changed over 20 years? One thing that springs to mind is that the office at Taylor House used to have wall-to-wall shelving stacked with large-size paper maps, before the huge job of sorting and scanning moved these to a digital archive. Also, before Covid, meetings were held with everyone sitting around a table at Taylor House but nowadays most are



held remotely with only occasional in-person meetings. Another big change is that for many years I was often the only female present at meetings of the Managing Committee so appreciated being joined by Hilda Bowler, Rhoda Barnett and Jenny Allen and now the Society has a female Chair (although more ladies are still urgently wanted!). One of the things I admire about the Trustees is that they are constantly seeking to be inclusive, wanting to attract members of all ages and diverse cultures. They are conscious that inevitably many volunteers are retired so they've been particularly pleased with the increasing numbers of younger members who are willingly contributing their time and energy despite many working full-time and having young families.

I find that one of the biggest misconceptions when mentioning PNFS is that people think it is simply a group that organises walks. The reality is that all involved with managing the Society are constantly endeavouring to focus on its aims and objectives, whether that be reminding local authorities of their legal obligations to maintain the surfaces of footpaths in good condition or funding replacement of stiles with gates to make them more widely accessible.

Frustration is frequently expressed about the lack of progress by local authorities in repairing reported faults but the Trustees do have some sympathy with under-staffed and under-funded council departments, also with farmers whose livelihoods depend on lands crossed by PROWs so, instead of showing aggressive attitudes, they seek to work with them to find solutions so that walkers can enjoy using well-maintained paths peacefully and safely.

I've observed that the volunteers who run PNFS have experience from a vast range of different backgrounds, contributing their expertise in areas such as publicity, technology, policy-writing, accountancy, social media as well as highway law. Yet they all share in common a deep passion for the values and aspirations of PNFS and are diligent to make wise decisions regarding the subscriptions, donations and legacies that they are entrusted to care for.

Finally, on a personal note, although I am technically an outsider at the meetings, attending to keep a formal record of discussions rather than taking part in them, I have always appreciated being made to feel a valued part of the team - it was touching to unexpectedly receive some beautiful flowers with get-well wishes when I had an operation a few years ago and heartwarming to receive a lovely card on the happier occasion of my wedding. I'm so glad I agreed to take on the challenge of working for this well-deserving charity which has come to hold a special place in my heart after 20 years of taking minutes at its meetings.

Out of area - Stretham

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector



Old West River 'Ouse Valley Way' looking towards Stretham Old Engine.
This is also part of a pilgrimage across Britain 'Via Beata'

Yes okay I like walking. I hope it helps keep me fit and healthy. Lets take a holiday, yes nice idea, where shall we go. Not walking as the other half doesn't do my sort of walks. We like Landmark Trust it saves and restores old buildings with the long term security of the building covered by letting it for holidays. One such site is Stokers Cottage which stands on the banks of the Old West River of the Great Ouse at Stretham, Cambridgeshire. This is Fen country and this section of the Great Ouse was bypassed when Dutch engineer Cornelius Vermuyden recommended a drainage scheme constructing the long straight bypass river the Old Bedford River and Denver Sluice in the 17th century.

Landmark thoughtfully provide a comprehensive bookshelf relevant to the location of the property along with a 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map of the immediate area. This may not be a walking holiday but those green lines are very tempting.

Draining the land had the consequence of the land shrinking and it soon needed windmills to pump the water into the rivers which also needed banks to contain them. These banks are frequently public footpaths so for an evening stroll I could use these. Care is needed to avoid a there and back as river crossing points are very limited. I managed to devise a few short walks and soon discovered that the paths are well used and easy to follow.

Stokers Cottage was the home for the man who fed the boiler at the now preserved Stretham Engine House next door. Initially the windmills managed to lift water from the fields into the rivers but this caused the land to shrink further and soon steam power had to be employed. The books available for bedtime reading soon explained all this plus we discovered that the steam engine installed next door in 1831 had been made in our home town of Ripley Derbyshire by the Butterley Company. So there is the first Peak and Northern connection. In 1924 steam gave way to diesel with the installation of an engine by Mirrlees Bickerton and Day of Hazel Grove, Stockport. It was good to be offered a private viewing of both this pieces of impressive machinery although neither are now operational.

Back on the paths I was pleasantly surprised by my walks. There and back on opposite sides of the water become circular walks in a landscape very different to the hills and dales of Derbyshire and the Peak District. I passed the gentle discharge of pumped drainage from a small station of the Littleport and Downham Inland Drainage Board. Boats were moored around the confluence with the River Cam and a jogger passed me by as I stood to watch a train on its way to Ely.

Not a first choice for a walking holiday but I was inspired to look up Slow Ways and Via Beata to see what routes are available. This soon gets me wanting to walk Soham to Ely or even Ely to March both have rail connections to make the return journey. It certainly is easy walking no puffing up hills so yes I might be back, thanks Cambridgeshire.



Ely riverside footpath which could be on Via Beata and a Slow Way but is missed by both.
All photographs by Ken Brockway



Via Beata sculpture in Stretham church porch

Changing face of our countryside

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector



A huge solar farm changes the view from green to grey at the meeting of Tutbury FPs 8 and 15.



Signpost Report

David Morton, Signpost Officer



This report continues where *Signpost 87* left off in December 2025.

Prospects and Signpost Donations

The two signposts at Brinepits Farm near Audlem 668 and 669 are still waiting for the legal department of Cheshire East to sign off the paperwork.

Sadly my high hopes for new signposts at Stafford and Ipstones have yielded nothing so far.

Meanwhile, thanks to excellent suggestions and active help from several members of PNFS, six new signposts are in the pipeline, as follows:

663 at Howlers Knowl farm, near Jenkin Chapel - suggested by me

664 south of Warslow - suggested by Bill Parke

665 south of Denby Pottery, south of Ripley, Derbyshire and

666 on Cromford Canal towpath, west of Ripley - both suggested by Ken Brockway

667 north of Chevin Golf Course, Duffield - suggested by David Moreton

668 at Little Budworth Country Park, Cheshire West - suggested by Linda Smith

Plates are on order for 663-666, as is the replacement plate for Signpost 1, stolen from Carr Meadow, They are due for collection any time.

666 and 667 have both attracted donations of £800 to cover their cost.

Bill, Ken and Linda not only suggested these locations, but also negotiated landowners' consent and the support of local walking groups. Linda also suggested an excellent spot on the Sandstone Trail near Frodsham, but I could not work out a way to fix it securely to the sandstone outcrop.

New Signpost

662 at Mobberley Hall Farm was erected in memory of Eileen Leonard on 21 Jan 2026.

Lost and Found

332 at Chanderhill, near Chesterfield was given a new plate on 21 Apr 2026.

001 at Carr Meadow was reported missing and its loss confirmed by me on 20 Dec 2025. I spoke to neighbours and farmer-landowner, who said it had been missing for 6- 8 weeks. It was reported by D Gosling on NW News TV and by me on Radio Derby. Derbyshire Police were notified - all to no avail.

407 at Mixon near Onecote was reported missing by F/P Checker Heather Burke in Jan and I confirmed its loss with farmer and by visit. It was one of three at the farm.

Maintenance

Essential jobs only in winter due to bad weather.

May: 389 and 390 were retrieved from Brennand Farm, Bowland with help from Shirley Addy. Both posts had been knocked over. 389's concrete repair post was snapped! I suspect a pedigree bull was the culprit. 389 has been reposted 2 or 3 times already and is in a spot inaccessible by car, so I may not re-post it. Like 407 at Mixon, it is one of a group of three PNFS signposts. I intend to re-post 390, which is accessible.

Fingerpost 8 at Bullshaw Farm below Lantern Pike has been damaged again. 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 three older fingers had disappeared and the post had been moved several yards and propped by a 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.

June: John Hodgson and I just reinstated the stolen S001 with a new one donated by members Michael and Peter Gunn in extreme heat at Carr Meadow. The farmer turned up, having forgotten my conversation with him in December, but I persuaded him that he had agreed to our moving it away from the road and John told him that he was an ex-farmer himself and mollified him. He departed amicably.

Thanks again to the many members of the society who have helped me this year.

More suggestions would be most welcome, particularly after the 'gap year' of 2025, when only two were erected, following seven in 2024. We used to average twenty per year. Considerations are printed on page 25 of the 2025 Annual Report.

Have a laugh 😊

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector

It just tickled me as to what councils say should be done and what we get supplied.

Spotted on the Kirklees website: "If a landowner or occupier wants to put a new gate on a public right of way, they must apply in writing to the council for permission. Permission won't usually be given for any additional stiles because they are not suitable for people with limited mobility. Permission for new gates will only be given if they are necessary to control animals. Putting up a gate without permission may be regarded as a criminal offence (see 'obstructions'). Highways Act 1980 section 147.

View DEFRA's good practice guidance on authorising structures at: "If a gate crosses an enclosed public right of way, such as a lane enclosed by hedges, then it should be unlocked even if there is a stile or gate alongside it off the path. A locked gate could be regarded as an obstruction and may be dealt with as such unless it is preventing livestock escaping onto a road. If this is the case, an alternative means of access must be provided alongside the locked gate."

See picture (right) taken on 25 April this year on Kniveton FP8. Clearly a new bit of fencing to fill what I guess was a gap. Lets start with, was permission obtained to erect this structure? Was consideration given to BS 5709 Gap, Gate or Stile? The step here is very narrow recommendation is 200 mm (8"). The distance from the step to the top rail exceeds the recommended 450 mm (18"). There is no handpost. The only good thing I can say about it is the use of new timber rather than secondhand scrap.



Left: Biggin FP14 is this a stile?

Centre: Hognaston FP17 what will replace this gate?

Right: Anslow FP0.509 a PNFS member struggles over a fence with concrete block to replace a damaged wooden step 10 June 2026.

Surveys and spells

Ron Braddock, Member

As the popularity of Kinder Scout increased, several articles, about the moorland area, contained some interesting, if rather strange claims, about the highest point in Derbyshire. For example, it was reported (*Burnley Gazette*, 1870, p2), about Kinder Scout, that: 'At its summit are the remains of a Roman encampment, which at the taking of the census about thirty years back was inhabited by one soldier who was then employed upon the Ordnance Survey.'(i) Unfortunately, there is no evidence to confirm that a Roman station existed, on the top of Kinder Scout, or adjacent hills. Although, it is true to state, that soldiers, of the Royal Engineers, surveyed Kinder Scout, before 1840, and they apparently erected a cairn of stones on the moorland plateau. It is possible, that a soldier was stationed on Kinder Scout, after 1835, but it took several years before a one inch to a mile scale map, of the region, was published. Newspaper readers were informed (*True Sun*, 1837, p2) that members of the British Scientific Association had met in Edinburgh and they passed a resolution stating: 'that the progress of various branches of science is seriously retarded by the want of an accurate map of North Britain, and the North of England, and that this opinion be represented to his Majesty's government with the view of expediting the completion of the unpublished or unfinished parts of the Ordnance survey.'(ii)



Part of 1840 map, showing Kinder Scoutn, engraved in the Tower of London at the Ordnance Survey Map Office and published by Colonel Colby. ©Crown copyright 2026 Ordnance Survey. Media 026/26

In May, 1835, the esteemed council, of the aforementioned organisation, made representation to the government and it was hoped that this would stimulate progress. It was a matter of great concern, to many scientists and travellers, that a survey of Scotland, and many parts of England, had not been finished. It was also mentioned (*Ibid*) that: 'From this document we find that the survey was begun in 1791, and after forty-three years only sixty-five sheets had been published of the general map of England, which would consist of 108 sheets when completed. The survey of England was, therefore, scarcely more than half executed; and though the rate of progress had been accelerated, it was inferred that ten years would lapse before it reached the Tweed.'(iii) Several maps of different parts of England were produced, by the Board of Ordnance, before a map was published, in 1840, that showed Hayfield and Kinder Scout. It was also announced (*Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 1837, p1) that: 'The Master General and Board of Ordnance, do hereby give Notice, that with a view of affording the Public a more extended use and benefit of the Survey of England, they have directed a considerable reduction to be made in the price of Sheets already published; and that any Sheets required may be obtained

at the reduced Price upon application to Mr. Gardner, their Agent, at 163 Regent Street.’(iv)

Another interesting story, about Kinder Scout, was told by Joseph Gurdy in an article about a visit to Hayfield. Gurdy was a former resident of Hayfield who was indentured, when he was young, as an apprentice to learn the skills of weaving woollen cloth. He subsequently wrote several articles, after leaving Hayfield and returning to the township, that contained fascinating details about the history of the village. Gurdy (1870, p3), in the *Glossop-dale Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter*, described a story about an elderly resident of Hayfield, called Susannah, who was accused, during the previous century, of being a witch, and he stated that: ‘Susannah’s witch caused a great deal of trouble among the inhabitants at the time.’(v) It seems that all the awful misfortunes and unfortunate events, that occurred in Hayfield village and the immediate vicinity, were blamed on old Susannah. Gurdy (Ibid) mentioned that: ‘The old Judeth used to go about selling wooden pins, at the same time hanging on for charity.’(vi) Apparently, Susannah had acquired some knowledge of witchcraft from an old sailor, who had passed through the village, after she had been impressed with the spells that he cast on local



inhabitants. Everyone, in Hayfield, knew that Susannah had obtained knowledge of the dark arts, from the sailor, and many people were reluctant to annoy or upset her in case she cast spells in retribution. When a fever spread through the village, and cattle became ill, old Susannah was blamed for all the events that occurred. Fortunately, when a crowd of angry residents gathered around her, near the George Inn, the minister of Hayfield church intervened, pacified the crowd, and told her to go home after she produced a box containing a black beetle.

Jumble End Cottage, Kinder Road, Hayfield. Old Susannah lied in the vicinity near Jumble Farm

Gurdy (Ibid) also explained, after a minister had spoken to the crowd and talked to old Susannah, that: ‘He then sent her home, and as the old woman was going up Jumble (for she lived there) folks told her they had seen her “witch” go up towards Kinder like something, they did not know what, as swift as a greyhound, and by that time it was at the top of Kinder Scout. In a while someone came down that had been at Hollinshead, and told folks they saw it go by there up towards the Downfall, and it plunged into the Mermaid Pool.’(vii) Some of the excursionists, who visited Hayfield and Kinder Scout, may have been told that Roman soldiers built a station, on the Scout, and that during the 18th century Hayfield residents were afraid to criticise a village resident because they believed she was a witch; they may also have been told that Druids had once met, amongst the rocks and pools, on Kinder Scout.

Evidently, stories about a witch, did not deter numerous excursionists, from Manchester, from visiting Hayfield, and may have inspired some people to explore. Parker (1870, p3), from Ardwick, in a letter to the Editor of the *Glossop-dale*

Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter, wrote: 'On Saturday last, I formed one of a party of about 30 individuals of both sexes who had come from Manchester to refresh themselves amid the lovely scenery and invigorating air of Kinder valley. We put up at the house of Mr. Woolley, Royal Hotel, in the quiet but picturesque village of Hayfield. Here everything was done for our comfort that kindness and the most earnest solicitude could suggest.'(viii) It is possible that Woolley provided the excursionists with the necessary permission, to visit Kinder Scout and a nearby valley, although the extent of their ramble is unknown. The landlord also arranged for a piano to be moved to a private room so the visiting Mancunians could sing a few songs after they had returned from a walk. Newspaper readers were informed (Ibid) that: 'After we returned from our stroll along the heath clad hills of Kinder Scout, having an hour or two to spare, our musical friends set themselves to fill up the moments in songs and harmony.'(ix) Unfortunately, Hayfield brass band was practicing in a nearby room and Parker declared that they would not stop playing their musical instruments. This was subsequently refuted, by a member of the band, who stated that no person had requested the band to refrain and they would have been pleased to stop playing and oblige the visitors.



Hare and Hounds public house, New Mills. In 1871, the licence was transferred from Martha Torkington to Samuel Fairhall

Some excursionists may have been encouraged to visit Kinder Scout after reading that walkers could observe the sea from the summit. For instance, it was stated (*North Derbyshire & North Cheshire Advertiser*, 1871, p6) that: 'In a propitious day the view from the top of Kinder is so expansive that in some states of the atmosphere you

may descry the sea at Liverpool, nearly fifty miles distant.'(x) The popularity of Kinder Scout also encouraged some landlords to advertise their premises in the hope of increasing custom. For example, an advertisement (*North Cheshire Herald*, 1871, p1) explained: 'Mr. Samuel Fairall, Proprietor of the Folly, Low Leighton, New Mills, begs to announce that he is prepared to accommodate any number of parties who are desirous of spending a day in a most magnificent part of Derbyshire Scenery. The Park, the Moors, and Kinder Scout, which are in close proximity to the above premises, will afford a pleasant treat to any one.'(xi) The proper, or more recognised name of the Folly, New Mills, was the Hare and Hounds public house. In 1870, the license was transferred to Martha Torkington, from her late husband, and the following year the license was transferred from Martha to Samuel Fairall. The new landlord hoped to increase revenue by attracting excursionists who planned to visit the Derbyshire countryside. Another notice (*Warrington Examiner*, 1871, p1) referred to the Crown Hotel, New Mills, and stated: 'Renovated under New Proprietorship - Commercial and Family Hotel. Every convenience for dinner and picnic parties. - Within easy distance of Kinder Scout, and other romantic scenery. T. Saxton, Proprietor.'(xii) In 1871, the license of the Crown Inn, or the Crown Hotel as

it was sometimes called, was transferred from Herbert Redfern to Thomas Saxton and the new landlord also hoped to increase custom by attracting tourists who wanted to visit Kinder Scout. Some people alleged that Druids had constructed a stone circle on the moorland area and it was believed that a stone altar was used. There is much to learn about the history and legends of Kinder Scout and present-day visitors, like their forebears, continue to be enthralled by the magnificent splendour of the moorland scenery and the impressive Kinder Downfall.

Photographs copyright Ron Braddock, except where stated otherwise

References

- (i) *Burnley Gazette* (1870), 'Charles Owen's Grave', 8 January, p2.
- (ii) *True Sun* (1837), 'Ordnance Survey of Scotland', 29 June, p2.
- (iii) *Ibid.*
- (iv) *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* (1837), 'Ordnance Survey of Great Britain', 1 June, p1.
- (v) Gurdy, J (1870), 'Joseph Gurdy's visit to Hayfield', *Glossop-dale Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter*, 19 February, p3.
- (vi) *Ibid.*
- (vii) *Ibid.*
- (viii) Parker, A (1870), 'Hayfield, The Hayfield Brass Band and the guests at The Royal Hotel', *Glossop-dale Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter*, 23 July, p3.
- (ix) *Ibid.*
- (x) *North Derbyshire & North Cheshire Advertiser* (1871), 'Rambles through Derbyshire, Hayfield', 10 June, p6.
- (xi) *North Cheshire Herald* (1871), 'Mr. Samuel Fairall', 3 June, p1.
- (xii) *Warrington Examiner* (1871), 'Hotels', 7 October, p1.

Eccles Rambling and Social Club's 80th anniversary

David Morton, Signpost Officer



shown an interest in our work dating back to 1986, when they paid for S208 to commemorate their 40th anniversary! S208 began life as a single-fingerpost. It lasted till 2017, when I attached a cast-alloy plate to the original post.

In June I fixed an 80th anniversary plaque to S208 at Combs on behalf of Eccles R&SC days before they held a related 9 mile, 1400 ft ascent walk from Taxal layby. They rewarded me ten years ago with free Eccles Cakes at start, finish and en route, and they have



Finding trouble

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector

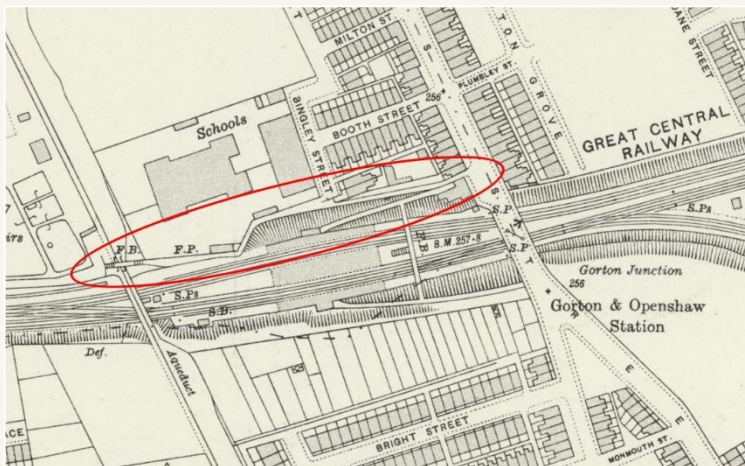
Always finding trouble, some might say. After the AGM in Manchester I took a walk using Slow Ways. By chance two of the routes that flagged up were along canals which I had visited during restoration and later by boat so I was interested to see how things had moved on. A route to Gorton left Oxford Road and joined the Rochdale canal. A path along the canal is shown on OS with the recreation route diamonds so invites. Having some limited knowledge of that canal I was sceptical. The towpath soon came to an end and as I can't walk on water I needed to move to streets but the diamonds ploughed on ignoring this reality.

Moving on to the Ashton canal again with diamonds plus orange dots of a cycle route I had better luck. I pass the Co-Op Live and the sign confirms to me it is the high street Co-Op let's hope they do better here than our local store. OS tells me this is Bradford, so I'm a bit confused. At Openshaw my Slow Way guide directs the route onto the former Stockport branch canal, new territory for me and the orange dots confirm something.

Now to the point of this article. Who looks after these paths? We can guess that Canal and River Trust are responsible for towpaths. If it's a recorded rights of way then we can involve the Highway Authority. Part of the Stockport branch cycleway is shown on Find My Street (FmyS) as "Footpath along former Stockport Canal" It has a Unique Street Reference Number "USRN: 24525454". So it's a street and a footpath but who maintains it? FmyS tells us "Not maintainable at public expense". The northern section linking to the Ashton canal is not on FmyS but maps do show this as 'Public Park or Garden'.

An old private arm bridge confirms to me this was a canal and then a bridge over a railway retains stone setts of the aqueduct towpath. Here the Slow Way turns along a signed route to Gorton station. It's a bit overgrown but there is evidence of use. SW reviews had warned that the final section is impassible. There is a road alternative along Barrass Street (formerly Bingley Street) then Beeth Street, both

maintainable at public expense. The link path is invisible on the definitive map and FmyS so who do I complain to to get it cleared?



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Is this a lost or unrecorded way? An inspection of old OS maps on the wonderful National Library of Scotland website shows a FB (footbridge) over the canal by the aqueduct where I joined the path. OS also put FP (footpath) on the line of the path. Good starting research. The Land Registry search map shows the path unregistered, as is the active rail line and as I had noted it looked like the railway had made provision for the path during some construction work. It looks a good candidate for a claim. Deposited plans for the canal and railway should help these could be in the local archive. Any volunteers to take this on?

Interested in volunteering with PNFS?



Footpath Inspector ~ Path Checker ~ Area Officer ~ Signpost Team ~
Consultations & Orders ~ Courts & Inquiries ~ Media & Publicity ~
Admin Support

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



Not every cow is a potential threat

John Harker, Acting Courts and Inquiries Officer Kirklees

Recently, I was doing a recce for a forthcoming walk I'm leading in the Denby Dale area of Kirklees. Alighting from a bus in the village of Clayton West, I followed Denby Dale Footpath 33 across a parkland which had been the grounds of a large

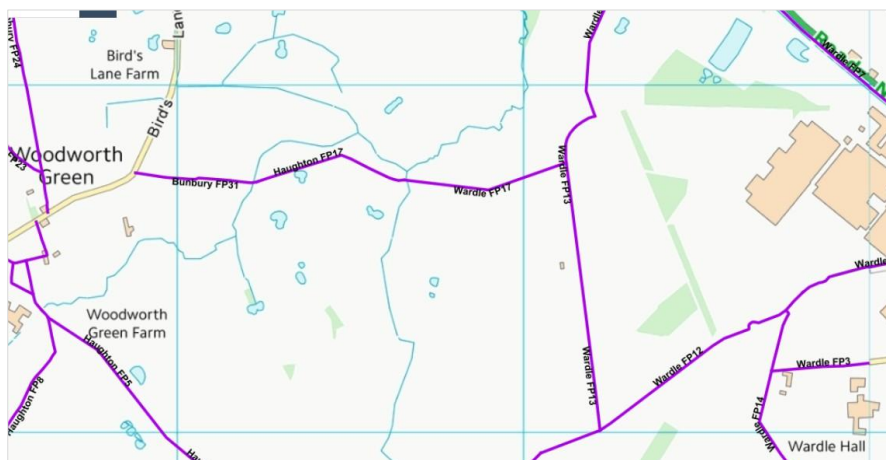
property called "The Park". The descendants of the original owner donated the parkland to the people of Clayton West to be held in, and managed, by a Trust as part of the 2000 Millennium celebrations. The aforementioned metal bovine greets you as you cross the parkland on a section of the "Kirklees Way".

A cul-de-sac no longer, with a bit of help from PNFS

Richard Vickery, Footpath Inspector

In the Autumn 2022 issue of *Signpost* (73) I wrote about a Cheshire East cul-de-sac path, Stoke FP7, which is just north of Nantwich. It originally joined FP11 in the neighbouring parish of Hurleston, but the latter was one of several paths that were the subject of a dispute between the landowner and Cheshire council in the 1960s. The local council raised no objection to the path closures so a compromise was negotiated by Cheshire Council where some paths would stay open and some, including FP11 would be closed. Hence when the Definitive Map was published in 1973 this path was not shown and Stoke FP7 became a cul-de-sac and has now fallen into disuse.

In the nearby parish of Haughton there has also been a cul-de-sac path, Haughton FP17 which joins Bunbury FP31 at its west end but stopped at the east end at the boundary with Wardle parish. This is shown on the old Definitive Map.



Definitive Map, pre-24 June 2026 (Cheshire East)
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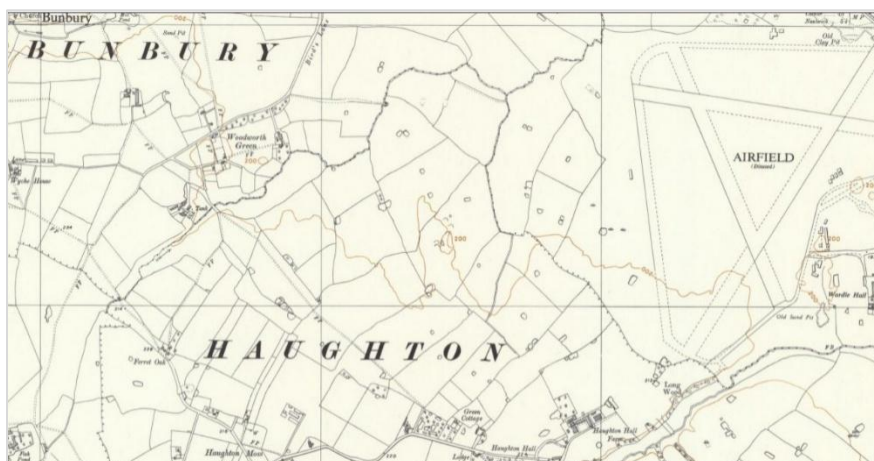
The reason for this cul-de-sac is due to the history of the land use of Wardle parish in the twentieth century. Prior to that old OS maps show that there was a path from Woodward Green (just south-east of Bunbury) to Wardle Hall, an 18th century farmhouse near the Shropshire Union Canal. This is shown below.

Looking the OS map for the area from 1933, the footpaths are still shown. However, during the Second World War the land in the Wardle parish was requisitioned by the Ministry of Defence.



OS Map 1898 1 inch:1 mile (National Library of Scotland)

In December 1940 it was decided to build an airfield, one of a number in Cheshire intended to boost the fighter defence of Merseyside which with its docks was a target for the German Luftwaffe. Three concrete runways were completed by 1942 but as the need for fighter defences had declined it was decided to use it for training. It became RAF Calveley and was in use until October 1946. Needless to say, the footpaths in the area were closed. The runways still exist and they are shown well on the OS map from 1965.



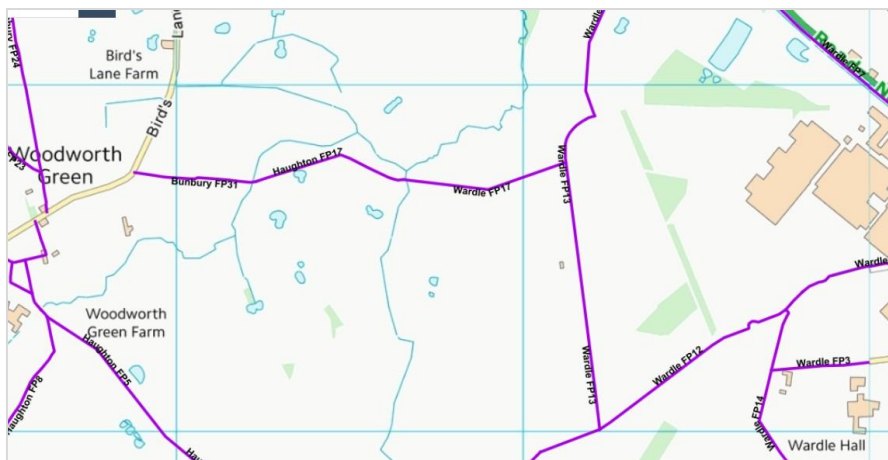
OS Map 6 inches:1mile 1965 (National Library of Scotland)

Much of the land is now part of the Wardle Industrial Estate and over time footpaths have been reinstated such as Wardle FP13 which runs north along the old runway.

Recently, Cheshire East has obtained agreement with the landowner to create a new footpath, Wardle FP17 to join the cul-de-sac to the wider network. This joins Haughton FP17 on the west and Wardle FP13 on the east. With contributions from South Cheshire Ramblers and PNFS this link has now been created and was officially opened on 24 June 2026. This new link from Woodworth Green, just south-east of Bunbury to Wardle now has five new bridges.



New bridge on Haughton FP17 – funded by PNFS



*Definitive map, post 24 June 2026 (Cheshire East)
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So now, as can be seen from the updated Definitive Map, there is no longer a cul-de-sac but a walking route which can be used to go from Bunbury down to Wardle and the Shropshire Union Canal at Calveley.

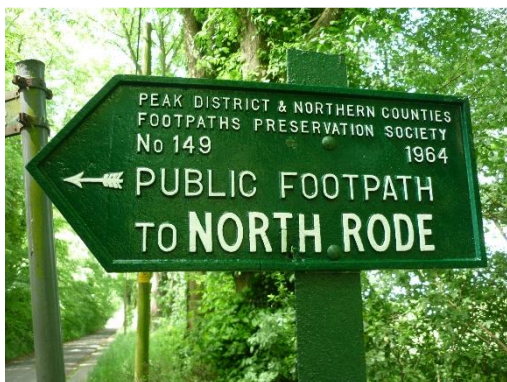


OS map Showing the location of the new path
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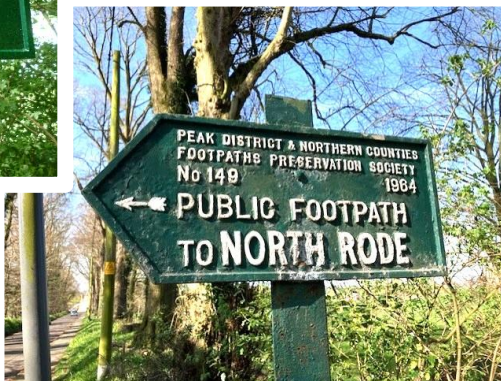
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Definitive Map © Cheshire East Council

Before and after S149 at Gawsworth

David Morton, Signpost Officer



S149 was very badly corroded but saved in the nick of time. I've now insulated the plate from the angle iron post using an old, left-over plaque.



Reporting a right of way fault

Ken Brockway, Footpath Inspector



There has been much discussion and criticism of the most recent online rights of way fault reporting site for Derbyshire. The details of that will not be reported here except in making comparison with other authorities. Contributions from other areas would be useful although it's likely that any suggestion we make to offer a better service will be ignored.

I'm prompted to write this after reporting issues in Warwickshire. Like anything new, to me that is, it takes a while to find your way around. It does require an

account, as so many now do. I had reported to the authority before and had kept a record of the log in but it didn't work so I set up a new account spotting that the password needed special characters which my recorded password did not include. Having logged in I found that I was back in the original account and the fault I reported in 2022 recorded as 'resolved'. I'm not likely to return to confirm this.

The page offers a map with the RoWs shown and I discovered that an OS 1:25,000 base map is available so five stars for that. The drop down offers a good choice of relevant fault issues and there is space to describe the location and fault as well as adding pictures and pdf documents. One really great bonus was the ability to make more than one submission without having to start the whole process from the start. I think that is worth another five stars.

I was bombarded by emails telling me I had submitted the another that the report had been accepted. Another five star feature was information that my report had been 'merged' with a previous report. I therefore discovered that my cross field reinstatement issue, March 2026, had been reported in January 2025 which might explain why I was able to follow a tractor track across the field but without further attention the path will soon be obstructed by a crop of Oil Seed, hence my report. Another merge was a ditch or stream crossing (see *picture*). This was challenging to negotiate but as the previous report was only December 2025 it needs a little more time to allow provision of a safe crossing.

Not a county I walk in that often so I can't say how effective the reports are dealt with but the reporting system was in my view a shining example of how it should be done. I had walked from Hinckley in Leicestershire and found a few issues on the edge of the ever expanding town. One useful feature in Derbyshire, should I ever remember to look, is the path closure register. No I wouldn't have looked but returning home couldn't find a corresponding register for Leicestershire footpaths. The first problem was an unsigned and overgrown path but the next was a huge fenced building site with no way through but no site notices for the path closure. The Leicestershire reporting form, when I finally got into it is basically the same as Derbyshire although an account was not required and the layers of provisional questions were omitted. It was clearly a modified road fault report form, as is Derbyshire, so at the end of each report I couldn't find how to return to footpath faults among the labyrinth of road issues listed.

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.

9 SEPTEMBER (Short) - Mike Gunn 07724 155847 michaelgunn65@gmail.com. Plumley circular walk 7 miles. A flat walk in the Cheshire countryside on field paths and quite country lanes. We will frequently cross the Peover Eye and pass Holford Hall with a final stop at the Golden Pheasant for refreshments. Train from Manchester Piccadilly at 10:10 Altrincham 10:36 arriving Plumley at 10:57 WA16 9RU.

30 SEPTEMBER (Long) - Bill Minshall 077719 85846 bill.minshall@btinternet.com. Stone to Stoke approx 11 miles. Details to follow.

14 OCTOBER (Short) - John Harker 07929 051978. Details to follow.

28 OCTOBER (Long) - Details to follow.

11 NOVEMBER (Short) - Sue Davies 07967 035784 suekercher@hotmail.co.uk. Details to follow. 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 9.47 Train from Sheffield 10.14 Walk from Hathersage Station 10.45 (or when train arrives). S32 1DT

25 NOVEMBER (Long) - Details to follow.

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.

*Short July
walk on a
glorious
sunny day -
photograph
by Ross
Myddelton*



F008 restored

David Morton, Signpost Officer



Photographs of F008 clockwise from top: recent restoration with two new fingers; during 1930s; restoration in June 2026; leaning and missing fingers in April 2026. See Signpost Report in this issue for more details.