

# **SIGNPOST**

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



**Number 35**

**Winter 2009/10**

## RAMBLINGS FROM THE CHAIR

A rather belated Happy New Year to all our members.

Writing for Signpost is always more of a challenge at this time of year. We have closed the books on 2009 and the proper place for a roundup of the year is in the Annual Report which the officers are busy putting together. I don't want to pre-empt the report other than by saying that 2009 was a very good year for the Society. Records were broken for membership, for the number of volunteers working for us and for the number of signposts guiding the way.

So what does 2010 have in store for the Society? Well, the media is telling us that we are coming out of the recession, albeit slowly. While that forecast may be true I don't expect it will mean any more money or resources being allocated to rights of way work by local authorities. It follows that the work of the Society and the vigilance and hard work of all our volunteers will be as much in demand as ever.

In the last newsletter I detailed the steps we have taken to ensure that every penny we get in is put to the best possible use. The decisions we have made have gone a long way to ensuring we still have the money to carry out our work. The first big challenge for 2010 is to find ways of increasing our income. With this in mind I have asked David Bratt, our President, to lead a project to find ways of doing this. We aim to have a discussion paper ready to go out with the Annual Report along with concrete proposals ready to be presented to the AGM.

The second priority I have set for 2010 is to dramatically increase the number of Inspectors we have in the field. We cover a huge area containing 35 Highway Authorities and there are a number of Highway Authorities where we do not have a single Inspector. Thanks to the good will of a small number of Inspectors who act as a flying squad, we are able to cover consultation and orders work in these areas; but we cannot inspect footpaths or take part in local discussion.

In preparation for a recruitment drive for Inspectors in these authorities, we have nearly completed the production of a new "Handbook for Volunteers". The Courts & Inquiries team has been hard at work for the past few months pulling together and updating our policies, and giving practical advice on how to deal with the most common forms of legislation. We aim to have the handbook, along with a training pack, ready for the Inspectors Conference later this year.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find a report on a project being carried out by Gilly Gostick, a Vice President of the Society. I'm very grateful to Gilly for suggesting this project and taking on the hard work it involves. This is exciting new territory for the society but I will leave David Bratt to explain in detail.

Changing tack; one of the questions I am frequently asked is: *"Why does the Society fund bridges? Isn't that the Highway Authorities or the landowners'?"*

Cover Photograph: Winter near Chapel-en-le-Frith Dave Brown

*responsibility?"* To answer the second part of the question first, the simple answer is yes. In answer to the first part of the question I usually refer to other charities: British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research, RNLI, Mountain Rescue. Shouldn't the government fund their work? The fact is the government, the NHS or other responsible bodies just don't have the money to fund everything they would like. Charities are set up to meet the shortfall in official funding and we at PNFS are no different. We act as a conduit for donations into areas where we believe that money is most needed or will provide the greatest benefit. I think we do a good job when we fund a bridge. We always link its funding to other rights of way improvements in the area and this brings benefits to all walkers. Rhoda Barnett and Neil Collie are currently working with Derbyshire County Council and the National Trust with a view to PNFS funding a bridge on Hathersage Footpath 70. As part of the package we are seeking improvements, funded by DCC and NT, to paths leading to the bridge. This will benefit people with disabilities and families with pushchairs.

I recently had an invitation from the Chairman of the "Friends of Dunwood Park" to pay a visit to the park and see their plans for it. They are ambitious but subject to winning a lottery bid. If the bid is successful, matched funding from Oldham MBC will allow a £1m facelift for the linear park. What makes Dunwood particularly interesting is that the Beal Way, the Crompton Circuit, the Oldham Way and the Rochdale Way all pass through the park. Over the last two years Martin Riley (Inspector for Oldham) has led a couple of walks that go through the park. The prospect of seeing it brought back to its former glory and of being able to take refreshments and a comfort break at the newly restored facilities is one to which I very much look forward. Further information on their website: [www.dunwoodpark.com](http://www.dunwoodpark.com)

My plea in previous newsletters for volunteers has been well rewarded: Suzanne Clarke, Brian Hamilton and Jean Parrish are now regulars on a Monday at Taylor House. My plea in this newsletter is rather more specific: is there anyone out there who has access to Adobe Dreamweaver software, knows how to use it and is willing to spend a few hours helping with some small changes to our website? If the answer is yes please get in touch with me via email – [clarke.rogerson@googlemail.com](mailto:clarke.rogerson@googlemail.com).

Finally, advanced notice of the AGM, which will be held at the Britannia Hotel, Offerton on Saturday 1 May. A formal invitation will be sent nearer the time.

### **MAKING DONATIONS TO THE SOCIETY**

If you wish to donate to the Society, either on a one-off or regular basis, you can do so by standing order to our bank using the following details

SORT CODE 40-52-40      ACCOUNT NUMBER 00089378

And, of course you can still send a donation by cheque to Taylor House

UK tax-payers can increase the value of their donation by at least 20% by gift-aiding it using the form in the last issue (also available on our web site)

A recurring topic in the question time following the illustrated lecture I give about the Society's history and current activities is how people with disabilities can obtain information about footpaths suitable for wheelchair access.

Not having a ready answer to that question we decided that we should take up the challenge of :

- searching out such information as is available on the websites of the Highway Authorities (HAs) with whom we deal and noting where such information is lacking
- refining that information and, where necessary, seeking further specific information by letter or email directly from the authorities
- working out the most user-friendly way to display, on the PNFS website, this guidance for people with disabilities
- considering how to make the information available to people without internet access.

It is always easier to define the outlines of a project than to find a suitable volunteer who can work out the detail and spend precious time doing the hard work of pushing the project forward. Step forward Gilly Gostick, our recently appointed Vice-President, and widow of the late Sir Martin Doughty. In her past career in health and social care, she has had considerable experience and interest in helping people with disabilities and life-limiting illness and in supporting carers

Gilly has been active on the project for a couple of months and we regularly meet to agree the process, review progress and decide on the next steps. So far she has assessed 15 HA websites against a number of criteria. It is not unfair to say that, to date, we have found few HAs with sufficient information about access for people with disabilities and also clear and easy methods of finding it.

However, we have already identified two good sources, which can now be accessed via our website. They are [www.peakdistrict.gov.uk](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk) (which has a link to Access Peak) and [www.walkswithwheelchairs.com](http://www.walkswithwheelchairs.com).

Gilly is now assessing the remaining 20 or so HAs and we will then be able to determine our follow-up questions. We aim to offer a comprehensive guide on our website to what is and what is not available across our territory.

Disability can take many forms, but we have taken as our starting point the needs of people using wheelchairs. Stiles, i.e. officially approved obstructions, are a huge topic in themselves and do not fall within the remit of the project. An incidental benefit is that information about wheelchair access is also applicable and helpful to families with pushchairs.

Thanks are due to Gilly for her commitment to the project and for her professional approach. I am sure there will be a worthy and valued outcome of which the Society can be proud. You will be kept up to date!

November was another quiet month on the Signposts front, spent largely on refurbishment and maintenance.

S173 by Taxal Church was reposted and F007 west of Stony Ford was repainted and reposted. S342, which had been recently erected near Rivelin Dams, Sheffield, was temporarily taken away by Sheffield PROW pending further discussion of the status of one of the paths as a bridleway. John Harker is keeping an eye on this. S226 on Lyme Handley 3 is again in limbo as negotiations on how to respond to the short but badly eroded section of the "Ladybrook Valley Interest Trail" drag on into their twelfth year.

Things perked up in December when we erected a further five signposts on the 9th and 16th. These were S375 at Besom Hill Reservoir, Oldham, and S376, a memorial to Harry Sutcliffe, donated by his family, in the Tame Valley just north of Delph. Then a week later Ted and John erected S377 and S378 near Flagg, west of Bakewell, and Christian Hayes, PROW officer for Rotherham, erected S374 at Aston, just east of the M1. S377 is a memorial to Brian Hamilton Senior, donated by his two sons, while S378 was erected close by, in an area with few of our signposts, at the suggestion of footpaths inspector Ian Ray. I can testify to its value, as I got my feet quite wet in the process of searching for the indistinct stile it points to on the far side of a soaking and pathless pasture. S374 now has the distinction of being our most easterly sign, beating S365 at Thorpe Audlin, Wakefield, by no less than 207m.

Of course the icy conditions of late have reduced our outdoor activities, but I was able, with help from Tony Brackenbury, our inspector for Chinley Parish, to retrieve S033 just as the bad weather set in. This 1930s replacement plate, made of cast iron, has been shotblasted and coated with Vactan and I am now in the process of repainting it. In January S379 was erected by Ted and John above Lower Nabbs Farm, Wildboarclough, as a memorial to Bob Chaney, paid for by Manchester District & High Peak R.A. Two more signposts are planned, one for the Pennine Way at Torside and the other just north of Ipstones near Leek, Staffs, thanks to generous donations by individual members. Two more private donations were made in relation to S346 at Whitle, New Mills, and S267 at Turton Moor, south of Darwen, which will help fund a further two. Our sights are now set on the Forest of Bowland, with the help of Shirley Northcott. This will be a welcome first step to making the PNFS visible in north Lancashire, beyond the boundaries of the "Cotton Towns".

Donations are now the only means of financing new PNFS signposts, so please consider supporting our work in this way. If you wish to do so, phone me at home on 0161 283 7824.



*Sign obscured by ice*

## **PNFS WALKS PROGRAMME**

For all walks, check train or bus times near the date and bring lunch. All walkers joining a PNFS led walk should be appropriately dressed and are responsible for their own safety. Walk leaders reserve the right to exclude people from the walk without giving any reason for that decision.

### **SHORT WALKS**

#### **Wednesday 10th March**

Leader : Dave Morton (0161 283 7824)

Whaley Bridge, Goyt Valley, Taxal circular. 5.6 miles, 950ft.ascent

Manchester Piccadilly 0952 or 199 bus from Stockport 0935

Walk starts at Whaley Bridge station at 1035

#### **Wednesday 14th April**

Leader: Neil Collie (0161 4409424)

Northwich and Anderton Circular. 6 to 7 miles flattish.

Manchester Piccadilly 1017. Walk starts at Northwich Station at 1115

#### **Wednesday 12th May**

Leader: Bill Buckley (01457 855 639)

Glossop to Broadbottom linear 5 miles 1000ft of ascent.

Manchester Piccadilly 0948

Walk starts Glossop Station 1020

#### **Wednesday 9th June**

Leader: Dave Brown (01663 733236)

Whaley Bridge to Hayfield linear 6 miles 1200ft of ascent.

Manchester Piccadilly 0952 or 199 bus from Stockport 0935

Walk starts at Whaley Bridge Station at 1035

Return by bus to New Mills or Whaley Bridge.

### **LONGER WALKS**

#### **Wednesday 24th February**

Leader: Martin Riley (01706 848408)

Greenfield circular including Saddleworth 55 to assert once again our right to walk this path. 11 miles. Hilly.

Manchester Piccadilly 1011 (changing at Stalybridge) or

Manchester Victoria 1027 Walk starts at Greenfield station at 1055

#### **Wednesday 24th March**

Leader: Bill Minshall (07771 985846)

Kidsgrove circular. 10 miles undulating.

Manchester Piccadilly 0948

Walk starts at Kidsgrove Station 1035

#### **Wednesday 28th April**

Leader: David Bratt (01925 762472)

Delamere circular. 10m hilly.

Manchester Piccadilly 0917

Walk starts Delamere station (request stop) 1030



**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May**

Leader: John Humpherson ( 0161 449 0524)  
 Marsden to Littleborough linear. 10m. Hilly  
 Manchester Victoria 1027  
 Walk starts at Marsden station 1100

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June**

Leader: Bill Buckley (01457 855 639)  
 Hadfield to Glossop linear. 12m. Hilly.  
 Manchester Piccadilly 0948

**BRIDGES**

Neil Collie

A partnership between Wakefield Council, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and our Society has secured the replacement of two dilapidated footbridges on paths in Ackworth and North Elmsall. Managed by members of the Public Rights of Way Unit of Wakefield Council, the bridges were funded by our Society and constructed in the summer of 2009 by volunteers from BTCV.



The bridge on Ackworth Footpath 13 is on a well-used path integral to the local network around Ackworth and Thorpe Audlin and is part of a comprehensive scheme of path improvement and new signing in the area.

*PNFS Inspector Brian Lawrence & Trevor Healy of BTCV watch as Chairman Clarke Rogerson hands over the bridge to Wakefield Councillor Sarah Balfour .*

More recently we have seen the construction of a new bridge over the River Beal at Shaw, Oldham. A contribution from the Society and the perseverance of the PNFS Inspector, Martin Riley, ensured that a new steel bridge was constructed to replace a timber structure which had been the subject of vandalism in the past. The footpath is close to Shaw station and planned improvements include modifying the existing steps and, we hope, replacing a substandard subway by an at-grade crossing of the new Metrolink line.



*Before*



*During*



*After*

## **FROM THE EDITOR**

It was very gratifying for all us who work for the Society to receive this note from member Nick Hams just before Christmas.

*I would like to say what a grand job I think you all do in the PNFS. I'm very impressed with the achievements reported in the newsletters, the tenacity of the footpath inspectors, the professionalism of the legal eagles who deal with the land owners and councils, the commitment and hard work of the footpath sign teams (those cast iron signs are works of art and things of beauty to behold), and finally the well-written and delightfully literate newsletters and annual reports. I am proud to be a member of such a lively, effective, proactive organisation. It deserves to be thriving like it is.*

We also get a fair amount of, mainly positive, comment about our Newsletter and Annual Report. The comments often refer to the high standard of the photographs we use. But I never have as many photographs to choose from as I would like. So to all you snappers out there, I am offering you the chance to see your photos in print and to win a prize of one year's membership of the Society. The rules are simple - the photo should have some relevance to the Society and the photographer must be a member of the Society. Digital pictures of a resolution no less than 1600 x 1200 are preferred but 35mm slides or good quality 8 x 6 prints will be accepted. Send your entries to the editor before April 17th and the winner will be announced at the AGM.

## **BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR**

John Harker

Until 12 months ago I was lamenting the fact that the Society had been without any inspectors in Tameside for some time. Then, just like waiting for a bus, two came along almost at once. Pat Thomas and Mark R. Atherton have divided the borough between them and are now actively checking the state of the path network. Their results make sobering reading, to say the least.

A number of serious faults and obstructions have come to light as well as more mundane things like lack of signposting and waymarking. Many of the faults and obstructions are, we suspect, of long standing. Unofficial diversions, some signposted by the authority to give them a veneer of authenticity, render the Ordnance Survey map used by the visiting walker somewhat confusing. Only a small percentage of the footpath network has been surveyed so far, but the portents for the rest are worrying.

Tameside MBC is relatively small in terms of geographical size, but has quite an extensive path network. However, this is not reflected in the authority's spending or staffing for its statutory functions such as maintenance, enforcement and the Definitive Map. A single Rights of Way Officer is faced with a job where several officers could be gainfully employed. There is certainly enough work to keep them all busy.

Matters came to a head recently when several reported problems had not been resolved. Obstructions remained where enforcement action should be taking place. I was authorised by the Legal and Policy Committee to serve notices under sections 56 and 130A of the Highways Act for a number of faults and



obstructions. However, as a matter of courtesy, we always send a final letter indicating our course of action unless matters are resolved. This brought a belated promise of specific action on each of the three highlighted footpaths – Longdendale 103, Mossley 107 and Stalybridge 11. Our suggestion of a meeting between ourselves and highways officers to discuss how we can address major issues has been accepted with alacrity. Hopefully, both parties will start a dialogue which could lead to better communications and a better understanding on our part, of Tameside’s priorities and for, Tameside, of what we expect of them as a Highway Authority.

I suspect this is the very early stage of a long and time-consuming journey for this Society. It’s a journey which will have plenty of frustrating obstructions to negotiate (if you will pardon my torturing of a metaphor). Lots of work to come I’m sure for the Society volunteers in general and for yours truly in particular. Now I’m thinking I should have been careful what I wished for!

## **THE CORE WORK OF THE SOCIETY**

Continues unabated, as these extracts, chosen at random from our Courts and Inquiries Officer’s files, illustrate.

**Bolton** -Westhoughton 112 – Definitive Map Modification Order.

Public Rights of Way staff have had another meeting on site with the landowners. Bolton will provide three new stiles along route. When this work is complete the land owners are willing to dedicate the path as public. This will render a DMMO application unnecessary. I am content to leave matters in the hands of PROW staff to progress. The DMMO application is in abeyance for the moment. Stiles are now installed. The only work outstanding is a small section of fencing remaining to be erected. Forms of dedication have been signed by two of the landowners; the third will sign when the fencing is completed.

The works are now completed and all forms signed and returned. The Council agreed to accept responsibility for the path. I am now waiting for Bolton’s legal staff to formally process the documents so the path can be added to the Definitive Map. At the moment other more pressing work is taking up all their resources. I will continue to push for final resolution but I am satisfied that the path is safe to walk. (Terry Norris)

**Rotherham** – Aston cum Aughton Footpath 5

I have reported previously that this footpath is flooded and impassable where it abuts a railway embankment due to a blocked culvert. I have received assurances from the officer dealing with maintenance and enforcement that Network Rail is being pressed for action but so far nothing has happened on the ground.

As far as I’m aware there is no progress on this front and I feel that we should force the issue with a section 56 notice about ‘path out of repair’. Although I now have authority to serve a section 56 notice I held fire until I had made a site visit. I did that recently and found the flooding had receded to the point where the path was walkable apart from the over/undergrowth. The council

tell me that Network Rail has carried out work on the culvert, but the temporary Traffic Restriction Order has recently been extended for another 6 months until Jan. 2010. The council believe the path will be fully restored to use well within that time frame. I am content, for the time being, to allow events to take their course with the section 56 as a last resort if that time frame slips.

Council engineers are agreed as to what is needed to deal with the cause of the flooding, but it is unlikely to be sorted out by the time the current temporary TRO expires in Jan. 2010. I have made it clear that a further extension of the TRO is unacceptable due to the length of time this has been ongoing. The council are considering reopening the path with notices warning that path is liable to flooding in wet weather and are hoping for the best.

Together with a local Ramblers Association Footpaths Officer, I have requested a meeting with officers of both Network Rail and the council to sort out this case once and for all. In agreement with local RA I am drafting the paperwork for section 56 and section 130A notices to be served on the council if no satisfactory solution is forthcoming. *(John Harker)*

### **Staffordshire** - Kingstone Bridleway 13

Late November 2009 it was reported to the Area Officer for Staffordshire that the surface of this bridleway in East Staffordshire was out of repair. On investigation it was found that the farmer had placed a cattle feeder on the way and that a nearby water trough was overflowing onto the track

Bridleway 13 was impassable, being a foot deep with mud and slurry. The problem was reported to Staffordshire County Council and it was made clear to them that the Society expected clear action to restore the surface of the bridleway. This they did, forcing the farmer to restore the bridleway by the end of January 2010. Staffordshire County Council is to be congratulated on the speedy and decisive action they took to make this bridleway usable by the public. *(Harry Scott)*

### **Saint Helens** -SH 501

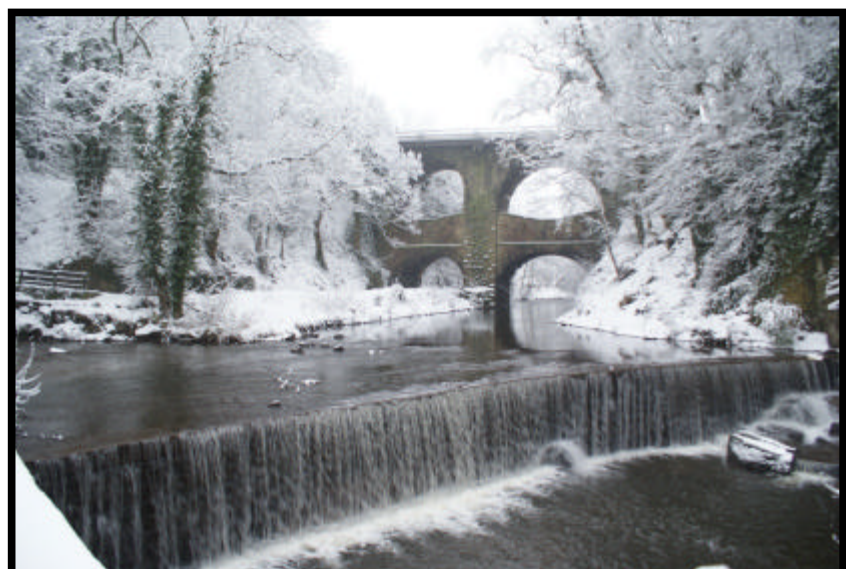
This concerns an application to the magistrates' court under section 116 to divert part of this path away from the canal towpath and onto a lit tarmac-adamed path which has been in existence for some 10 years. The council claim the new path is more 'commodious'. Our inspector considered this diversion to be against the interest of walkers. Following a site inspection with the inspector and consultation with the Chairman I wrote to the Council notifying them that the Society will be opposing the diversion at the hearing.

Skeleton arguments have been submitted and the case will be heard on February 26th before a district judge. As well as claiming that the new path is not more commodious I will be arguing that the diversion path is already a PROW having been dedicated for public use under common law. We are being joined at the hearing by the Towpath Action Group and the Sankey Canal Society. I have greatly appreciated the help and support given by Adrian Littleton (*Legal Advisor to the Society*) and Rhoda Barnett (*Courts and Inquiries Officer*) in preparing the case. *(Terry Norris)*

Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope at sunset  
*Ant Holloway*



Track between  
Wyver Farm and  
Belper Lane End  
Derbyshire  
*Geoff Errington*




The Torrs at New Mills, Derbyshire *Dave Brown*

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a heritage map of  
**MELLOR**  
including Ludworth and Marple Bridge  
covering 10,000 years of occupation

A large-scale full-colour map  
marking 58 heritage sites, which are described  
on the back of the map.



a booklet of trails passing the marked heritage  
sites accompanies the map

Mellor lies to the south-east of Marple in the  
Metropolitan Borough of Stockport in the County  
of Greater Manchester

for a thousand years in Derbyshire, Mellor was  
part of Cheshire from 1936 to 1974

This map and an accompanying booklet  
of walks is available from Mellor Archaeo-  
logical Trust, The Old Vicarage, Mellor,  
SK6 5LX. Price £5 .00 post free  
[www.mellorheritage.org.uk](http://www.mellorheritage.org.uk)

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