

SIGNPOST

Newsletter of the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

Number 23

January 2007

**We now have over 1200 members
Our best-ever total!**



At the half-yearly meeting the Chairman cracks one of his jokes

Chairman's Report

There has been a most rewarding surge in membership over the last Quarter viz from 1080 to 1210 with **Peter Rhodes's** illustrated lectures and **June Mabon's** publicity initiatives contributing strongly in providing **Reg Boot** our Membership Secretary with plenty to do. Hopefully there will be no respite for Reg!

The month of November was very demanding at Officer level with both the Inspector/Agents Conference and also the Half Year members meeting—there were some flashbacks to being back at the dreaded “work”!—both though were well attended and very productive—reports of the outcomes follow in this *Signpost*.

We send best wishes to two of our members **John Watkin** and **Keith Doughty** being respectively incoming and outgoing Chairmen of the North and Mid Cheshire Area RA.

I met recently with **June Mabon** to review a raft of potential Publicity opportunities amongst them a pilot campaign to persuade Parish Councils to affiliate to us—there are some 1500 in our territories so we will start with a target group of 100 to be selected by **Adrian Littleton**.

On September 30th **Fred Ogden** and I joined the Manchester and High Peak RA walk to Flash and the dedication of SP 309 which they had kindly funded in memory of **John Stirling** who had been a stalwart member of their group.

Back in October 2004 I received a most humorous letter from **John Hemingway**—a friend, a member and fellow Rambler. I will quote a couple of paragraphs—

“Earlier this day we (John and wife Dorothy) came upon a signpost which nominally may have belonged to your or, perhaps I may say with scarcely a blush, our organization. It did require I can say a leap of faith to deduce this. The post itself was near to vertical but held two almost indecipherable panels, certainly my thoughts turned to muse on what passes as art in certain quarters. Should you be able to dispatch an emergency team to erase this slur on the good name of the PNFS my advice would be to concentrate on SD 772194 ie Beetle Hill”.

At that time we were not up to speed to leap off anywhere but John had sown the seed and at an Officers’ meeting we agreed the policy of the replacement of every tubular post with standard square signs. It then took **Neil Collie** to come forward to drive the project and I am delighted to, at last, say to Dorothy, sadly now John’s widow, that on Oct 11th a weather battered work party of National Trust personnel and ourselves replaced SP 201 with a thing of beauty. One for John.

Our walks long and short continue to attract good turnouts and you will see further on the programmes for the first 6 months of 2007. In particular we will, in February, revisit Saddleworth 55 with **Martin Riley** as there is, despite some improvements, still unfinished business at Upper Castleshaw Farm. **Eileen Leonard** will be with us having suffered more than most at the hands of the farm occupant but Eileen is no quitter.

2006 has been a very good year overall for your Society. Our resolve must be for more of the same in 2007 and I wish you and yours the enjoyment of good health and happiness in the year ahead.

Kind regards, **David Bratt**

Peter Ritman

I referred in the last *Signpost* to the then serious illness of **Peter Ritman**, a Taylor House volunteer, and am now very sorry to report his death—I represented the Society at his secular and moving funeral when it was evident that he had been closely involved and active in a vast range of causes over many decades and all linked to the socialist values he held dear. We send our sympathies to his widow Dodie and all his family.

New Ways of Working Conference

Our latest conference was held in Stockport and a record number of 74 delegates attended. Included in this number we welcomed some new or prospective Inspectors. A couple have since confirmed their interest by becoming Inspectors! This conference was given over entirely to looking at how the Society has been working with regard to the Public Rights of Way Network and how it should organise itself for the future.

The conference was asked to vote on two very important questions

Does the Society need to change the way it works?'

Conference vote result 88% YES

‘Should the Society adopt the proposed new flexible model?'

The proposal was summarised in a ‘Statement of Intent’ that had been circulated prior to the conference



David Bratt opens the Conference



Clark Rogerson offers guidance to a Discussion Group

“It is the intention of the Society to decentralise, where possible, the assessment and decision making on all matters related to the Public Rights of Way Network away from Taylor House. Over time this will be achieved by appointing one Area Officer for each ‘Authority’ within our area, with full delegated authority and decision making capability, currently undertaken by the Assessors at Taylor House.

The Assessor role will continue for any ‘Authority’ where an Area Officer has not been appointed and will help support Area Officers in the future.

The role of Inspectors will continue, with only minor changes, they will report either to an Area Officer or to Taylor House as required.”

One important aspect of these changes is that if any of our volunteers do not want to change what they do then they can carry on as they are.

Conference vote result 87% YES

Given such a clear mandate the conference then went on to look at the detailed implementation plans and the support that will have to be provided to the new Area Officers. The programme of work will last for at least two years but it will start in January 2007 with

the first 5 Area Officers in the pilot will cover

- Barnsley MBC
- Doncaster MBC
- Sheffield/Rotherham MBC
- Staffordshire CC
- Warrington MBC

Taylor House Assessors will work to their new procedures.

Those Inspectors who have indicated that they would like to work to the new ‘Job Description’ will start in January 2007. Throughout 2007 and 2008 there will be extensive evaluation of the new ways of working before, and as, further Area Officers are appointed. This was an excellent conference that was enjoyed by the delegates and confirmed just how fortunate the Society is to have such enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers.

Speakers at the Conference



Roy Spoors



Andy Overton



John Harker



Terry Norris



Harry Scott

The Peak and Northern Footpaths Society
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
will be held on
Saturday 28th April 2007
at the
BRITANNIA HOTEL
Dialstone Lane, Offerton Stockport
10.30am Coffee for 11.00am start
A HOT BUFFET L UNCH WILL BE PROVIDED FREE TO MEMBERS
Please book with
Eric Kime 35 Buxton Lane Marple Stockport SK6 7QL
0161 427 1082
asap but no later, than 23rd April
The 383 bus from Stockport station or Marple stops outside the Britannia
The 192 Manchester to Hazel Grove bus runs every few minutes close by
on the main A6 road

New Inspectors

Wendy Fermor (Adlington, Pott Shrigley etc), **Alec Beard** (Bollington, Macclesfield) and **Gloria Gaffney** (Ringway) all retire with our grateful thanks for services rendered and in come **John and Eileen Wallace** for Cheadle and Gatley, **Nick Gregg** for Hazel Grove, **Ann Papageorgiou** for Mellor, **Brian and Hazel Ellison** for Congleton & Macc South, **Mike Barnes** for Bollington etc, **Richard Hinckley** for Sandbach, Middlewich etc and **William Allan** for South Derbyshire. Needless to say, **Hilda Bowler**, Taylor House Inspector Supremo, has been a very busy bee with all this traffic.

The Town End to Bolton-le-Sands Path, Lancaster **The Intervention of Mr Kind**

In the January, March and July 2006 *Signposts* I described how this ancient path was gradually being winched on to the Definitive Map.

Finality seemed imminent when I wrote my July instalment - all that remained was confirmation of two seemingly uncontroversial amendments to the text of the Order.

Alan Kind, the author of the Journal of the Byways and Bridleways Trust, is campaigning to persuade the Planning Inspectorate to eliminate what he sees as chronic faults in footpath orders.

It was our bad luck that with very little previous knowledge of the Town End Path Mr Kind objected to the Inspector's proposed amendments. He demanded a survey of the Path and elaborate extra text about width and other features.

I argued that to meet Mr Kind's demands it would be necessary to re-open the inquiry and find out from numerous witnesses what width of path they had trod in 1948-68. I also contended that objections based on ignorance of the facts should be given little weight. Mr Kind was irritated by

this idea.

His sole accomplishment was to add five months to the length of the proceedings. On 30 November came a decision letter on the amendments, which confirmed them as originally drafted by the Inspector - via the reasoning which had irked Mr Kind.

It is not PNFS policy to condone sloppy drafting of footpath orders: but before seeking improvements we examine the facts.

Adrian Littleton

Correction

In our appeal in our last edition for volunteers to help the disabled at Tegg's Nose we have the wrong telephone number, which should be 01606 541 804. One member who stepped forward was welcomed but told the scheme is on hold for the moment for lack of funds.

For Outsiders Everywhere - Update

The appeal in the last Newsletter for information about the BBC Radio Manchester programme 'The Outsiders' brought a good response. I have heard from **Charles Peers, Percy Hutchinson, Jack Ogden, and Mr A Clough**, who now live as far afield as Northumberland and Devon. It is good to know of the interest in our activities from such far away places! Many thanks for the information. **Charles Peers and Percy Hutchinson** erected the original sign on Holcombe Moor in 1985 and which was dedicated to Radio Manchester.

The new sign, assembled by **Bill Johnson**, was erected by **Ted Wolfe** and **Brian** our contractor, on a very wet day in October 2006. We received great help from the National Trust Stubbins Estate warden, **Nick Taylor**, and his team, and much encouragement from our chairman, **David Bratt**, who was present and led the bedraggled team to the local pub afterwards.

Neil Collie



Removing the old post...



...whilst the new one waits.

Letter to the Editor

Scout Moor; David Bellamy and Tidal Power—*Signpost 22*

Reading **David Bellamy's** views on tidal power encouraged me to investigate further.

Two reports concerning Marine Renewable Energy (Wave and Tidal) have been published recently. The first report, the 'Path to Power', from the Wind and Tidal Section of the BWEA, represents the developers. The second report, 'Marine Energy Challenge', is from the government-funded Carbon Trust. They both emphasize that wave and tidal activity is at the research and prototype stage and that there is, at present, no commercial development. They concur that the two main hurdles facing the industry today are lack of financial investment and grid access.

The BWEA report contains a new UK Marine Renewable Energy Atlas (which considers that only a relatively minor area of the UK's offshore waters would be effective for tidal generation; whilst a greater potential exists for the wave resource. It concludes that 'wave and tidal capacity could supply 2.1 % of UK's electricity demands by 2020.'

The Carbon Trust report mentions that they will be granting £3.1M towards wave and tidal development costs this year ("a drop in the ocean", say I). Their conclusion is that 'marine energy will move closer to realising its potential of up to 20% of the electricity needs by 2020.'

I am enthusiastic about marine renewable energy and believe that it will form part of a long-term energy mix. However, **David Bellamy's** scenario where tidal would replace wind just does not ring true: any government would seek to maximise all renewable energy.

Graham Turner

The Half Year Meeting

The meeting was held on 25th November at the Acton Court Hotel and attended by some 50 members. Summaries of the various reports given are as follows.

David Bratt, Chairman, said that the PNFS continued to progress on all fronts of its activities, membership increase being particularly impressive. Volunteers at TH and in the field were thanked for their ongoing good works and he noted the current Signpost team of **Fred Ogden/Ted Wolfe/Neil Collie/Bill Johnson** and **David Morton** worked very well and effectively together.

Reference was made to the now well-established walks programmes and finally the matter of succession planning underway to cover future management needs. He would be pleased to stand again for Chairman next April and if successful this would be his fourth and final year in that office.

Roy Spoors, Vice Chairman spoke on the following topics—full implementation of the policy change on extinguishments and diversions, the increased use of e-mail, the delivery of a new



Inspectors Handbook, review and update of the FP faults database, improving IT systems, redesign of the website, ongoing programme to replace/update our definitive maps, the serving of more S63 orders and likely 2x S 56s. We are going to Magistrate Court level in Staffs over a contested S63 obstruction case we have initiated.

He then gave detailed feedback on the outcome of the recent Agents/Inspectors Conference—please see separate report. The meeting endorsed the proposals.

Alan Postill, Treasurer, reported that the financial position of the Society was sound and that income would exceed expenditure this year because of the 3 legacies we had been left. The 4 trustees would be meeting to review financial matters and determine any proposals to be put to the AGM.

Fred Ogden, Signpost Officer, spoke of the considerable number of plantings of new, replacement and refurbished signs. New sign locations in progress included Marsden, Taxal Moor and Chew Reservoir. He would welcome any suggestions on where a post could be placed in the vicinity of Delamere Forest to assist a request from Robert Fysh on behalf of Altrincham Rambling Club.

David Bratt updated the meeting on the progress of 13 bridge funding projects - 5 completed, 5 committed and awaiting installation, 1 with cost not yet finalized and 2 still at an early stage.

The following resolution was put “The Council of the PNFS directs that Taylor House shall be transferred from **N H Edwards** and **K D Wykes** to **D W Seddon**, **D C Bratt**, **R Spoons** and **A Postill**. Each of these transferees shall sign a declaration of Trust committing himself to hold Taylor House upon Trust for the members of the Society”

Proposed **J McCarthy**, seconded **A Littleton** and unanimously approved.

Matters at various stages of the meeting raised from the floor—

Geoff Hill—ref website and possibility of duplicating faults reporting. No facility yet to rule out but **Hilda Bowler** would keep look out for such duplications.

Geoff Hill—do we initiate use of 20 yr rule for claiming a path. No; as has to be local experience initiative—we do provide a support service and have used our website to seek user evidence. GH further said RA were appealing at House of Lords over acceptance of “secret” letters out of the public domain being admissible as denial of permission to walk a path.

Gloria Gaffney—any surplus donated monies in the **LG Meadowcroft** fund over and above the Tom Wood bridge project should surely not be absorbed into the general signpost fund but used for further LGM linked projects eg the Cown Edge Way. DB said he concurred with that view—we would first need to check on there being any surplus monies.

Jim Wild—ref the 3 legacies received --gave a brief pen picture of the 3 past members one of whom was always known as Burma Bill. All appreciated by those present.

Neil Collie—Queried cost exposure levels in Magistrates Court—RS said could be a few thousand pounds but once in the process could go way beyond. DB said any case of great principle to PNFS and with the potential to absorb all our resources would have to be put to an EGM for membership consideration.

Justin McCarthy—Stressed importance of archiving of information received by e-mail. Assured we back up on a weekly basis, with some hard copy retained.

Justin McCarthy—referred to Cheshire CC and its latest position on alleygating.

Geoff Hill—would appreciate option when renewing to request a receipt letter be not sent to save costs.

Jim Wild—with regard to concessionary paths, had the Society changed its understood policy on challenging original path lines being blocked. RS we would take action on any obstructing but would also encourage any acceptable concessionary path being upgraded to the definitive map.

Robert Fysh—Had heard of a concern ref a bull in a field. Specific rules applied if the field was crossed by a public path—on its own a bull had to be less than 10 months of age and above that could only be a beef breed bull and had to be accompanied by cows/calves. Dairy breed bulls above 10 months of age were forbidden.

Neil Collie—referred to Cheshire CC and its fully spent up ROW budget. RS said we would challenge any closure of a FP on “safety”

grounds where they were claiming inability to fund.

Gloria Gaffney raised the subject of the policy change reported in the last Signpost ref Public Inquiries. She felt embarrassed that the policy change was directed at and identified her and the Bilston Drive case specifically. RS said that those views were not supported by a reading of the policy change. After further exchanges between RS and GG the PNFS position was clearly stated and there was general approval expressed by the floor.

Half Year Meeting Endorsement for Policy Amendment

In the last issue of '*SIGNPOST*' it was announced that the Officers had agreed a policy amendment to cover the raising of purely 'technical' issues for the first time at a local Public Inquiry. The effect of such tactics is often to achieve no more than a postponement and to cause frustration and annoyance to a whole range of people. It also brings the movement into disrepute.

To be quite clear, the policy amendment does not say that technical, order map detail and statutory requirements are not important. They are! However, the Society will always deal with them by bringing them to the attention of the authority early in the process and certainly before determination. Under no circumstances will the Society support other organisations or individuals who adopt these tactics of 'ambushing' determinations.

At the Half Year Meeting one person questioned this policy and, following a re-statement of the Society's position there was general approval from the floor. Since the '*SIGNPOST*' article appeared there have only been two requests for clarification which, when given, resulted in agreement to the policy amendment. Also there have been many comments received that fully support this policy amendment and approve of formalising the fundamental principle that this Society acts with integrity and 'reasonableness'.

It is very important that the policies of the Society truly reflect the views and opinions of our membership as a whole. So if you would like to express your opinion on this policy amendment please send me an email. All views are welcome and the Officers will always listen to the views of the wider membership.

Roy Spoors.

17th December 2006.

PNFS Signposts now on



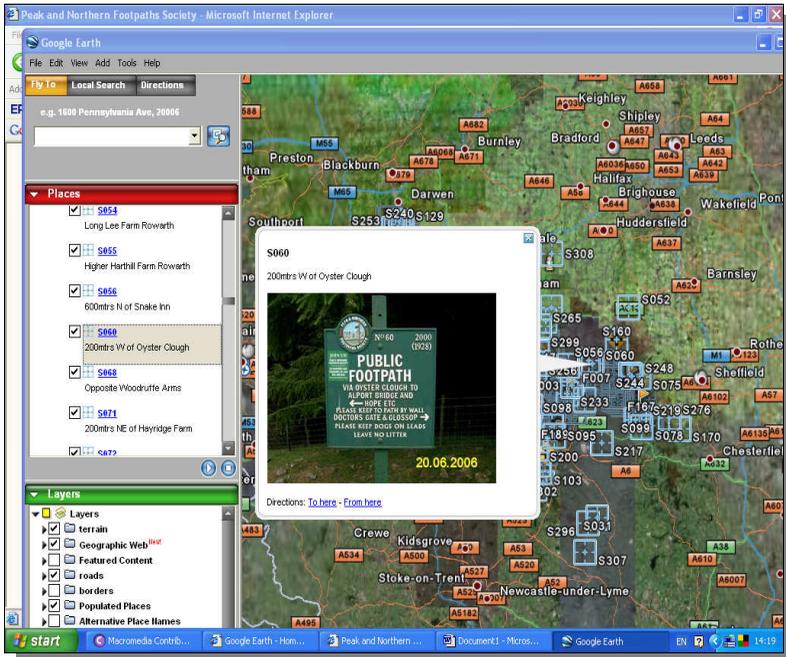
The Peak and Northern website (www.peakandnorthern.org.uk) has recently been enhanced to show details of most of the society's signposts via Google Earth.

To use the facility you will need a computer capable of running Google Earth - for details of the configurations of PC required to run Google Earth, please visit <http://earth.google.com/download-earth.html>

From the Peak and Northern home page, select **Signposts**, then **Where they are** menu options and then:

- Either click to open Google Earth (if you have the software already installed).
- Otherwise click on the Google Earth logo to download the software.

The mapping display will zoom in on the geographic area covered by PNFS, showing placemarks for our bridges, fingerposts, signposts and plaques.



To display information of any item and a photograph, where available, double click either the placemark on the map, or the [blue lettering](#) in the “Places Menu” on the left hand side. For those with older computers not capable of running Google Earth, or for those of you who would like to tick off signposts visited on a printed list, click on the link at the bottom of the page to display a text file of signpost details (number, grid reference and location description).

Geoff Errington

Campaign to Improve Access on Bosley Cloud

Anyone with a long memory will know that in the 1930's The Cloud at Bosley was closed by the then landowner, Lord Egerton. Following a long campaign by the Society a 'peace agreement' was signed which opened up access to The Cloud.

You would be forgiven for thinking that 70 years was long enough for Cheshire CC and Staffordshire CC to sort out any footpath issues on The Cloud. Not so!! **Alan Soper** from Congleton has worked diligently for many years to get either Cheshire CC or Staffordshire CC (the county boundary is on The Cloud) to make a modification order to add footpaths and improve access.

Alan has had no success to date so the Society has recently been looking through our archive and turned up a useful old draft map dated 1936. However, what is really needed is user evidence. If you have walked The Cloud, or know anybody else who has, particularly around the 'Bridestones' area please email TH urgently.

Our historical involvement in opening up access to this site of national importance means that it is particularly appropriate for the Society to mount another campaign for improved access. 70 years is long enough, please help and support this work and maybe the Society can succeed again!

WEDNESDAY WALK REPORTS

Bollington, Circular, 27th September, Leader **Ted Wolfe**

10 miles. Overcast but dry. 7 hardy souls started from Pool Bank car park on what could be a memorial to the lost pubs of Bollington. Three were for sale or are now private houses and the Bulls Head at Kerridge, intended for a lunch stop, was closed. We passed Styperson Pool, then along the towpath and over the high aqueduct to White Nancy, the memorial to Waterloo and perhaps a site for a PNFS topograph? On across the river Dean to the Robin Hood (this one was open) and back to Bollington.

Stockport Circular, 25th October,

Leader **Brian Morrison**

12 miles. 14 out. Starting at Taylor. House, up to Woodbank Park. Lunch was at Chadkirk Chapel where the rain started to fall. Undeterred, we followed the canal and river Goyt to Marple Bridge, past Marple Dale via Otterspool, returning to Taylor House extremely wet!



Piethorne Valley Circular 13th September

6 and a quarter miles

Leader **Clark Rogerson**

8 out, Weather dry but overcast. An early panic caused by a train cancellation was solved by **Martin Riley** who informed the waiting horde why the leader was late at Newhey. All had become acquainted by the time we reached Piethorne Reservoir and walked up Crompton Moor. On to Crow Knowl then Brushes Quarry for lunch, where we were told us how Oldham MBC had moved illegal motorcyclists from the site. Then it was down through Pingot Quarry with its waterfall and back to the station.

Marple Circular in November

Leader **Paul Vickers** and **Barry Mead**.

From Marple Station through Linnet Clough enjoying the autumn colours, to Mellor Church where we took magnificent views and examined the 'Dig' where archaeologists unearthed an Iron Age Hill Fort dating from 500 BC. We climbed up Primrose Lane and along Back Lane, both former turn-pikes, down Strawberry Hill, back across Roman Bridge and along the canal in dry weather after the occasional showers had blown away.

STOP PRESS

From:

Sir Martin Doughty Vice President PNFS and newly appointed Chair of Natural England.

I follow the fortunes of Peak and Northern with great interest and it has been hugely encouraging to see the membership numbers climb to their highest ever level in recent years under the careful stewardship of you and your colleagues.

I would be very pleased to visit you at the Offerton headquarters at a mutually convenient date and time, probably accompanied by our North West Regional Director.

A Plea from the Signpost Officer (Admin)

The Society has recently erected Signpost No 315 and has others in various stages of implementation. Due to the large number of posts erected in the last ten years it is a never-ending task to maintain them in a condition which reflects the status of the organisation. May I therefore urge members to volunteer to help Ted Wolfe and his team to this end. It is a heavy commitment for a small band of workers but if half-a-dozen members would offer their assistance just once a month it would help enormously. Please give this request your earnest consideration and contact any of the Officers at Taylor House for further information.

Fred Ogden

We are still awaiting the return of Cheshire County Council's contractors who removed our signpost at Jenkin Chapel in the interests of historical accuracy in a scene for the TV production of Jane Eyre and then replaced it in its current shortened form. We hope that they will get round to returning with a full-sized post early in the New Year as they have promised.

Shorter walks Programme January-June 2007

Please check all bus/train times.

Wednesday 10th January

Leader: **Clarke Rogerson** 0161 749 8412
GREENFIELD TO STALYBRIDGE 5.6 Miles, Negligible ascent
Man Victoria 10.27hrs walk starts Greenfield Station 10.55hrs

Wednesday 14th February

Leader: **Dave Morton** 0161 283 7824
MARPLE CIRCULAR 5.9miles, 800feet ascent
Man Piccadilly 10.22hrs walk starts Marple Station 10.45hrs

Wednesday 21st March

Leader: **David Bratt** 01925 762472
ASHLEY 6.0miles, Negligible ascent,
Man Piccadilly 10.24hrs walk starts Ashley Station 11.00hrs

Wednesday 11th April

Leader: **Neil Collie** 0161 440 9424
WILMSLOW, BOLLIN VALLEY TO HANDFORTH 6 miles
Man Piccadilly 10.34 (fast train), walk starts Wilmslow Station at 11.00, return from Handforth Station.

Wednesday 9th May

Leader: **Wally Smith** 0161 485 7764
WHALEY BRIDGE 6.0miles approx.
Man Piccadilly 10.37hrs walk starts at Whaley Bridge Station 11.15hrs

Wednesday 13th June

Leader: **Martin Riley** 01706 848408.
NEWHEY 6.0miles approx
Man Victoria 10.30hrs walk starts at Newhey Station 10.55hrs.

Longer walks Programme January-June 2007

Please check all bus/train times.

Wednesday January 31st

Leader **Eileen Leonard** 01625 874 183

MOBBERLEY. Walk of 10 miles, farmland, including a few “difficult” paths starts from Mobblerley Station at 11.00. Train from Man Picc 10.24 stops also at Stockport 10.34 Please bring lunch.

Wednesday February 28th

Leader **Martin Riley** 01706 848 408

DIGGLE. Walk of around 10 miles, hilly, taking in Saddleworth FP 55 an ongoing access problem path. Starts from Diggle Bus Terminus at 10.30. Bus Service 184 at 09.10 from Manchester Oldham St. Train from Man Vic at 09.27 connects with Diggle 184 bus at Greenfield Station. Please bring lunch.

Wednesday March 28th

Leader **David Morton** 0161 283 7824

CHAPEL EN LE FRITH. 10 mile hilly walk starts Chapel rail station at 10.50 with train from Man Picc at 10.33— Stockport 10.47. Please bring lunch. Return from Chinley Station.

Wednesday April 26th

Leader **Brian Morrison** 0161 483 8957

DISLEY. 10 mile walk starts from Disley rail station at 10.15. Bus service 199 from Stockport bus station at 09.35. Or by rail from Man Picc at 09.37. Please bring lunch

Wednesday May 23rd (NOTE-- not the last Wednesday)

Leader **Clarke Rogerson** 0161 749 8412

BROMLEY CROSS. 12 mile walk commencing Bromley Cross rail station at 11.30. Train from Man Vic at 11.00. 1300 ft ascent. Walk is Nr 35 in leader’s book Walk! The South Pennines. Please bring lunch.

Wednesday June 27th.

Leader **David Bratt** 01925 762472

STALYBRIDGE. 12 mile hilly walk commencing Stalybridge station at 10.30 and visiting GR SE 000000 (and railway heritage pub option on return) . Train from Man Picc at 10.12—also Man Vic options. Please bring lunch.

The Peak and Northern Footpath Society
Taylor House 23 Turncroft Lane
Offerton Stockport SK1 4AB Tel: 0161 4803565
Reg Charity No: 212219

www.peakandnorthern.org.uk

mail@peakandnorthern.org.uk