



Newsletter, Autumn 2020

Dear Members

Like everyone else we have been a bit hamstrung by Coronavirus. Getting movement on rights of way and BW issues is slow at the best of times. Covid has slowed things down even further. Covid also put the kibosh on the pleasure ride we had planned for May. This was especially disappointing as the ride before that one had to be cancelled as well, on that occasion due to dreadful weather.

But we are still here. Plenty has been going on behind the scenes and we will be doing our utmost to run a pleasure ride in the spring.

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Over Haddon to Youlgreave route to be BW



A public inquiry has rejected the Byway Open to All Traffic claim on the beautiful route that links Over Haddon and Youlgreave. The inquiry Inspector decided that only a short tarmac section between Over Haddon and the ford over the river Wye is legal for motor vehicles. This is great news for riders in the area. It is also great news for the farmer whose land is crossed by the track. For nearly 20 years the farm has had to put up with 4x4s and motor bikes rutting and ripping up their grazing land.

It is a gorgeous route. It runs from the village of Over Haddon, down a tarmac lane to the ford, across the ford, uphill through woodland, then across open farmland to reach Back Lane near Youlgreave. PHP and the Peak District Green Lanes Alliance researched the case for BW and contested the BOAT claim at the public inquiry.

Threat to Monsal Trail



We were disturbed to learn of proposals to reopen the Monsal Trail as a railway line. Peak Rail (formerly the Manchester and East Midlands Rail Action Partnership (MEMRAP)) has proposed running trains on a 36-mile stretch of track between Matlock, Bakewell, Buxton and Chinley with an alternative multi-user to replace the Monsal Trail. We have been catching up with how the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) (which owns the Monsal Trail) and Derbyshire County Council (DCC) have responded to the proposal.

In mid-August John Thompson, Chair of the Peak District Local Access Forum, invited the PDNPA Chair (Andrew McCloy), the DCC Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways (Simon Spencer), the MP for Derbyshire Dales (Sarah Dines) and the MP for High Peak (Robert Largan) to meet on the Monsal Trail to discuss the Peak Rail proposal.

Feedback from the meeting is that for a variety of reasons neither the PDNPA nor DCC will be supporting the railway proposal: DCC believes that the proposal represents poor value for money; the Monsal Trail is seen by both Authorities as a key feature of their sustainable travel plans and an important part of DCC's Key Cycle Network; completion of the White Peak Loop and connecting Buxton to Matlock with a multiuser path is seen as the priority for stimulating sustainable journeys for both work and leisure and is where limited resources should be directed; any replacement to the Monsal Trail would need to be an equally convenient alternative; creating such an alternative would be prohibitively expensive and would be a challenge to engineer because of the terrain. It also clear that for the rail line proposal to go ahead would require an Act of Parliament.

Whilst we can never say never, with such heavyweight opposition from PDNPA and DCC it seems hard to understand how a railway could be reinstated along the Monsal Trail.

Reclamation of Sheen BW 15 – in just two days

They said it couldn't be done... well that seemed to be the opinion of Staffordshire County Council, various contractors, landowners and ramblers... but volunteers including PHP members managed to clear in just a couple of days a BW which has been locked off, overgrown and out of use for over 30 years. Flick Edmeston explains how they did it.

Josephine Shepherd, secretary of Staffordshire Moorlands Bridleways Group and I spent a morning in late August investigating the state of Sheen BW15 after it had been brought to our attention on Facebook (thank you Christine Harding). The track had not been ridden for



Before...

over 30 years. There was a padlocked gate at each end and two sections of seriously overgrown holloway, with vegetation so dense that we couldn't even walk through, but there were also several sections which were walled and beautifully clear which inspired us to try and draw up a plan.

The plan involved setting aside four days for the work, organising the Staffordshire Knott pub 100 yards away to

provide lunch for volunteers, car parking and "hand washing" facilities. Most important of all was the recruitment campaign which we ran through word of mouth, on Facebook and via PHP, getting a very encouraging response.

Staffordshire CC had very kindly contacted all the landowners concerned – or even the concerned landowners – to let them know that the clearance was going to take place and had also outlined our legal rights; e.g. that we could remove any illegal fencing, padlocks and also all unnecessary vegetation but that it was up to the landowners to dispose of this. We were running this exercise under the BHS banner which provided us with credibility and insurance, but also unfortunately required a risk assessment. On the plus side though, it also provided the new Midlands Access Field Officer, Wendy Bannerman, who put in an energetic morning's work.

Thursday 10 September was a lovely day for being outdoors and we made the most of it. Clearing progressed at a phenomenal rate thanks to all the volunteers who turned up armed with loppers, strimmers, gloves and enthusiasm. We had enlisted the help of a couple of keen horseriders from Matlock who are also professional chainsaw wielders and they immediately started on the second section of holloway which was completely overgrown with substantial willow trees. That section alone would have taken days to clear without their help. Mike Rhodes and Richard Pett also came along from the Peak Park on Thursday morning to support our efforts.



Before...

Work continued after a short break for lunch but such was the rate of progress that I was getting worried we wouldn't have any work left to do on the Friday, let alone over the weekend, so on Friday morning we put the word out that all our kind would-be volunteers for Saturday and Sunday could have a lie-in instead. Some seemed very disappointed, but please don't worry, we have your all names on the list for the next project!

Friday mainly involved finishing off by a smaller, but extremely capable, bunch of volunteers– tidying up and cutting back small shrubs and bushes which were left after the chainsaws had completed their task. Josie and I spent a couple of happy

hours digging a small drain to try and encourage some of the standing water to relocate as the second section of holloway was very waterlogged – hence the willow trees.



The change that was achieved over the two days was nothing short of amazing. The bridleway is still not rideable because there is a short stretch of boundary fencing which needs to be replaced by a gate, and the drainage and surfacing problems have yet to be overcome. Peak Park, Staffs. CC and Josie have held an on-site meeting to discuss the way forward and possible methods of funding the necessary work, although exposure to the daylight has already started drying out the ground. We are hoping that the track will be available to riders by spring next year at the latest. And they said it couldn't be done!

...and after

Help with rehoming

For many riders there comes a time when, sadly, they need to find a new home for their beloved horse. Sheffield-based rider Jenny Owen explains here how Leeds-based rehoming centre Hope Pastures helped her find what looks to be the perfect solution for Milly.

When I became a first-time horse owner in 2014 (at the advanced age of 60), I didn't anticipate needing to find a new home for Milly at any point. She was a former trekking pony who took to her new life with me very well, despite the fact that I was learning as I went along. I learned about barefoot hoof care and bitless bridles, which turned out to suit Milly well. And with help from Hope Pastures we learned to use clicker training, my first introduction to this rescue, rehabilitation, training and rehoming centre.

But life moved on - with the arrival of grandchildren, some major surgery for me and not enough time to ride Milly. She was living contentedly on a small farm on the northern edge of Sheffield, but her exercise routine was getting less and less demanding, and it showed. Her belly was expanding steadily.

By early 2020, I could see that this couldn't go on. However great the wrench, I would have to find a new home for Milly. But how to find one where her bitless and barefoot routine – and her successful development via positive reinforcement training – could continue? How to find a new home that I could trust? For all the problems associated with Facebook and other forms of social media, those avenues worked out well for us. I had noticed that Hope Pastures occasionally placed adverts on Facebook for horse owners who use reward-based training, as well as for rehoming their own rescue animals. I messaged them with a tentative enquiry and got a quick and very helpful reply. Their advert about Milly got a lot of responses and to my huge relief, Hope Pastures sifted through them for me, passing on only the ones that sounded compatible with Milly's needs. Top of this list were a mother and daughter who were looking for a second horse to join the rescue mare they were already bringing on.



Milly

Milly is now settled happily with her new family. Formally, she's on loan to them. This leaves ownership and control with me for the moment. If all continues to go well, they'll take over ownership soon. Getting out and about with an enthusiastic teenage rider, Milly is already slimmed down a great deal.

Could I have achieved this without help from Hope Pastures? Possibly, but it would have been a much more stressful and uncertain process for Milly and for me. So I'm glad to have a chance to say 'thank you' and to share some information. If anyone reading this would like to support them, you can find them at <https://www.hopepastures.org/>

Twenty-two new BW applications

Flick Edmeston, PHP's phenomenal rights of way researcher, has put in over 20 new bridleway applications since the last issue of the newsletter. Below is a list of them. All are now on the DCC register of Definitive Map applications. Flick says: 'I can only say that I am getting to know Derbyshire a lot better than I did. Some of the new applications are not in the Peak Park, but they are within easy travelling distance, just south of Ashbourne'.

The new applications are listed here by parish. Flick says that if you see one that may be of interest, you can search for it by parish or by application number on the Derbyshire.gov.uk website under 'Rights of Way' then 'Register of applications'. The direct link is <https://apps.derbyshire.gov.uk/applications/right-of-way/>. This will give you access to the status of the claim at present, a map of the route as claimed and a list of the historical documents supporting the application.

| PARISH | CLAIM FOR UPGRADE | APPLICATION NO |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Thornhill, Hope Woodlands, Aston | FP5, FP11 | 04357 |

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|----------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| Derwent | FP11 | 04359 |
| Litton | Road to Litton Mill | 04363 |
| Taddington, Wormhill | FP1, FP63, FP9 | 04365 |
| Bradwell, Castleton | FP1, FP5 | 04381 |
| Yeldersley, Bradley | FP3, FP6 | 04389 |
| Litton, Tideswell | Little Lane | 04392 |
| Hope | FP19 | 04394 |
| Newton Grange | FP8 & 9 | 04412 |
| Hope | FP22 | 04431 |
| King Sterndale, Buxton | FP14, 7 & 6 | 04437 |
| Church Broughton | FP16 | 04465 |
| Cubley, Boylestone | FP9, FP10 | 04466 |
| Crich | FP20 & 21 | 04464 |
| Hungry Bentley, Boylestone | FP2, 12, 16 | 04467 |
| Marston Montgomery | FP50, 31 | 04469 |
| Matlock | FP89, 20, 5 | 04474 |
| Hungry Bentley, Cubley | FP12, FP20 | 04480 |
| Taddington | FP25 | 04481 |
| Church Broughton | FP20, FP11 | 04482 |
| Bakewell | Coombs Road | 04484 |
| Cubley, Sudbury | FP3, FP25 | 04503 |

Offroading update

The good news this issue is the Planning Inspectorate decision that all but a short section of the Youlgreave to Over Haddon route is a bridleway (see page 2). Not such good news is the Peak Park's annual review of its Green Lanes Action Plan. This is extremely disappointing. PDNPA seems to think that there is no need for further Traffic Regulation Orders to curb motor bike and 4x4s use, even where offroading is making riding routes inaccessible or dangerous on horseback. Serious problems remain on a number of routes.



Part of Back Lane is now a trench

Pindale near Castleton has become impassable on horseback; Limer and Swan Rakes at Hollinsclough have been closed to all users by Staffs CC for several years because they became too dangerous but Staffs is taking no action to deal with the problem; repairs to Hurstlcough Lane (linking Hathersage and Bamford) have served only to increase motor vehicle speeds; Clough Lane near Matlock has had to be repaired again this year by DCC but riders still avoid it because it is narrow with unsighted bends; DCC repairs on Beeley Hill Top near Chatsworth are washing out despite new drainage; in Kirklees, Ramsden Road is supposed to be being repaired and managed through a partnership scheme with the off-roaders but there is no sign of any effective progress

Outside the Peak Park, and so only DCC's responsibility, Back Lane in Darley Dale is not only in an atrocious state but, according to evidence to the recent public inquiry into its rights of way status, it has

been dangerous for riders and pedestrians for many years and this was one of the reasons why Red House Stables in Darley Dale closed its riding school business.

PHP will continue to press for action on all these riding routes. If you are aware of other routes where off-roading is excluding riders from access or safe use, email us at peakhorsepowersecretary@hotmail.co.uk

BHS Trustees

PHP committee member Di Tranter has come to the end of her six-year stint as a BHS Trustee. Having Di on the Board has meant we have been able to keep very close to BHS thinking on rights of way. Thank you for all your hard work Di, not just on rights of way but across the board on the host of equestrian issues which BHS deals with.



Sandra Harris

One of the recently elected new BHS trustees also has links with PHP. Sandra Harris, who is filling the role of Trustee for Business with Digital Knowledge, is a member of MADBAG (Matlock and District Bridleway Action Group), MADBAG is affiliated to PHP. Congratulations to Sandra on her election.

Bog Bridge gets new lease of life, at last



Hayfield's infamous 'Bog Bridge', on Hayfield BW47 adjacent to the Shooting Cabin on Leygatehead Moor, has been replaced with a completely brand-new structure. Astonishingly, the work was carried out by DCC's Structures Management team during the height of lockdown in March and April, no mean feat, let alone coping with the difficulty of getting men and materials up to such a remote location.

Failed planking on the bridge was reported by Dark Peak Bridleways in August 2018 but it took a horse putting its foot through - thankfully without injury - the following December to galvanise the Council into closing the bridleway. Some repairs were carried out but more planking subsequently failed elsewhere and DCC decided to replace the whole structure.

The new bridge is the third across the extensive 'Liggate Swamp', as the bog was fondly known by walkers back in the 1930s. The first bridge was installed in the 1970s following a long campaign by horseriders after the former FP from Chunal to Hayfield was upgraded to BW. The new bridge is made of a non-slip composite material which has been thoroughly tested elsewhere in the Peak Park.

Sadly, however, riders wishing to use the bridge to complete a circular ride to the north of Hayfield via Carr Meadow, are currently unable to do so unless prepared to tackle the very busy A624 up Chunal Bank. A short but important section of FP at Matley Moor Farm, which riders have used for many years to access Lantern Pike and the Pennine BW, has been closed to horseriders by the new landowner. An application to upgrade the FP has been submitted but it may be some time before it comes up for consideration by the powers that be.

You can contact us at
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