

# Peak District Boundary Walk: Introduction - Stuart Firth

In 2017, the Friends of the Peak District published a guidebook entitled **Peak District Boundary Walk - 190 miles around the edge of the national park**. A great deal of research and signposting had been necessary and full acknowledgment is given here to the instigators.

The official walk is broken down into twenty sections each of which is walkable in a day. In an ideal world one would walk them continuously over about three weeks.

However, not many people can or wish to dedicate such a block of time. As the national park is the home territory of the Oread Mountaineering Club, the idea was born to undertake the walk over a period of time. It would be woven into the club's busy calendar, seek to attract as wide an attendance as possible and draw on multiple leaders. Where possible the walks would be made circular, utilise public transport if possible and encourage lift-sharing and car-shuttling where necessary.

The route was modified to enable a celebratory start and finish at Heathy Lea - the club's hut near Baslow - and several weekend sections were incorporated. One section doubled up as the traditional annual **Bullstones** meet. Covid threw a spanner in the works but workarounds for the "rule of six" were found.

In retrospect, the most striking things for me were the enthusiasm members showed for the project and the joy of discovering so many new places in what we had all thought was familiar territory.

Naturally I must thank all the leaders and attendees who made it all such fun. I also thank Ruth Gordon - for her meticulous and creative contribution in editing the Club Newsletter from which these meet reports are extracted.



*The ubiquitous waymark sign which guided us along the route*

## Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 1 - Heathy Lea to Rowsley

**26 November 2017 - Stuart Firth**



*And then there were four...*

It all started so well – and finished likewise. If ever there was a meet with the highest percentage of candidates for the bent screw award, this was it. Twenty-five of us – plus one dog – set out in good order but, within an hour, the meet leader's party had been reduced to four. Poor leadership and poor followership were the root cause. Twenty-one folk failed to wait for the leader at a key junction and were then were led astray by two senior members who had proposed the route variation in the first place but did not then stick to it. Of the four who followed the correct route, the leader cannot be held entirely blameless; another lost contact with his minder; and a third allowed his lunch to disappear with his erstwhile companion. Only Sue Todd followed instructions to the letter. By doing so, she not only broke the habit of a lifetime but also demonstrated a complete lack of understanding of the Oread ethos. She therefore contributed to the 100% tally. Just as the entire island of Malta was awarded the George Cross in WW2, maybe PDBW 1 is a strong claimant for a collective bent screw?

Nonetheless - and despite the rather muddy conditions - a good time was had by all and mission accomplished. The weather was surprisingly kind and entertainment continued to the end as Chatsworth staff endeavoured to release cars from their Christmas Quagmire. Francesco was the youngest participant and Paul Gardiner the oldest so spanning seven decades. Jan Wilson was universally deemed to have sported the silliest hat. Spenser nobly did his homework rather than the walk but then demonstrated his skill at devouring prodigious quantities of cream tea scones. Many thanks to Uschi for providing homemade soup and introducing us to lacing it with vinegar – a first for me and delicious too. Thanks also to Jan for mashing infinite cups of tea and coffee and providing supplementary cakes; and Pam for collecting fees and dealing with the aftermath in the hut.

(Participants: Paul and Jean Bingham, Paul Gardiner, Colin and Uschi (50%) Hobday, Tony Howard, Stuart Firth, Sue Todd, Angela Milne, Chris and Gill Radcliffe, (Spenser Gray), Michael Hayes, Pam Storer, Nick Evans, Peter Amour, Francesco – all the way from Italy, Rory, Margaret Mills, John Green, Dave (Snod) Helliwell, Ruth Gordon, Chris and Jan Wilson, Chloe, Simas, Lance and a dog.)

## **Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 2 - Rowsley to Winster**

### **21 January 2018 - Stuart Firth**

The forecast was perfect - for those with a propensity to put their heads back under the duvet cover. However, heavily falling snow and tricky road conditions did not prevent a strong and enthusiastic team assembling at Massarella's Cafe in Rowsley. Once Snod and Ruth had found each other, we set off in the wrong direction. We soon corrected, only to be confronted with the challenge of communicating our lunch requirements with the pub; there was no mobile signal and the phone box had no phone. Nor a defibrillator to reset the meet leader's heartbeat. The snow continued to fall and turned the scenery into something quite magical. Wandering up through the woods we visited some old quarries but there were no takers for climbing the impressive rock faces.

Once we reached the Nine Ladies on Stanton Moor, our own Oread ladies posed for a group photo, a snowman was built and a friendly snowball fight commenced. The descent and re-ascent to Winster was as muddy as usual.



*Ten Ladies gauge the spirits of the Nine Ladies on Stanton Moor*



The Miners Standard provided us with a great, warm environment for the consumption of magnificent BLTs and chips and a convivial time was had by all.

We returned via Rowtor Rocks at Birchover. There was a lot of fun exploring the folly houses and tunnels and various attempts were made on the bouldering climbs. Possibly a good venue for an evening meet for the wall climbers?



*The strong multi-national Oread team at Rowtor Rocks.*



*Leaving Birchover, various members felt it desirable to pass through the hole in the boundary stone, causing much merriment.*



Once back on Stanton Moor, the youngest member, William Gardiner 16, demonstrated his climbing prowess by ascending the Via Ferrata in full winter conditions. More experienced members thought better of it.

Back at the Nine Ladies we were surprised to find no traces of our snowman. Perhaps the whacky energy lines had spirited him away? Who knows? Descending back to Rowsley there was plenty of opportunity for glissading, slipping and plastic bag sledging. All arrived safely back in Rowsley just as it was getting dark. Everyone seemed to have had a fun day out and it was great to see such a good turnout. Special thanks to Michael Hayes for getting support from the newcomers.

Attendees were Ruth Gordon and Snod Helliwell, Colin and Uschi Hobday, Pam Storer, Francesco Comin, Pete Amour, Chris and Jan Wilson, Michael Hayes, Emanuel Savy, Angela Milne, Phil and Yvonne Waterson, Mary Haslam, Nigel and Janet Briggs, Paul, Douglas and William Gardiner, Kasia Sajdok, Ewelina Czaja, Ashley Kitchen, Michael Percival, Sue Todd and Stuart Firth.

Once again Paul was the oldest (founder) member and his grandson William 16 the youngest. The best hat was definitely Mary's; other contenders had decided to keep theirs dry for the next occasion.

## **Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 3 - Winster to Minninglow**

**17 March 2018 - Gill Radcliffe**

A spring like afternoon on Friday gave way to a last blast of winter on Saturday morning as 21 Oreads and friends assembled at the Market Hall in Winster for the third stage of the Peak District Boundary Walk.



We were later joined by Rob Tresidder who was two minutes late and thwarted from starting with the rest of the party by a meet leader who likes to keep to schedule.



*Heading down from the car park for the start. Photo Tomasz Janiki*

Frequent gusts of strong wind and snow showers kept the party moving at a brisk pace towards Bonsall. Rob joined at some point but the meet leader was marching ahead and didn't notice. A few individuals tentatively suggested a tea break and managed a quick sip from their flasks before the meet leader set off again.



*Into the fields ....Photo Tomasz Janiki.*



Field after field, stile after stile (did anyone count them all?) passed by as the snow fell and the party burrowed into their brightly coloured jackets. It was close to 1pm when someone plucked up the courage to request a lunch stop. Surely no one was hungry? The meet leader was assured that many in the party were indeed hungry and she agreed to huddle behind a wall for a few minutes.



*Huddled behind a wall. Photo Tomasz Janiki*

Lunch was soon over and who would want to linger in that wind? The party continued to Ible and the High Peak Trail.





Rob left to watch the rugby (England lost), perhaps he should have joined the rest of us in the pub. Rusty left to walk home, ignoring rights of way in favour of speed. The remainder hot footed it back to Minninglow car park, and the meet leader was relieved that everyone was able to find a space in the cars, especially as she had volunteered to be last to get a lift.



*Silly Hat competition – Round Three.*

A hot drink in the Miners' Standard ended a brisk walk on an invigorating day. As Paul G said “it wouldn’t have been anything like as good in fine weather!”

PS – did anyone look at the view? Many thanks to all attendees for an enjoyable walk: Jan and Chris Wilson, Ruth Gordon, Colin and Uschi Hobday, Paul and Douglas Gardiner, Nigel and Janet Briggs, Tony Howard, Roma, Stuart Firth, Angela, Rusty, Mick Hayes, Rob Tresidder, Tomasz Janicki, Mary Haslam, Aga, Donald, Chris and Gill Radcliffe.

# Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 4 - Minninglow to Ilam

06 October 18 - Pam Storer



Peter Amour, Angela Milne, Nick Moyes, Chris Wilson, John Green, Spenser Gray, Pam Storer, Stuart Firth, Sue Todd (Hidden), John Gwyther.



Derek Pike, Rusty Russell, Mike Hayes, Tom Hayes.



Pam Storer, Peter Amour, Angela Milne, Nick Moyes, John Green



Ellie Hayes, Paul Gardiner, Uschi Hobday, Douglas Gardiner



Thorpe Cloud







Mike Wren



Derek Pike

All Photos above taken by Mike Wren - or his beautiful unknown assistant.

The following recollections of the day - which may vary - were kindly contributed five and a half years after the event.

“Sorry the weather must have been very bad as I have no pictures on my phone for that date apart from one that I took at the hut later that evening”.  
*Mike Hayes*

“My diary says - good turn-out, 20 people finished in Ilam tea room. Douglas logged 11.9 miles.” *Paul Gardiner*

“I have a vague recollection of stopping at the Old Dog at Thorpe as we passed by.” *Chris Wilson*

“I recall it was a lovely day, and a very friendly farmer, who Rusty might well know, at our lunch stop. I remember a small pot-bellied pig as being the star of the farmyard.” *Mike Wren*

“This is my log entry: 06/10/2018 - Oread Meet - PDBW (Section 13) From Minninglow via Roystone Grange, Ballidon, Parwich, Sitterlow Farm, Lea Hall, Woodeaves Farm, Fenny Bentley, Thorpe, Coldwell Bridge, Ilam. 18.5k - Rain then cloudy with a little sun later, cold.” *John Green*



## Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 5 - Ilam - Onecote

### 4 Nov 18 - Peter Amour - A story of lost and found

Sunday required a certain amount of determination by those intending to come out and play, Saturday evening had seen the bonfire revelry at Heathy Lea, and Sunday morning was to witness the annual fixture of the nearby Dovedale Dash and its attendant traffic problem.

A taxi service team of cars arrived at Onecote to allow the return plan for those yet to participate in the PDBW fifth leg. Having witnessed enough vehicles at Onecote I advised that we get underway to National Trust Ilam. On arrival there was obvious evidence of athletes preparing for the Dash. Shortly afterwards an unknown face approached us and asked "Are you the AAC group?", "AAC Group? No." was the reply, thinking that we certainly didn't look to be an athletic club. At this point the meet leader recalled an email from the Radcliffes stating that there may be participants from the Austrian Alpine Club (AAC). With the confusion over, visitor Derek was welcomed into the fold, we now awaited ultra-reliable Mike Hayes but zero hour came and went and no Hayes. I attempted to ring him but found no signal.



*The early ascent onto Musden Meadows to warm everyone up.*

Having passed kick-off time we left Ilam's manicured grounds and steeply left the Manifold Valley to access Calton before descending into Waterhouses. The route then took a northerly direction over meadows and asphalt to reach Waterfall's Red Lion pub where those who had booked food took their nosh (after a little confusion about my booking). Having found our food, we also gained the missing Mr Hayes, who had headed to Onecote to dump his motor but found the hasty transport arrangements had abandoned him! On interrogation he'd enjoyed a more athletic route from the finish point to the pub than the rest of us.

Refuelled, a photocall was made for the record outside the Red Lion before we proceeded westwards, with much of the route following the Hamps Valley. The meet leader adjusted the final section to run a parallel route avoiding the swampy ancient packhorse route of Wetley Lane. With vehicles accessed we returned to Ilam to reacquaint everybody with their homeward transport and an Ilam cuppa.



*The PDBW Number Fivers post lunch, having gained calories, a lost member and a pumpkin - to clarify the lost member is fourth from the right.*

Thanks for all who took part as shown in the accompanying images. Thanks especially to those who made the linear route possible by use of their vehicles including Tony Howard, Colin and Uschi, Stuart (Mr Boundary man) Firth, Sue, and Mike Hayes. I'm looking forward to the sixth PDBW, cheers Gill and Chris.



## **Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 6 / Bullstones Meet, Onecote – Tittesworth**

**7 – 9 Dec 18 - Chris Radcliffe**

The aim this year was to combine completion of another section of the Peak District Boundary Walk with elements of the Bullstones tradition, ensuring that hardened Bullstoners could have their fix of hardship, but also enable other Oreads to complete the walk with less discomfort. To this end we were very fortunate that Bill and Elen made their farm at Thorncliffe available for us, providing some with comfortable accommodation and a sociable venue for Saturday night. Kev had made an arrangement with a local farmer to have a bivvy site, not far beyond the old Mermaid pub.



*Leaving Whitehouse Farm on Saturday morning.*

Friday evening saw over 20 Oreads and friends gathered in the Old Rock Inn, Upper Hulme, to fortify themselves with beer and food before disappearing into the night. How many will be seen again?



One of the meet leaders took the easy option and returned by car, with John Green who had already completed the whole walk and had to return home early. A small group of four left the pub early and having Chris as their guide, who had previously reconnoitred the river crossing, made good time back to the farm. A large group of a dozen determined Bullstoners left the pub later and then spent a good deal of time floundering around in the dark trying to find the river crossing. They eventually reached the bivouac site without further mishap. It was a wild night, which provided a suitable level of discomfort, especially for Mick Hayes whose bivvy sack of 30 years failed to prevent ingress of water and he remained sodden for the duration.

On Saturday morning we were joined by Colin, Uschi and Douglas. A band of 14 set out along the Hamps Way to Onecote, enjoying a dry morning. Rain arrived just as we turned up at the pub – good timing. The afternoon remained damp as we walked back along the PDBW back to Whitehouse Farm. The Bullstone traditionalists set out on a longer walk, getting back in the dark and the pouring rain.

Home-made soup by Sue and Angela was a welcome precursor to the main meal, to which many had contributed and a substantial feast was enjoyed by all. This was followed by whisky tasting in “the shed” or would have if Kev had remembered to bring it but, in the end, Spenser saved the day.



*The group in the Hamps valley.*

Sunday was a bright and dry day, and a large team assembled to complete the PDBW section to Tittesworth Reservoir and then continue past the Roaches and back to Whitehouse farm via Swainsmoor. We were held up from a prompt departure by Stuart and Sue who had uncharacteristically overslept.



*Mike Wren and Colin ascending towards the Mermaid late Sunday afternoon.*

It was clear that both meet leaders, not having reced the whole route, could not navigate, despite one having years of experience in the mountains and the other being a qualified Mountain Leader. After several wrong turns we eventually completed a walk that was somewhat longer than the main event on Saturday.

Special thanks to Bill and Elen for making Whitehouse Farm available to us and their forbearance when we returned later than expected on Sunday – thanks to all who worked hard to clear up after our occupation.

Thanks to all who came on the meet and made it an enjoyable event – Stuart Firth and Sue Todd, Angela Milne, Colin and Uschi Hobday, Pam Storer, Michael Hayes, Pete Amour, Chris and Jan Wilson, Simon Pape, Spenser Gray, Tim Sellears, John Green, Nigel and Janet Briggs, Douglas Gardiner, Mike Wren, Kev and James Fidler, Kev's brother-in-law Ivan, Chris Seaman, Michael Percival, Derek Pike.





*Some of the survivors at the Mermaid. Special congratulations to Uschi on her birthday achievement.*

## **Historical Note**

This meet was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my first Bullstones meet with the Oread in December 1968. The continuity in the Oread was also marked by having Colin Hobday on the meet. He was already an established Oread member in 1968 and was present on the 1968 meet. Another member present in 1968 was Paul Gardiner. He wasn't on Bullstones 2018, but had been on several PDBWs earlier in the year and his son Douglas was on the Bullstones.

The Bullstones in 1968 involved walking, on Friday night, from the Nags Head, Edale over Kinder to Wood Cottage in the Snake valley.





*The group is probably outside Wood Cottage (which no longer exists) with L to R: Fred Allen, John Welbourne, Stan More, Colin Hobday, Harry Pretty, Paul Gardiner, Derrick Burgess, Peter Janes, Dave Appleby, Don Chapman, Ray Handley (hidden).*

On that occasion Digger Williams didn't make it and had to bivvy out. When he turned up on Saturday morning, he was given a "dressing down" by Harry Pretty. The walk on Saturday was a split affair. We all started up Alport Dale, but only Derrick Burgess, Don Chapman and I did an extended walk up onto Bleaklow Hill, Bleaklow Head and back via Wainstones and Alport Moor, descending Oyster Clough in the dark. Sunday was a shorter walk, back over Kinder and Crookstone Knoll and into the Nags Head by 12:30.



*The second photo is taken in Alport Dale with L to R: Cecil Speed (non-member) Harry Pretty, Colin Hobday, Pete Janes, Dave Appleby, John Welbourne, Don Chapman? (hidden).*

If you would like to read the full write up of the 1968 meet, please contact the Editor, Ruth Gordon for a copy.

## Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 7 - Tittesworth to Wildboarclough

**13 Jan 19 - Stuart Firth**



*The happy team of wanderers en route from Tittesworth to Wildboarclough.*

Although the weather was vile on the drive over the Cat and Fiddle to Tittesworth Visitor Centre, it rapidly improved. Those who braved the inauspicious start were well-rewarded. We stayed largely dry as the cold wind dropped and the day brightened up. A few silly hats were on display and the team set off in convivial mood. Farmyard conditions were challenging.

The route itself was scenic and interesting throughout and, having abstemiously foregone the delights of the Dane Valley microbrewery, we enjoyed sustenance at the Ship Inn, Wincle. Colin then entertained us with a near face-plant in the mud, glorious mud towards the end of the walk and Alex's trainers were certainly not "as-new" at the finish.

We made it before nightfall and many thanks to the car shufflers who facilitated the logistics.

We look forward to John Green's PDBW stage on Saturday 16th February and Chris and Jan Wilson's on Sunday 17th March.



## Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 8 - Wildboarclough to Bollington

**16 Feb 19 - John Green**

This was a strange but excellent walk. Strange because I seemed to have a different number of members every time I counted!! Anyway, ten of us started out from the Crag Inn on time at 10.30. Rusty accompanied us for the first half only, which was sad because the second half was amazing! It was straight into the Matterhorn of Cheshire, Shutlingsloe, a great peak I have climbed many times - as have most Oreads. We passed over it on a Bullstones a few years ago. It was then down through the trees of Macclesfield Forest for a break in lovely sunshine at The Leather's Smithy pub. Most members stayed outside in the sun, as did I, and we said goodbye to Rusty as well.



P1070791.JPG

Leather's Smithy Inn

Saturday, February 16, 2019

The push on up to Tegg's Nose was hard, but gave lovely views of the surrounding country of reservoirs and hills, leading out over the Cheshire plain.

A tea was taken at the Visitor Centre after Mike and Spenser had soloed a route on the slabs in the quarry. Mike did Square Route and seemed to run up it, much to Helen's worry.



*Mike Hayes climbing  
Square Route*

The final part involved a walk over fields to the Kerridge ridge, mostly on the Gritstone Trail, to White Nancy, a folly just before the steep descent to Bollington. This was, in my opinion, one of the best walks I have done for years, it had everything and good weather to boot.



*The team at  
White - freshly  
painted -  
Nancy.*

Stuart has given me a list of those who came but I cannot confirm it; suffice to say I did see some of them most of the time.

John Green, Stuart Firth, Sue Todd, Peter Amour, Rusty (50%), Colin Hobday, Paul Gardiner, Martha, Sophie, Tom Hayes, Ellie Rickman, Michael Hayes, Helen Hayes, Spenser Gray, Mike Percival, John Gwyther.

Many Thanks to all who came and enjoyed it, I will be going back for more exploration of that fantastic ridge.



## Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 9 - Bollington to Whaley Bridge

### 17 Mar19 - Chris and Jan Wilson

The omens were not good. Forecasts of gales, wintery showers, hail and heavy rain combined with a lengthy drive from the usual Sunday haunts on St Patrick's Day suggested that few Oreads would venture forth to the start of the walk from Bollington. How wrong that proved to be. As the clock ticked down towards the 10.15 kick-off about 24 of us milled about trying not to freeze.

Once underway we soon warmed up ascending out of the town to Sowcar where we left the road and crossed fields to Hedgerow, an ancient drovers track leading through the Harrop Valley towards Kettleshulme, providing access to a few farms. In days gone by it was also home to the Cheshire Hunt Inn which, before the late 1800s, was known as the Quiet Woman and had a picture showing the head of a woman inside bird cage. The woman was portrayed with a very large tongue hanging from her mouth trapped with a large mouse trap!

Crossing Harrop Brook into Berristall Dale we began a long uphill slog up Gausie Brow where the Gritstone Trail was briefly joined. As the angle eased, we made a short photo stop with the assembled crowd taking in the view over Manchester whilst being blasted face on by the rain!



From Andrew's Knob we lost much of the height gained, crossed the road near the old 19 century Bakestonedale brickworks and had a coffee break. Refreshed, it was uphill again to the moor where concrete obelisks mark deep mineshafts capped in the 1970's. After passing the Birchencliff farm

buildings, the (unfortunately closed) Tin Hut Coffee Tavern and a stud farm at Harrop Brow we crossed the canal and the former Macclesfield, Bollington and Marple Railway which carried cotton, silk, coal and passengers, but closed in 1970 and became the Middlewood Way. Lunch was had at the nearby Miners Arms in Wood Lane North.

Refreshed and in better weather, we followed the Macclesfield canal tow path northwards for almost a mile before turning uphill and west towards Lyme Hall. This sports a medieval deer park, gardens and pleasure grounds dating back to the 1720's. There was a house at Lyme by 1465 with the core of today's structure built in the 16th century. The Hall and 17 acres are now National Trust. After a brief stop by the mill-pond we moved on uphill past Lantern Wood towards Black Hill and Derbyshire. A lovely flat traverse through moorland brought us to the Dipping Stone, the remains of an early medieval wayside cross which also functioned as a boundary marker. It is a boulder which has had two rectangular sockets cut into it. The cross apparently fell victim of 16th century iconoclasts. The stone has since been used for baptisms and also during times of plague.

We ignored the standing stone at nearby Hawkhurst Head and went downhill towards Toddbrook reservoir as the odd squall passed over and on to the station in Whaley Bridge. An adequate supply of transport enabled all to continue either home or back to the start in Bollington, where several participants rounded off the day with a visit to a local hostelry.

It had been a great day out with wonderful company, a fitting finale to the winter's boundary walks. Many thanks to the too many to name who came along



and hopefully we'll all meet up for the next stage in the autumn.



## Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 10 - Whaley Bridge to Buxton

### 21 Sep 19 - Colin Hobday

The weather forecast for the day was “this will be the last day of summer”, and for once the weather men got it right. As usual with the Oread, not many informed us beforehand that they were coming, so it was a wait and see situation. As we had arrived early, we nipped across the road from Whaley Bridge Station carpark for a quick coffee. What a delightful and well supported café.

We drifted back across the road just before 10.00 a.m. and found that quite a few Oreads (13 at that stage) had turned up for the walk. We started off with a photo shoot underneath the Whaley Bridge Station sign.



*“The Team” at Whaley Bridge Station*

Walking up the road brought us into the Memorial Gardens, making a slight deviation to look at the leaking dam wall, which made world news a few weeks ago. We were in Munich at the time and saw it on TV with daily updates. The site looked a real mess with heavy machinery, pumps, gigantic hosepipes, barriers and red tape everywhere. Apparently, it will take two years to repair.

We moved on, doing a lap of the housing estate, before coming out in the open countryside. We suddenly noticed that Michael H. had disappeared, having had a phone call from two very new prospective members, who had

arrived late and did not have a clue where we were. They all caught up with us at Taxal church, this swelled the number to 15. The next stage followed the river Goyt, through meadows and woodland along Fernilee reservoir in glorious warm sunshine and cloudless sky. We crossed the dam wall at Errwood Reservoir. A short steep climb over Bunsal Cob brought us on to the moorland where lunch was taken in the sunshine. (No pub or café in sight – this must be a first for a PPBW so far. Don't blame the meet leader!!!)

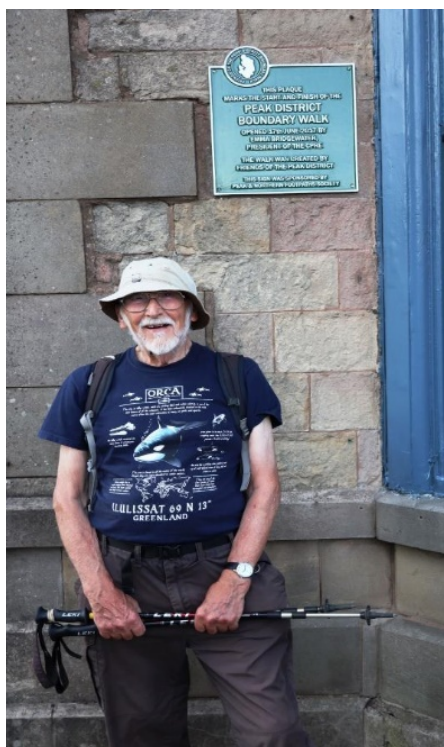


### *Lunch Stop at Bunsal Cob*

After lunch a steady climb up to the disused railway line which we followed for about a mile. On the way up to Watford Moor (the last climb of the day), we met two very fit and fast mountain bikers plus dog, hurtling down over boulders and down narrow tracks. After they passed, we saw a sign that said, "No Cycling". After a quick stop for more fluid a short 10-minute climb saw us on the top of Watford Moor with Buxton nestling in the valley below.

A steady descent followed including crossing the Cavendish Golf Course. Hard hats were the order of the day, as we were frequently in the firing line of stray golf balls. Soon we got into the Pavilion Gardens of Buxton, which resembled Blackpool on a good day. Toy trains, ice cream stalls, kids paddling in the river, families picnicking on the grass, pop concert, antique fair, etc. etc. All a bit of a culture shock, when 1/2 an hour ago, we were still on the peaceful moorland. The finishing point was the market place, where we had a group photo under the official plaque of the PPBW start and finish of the route. But as in true Oread Tradition we started somewhere mid-way round the circuit.





*Paul, our most senior Octogenarian founder member!!*

There was, surprisingly, a distinct lack of enthusiasm for a pub-stop, some wanting to get back home, catching an early bus, while the rest of us went to a café on the square for a tea drinking session.  
Total distance of the walk - over 10 miles.

Highlights of the day,

- Radders bringing his camera, posing to take photos and realizing, that there was no memory card in the camera.
- Radders having to take his hat off on the Manchester Airport Bus, to prove to the lady bus driver that the picture on his bus pass was actually him.

Those present: Michael, Helen and Emma Hayes, Stuart Firth + Sue and Angela, Paul Gardiner, Mike Wren, Chris and Gill Radcliffe, Pippa Leach, Colin and Uschi Hobday. + two new prospective members from Derby. The team included two Octogenarians. Well done.

Thank you all for coming, all in all it was a brilliant day, nice countryside, excellent weather and good company.

# Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 11 - Buxton to Peak Forest

**09 Nov 19 - Rob Tresidder**



The Official PDBW start in Buxton. Rob Tresidder, Sue Todd, Pippa Leach, Gill Radcliffe, Mike Percival, Mike Hayes, Tom Whieldon, John Gwyther, Angela Milne, Ellie Rickman, Stuart Firth. Photos courtesy of Chris Radcliffe

I was privileged to lead the official first section of the PDBW, though of course not the first day of the Oread's circumambulation. Fourteen of us gathered in front of the sign marking the official starting point of the round, in Buxton market place. We made an urban(e) start southwards along the main Ashbourne Road before walking through Buxton's ramshackle allotments and caravan park. We emerged with the rain into more attractive countryside as we approached Cowdale.





From there steeply down into Deep Dale where we crossed the swollen Winterbourne stream with some difficulty. The PDBW follows the stream down past Topley Pike to enter Wyedale, but this section has been closed since 2017 as a result of the deposition of a huge amount of quarry waste by Tarmac. The closure allowing for removal of waste and “natural” restoration is due to end in 2025. *[Postscript: In late 2023, the waste had not been removed and so the anticipated natural restoration had not even started.]* We followed the re-routing which climbs steeply up the south side of the dale before turning east to run along the lip of the valley and so down to the River Wye.

Here two alternatives are listed. We chose to take the longer, into Cheedale for a rain-soaked standing picnic which seemed hardly to impact one of our number, recently returned from a winter experience with the Dutch under-ice swimmer, Wim Hof. We exited Cheedale to pass through the curiously named Wormhill and eventually into the delightful Dam Dale and Hay Dale. Just before entering Peak Forest we passed an industrial livestock farm and in the village the church with the unusual dedication to King Charles the Martyr. Sadly, the pub was not open. Most collected the cars they had left there in the morning. A few caught the bus back to their onward transport in Buxton.

My main achievement of the day was to persuade every walker onto a bus so we managed without all that car shuttling!

## Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 12 - Peak Forest to Hayfield

### 30 Nov 19 - Dave Helliwell and Ruth Gordon

The sun was just breaking through the mist as we arrived at Hayfield to drop the cars off. Mick, being unsure how many spaces we would have in the car, had already dropped his passengers off at Peak Forest, cheerily suggesting Pippa run a PE class to ward off hypothermia. They must have been frozen as it was still thick icy mist when we got back there. So we didn't delay departure – once we had corralled Tom who was waiting by the church on the main road rather than the chapel on the side road.

The first part of this leg of the walk is not very inspiring – round the back of a farm then almost down to the road again – a few more PDBW



markers had appeared since our recce in September but several of the stiles were just as fragile as we remembered. As we passed Barmoor above the A623 the sun began to break through giving spectacular short-lived views. Crossing the road, we plodded steeply up through the gorse to emerge above Chapel. We made our way down through Blackbrook and, in a deviation from the printed route, which is horribly boggy, by road into the bottom end of town where some ate their sandwiches and had a drink at the Packhorse while others availed themselves of tea and delicious bacon butties at Fosters. Several of them emerged with other purchases including great sourdough loaves. Mick was tempted by the Christmas trees, reminding me of a dog trying to pick up an-over large stick – but decided they were just a bit too big to carry six miles over hill and dale.

We plodded up the road to pick up the footpath to Wash, then a bit more steeply down and up, crossing the railway to join the Peak Bridleway.





*Contact made with the Pennine Bridleway before South Head. Photo Peter Amour.*



*Dropping down from Mt Famine with an atmospheric, distant Kinderlow End. Photo Peter Amour.*

The sunshine and views still coming and going elusively. We stopped below Mount Famine for a cake break – Jan had brought some delicious offerings but the wind was too cold to linger long. Finally made it down into Hayfield around 4pm where Mick took a carload of folk needing to get home soon and the rest of us stopped for an excellent cup of tea and home-made chocolates in Millie's cafe.

Thanks to all 13 participants for an enjoyable day in good weather, unlike the two recce walks when we both got soaked to the skin!

## Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 13 - Hayfield to Old Glossop

**18 Jan 20 - Sue Todd**

The chance of clement weather in January is probably a tall order, but wow, were we blessed. Blue skies, clear visibility, crisp temperatures, and a happy team.

Most of us opted for the bus from Glossop and we made a prompt start at 10.30am from Hayfield bus station.



Snod, Ruth and Ellie met us a mile in, near the foot of the climb on to Lantern Pike. A few outer layers of clothing were cast as we felt the warmth of the sun and our own efforts on the route up. The views just got better on the ascent until, at the top, we could all take in a stunning panorama of the dark and white peak.

After a quick break and photos, we descended through open moorland and wild scenery to Rowarth village and the Little Mill pub by the brook. Sitting outside, we were able to eat and drink to the sound of a variety of quacking pet ducks, delightful.

Climbing out of the village our route took us onto Cown Edge, where distant Manchester was clearly visible on our left and the wild moorland and Kinder to our right.



Before our descent into Charles Town, we were confronted with wonderful views of Bottoms reservoir and Tintwistle Moor in the far distance...our next stage of the PDBW!

Only one short climb left before we dropped down into Old Glossop through various horse fields and a special little memorial corner with photos and flowers dedicated to Luke.



*Stunning views from Lantern Pike.*

Manor Park stream afforded a boot wash facility, which was greatly appreciated and the sun was still shining. A great day out.

A big 'thank you' to everyone who turned out on my first meet: Peter, John G., Stuart, Helen and Mike, Jan and Chris, Snod and Ruth, Pippa, Ellie, Angela, and Jon. I hope you enjoyed the day as much as I did.

## Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 14 - Old Glossop to Greenfield and Greenfield to Marsden.

**13-15 Feb 2020 - Stuart Firth**

Boy were we lucky! During the week prior to the meet, I began to develop a full alphabet of alternative plans. The weather forecast was dire; the bunkhouse had been cold on the original recce; a third of the attendees were new to the club; the routes were the highest, longest and most exposed sections of the PDBW. What could possibly go wrong? Quite a lot actually!

In the event, we had a brilliant weekend. While the rest of the country appeared to be battered and flooded by Storm Dennis, we seemed to have the wind on our backs for the whole walk. There was a little rain on Saturday but none at all on Sunday - until it was time to drive home. Indeed, we actually got some sunshine and the gods were clearly smiling on us.



*Having survived the horrors of Storm Ciara, the cast and crew of the Magic Roundabout brace themselves for the onset of Storm Dennis.*

The walks themselves were fantastic with tremendous views connecting wild moorlands, hard upland farming and an industrial heritage landscape of impressive dams and reservoirs and textile mills. There were the paddy fields of Padfield (who knew?), the entertaining outcrops of the “Pots and Pans” and a few bizarre discoveries.



Namely: a mystery inverted wine bottle carefully bracketed twelve feet up a telegraph pole; a 99% dead crow with a freshly laid blue egg under its tailfeathers; and an armless statue in the middle of nowhere.



*Happy Boundary Walkers playing with the Pots and Pans, Chew Valley.  
photo – Peter Amour.*



*The Team at Dovestones Reservoir*

Radders proved that his wellies leaked by paddling in the Flintstones Jacuzzi on top of the Tor and Tom broke the world record for cake-eating. It took longer to buy the train tickets from the non-intuitive machine than it did to complete the return train journey. The Donkeystone Tardis microbrewery on an industrial estate in Greenfield was a fine discovery – as was the beer. A new addition to the SI metric system and Oread lexicon was initiated: “Walking at the speed of Pip”.

There was some great teamwork – provisioning, transport and clearing up – so, many thanks to the cast and crew for that. Thanks also to Spenser for suggesting the bunkhouse in the first place - this really enabled the whole weekend to work well. And I can save Plans B-Z for a future occasion...

## **Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 15 - Marsden to Holme and Holme to Langsett Barn**

### **13-15 March Stuart Firth**

This was our second double stage of the boundary walk with some challenging logistics. We based ourselves at the spectacularly-positioned Whitegate Leisure campsite near Holme with campers, sleepers-in-cars, camper vans and a party self-catering nearby. Holmfirth Taxis did a fantastic job shuffling us to the start, from the finish, to the pub and back and sundry car-recovery missions.

Saturday's walk started from the Month of Sundaes café in Marsden and retraced our steps back to the leat traversing the hillside above the Holme Valley. We could see the site of the historic Bilberry Dam disaster of 1852 that killed 81 people and was witnessed by an ancient relative of mine. The guidebook led us astray into a shooting range but fortunately our losses appeared to be minimal. We continued past multiple reservoirs built to feed the old woollen mills and had fine views towards Castle Hill, Huddersfield and the Emley Moor masts.



P1080766.JPG

Mick & Helen at lunch

Saturday, March 14, 2020

*The fashionistas of the Oread model the new 2020 spring season colours... (Photo: John Green)*





*The self-declared good-looking members of the party smile for the camera.*



*... whilst Radders takes a Churchillian postprandial nap with the spring chickens still looking energised.*

A few of us celebrated the completion of the official stage by calling in at the pub before completing the day with a hike back up to the campsite. The hospitable Fleece Inn at Holme provided us with an excellent dinner and it was great that our party of fifteen could all eat together and be served simultaneously. The standard of graffiti in the gents was memorable but unfortunately not repeatable in a journal of such high social mores.

Saturday night was notably wild, wet and windy with vans rocking and rolling and tents flapping noisily. Fortunately, only one vehicle needed the helpful campsite owner's 4x4 to be towed off the waterlogged pitch on Sunday morning.

Our second day seemed colder and we passed through interesting woodland from Heaven (Elysium Farm) to Hell (Hades). Not surprisingly, the weather then warmed up.



*Hades – a fine piece of graphic drystone wall demarcates the official entrance to Hell.*

By our elevenses refreshment stop, we had crossed the watershed and entered the reservoir moorland area associated with Sheffield's outlying steelworks hidden in the valleys to escape Hitler's bombs. There was a slightly dull stretch along a tarmac rail trail but we soon reached Langsett reservoir where we had lunch alongside a trout ladder.



*Pip and Neil are early adopters of the Covid19 self-isolation strategy...*



We had been walking briskly and arrived at our endpoint much earlier than planned. This allowed us to refresh ourselves in the café and pub while we waited for the rescheduled taxis to return us to the campsite. All-in-all another happy weekend walking despite the looming Virus Crisis and plummeting stock markets. Let's hope it'll all feel more settled in September when we hope to resume our PDBW walks. Hope to see you on the other side...

If you want to do a bit of DIY on stages you have missed etc see the website [friendsofthepeak.org](http://friendsofthepeak.org) which has lots of info on the PDBW, downloadable maps and also volunteering opportunities.

## **Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 16 - Langsett to Low Bradfield**

**20 Sep 20 - Pip Leach**

**Covid, the PDBW and the Rule of Six!**



*Checking out social distancing at the start. Photo Chris Radcliffe.*

A big thank you to everyone who came on the PDBW from Langsett to Low Bradfield, it was lovely to see everyone, a breath of normality, albeit 'new normal'. Special thanks to Mick, Chris and Stuart, who were on hand to lead a sub group, if numbers necessitated.

We got off to a slightly later start than anticipated, due to the road works and using different car parking sites in Low Bradfield, but with masks on and windows open, the shuttle was soon underway. This actually gave the sun chance to come out, as it had been a cool autumnal start.

There were 11 of us in total, so we were able to divide into team A and team B, setting off ten minutes apart and allowing refreshments from Bank Side café to be consumed.

The walk was varied and pleasant. In Team A, we were slightly under pressure to get a move on, as when we stopped for a coffee break, Chris Radcliffe's red tee-shirt became visible, as team B were hot on our heels!



*Team A*



*Team B*



The ridge up to Salter Hills gave superb views of the hills on the Strines Road and also prompted some discussion on the escarpments standing out from the moorland up there. Those of us in Team A, could look back and monitor the progress of our fellow Oreads, bringing up the rear. A breezy, open trig point was our lunch stop, where Team A, and Team B could shout out pleasantries, whilst retaining social distance, of course.



*Lunch stop on the Salter Hills on the September Boundary Walk. Photo Chris Radcliffe.*

The afternoon route took us through the pretty village of Bolsterstone, then hills, lanes, stream crossings, waterworks, farms all provided plenty of interest. High and Low Bradfield are both quaint, small villages and a fitting finale for the walk, with a quintessentially English game of cricket, being played out on the green.



*Afternoon stop near White Lee Farm, photo John Green.*

Team B, I'd like to say we were in **hours** before you! What kept you? But that would be unfair.

Looking forward to the next leg, let's hope there are no tighter restrictions to thwart our plans.

## Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 17 - Low Bradfield to Ringinglow

**10 Oct 20 - John Gwyther**

Ten members met up at the Norfolk Arms, Ringinglow on a rather dreary Saturday morning. We were all transported in a socially distanced manner to the start at Low Bradfield (except Peter Amour who had already walked the route in the dark). We then set off in two groups (Peter leading the first as he could do it blindfold). The second was accompanied by Luna, an eighteen-month-old white Alsatian bitch who was very adept at tying up various walkers with her 10-metre lead.



*Luna leads the way*

We passed an obelisk at Edgefield Farm, dedicated to a child who drowned in a spring there in 1832 (thanks Nicola), had a few tutorials on fungi from Natasha (who sadly only found one specimen good enough to eat) and lunched at Wyming Brook.





### *Socially-distanced lunch*

There was quite a lot of road walking, the terrain wasn't too muddy, the weather bucked up and the company was excellent. Many thanks to Sue, Rachel, Pippa, Nicola, Natasha, Stuart, Spenser, Mike, John and Peter (special merit for doing the walk twice) for coming; and hopefully see you on the 8th November for the penultimate stage. Thanks to Stuart for providing the photos.

## **Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 18 - Ringinglow to Millthorpe**

### **24 Apr 21 - Chris Radcliffe**

Initial light cloud gave way to clear skies and full sun – a great day for finally being able to walk the penultimate section of the Peak District Boundary Walk. The pandemic had forced us to cancel the meet twice, but now we were treated to ideal walking conditions.

The latest BMC advice was that as an organized club meet we were not restricted on numbers (providing we had a risk assessment in place and everyone was properly briefed). Twenty-one members and friends assembled at the Norfolk Arms, an excellent turn out. It was great to see three generations of the Gardiner family represented on the meet.

It was busy at the Norfolk Arms, but it soon thinned out as we set off along Houndkirk Road and once we turned off over Houndkirk Moor we encountered few other folk, although we were passed by a group of

mountain bikers descending into Blackamoor Plantation. We climbed back up past “The Bench” where we paused briefly before continuing up the flank of Blacka Hill and traversing around Wimble Holme Hill.



*Three generations of the Gardiner clan - Douglas, Paul and William*

Continuing along the edge of the moor, we climbed up to the Totley Moor trig point. There was an excellent view here over Sheffield and the eastern Peak and we stopped here for lunch.



*Lunch at Totley Moor Trig point on the Boundary Walk, 24 April. Photo Chris Radcliffe.*



The track continued below Flask Edge and we crossed the Owler Bar road close to Barbrook Reservoir, pausing to check out the 1709 Stoop (Guide Stone) and the nearby Companion Stone (millennium project). We descended through Greaves Piece into the Cordwell Valley, but there was one last climb up Horsleygate Lane before the final descent along Grimsell Lane to Millthorpe.

Kudos to Pete Amour who left Millthorpe at 6am to walk to the Norfolk Arms and join the rest of us for the walk – a sterling effort; also to John Gwyther who cycled to the start from Millthorpe. The rest of us made various arrangements to car share in our bubbles.

Most of us went to the Royal Oak for sustenance. Service was slow, but it was pleasantly sunny – a good end to a very sociable day.

Many thanks to all who joined me on the meet: Stuart Firth, Sue Todd, Angela Milne, Ellie Reynolds, Pippa Leach, Rachel Walker, Louise Amandini, Peter Amour, Nicola Bashforth, Michael and Helen Hayes, Chris and Jan Wilson, Paul, Douglas and William Gardiner and friend, John Gwyther, John Green, Gill Radcliffe. Also to Stuart Firth and Peter Amour for the photographs.



*The team contouring Wimble Holme Hill – John Green in the lead and the remarkable Paul Gardiner in high spirits.*

**Paul Gardiner adds:** “I would just like to add my thanks to the people who picked me up and sorted me out when I took a tumble”.

## **Peak District Boundary Walk Stage 19 Finale - Millthorpe to Heathy Lea**

### **24 Jul 21 - Paul Gardiner**

Well, it finally happened. The day long awaited since November 2017 and one which, in an unguarded moment on the top of Teggs Nose or somewhere, I had volunteered to lead. The morning was dull following some days of 30's heat. As people gathered in different locations some had decided to make the final leg a complete circuit itself which immediately reduced car shuffling. Superfit 1 - Chris W, Jan, Stuart, Sue, Chris R, Gill and Angela left Heathy Lea at 08.30. Superfit 2 Peter Amour and John Gwyther left Robin Hood at 08.45. At 10.00 Douglas and I were at Shillito Woods, the 'proper' start for the day, soon to be joined by Superfits 1 and 2 right on cue. By now 11 were in the starting blocks and, as Peter was checking the location of John Green, Nicola arrived in some haste after fighting road closures.



*Inspirational – Paul Gardiner shows the way on the final leg of the Peak District Boundary Walk. Photo Peter Amour.*



So, by tarmac, track and field on to Millthorpe where John Green waited with Sylvia and a coffee break was taken. Sylvia departed to Heathy Lea directly and word had it that Colin and Uschi had left before us at 10.00 to get a head start.

At times I was asked how many were out but, by this stage every time I counted, the result was different... Outside the Royal Oak the final leg started, proceeding by tarmac (boring), Smeeckley Wood and Hewetts Bank in greatly improved weather, we hit tarmac again and shortly encountered our esteemed President Nigel and Janet going, as planned, in the opposite direction. Doing a smart about turn they joined on as we plodded down the minor road to the A 621 admiring orchids and other flora along the way.

On the moor approaching Birchen we deviated from the low-level path, (as guide book) to fight vegetation up to the top of the crag where, as we stopped for lunch, as if out of nowhere, Colin and Uschi appeared asking what had kept us!



*The last miles of the last stage of the P.D.B.W. on East Moor. Photo Peter Amour.*



Douglas Gardiner, Chris Wilson, Jan Wilson, Paul Gardiner, Angela Milne, Sue Todd, Gill Radcliffe, Nigel Briggs, Peter Amour, Nicola Bashforth, John Gwyther, Uschi Hobday, Chris Radcliffe, Janet Briggs, Colin Hobday, John Green

Descending steeply to the Robin Hood, and with all finally seated, my head count was 17. Orders were shouted to a very patient table server and drinks, courtesy of Jack Ashcroft and A.N. Other, were enjoyed in an hour of banter and creeping green things! Eventually the cream tea team set off to prepare a spread at HL and the rest followed shortly after. Full marks to Stuart and Sue for plates full of calories and fresh fruit eaten outside to round off a very satisfying end to the PDBW. Thank you everyone for coming. Rumours that Stuart is planning to do the walk again in reverse have not yet been confirmed.....

Here follow some (interesting or boring depending on your point of view) statistics courtesy of Stuart and Radders: PDBW started 26.11.17. Distance 220 miles. Ascent more than 10,000 metres. Official stages 20. No. of Leaders 15. No. of Participants 85. Bent Screw nomination: Radders and Gill, doing a catch-up stage twice, having left the keys to shuffle car 1 in shuffle car 2.



## Reflections

Here are some reflections of participants once the whole project of the boundary walk had been completed. Not quite “Tripadvisor” but there are similarities...

### **Paul Gardiner:**

Just a few thoughts, maybe not fodder for an article but this is how it grabbed me. The abiding memory was that I soon found out that I was no longer up with the pace! Something that manifested itself more and more as the stages rolled on. Of course, completion took several years so one obviously aged. I enjoyed the first few stages, particularly in the snow going from Rowsley to Winster but then a lengthy course of radiotherapy intervened so that I missed a few sections. On resumption, only three days after my final dose, we left Wildboarclough and went straight up Shutlingsloe which I found a severe test. It was somewhere on this stage, high on a moor that, in an unguarded moment, I found myself offering to lead the final stage, whenever that might be. The section from Marsden to Holme covered very interesting ground with an overnight camp on Saturday night. On Radder’s penultimate stage, much delayed by Covid, I managed one of my tumbles and was tended by Oread Angels. The final section was memorable for the number of ways people arrived at the start, some making it a circular walk. The passage along this section being the one occasion when I could lead off at my own pace with everyone else trailing behind!!

### **Colin Hobday:**

We only managed about half of the walk due to health problems but did complete the final stage at our own pace meeting up with the group near Birchens, finishing at the Robin Hood for an enjoyable pint before going on to Heathy Lea for further refreshments. Sadly, I will not be completing the missing stages as age caught up with me but many happy memories meeting different members on various stages of the walk. The logistics of organising cars which always worked out despite spending time in some pubs,

Memories that come to mind are walking on the High Peak trail in a blizzard to Gotham car park, the pouring rain on the Morridge and staying at a farm house. Also, many new footpaths in Staffordshire and Cheshire - an area we tend not to visit. Favourite sections - they were all enjoyable each section having its own caricature with the challenge of finding the footpath on new ground.

### **Jan and Chris Wilson:**

Chris and I thoroughly enjoyed the sections of the Peak District Boundary walk we completed with the Oread and I have used parts of some sections as

the basis for subsequent walks I have led. The walk introduced us to areas of the Peak which we had not really explored in any great detail. Chris's favourite section was the Bollington to Whaley Bridge route which we led. It has plenty to commend it with views, Lyme Park, moorland and industrial heritage. Also we got a lovely sunny cold day and a good group of reprobates to share the joy. As a close second he is with me when I say it's the wilder moorland particularly in the North that fills us with joy. The sections from Greenfield around to Bradfield have so much grandeur and austere beauty you can't fail to find them really awe-inspiring. The night in the Greenfield bunkhouse with the shared meal was also a real highlight as was the final section back to Heathy Lea. Hats off to the Elderly Sage for leading that last day and to the organisers for yet another great cake stop.

Both Chris's and my abiding memories were the company and the craic. Completing a long day sometimes tired and or wet and hungry whilst still laughing with the team has to be one of the most fun experiences in life. We have been associated with the Oread for more than forty years and it was such a joy to share the walks with old friends and also to meet members we hadn't spent a great deal of time with and chew the fat. There is a humungous amount of knowledge wit and wisdom in the club. Soggy and boggy ground was also high on the memory list particularly some of the steep hillsides in the North where it seems an impossible amount of water is retained by the landscape.

Our lack of awareness of the sheer range and type of terrain together with the number and variety of cakes to be had came as a nice surprise for both of us. Needless to say we will be visiting both the places and cafes again in the future. We have no firm plan to complete the sections we sadly missed but I guess we probably will one day and we will certainly participate in any future long-distance projects.

### **Nigel Briggs:**

My abiding memory is that of a project which seem to appeal to a wide cross-section of the membership. I recall getting some big turn outs and some of the walks being very well supported. Having it as a project seemed to create more of a 'buzz' than day walks. As it went around the Peak you got people dipping into sections that were convenient to them along with those doing the whole walk. I did not take part in all the sections, to be honest we may not have been on many (about 5). I do not have a favourite as such. I did enjoy going through areas I was familiar with but on very different paths to those I had used before - going near Harborough Rocks was one such area. I kept working out where I was but the route was far from obvious to me. I also enjoyed the walking at the top (North) end of the Peak, not an area I am familiar with.

No real surprises except maybe how swept up in the whole project some folk got! We have not done any of the walk since completion. Cream tea at Heathy Lea seemed a very fitting finale! I have no intention of doing the



whole thing at the moment, now the idea of riding round (following Radder's route) in one has crossed my mind but nothing more than a momentary thought which was soon corrected!

All in all a good project that captured folks imagination, thank you for making it happen.

**Peter Amour:**

The whole event was rewarding, apart from a catch-up on the Winster - Minninglow stage, which I did with my sister's partner Tom in torrential rain. The most memorable stage for me was one of the out and back ones: Millthorpe - Ringinglow - Millthorpe. I arrived at Ringinglow to hear the very clear tones of Ms Leach addressing her companions, I stated that she was audible on the moor, to which she cheerfully responded with "It's my teacher voice!"

Later, while having a coffee stop at the south end of Blacka Moor I made some innocent comment which could be construed in various ways. Without even a pause Paul Gardiner delivered a high-speed put-down of me, which had all around howling with laughter, including me! I only wish I could recall the content.

Chris Radcliffe provided us with a good stage and informed us about the ancient way-stoop (early mile stone) on Big Moor, and how to make use of them. A good day, culminated by me enjoying a visit to veteran member Jack Ashcroft at his home.

**Pippa Leach:**

What an excellent quest for Oreads, to circumnavigate our own 'back yard' pulling together much-loved areas, in a different, exciting and new way, but also possibly taking some to parts of the Peak hitherto unexplored. We had the challenge of shuttles during Covid, weekends away, storm-force winds. Some linear walks were turned into circular walks, if the logistics permitted. Clearly, logistically, it was not an easy thing to organise. People dipped in and out, some determined to complete the whole thing and others quite content to just come along for the day. I'm sure it also provided opportunities for Oreads to lead a walk (with some arm twisting) if they hadn't done so before.

From my point of view, I was a bit of a late starter. However, the missed legs gave me a focus, once Covid restrictions began to lift. I managed many of my missed sections with a bike, to get back to the start, or with my friend Rachel. I loved the sociable atmosphere on the walks, a little mini-adventure. Sadly, I also missed the very last leg, as I had departed for Scotland. I did catch up later though - I couldn't leave unfinished business!

**John Green:**

Abiding memories of the walk - The company of kindred spirits all up for a challenge. Achieving a goal that made it all worth it. If it had been done alone it would not be as good as it was with the Oread members for company.

My favourite sections were the northern part where we made it a weekend meet. Walking in country that was new to me and where I enjoyed the discovery of new places including breweries. The atmosphere on those occasions was really great, almost like being on an expedition.

Big surprise - Paul Gardiner being still able to cover the distance needed at his age. Gives all us oldies hope.

I missed a couple of stages in the early days but did them as soon as I could myself. They were not as good as the club sections.

I honestly think this was one of the club's real win-win projects as it gave everyone an objective they needed to work for, but were capable of doing. We had all types of weather conditions and it's fair to say that on completion you really felt you had achieved something well worthwhile. The worst part was the "Bullstones" section which in my opinion did not have the flow that the other sections had. I did my own thing on this bit so I did the lot as one walk.

**Sue Todd:**

My abiding memories were the weekend of the two days at the Bunk House in Greenfield. Battling through the high winds and blizzards. The great community evening meal on the Saturday. The slug on the cake-cover and having to clean everything we used in the kitchen! The second weekend away on a waterlogged campsite and getting the communal pub meal in just before Covid lock-down!

My favourite sections were:

- a. John Green's section. It was a high-level walk in lovely countryside but we could still see the conurbations of Manchester and beyond.
- b. The Marsden section, on the high moors of the Dark Peak and following the water channels serving the dark satanic mills of the industrial revolution.
- c. Colin Hobday's section that went from Peak Forest and brought us on to Buxton golf course, from an amazing wilderness with lakes. That was a beautiful warm sunny day.

The biggest surprises were:

- a. The varied landscape generally.
- b. How many areas I had never walked in over 50 years of living in Derbyshire.



- c. The raw beauty of the Dark Peak.
- d. How near and yet so far from Manchester and its environs.

I missed the section from Winster due to illness when it was walked in bitterly cold February weather - the Beast from the East. I have now completed the whole walk.

It's made me appreciate what a stunning landscape we have access to and on our own doorstep. I was inspired that our oldest member, Paul Gardiner, saw it through and lead the last stage, despite a delay through Covid restrictions, and we finished off with a suitable celebration at the Heathy Lea, the Club hut. It felt to me quite an achievement.

### **Chris Radcliffe:**

The initiative to walk the whole of the PDBW starting and finishing at Heathy Lea captured the imagination of many members of the Oread and Gill and I were pleased to complete the walk, albeit after several catch up days.

We were there at the beginning – the first section from Heathy Lea to Rowsley and back via the Heritage Way, on November 26, 2017 and we were there for the finishing walk from Millthorpe to Heathy Lea on July 24, 2021. It seems remarkable how long it took to complete the walk, in part because the scheduled Oread meets avoided the summer months and of course the impact of the pandemic.

*(Chris has written more expansive reflections and - at his request - these will be published separately).*

### **Stuart Firth:**

I have many long-lasting and delightful memories of the Peak District Boundary Walk project. First of all, it was great that so many members bought into the idea and contributed to its execution in many different ways. All the leaders put their own stamp on their sections and the participants made it all a fun experience. At several points we even had three generations of the same family - the Gardiners.

The terrain covered was remarkable ranging from isolated hidden valleys, through industrial archaeology to extensive wilderness views over neighbouring counties. There was a fascinating blend of familiar territory and new ground - even within our own backyard.

Pubs, cafes, cakes, communal meals and accommodation added to the variety as did the wide range of weather conditions - generally surprisingly favourable.

Although the logistics were a challenge, we did make use of public transport where feasible and car-sharing encouraged the strong community spirit. Despite the Covid pandemic and the extended timescale - nearly four years to walk 190 miles - people sustained an interest throughout.

So - a final thank you to all who came and saw and conquered. See you on the next walk...

### **Appendix:**

My working plan which details sections, leaders and attendees is embodied in a spreadsheet published separately.