

PROJECT CLOSING REPORT – Peak District Boundary Walk Launch Event

1. OVERVIEW

Friends of the Peak District (FoPD) asked us to organise an event to promote the opening of a new circular walk around the Peak District National Park.

This brand new long distance walk encircles the Peak District National Park. It is 190 miles long, divided into 20 stages. We believe it is the only walk in the UK that completes a full circle around the perimeter of a national park. It starts and finishes in Buxton, by the Market Cross.

2. DETAIL OF WHAT TOOK PLACE

A project team was set up in March to plan for a Grand Opening event on Saturday 17th June. The date was set by FoPD, to suit the availability of their keynote speaker, Emma Bridgewater, President of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

In addition to Town Team members, the project team included representatives from HPBC, FoPD, Buxton Civic Association (BCA) and Buxton Markets CIC.

The key elements of the event were:

- Invitations extended to 'civic dignitaries' from all the districts and boroughs that the walk passes through; this was done in collaboration with HPBC
- Invitations extended to other VIPs from other bodies eg National Park, CPRE etc and to local community groups; this was done in collaboration with FoPD
- Teams of walkers who walked all twenty stages of the route on the day, co-ordinated by FoPD and Buxton Ramblers Club; parish councils were involved at many of the stages
- Monitoring of the progress of the walkers from the market place, with photographs sent in by Twitter, Facebook and other means; this was done in collaboration with BCA and FoPD
- An exhibition of the history of walking in the Peak District, provided by BCA, tying the event in to National Civic Day
- An extended market, with a focus on outdoor pursuits, arranged jointly with Buxton Markets
- Provision of a 'Walkers Pack up Lunch' through generous donations from Buxton food suppliers and Buxton Water
- Involvement from Marstons Brewery, who as well as sponsoring the walk itself, provided a beer tent with free beer for the walkers at the end of the day
- Recognition of the involvement of Ethel and Gerald Haythornthwaite in devising the park and its boundary and forming FoPD, by recruiting a horse and rider to lead the walkers out of Buxton
- Musical entertainment through the day, organised by D&J Karaoke, who also provided the PA kit
- Selling tickets for a raffle arranged by FoPD, to raise funds for a memorial plaque
- Heavy promotion of the event via the press, specialist magazines, radio interviews, fliers, posters and social media

The timing of the event was as follows:

- 9.00 Extended Buxton Market opened with specialist equipment suppliers, artificial cave and other activities, outdoor based voluntary groups, stalls selling food and drink.
- 9.45 Introduction to the event and interview with FoPD, welcome to special guests and launch of the official guidebook: 'The Peak District Boundary Walk'.
- 10.00 Over 200 walkers set off to cover all 20 stages of the route. From Buxton 23 walkers were led by Sally-Anne Baroudi on her horse, Lottie.
- 12.00 The Grand Opening Ceremony and Civic Reception, hosted by High Peak Mayor Councillor Matthew Stone, MC'd by Colin Sykes, former Environment Correspondent for BBC and formally opened by Emma Bridgewater, President of CPRE. This was attended by 18 civic dignitaries from several boroughs and districts (see Appended list), 14 national and regional VIPs, 6 Borough and County Council officers as well as 28 representatives of local community organisations. This was followed by the 'Walkers Pack-up' picnic lunch.
- 18.00 Formal congratulations and Welcome to the Walkers who came back to Buxton after completing their stage of the route. Drawing the winning tickets in the raffle.

The first half of the day was reasonably well attended, with families enjoying the various activities on offer. After the civic reception and picnic lunch however, attendance dropped off significantly, possibly because it was a very hot day (29 deg C on Buxton Market Place!); as a result many of the food

traders pack up and left early. Around 80 walkers did congregate for the 6pm Welcome but did not stay on after it.

3. ASSESSMENT AGAINST AIMS AND SUCCESS CRITERIA

The measurable success criteria of the project were as follows:

- **To organise a successful launch of the new Peak District Boundary Walk.**
Achieved. Over 400 people were involved either as walkers or participants on Buxton Market Place in the three main events. FoPD were very pleased with how it went and feedback from the invited guests and other participants was all positive (see Appendix 1).
- **To promote Buxton as a destination by having the walk start and finish there.**
Achieved. The official guidebook promotes Buxton as the start and finish and features a photo of Buxton on the cover. Several national publications mentioned the event in articles promoting the Walk: a five page piece in the June edition of the Great Outdoors mentioned Buxton several times and specified it as the start and finish; an eight page piece in June Country Walking stated Buxton Town Hall as the beginning and end of the Walk and promoted the Grand Opening on Buxton Market Place on 17th June. Negotiations are taking place to erect a plaque on the Town Hall, indicating the Market Place as the start and finish point.
- **To raise the profile of Buxton Market Place as a key section of 'Main Street'.**
Achieved to some extent. We did fill the whole of the market place, the first time we have done this other than for the Spring Fair. Footfall however was lower than we had hoped.
- **To raise the profile of Buxton Town Team.**
Achieved. A great deal of publicity material was distributed across the Peak District and beyond. There was good press coverage over the planning period, and a very good response to the large number of posts on Facebook and Twitter. The first 'countdown' post on the BTT Facebook page on 27th May reached 15,000 people with over a 1000 people reacting or responding. Both High Peak Radio and Radio Derby covered it, with six radio broadcasts between them.

4. ANY FURTHER BENEFITS

- We have strengthened relationships between the Town Team and FoPD.
- We were able to promote a number of local businesses who donated items for the Pack-up Lunch.
- The involvement of new members who had not been involved in a Town Team project before.
- Benefit to Buxton Markets CIC by way of additional promotion, and a modest income from providing market stalls and space.

5. COSTS

The budgeted cost of the project was £250.

Income from stallholders totalled £305, of which £145 was passed through to Buxton Markets.

Other expenditure was £156.79 for posters (A4 and A1) and £13.98 for labels for the picnic bags.

The overall cost of the project therefore was £10.77.

6. LEARNING POINTS FOR THE FUTURE

Timing of the Event: We were always aware that June may not be the best month to organise a one off event as so many other things are happening. On 17th June, Eroica, a three day event, was taking place 10 miles to the south and Chapel Carnival 8 miles to the north, as well as many other events, weddings etc. This may have contributed to the lower than anticipated attendance at our event.

Climbing Wall: Buxton & Leek College were booked in but had to cancel only a couple of days before the event. Enquiries through various contacts identified a number of other walls in the local area that we had not known about before; none were available at such short notice, but their contact details have been added to the data base for future events.

Market Place Parking: We put up a very large number of laminated hi-viz signs around both halves of the market place, as well as putting notes on the windscreens of all the cars parked there the previous weekend; we were very pleased (and relieved) to find only one car parked at 6am on the Saturday morning.

Project Team and Meetings: Small sub-groups were set up with responsibility for organising specific aspects of the day, this worked well. Regular meetings were held and notes sent out to all involved; an attempt was made to contain meetings to one hour, which was pretty successful right up until the final planning meetings.

APPENDIX 1 - COMMENTS RECEIVED AFTER THE EVENT

We just wanted to say what a brilliant initiative the Boundary Walk is. Compliments to everyone who was involved in producing the book and the organisation of yesterday's inauguration. Although we couldn't take part yesterday because of family commitments we did join the Friends of the Peak District and have been reading the guide book. It's extremely good - well laid out, clear instructions and maps and interesting info. We are looking forward to a good summer's walking in that, although we are local, there are lots of routes we've never walked. Our French visitors had a wonderful day and feel that they had a great introduction to the Peak District. So well done and thank you to you and the team.

Best wishes,
Dell and Les Heaton

What a magnificent day yesterday - it will long live in my memory as being a very special day in so many ways. The organisation and also 'the extras', Julie were a credit to you: thoroughly excellent. The marvellous weather was a bonus, which added to the enjoyment and perfection of the day. Thank you for everything. I am enjoying the PDBW book and planning when to do my next route of the remaining 19 walks.

John was an excellent leader who facilitated my achieving completion of Walk 1: Buxton to Peak Forest, thanks to an excellent choice of pace AND allowing several breaks in the heat to rehydrate as necessary and also allowing those of interested in the wild flowers time to look-up information about them and appreciate the surroundings on such a beautiful walk. The only disappointment was the lack of refreshment facilities at Peak Forest - it is so unusual to find a village with no tearoom [and by the time we arrived the pub was closed from 3.00pm]. Thank goodness for the stand-pipe in the churchyard!

The drinks and food vouchers were a valuable bonus and greatly appreciated - our meal in the Kings Head was good AND most convivial: a splendid conclusion to a wonderful day.

The Buxton Rambling Club members were very friendly and welcoming and the French couple were a delight. I had stayed-over in Buxton on Friday night, I found the nearby Roseleigh Guest House to be excellent value and comfort and can thoroughly recommend it to anyone wanting B & B in Buxton - overlooking the lake of the Pavilion Gardens.

Thank you again and congratulations to all concerned with the preparation for the very special inaugural day of the PDBW, the route[s] and the PDBW itself AND the book.

Kind regards,
Kath.

Yesterdays event went according to plan with everything being in place by 0815. The day appeared to be slow probably due to the very hot weather. By 1500 the decision was made to dis-assemble the cave ready for pickup at 1600. Many thanks to everyone who did a super job in very hot conditions. Big thanks to Nick for delivery and pickup of the cave. Andy thinks we collected about 45 pounds. We flew the flag and some children had some good fun using the cave.

Mick

On behalf of Buxton Mountain Rescue Team I just want to say Thank You for the invitation to the official opening of the Boundary Walk.

The event seemed to go off very smoothly and it was certainly good weather. Apologies for the team disappearing mid afternoon, we received a call-out to a collapsed gentleman in Deep Dale.

Again many thanks for your support.

P.S. (I bought the book and I look forward to reading it!.)

Many Thanks for all your hard work in organising the Peak District Boundary Walk event on Saturday and what beautiful weather! Everything ran really well and the lunch pack was lovely.

Best Wishes

Joanne Hibbert, The Buxton Group Chair

Dear Julie

Many thanks for the kind invitation and many congratulations to you, Tina, Janet and the team for organising such an excellent launch. Well done all

Kind regards

James

APPENDIX 1 - CIVIC GUESTS ATTENDING THE GRAND OPENING ON 17TH JUNE

VIP Attendees at 10am:

Derbyshire Police and Crime Commissioner	Hardyal Dhindsa
MP for High Peak	Ruth George
Buxton Crescent & Thermal Spa Co	James Berresford
Editor of the Guidebook	Andrew McCloy

VIP Attendees At 12 Noon:

Title	Name	Consort
Mayor of the High Peak	Councillor Matthew Stone	
Deputy Lieutenant	Mrs. Louise Potter	
Chairman of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	Councillor Ben Emery	Ms Zoe Hill
Deputy Mayor of Rotherham	Councillor Alan Buckley	Mayoress, Mrs. Sandra Buckley
Mayor of East Staffordshire Borough Council	Councillor Simon Gaskin	Mayoress, Mrs Jane Gaskin
Mayor of Oldham	Councillor Shadab Qumer	Mayoress, Mrs Sobia Arshi
Mayor of Cheshire East	Councillor Arthur Moran	Mayoress, Mrs Carole Thomas
Vice Chair Bolsover District Council	Councillor Rita Turner	Mrs Diana Munro
Mayor of The Borough of Amber Valley	Councillor David Wilson	
Civic Mayor Elect of Tameside	Councillor Joyce Bowerman	Mr Fred Bowerman
Councillor, DCC & HPBC	Linda Grooby	
President Campaign to Protect Rural England	Emma Bridgewater	
Chief Executive Peak District National Park Authority	Sarah Fowler	
Director: Friends of the Peak District	Andy Tickle	
Friends of the Peak District	Brian Couzins	