

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



FREE TO MEMBERS

No. 11 SPRING 2004

Straight From the Horse's Mouth

Hello everyone.....

A very belated happy new year to you all. Things are happening. We are making a difference. As you all know, we have spent the last 3 years standing on our hind legs flagging up all the key issues on our riding network. We now feel the County Council are at last on message and are working more in partnership with us instead of stonewalling us. (More detail of what's been happening in this Horse Around). We are making sure your voice is heard at every opportunity; whether it be at county council or parish council level or being consulted on AONB Management Plans or Highways Agency on crossing point schemes.

For those of you who are not directly BHS members, I can report that the BHS now has an All-Party Parliamentary Committee Group at Westminster. This has given us a voice at the heart of government – and over 200 MPs are expressing interest in, and support for, the Society's work. The BHS will be briefing them on matters of policy. The BHS is the horse industry adviser to Defra and have a new important role advising government. There is now a team of Civil Servants dedicated to the horse – the Horse Industry Team. (Maybe now is a good time to contemplate BHS membership as they do seem to be representing the ordinary rider at the highest level now.)

I am also pleased to say that the horse hikes have been well supported. The Christmas Cracker ride took place on a lovely sunny day, if a bit cool and breezy. Now becoming something of a tradition for us, we called in at 3 different 'watering holes' – a very sociable ride. Well we do want to support local businesses don't we!! The away ride held on The Great Flat Lode was also an excellent event – well attended and in perfect weather. I'm sure it has inspired some riders to box up and go and explore the trail and area for themselves.

Finally, the PAROW paths officer is now appointed and has started work. I'm sure when called on, members will be keen and enthusiastic to lend a helping hand on the projects requiring volunteers.

In This Issue:

AGM 24th March

Horse Hike Programme

PAROW – Penwith Access Forum Update

Horse Hike Reports

Good and Bad News (more good than bad)

WPBA Review

And MORE

AGM 2004

**AT THE YACHT INN, PENZANCE ON
Wednesday 24 MARCH AT 7.30 pm.**

**and a talk by
RONI WHITTAKER
Equine Body Worker**

We can expect a fascinating and interesting evening on the work she does, treating back problems and all aspects of physiotherapy for horses.



She said "Hold Straight in a Warm Compress"

WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

Chairman: Adrian Bigg, Secretary: Margaret Bigg,

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Horse Hike on The Great Flat Lode

After all the wind and rain of early January, it was a relief when our group of 10 riders met on the morning of Sunday 18 January to find that the weather had turned and the start to the day was bright and sunny with just a hint of frost.

Although the Great Flat Lode Trail was opened some 3 years ago, I had not heard of it until recently when Beverley and Jasmine Jenkin suggested we share transport and try a horse hike somewhere new. We parked the lorry in South Wheal Francis car park which is large enough to accommodate several vehicles and met our fellow riders. Adrian and Margaret's mounts were both keen to get going with Adrian doing 2 loops of the car park with one foot in the stirrup meeting Margaret going in the opposite direction on the end of her pony's lead rope!

We left the car park at a brisk walk, and followed the track leading to an old tramway bridge which passes under a road. Mounting blocks are provided at either end of the tunnel and we found it best to dismount and walk through as the tunnel is quite low and long. The track then leads past Wheal Buller Riding School where there are loose horses on the path. They gave us no trouble and are obviously used to other horses and riders passing through. This part of the track is usable by courtesy of the riding school, so we walked through, easily mastering the horse friendly gates at either end.

We then found ourselves on a quiet stretch of road before crossing a busier main road onto a bridleway track that heads towards Lanner. This is mainly an old tramway ending in part of a disused railway track and a quiet lane. There are some excellent opportunities to have long canters along here but due to the fact that this was the first sunny day in weeks, there were many other riders out as well as walkers which meant that we kept a steady pace staying mainly in walk and trot.

After completing a loop, we retraced the path back through the tunnel and skirted the car park finding ourselves in a lane at Treskillard leading onto a bridleway heading in the opposite direction. We did manage to have some longer canters here and there are some lovely views of the surrounding countryside; at one point we could see St Ives. We rode through a wooded area and onto a farm track bridleway, passing thorough a small collection of cottages at Bolenowe. We were provided with a variety of scenery on this ride, making it an excellent opportunity to investigate new pastures. We totalled about 8 miles mainly off road on good surfaces, which were mostly dry, even after all the rain. Once back at the car park, we had a picnic lunch before heading home.

Many thanks to Margaret and Adrian for planning the route and to Beverley for organising our transport.

Sue Small

Membership Renewal Time!

It's that time of year again subs are now due. Enclosed with this edition of Horse Around is your membership renewal form. Some of you have recently joined us and are paid up members to April 05, but for the majority of you SUBS ARE DUE. Please renew promptly, as it makes our job so much easier. You can post it to me now or pay on the AGM night. I like to get subs in through the post (less hassle!) but I'm happy to take them at the AGM. We do hope you will come along and continue to support us.

Your committee have recommended that subscriptions are increased by 50p this year. This will be ratified or otherwise at the AGM. Our subscriptions at £3.50 for senior membership will still be very low compared with the BHS recommended minimum of £5.

Spring 2004

Programme of Horse Hikes

We have a packed schedule of events for your diary.

Organiser
or Contact

	Nancludra	14 th March	M & A
	Gwinear	20 th or 21 st March	M & A
	St Just	27/28 March	Amanda
	Gwinear Assoc.	4 April Sponsored Ride	George 01736 850878
	Drift	17/18 April	M & A
	Poldice Valley	24/25 April	M & A
	Goldsithney	8/9 May	Alison
	Tehidy Woods	15/16 May	M & A
	Sponsored Ride. Rosevidney.	23 May	Verity 01736 740224
	Chapel Carn Brea	5/6 June	Amanda
	Ludgvan	12/13 June	Charlie
	St Just	26/27 June	Sue & Howard

Always check with the organiser or ourselves a few days before. We do need to have an idea of likely attendance, and the exact date will be determined by the interest in the ride and/or weather. Please phone us early to find out more about these rides.

Margaret and Adrian Tel: 795098 Amanda 01736 871876
Alison 763223 Charlie 368610 Sue & Howard 788125

Most Horse Hikes will find a suitable pub for a lunch stop.

Hikes are ridden at your own risk.
BHS Affiliation covers our members for Public Liability Insurance on organised rides.

Juniors on Horse Hikes



All juniors must be accompanied by a responsible parent or guardian who can look after them and their safety on the ride, and can vouch for their riding competence.

If you have a good idea for a Horse Hike or wish to organise one, do please let us know!

Horse Hike Grading

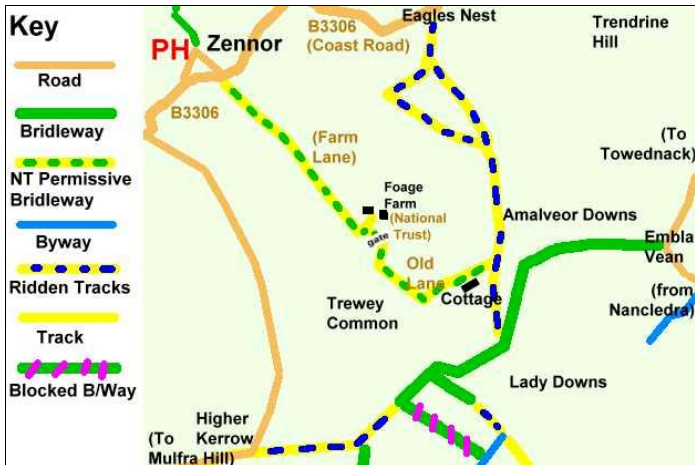
Our grading scheme for horse hikes has proved very successful. It gives a guide to the likely speed and pace of the ride. However if you do fancy a particular ride but feel the pace or distance may not suit you, please phone the organiser early because rides may be tailored to suit those interested.

We mark our rides as follows:

-  Easy Ride at walk or easy trot with maybe the option of a canter or two.
-  Rides with a reasonable amount of trotting and canters where the terrain is suitable.

Good News and Bad News

The Good News – National Trust Permissive Bridleway to Zennor



The National Trust have now cleared the old lane leading from Foage Farm, Zennor up to the moors. The new permissive bridleway runs around the perimeter of Foage Farm and leads up onto the moor at Lady Downs. This path would have been opened for us earlier, but the wreck of the Mulheim at Lands End took up their time and manpower policing the cliff land overlooking the wreck site. Discrete route signs will be put up soon.

Huge thanks go to our local National Trust team.

The path can be found from the moor running in front of the isolated cottage. From Zennor follow the track to Foage Farm and turn right through a gate/stile shortly before you reach Foage Farm. There are some gates on the route and part of the old lane is a bit boggy and stoney but rideable. It provides good access from the moors to the Miner's Arms at Zennor for pub lunch.

The Bad News

The Cornwall Wildlife Trust have now refused to reopen the track around the edge of their reserve at Baker's Pit, Nancledra. This goes back on their previous agreement in principle to do so. Reopening the old lane to horses would have provided lovely views across their reserve and have given access to the bridleway around Castle-an Dinas.

Horses would 'disturb the wildlife' and 'damage the track' are the weak reasons given. The Wildlife Trust seems to be one countryside organisation that has not yet adopted a positive policy on equine access. We will continue to lobby them and to monitor their performance. We would recommend all riders to do the same.

Further Good News

Goonhilly Downs – The Lizard's Best Kept Secret?

Last Autumn, Adrian and I set out to the Lizard to explore, on mountain bikes, the bridleways which run over Goonhilly Downs. We were surprised to discover that English Nature, have done sterling work on marking out the existing bridleways, creating new connections and a new signed 6 mile circular bridle route on their heathland reserve.

They have installed new horse-friendly gates so that access is more obvious. Basically, they have mowed wide riding strips in the open heathland. They are also using ponies to graze and mange the habitat.

This important nature reserve is the seasonal home to many ground-nesting birds and small mammals. Therefore riders should stay on the designated paths.

The new wide mown tracks create fire-breaks to help protect the reserve. (This is something WPBA has been advocating on local moorland – good fire-breaks to help contain gorse fires. By us riding fire-breaks, it helps to maintain them by keeping back vegetation.)

When we visited, it was very dry, but the area has potential for many boggy sections and wetland areas. There was evidence of moorland ponies grazing. (Sadly the Goonhilly pony became extinct a long time ago.)

We haven't completely sussed out a full ride yet, but hope to get Goonhilly Downs on our horse hike programme in the future. We estimate there are 8 miles of trackways in the area.

Anyone wishing to explore the reserve can park at either 1 or 2 obscure car parks located past the Goonhilly Earth station on the right hand side of the B3293. There is room enough for a box or trailer. Best to take your dog out there for a walk first to check it out. The warden says more work needs to be done to finish their access project. Gold stars to English Nature!

Footnote: Mountain bikers, don't get too excited – the terrain is no good for biking apart from one track. It can be a dead slow slog stand-up hard grind on the peddles. We won't bike it again. However, it's superb for horse-riding.

WPBA Review

We have come along way since we started up in April 2001 We have grown in confidence in tackling issues as we have gained more knowledge in how the County Council works or doesn't work as the case may be. The County does have limited resources, because your County Councillors see the obligations for the maintenance of out paths and bridleways as low priority compared to Social Services, Education and Roads. We have moved horse riding and bridleways a lot further up the agenda at County Hall and are continuing to forge a working partnership with the County and all who have an interest in our bridleways. Our local Forum PAROW is one example of this which is yielding visible results.

- We have been instrumental in setting up PAROW and are a key player.
- We have contacted and continue to work with many Parish Councils.
- We have been instrumental in getting all remaining Penwith parishes to join the Local Maintenance Partnership scheme and we are optimistic that Paul PC will join this spring.
- We are sharing information on our bridleways with the CC to enable best results to be achieved with available resources.
- The National Trust are providing horse paths where practical and consulting us on working proposals.
- We are lobbying and giving input into the CC RoW Improvement Plan.
- We are at last seeing some new routes opened.
- We continue to flag up horsey issues so that no-one can ride roughshod over us or drive a coach and horses through our aims.
- We are starting to succeed.

Where do we go from here?

Now that we have completed our Ridden Routes survey of West Penwith, we will be encouraging the CC to find an efficient way of getting the unrecorded ridden routes onto the definitive map. Currently the only process open to us is to put forward Modification Orders with witnesses of use. This is a difficult and costly process (for the CC). We are going to consult with established riders in each area of our district to determine how many of our routes could feasibly be put forward; this potentially is well over 100 paths. This will focus the attention of the CC on the problems we face and we will then determine the best strategy.

We will continue to work to protect your riding interests but we need you to be our eyes and ears. We need to be alert to problems and not accept blockages and closures without challenging them. We are also making sure horse riders are included and considered in any 'grand plan' leisure schemes.

Some Facts from our Ridden Routes survey:

In West Penwith there are

- 35 miles of usable meaningful definitive bridleway
- 55 miles of ridden paths and tracks that are NOT recorded on the definitive map as bridleways. These can be closed to us at any time!
- The 55 miles are spread over 130 different paths

Reopening of Bridleway No. 13 Paul

Paul 13 runs through the woods from opposite Lamorna Pottery. Work is now commencing to reopen with new gate and bridge. This work is a joint venture between WPBA, PAROW and the CC. See report on last page.

Annual General Meeting 24th March

As usual our AGM will be at the Yacht Inn (opposite Jubilee Pool). This year we have a talk by Equine Body Worker Roni Whittaker. Non-members are welcome but will be asked to join us.

It should be a very good evening with a chance also to meet other members for a good chat.

We will have our riding maps of Penwith available and Melanie will be taking orders for our excellent range of Association Sweat Shirts, T-Shirts, polo Shirts and Fleeces. All at very reasonable prices. (Melanie will also take orders directly, Tel 710839)

Riding Maps of Penwith/Kerrier

We have available maps in choice of two scales. A3 in size (2.5 miles per inch), or A4 size (1.75 miles per inch). The maps are available as follows:

- No 1 Sennen and St Leven
- No 2 St Just
- No 3 St Buryan and Paul
- No 4 Sancreed
- No 5 Madron
- No 6 Morvah and Zennor
- No 7 Towednack and St Ives
- No 8 Ludgvan
- No 9 St Hilary, Marazion, Perranuthnoe, Germoe
- No 10 St Erth and St Hilary
- No 11 Breage and Germoe (nearly complete)
- No 12 Crowan (nearly complete)
- No 13 Gwinear (nearly complete)
- No 14 Wendron (nearly complete)

The maps cover adjacent parts of neighbouring parishes and come with a sheet of notes. These maps are available at a nominal cost of only £1 A3 (50p A4) each to cover production costs etc. Full set 10 A4 with notes for £4.50 including postage. Any three A3 maps with notes £2.50 including postage. Please send cheque, coins or stamps with your order to Adrian at Trevesa Farm. Please add 25p for postage of small numbers.

Ride UK Project

We have fully documented the "Tinnerns Way" section from Lands End to Canonstow and are going to proceed in due course to document the remaining sections to the Devon Border.

The Tinnerns Way Section is rideable but it needs improvement in many places and designating as a bridleway through its length.

We see the Ride UK project as the spinal route through Cornwall. Ultimately building in connecting spurs and circular routes and bringing them up to a reasonable standard and on to the definitive map.

We are currently working with the County Council and a consultant to make a bid for Objective One funding for the project. The County Council is very keen to see the project succeed. Obtaining external funding will be key to making it all happen.

Christmas Cracker Ride

Our annual Xmas Cracker Ride was well supported. The sun was shining when 15 members, many with their horses adorned with tinsel or 'antlers', set off from St. Just Rugby Club. We rode up 'No Go By' Hill and soon turned off to Carnyorth Common, then across Trewellard Common. The horses were in fine spirits and anxious to get to our first watering hole which was the North Inn at Higher Boscaswell.

All the horses stood quietly by the well-kept front lawn and garden except for Roana, who simply could not resist doing a bit of 'gardening' and dropping a mouthful of grass into Margaret's beer! We mounted up and trotted the short distance up the road to Trewellard for lunch at the Trewellard Arms Hotel. After chips all round, we then left down Levant Road for a change of scenery as we rode out to the cliffs past Botallack Head, then past The Crowns and up to Botallack. We stopped off at the Queens Arms for our final Christmas cheer before making for home by way of Truthwall Lane and back down to Tregeseal. Thank you to Amanda for organising and leading the ride and to St. Just Rugby Club for use of their carpark.



Margaret and Roana



Christmas Cheer at the North Inn

3 April Sponsored Ride – Organised by Gwinear & District Footpaths & Bridleways Association. It will be an 11 Mile ride. Meeting at the field opposite Wall Chapel, Gwinear village at 1.30 pm. Ring George Ansell for details 01736 850878 (Every rider donating £5.00 or more will get a two tier rosette.)

Some Handy Horsey Hints

To stretch and make more supple your horse's neck – show him a carrot and move it back towards his shoulder. Do this on both sides.

To make it easy to slip your riding boots on and off put on a pair of pop socks over your jodpurs.

Don't polish the seat of your saddle – you will make it slippery and more likely you will come off!

Ragwort

The Equine Welfare Bill promoted by John Greenway, MP has passed its third reading and report stage. It went to the House of Lords in the Autumn, and it is now on the Statute Book. A statutory Code of Practice came into force in February. This will mean all land, domestic as well as public and agricultural will be subject to control. In effect, everyone must now be vigilant in eliminating ragwort. Anyone can approach public bodies or householders and request them to control ragwort. DEFRA is more likely to take action with the law strengthened now the Bill is in effect for next season's growth..

Each plant can produce 150,000 airborne seeds and these can lie dormant for 20 years. The best course of action is to pull it up and burn it before it kills your horse.

Japanese Knotweed on Bridleways

The County Council wish to know where Japanese knotweed is growing. If you report it they will add it to their map of invasive species and they will come and treat it. They are also concerned with and want to hear about Ragwort, Himalian Balsm and Pennywort (a pond weed) which are also non-native and extremely invasive. If you have an infestation of Japanese Knotweed on your land, you can cut it down but you must burn it on site and thoroughly clean any tools you may use if you dig it up. Otherwise you can easily unintentionally spread it elsewhere. Alternatively, cut it at ground level and spray the hollow tubes with Roundup.

Last year, the CC were particularly targeting Knotweed on highways, this year they will be specifically tackling it on Rights of Way. So please do report infestations to them. Contact: James McFarlane, Vegetation Advisor, Scorrier, Redruth tel: 01872 327338 at Cornwall County Council, Highways Department.
Email: www.jmacfarlane@cornwall.gov.uk

The EU Strikes Again!

Thanks to the EU, livestock owners in the future are likely not to be able to buy medicines including wormers without a VET's prescription. The implications could be horrendous for our pockets. The NFU is calling for domestic legislation to reclassify such medicines to allow qualified agricultural merchants to continue to supply them.

In Brief:

Locals and Voluntary Organisations to have more impact on Rural Issues

Lord Haskins (government senior rural advisor) has just finished his review of rural policy and has presented his final report to the Prime Minister. The conclusion being a radical overhaul of rural policy is vital to give taxpayers better value for money and to reduce bureaucracy. In particular, rural people should be allowed to decide how Government money is spent and "The voluntary sector is going to be seen under my recommendations to be taking a more prominent role in delivery". Currently it is believed DEFRA is too centralised and preoccupied with farming. The future for the countryside needs active communities and "Vibrant voluntary organisations are better able to respond to vulnerable people's needs than the state and its agents". Under his proposals, spending decisions would be made by local people working to improve rural life.

Could this ultimately spell a better deal for us horse-riders?

How do you make a small fortune out of horses?
Start with a large one!

New Bridleways Groups

We have some good news for the protection of Cornwall's bridleways. Three new bridleways Associations have recently been formed:

The Breage & Germoe Bridleways Association was formed last November by local riders who could see their bridleways and ridden routes being under threat. The Carnmenellis and Area Association was formed only this February and the Lizard Peninsular Bridleways Association just before Xmas.

This is great news as our 'territory' really only goes as far as St. Hilary and Perranuthnoe parishes. Breage & Germoe are just inside Kerrier District. We would like to wish them every success.

Our other adjoining association is the Gwinear and District Association.

We are working very closely with all these associations. Only by all riders working together will we be able to preserve our bridleways and ridden routes.

If you know of any riders in those areas please let them know of these associations.

- Breage & Germoe Association
Secretary: Eileen Keeling, 01736 762868
- Carnmenellis and Area Association
Secretary: Sarah Williams 01209 860726
- Gwinear and District FP and BW Association
Chairman: George Ansell 850878
- Lizard Peninsular Association
Chairman: Richard Stock 01326 290946

Bridleway Problems:

We now are getting regular updates of the County Council's problem database for our paths network.

For problems of overgrown definitive footpaths and bridleways please first report to the parish clerk for the parish. If the problems persist or the problems are more serious please let me know.

We want to ensure the CC's list gives the complete picture and that we are happy with the priorities given to the problems.

Problems on unrecorded rights of way (those not marked in green on the OS Explorer map) are more difficult to address, but please do report such problems to me.

Adrian

Problem Update

Bridleway No. 26 – Botrea - Sancreed Parish

We still have no further information when the 'unsafe' bridge is to be repaired. In the meantime, make your own decision as to whether you continue to use it or not.

Bridleway No. 7 - Porthcurno to Treen – St Leven Parish

The National Trust are still planning to repair this bridleway, hopefully imminently. We have reminded them again.

Bridleway No. 62 – Up from Lamorna Cove – St Buryan Parish

This has been on the County Councils plans for renovation for the last two years. We understand discussions are ongoing with adjacent property over a drainage problem.

And Finally

A white horse went into a pub and asked for Whisky. The barman said, "Which one would you like, we have Glenlivet, The Famous Grouse, and we've even got one named after you!" The horse replied, What! Trigger?

PAROW – (Penwith Access and Rights of Way Forum)

PAROW Paths Officer for Penwith

As reported in the last Horse Around, we now have a paths officer, Chris Fry from Ludgvan. He is funded initially for 1 year only through a Rural Key Fund Grant. He is based at the newly created Bolitho Business Park at Catchall, St. Buryan, where he has a workshop unit and office. He is working closely with the County Council Ranger and with volunteer groups.

**Paths
Officer
Chris**



The first major project is re-opening of Bridleway No 13 in Paul parish which goes through the wood from opposite Lamorna Pottery and thus avoiding riding on the busy B3315 to Lamorna. A lot of work needs to be done to make this bridleway serviceable including the construction of a small wooden bridge. We will be asking for volunteers to help Chris with this and other clearance projects.

This bridleway will form part of a circular walk from Lamorna Cove which will encompass local businesses. Chris will produce a walking leaflet detailing the route and these leaflets will be sold by local tourist offices and businesses. Money raised from the sales will be ploughed back into PAROW.

Adrian

County Council Parish Reviews – Update

The County Council's progress with their plan for reviewing and correcting the definitive map in 5 pilot parishes has been very slow. The last to start a year ago, Hayle, appears to have been put into abeyance.

We will be attending a meeting in April for progressing the review of St. Cubert parish (nr. Newquay) which is 'coming to an end'.

The aim of the meeting is 'to establish whether a consensus can be reached between the various interested parties as to how the identified proposed path upgrades may be progressed'.

We will watch developments with interest!

Success! – Paul Parish Council is likely to join the LMP

We understand that Paul parish is now seriously considering joining the CC Local Maintenance Partnership scheme this April. This is subsequent to specific lobbying by WPBA and will enable the County Council to give help to the paths in the parish.