

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



FREE TO MEMBERS

No. 12 SUMMER 2004

Straight From the Horse's Mouth

Hello everyone.....

What a fabulous Summer we're having. I hope you have managed to take advantage of it and found time to do plenty of riding. We wish we had time for more riding. There is so much call on our time these days; sometimes attending 4 or 5 meetings a week on bridleway related issues. We have certainly been busy.

One of the more fun tasks, we've been out exploring trails on our mountain bikes and we reckon on what we have discovered so far, is that Chacewater, Lanner, and Camborne areas have some of the best bridleway riding in Cornwall.

You can ride from Bissoe to Lanner using byways and bridleways to connect two brilliant trails: The Great Flat Lode, Camborne and the Poldice Valley which is the coast to coast route, Bissoe to Portreath. From Portreath, with a bit of thinking you can ride all the way to Gwithian with only one major road to cross. There is scope for some good riding but it needs imagination, fore-thought and planning. There is a lot of enthusiasm for creating, linking and extending multi-user trails at the CC and we are being consulted. We also hope to have some positive news about our Ride-UK Cornwall project in the next newsletter.

We have run some interesting and varied horse hikes, some old favourites and a particularly lovely one from Halamanning. (see - Tractors, Kill or Cure)

We had an excellent attendance at the AGM in March and once again another informative talk this time by Ronni Whittaker on the work she does as an equine body worker. She will come out to you and give horse and rider assessment/consultation. (Next year we will arrange for a sound system so those at the back can hear better.)

We were invited to run a stand at the Penzance Horse Show. We gained over half a dozen new members and established members came over to talk routes and buy the new improved and laminated riding maps. We hope you all got good placings in your classes at the show!

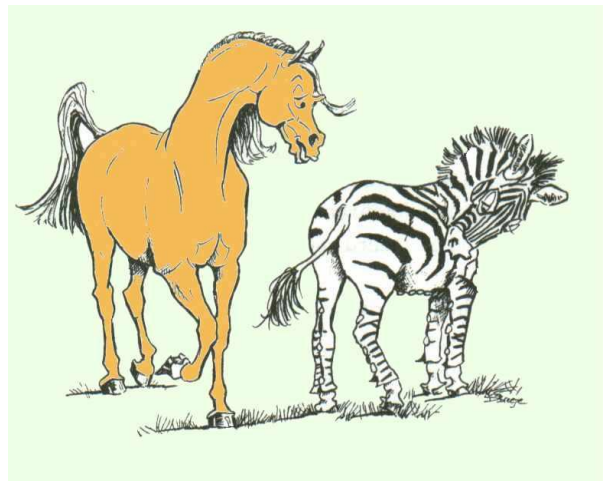
Remaining membership cards will go out with this Horse Around to everyone who has renewed. For those of you who have not yet renewed your membership, this is your last newsletter unless you rejoin now.

Finally, we have new support from local cyclists with whom we share the same aims and legal status on the rights of way network. (Where horses can go – so can cyclists.)

Margaret

In This Issue:

Horse Hike Programme
Our Jolly Green Giant!
Cornwall Local Transport Plan
Lobby to Minister for the Horse
Horse Hike Reports
And MORE



Those pyjamas do not suit you!

Welcome to Off Road Cyclists

A big welcome to our new off-road cyclist members who are a good ally in helping us show the importance of bridleways and byways. They are helping us research our ridden paths and tracks and informing us of problems. Cyclists (not the motorised variety), as you will know, share the use of our bridleways and ridden paths. We would like to thank the cyclists who are helping clear some of our bridleways. Promoting good will and co-operation between all the users of our paths and bridleways is the way we will succeed. We have been out cycling with them a few times now and are finding new routes to add to our riding maps.

WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

Chairman: Adrian Bigg, Secretary: Margaret Bigg,
Trevessa Farm, Trevega, Zennor, TR26 3BL
Treasurer: Charlie Cartwright

WEB: www.westpenwithbridleways.fsnet.co.uk

Email: trevessa-farm@supanet.com

Tel: 01736 795098

Horse Hike from Halamanning (or Tractors Kill or Cure!)

It was great to have some new faces along to the horse hike in May. Our destination was the Godolphin Arms at Goldolphin Cross. However Alison McCarthy who had organised the ride and planned the route arrived in her car, 'horseless', explaining that she had spent 2 hours trying to catch her horse, but he wasn't 'playing out' today! So after quick directions we went on our way.

The weather was hot so everyone wanted a really quiet ride. From Halamanning we took the bridleway to Millpool and Trescowe then up Rocky Lane over the shoulder of Godolphin Hill. After more tracks, twists and turns, we made our way up Tregonning Hill. Fine views were to be had in all directions, in particular Mounts Bay to The Lizard, and the Penwith hills. We rode the spine of Tregonning Hill, but then we had to phone Alison to find out the way down! We back tracked and took a steep path off the side of the hill. Quiet leafy lanes lined with blue bells and stitchwort soon took us to the Godolphin Arms, where our pre-ordered lunches awaited us. Riders and horses were weary in the hot sun and it was a welcome sight to see Alison, and Paul Nicholson with water ready for the horses.

After lunch, rather than struggle to get back on my horse off a wall, I decided to go and use the old pub mounting block much to the entertainment of fellow patrons. Other riders decided to follow and we were all helped on by the friendly landlord. What service! Just like the old coaching days - I imagine.

Completely relaxed and refreshed, we set off towards Godolphin House. We hadn't been in the saddle more than 5 minutes going along the road under a tree lined leafy canopy, when a quaint little tractor trundled into view followed by another, then another! This developed into a chugging procession of 40 vintage tractors! The proud owners were all smiling and giving us cheery waves. It was obviously some kind of 'Tractors Day Out'. Incredibly our horses just looked on bemused at all these 'puffing dragons'. However, one rider did have to dismount, and we found a place to pull in off the road and we watched them trundle by.

Eventually we continued our way home on a lovely NT permissive bridleway through Godolphin estate. We rejoined the road and continued on to Millpool, past the fish ponds and back up to Halamanning, where our trailers awaited us. We rode 11 miles, enjoyed spectacular views of Cornwall at its best, and in excellent company. Thanks Alison for organising such a brilliant horse hike, sorry you had to miss it, and to Paul for assistance and watering the horses.

Membership Renewal – Did you remember?

I'm sure that it is just an oversight in many cases if you have not yet renewed. We know only too well the balancing act of horse, job and family preoccupies your busy life. We hope you will continue to support the important work we are doing on your behalf. We are totally committed to voluntarily working for you and your horse riding routes, and are flagging up the issues at every level. If you wish and to save you trouble, you can send us 2 years subs. in one go and we will adjust our records accordingly.

Late Summer/Autumn 2004 Programme of Horse Hikes

Please note these dates in your diary now!

Organiser
or Contact

U	Nanclendra	4/5 September	M & A
UU	Gwinear	11/12 September	M & A
UU	Madron	18/19 September	M & A
U	St Just	2/3 Oct	S & H
UU	Drift	16/17 Oct	Gill
U	Halamanning	23/24 Oct	M & A
UU	Poldice Valley	6/7 Nov	Alison
UU	Chapel Carn Brea	20/21 Nov	Amanda
UU	Great Flat Lode	27/28 Nov	M & A
UU	Drift	4/5 December	M & A
UU	St Just - Xmas Cracker Ride	18/19 December	Amanda

We have restarted the program in September. We decided August was too busy and hot.

Anyone interested in mid week rides please phone M & A and we will let you know when anything is planned.

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.

Adrian

Margaret and Adrian Tel: 795098 Amanda 871876
Alison 763223 Sue & Howard 788125 Gill 810552

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:

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

Horse Hike From St Just

On the last Sunday in June, we met at Lafowda car park, St. Just for a ride to Trewellard. The car park has undergone quite a transformation (funded by the St. Just Regeneration Project) with the new hedges giving a less austere look to the once bleak square.

Our ten riders set off out to Boscean and Kenijack valley, which is sadly being overwhelmed with Japanese knotweed. We rode up the cliff track and past the Crowns mines and out to Botallack head. It was good to see so many people out walking and enjoying the lovely sea views. We took an inland track which enabled a steady canter. We eventually came out on Levant Road by Trewellard Methodist Chapel, which is now boarded up. It is a shame so many of our chapels are no longer in use. Outside the chapel door there was a small pile of shoes and I wondered if it was undergoing a change of religion!



We soon found the pub and lunch at the Trewellard Arms hotel - one of our regular watering holes.

Eric, enjoying his customary drink of Adrian's shandy!

After lunch, we set off up Trewellard Hill to Carnyorth Common. We enjoyed a fast ride up to the radio mast. We then made for Botallack Common and eventually came off the moor past Hailglower farm and Tregeseal. We rode past St. Just Rugby Club who were hosting the annual steam rally. The horses were not bothered by the hurly-burly as they passed the fairground atmosphere.

Rain closed in quite steadily as we made our way up to the church and St. Just square. We got completely soaked in the last 10 minutes of the ride. However, we all enjoyed a lovely 7 mile horse hike. A big thank you to Sue Thompson-Pentreath who organised and lead the ride on Henry, a horse of great character!



Some of us at the Trewellard Arms Hotel

New Improved Riding Maps of Penwith/Kerrier

We now are producing our maps in A4 format laminated with a page of notes on the reverse, The maps are now in clearer format to suit the A4 style. 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. These maps are available at a nominal cost of only £1.50 for single maps (including postage) or £11.00 for a set of any 10 including postage. Please send cheque to Adrian at Trevesa Farm payable to West Penwith Bridleways Association.

Maps can still be supplied in A3 format (not laminated) at the same cost.

In Brief:

BHS Access Week Ride

We staged a 12 mile ride for BHS Cornwall from Rosevidney farm over to Halamanning and Goldsithney and back. Although we had good support and excellent weather and everyone had an enjoyable day - going home with completion rosettes. Thanks go to Verity Perry for hosting the event and to all the BHS Cornwall Committee and others for marshalling.

Ragwort

New legislation now makes landowners responsible for controlling this weed. Any bad infestation of Ragwort can be reported to DEFRA. Prosecution could follow if there is non-compliance with the law. (see last issue of Horse Around.)

Conservation Cattle Grazing

There is a move to use cattle and ponies to manage the habitat on cliff land and moorland. Grants are available for this and it does work well in some locations, keeping invasive gorse and bracken under control. This is commendable, but one worrying consequence is the fencing off of large areas of ground which we may ride informally. Where definitive bridleways and footpaths cross, bridleway gates are being installed but more disturbingly, we ride many footpaths on open land. Kissing gates are very likely to be put in thus preventing use of our historical unrecorded access.

We are watching these situations carefully.

Horse Passports – Latest

All passports should have been applied for by 30 June from a registered issuing authority. From 28 February 2005 enforcement will start and a passport must be presented whenever a horse moves premises, enters competition, is used for breeding, leaves the UK, sold or goes for slaughter. The government believes the benefits will be less theft and the setting up of the National Equine Database which will form a vital part of the strategy for the horse industry.

Our Jolly Green Giant

We introduced you to Chris Fry, our PAROW Paths Officer, in the last issue of Horse Around.

Much of the work which 'our' Chris, alias the Jolly Green Giant, is doing, could in theory be done by Cornwall County Council. But CCC do not have sufficient funding. The CCC employs a Countryside Ranger in every district, but their remit is to liaise with landowners on path problems and not to do major physical work other than erect signposts and some critical tasks. (The CC also funds two two man Cormac gangs for the whole of Cornwall, including all the coastal path!) Chris is achieving an immense amount of work on our behalf and we are working with the CC to see if any lessons can be learnt from our experiences in Penwith.

St Levan Bridleway Number 52

St. Levan parish council asked PAROW to see if any work can be done to re-instate the old grown in bridleway No.52 which runs from the road at Trendrennan farm out to the cliff to join the Porthcurno bridleway. Chris Fry our valiant PAROW paths officer has been working hard on this between all his other jobs. Anyone interested in helping please get in touch with us. Chris has made fantastic progress revealing a beautiful old lane.



This lovely and long old lane has been totally overgrown for years with 10 foot high brambles and vegetation. The results of Chris's work is staggering, and when completed opens up a new bridleway for riders and walkers to reach Treen Cliff. There is currently further work to be done to reach the cliff path.



The current end of the lane – impenetrable brambles – but not to our green giant!

We are hoping to get volunteers to help him with the rest of the job.

Offers of help on this and other projects will be very welcome. Chris may be contacted on 811124.

Chris Fry is employed by the Penwith Access and Rights of Way Forum –PAROW, which is a grant funded body established and managed by WPBA together with West Cornwall Footpaths Preservation Society and Penwith District Council. (Read the weekly reports in the Cornishman)

Paul Bridleway No. 13

Frustration We had hoped to have this bridleway finished and officially reopened by now, but we have had one or two stumbling blocks. We wanted to install a bridge over a ditch. However working with the CC Ranger we determined that a bridge would require concrete footings and be a large project. We then found that the proposed bridge crossing was not in the correct position according to the definitive map or GPS and that the definitive path should go via a different route and start further up the road some distance from the CC 'Public Path' sign! However, we still have the problem of a bog and a shallow ditch. We have some plans to resolve the situation and in the meantime there is still some other work of gate replacement and re-siting of a barbed wire fence to do. At least this bridleway is now passable and being used with care, instead of being blocked!



The Jolly Green Giant – alias Chris Fry Clearing Paul 13

Map of Bridleways on Treen Cliff



Bridleway 52 will be open again shortly. Bridleway 7 awaits the NT to repair it, hopefully this Autumn/Winter

St. Just Regeneration Project

At long last we are now being consulted on the rights of way part of the project. At an early stage we submitted our ridden routes report for the St. Just area together with riding maps but got no feedback. There is now less than 18 months left for the project to run but we are now having regular meetings to try and get some vital links on to the map. The aim is to get some circular walks and rides created for locals and visitors alike and produce a booklet or leaflet. We particularly want to get some unrecorded rights of way onto the Definitive Map. In the longer term working with the Footpaths Society and PAROW and the CC, we hope to make the Tinner's Track a proper waymarked reality. Work does need to be done to make improvements to the track, but firstly we need to get the route on to the map. How much can be done under the St. Just Regeneration Project we do not yet know.

AONB Management Plan

Here in Penwith we have a large amount of "Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty" land. The Penwith Moors are of particular importance being crossed by the "Tinner's Way" and consequently we are making sure we are included in the consultation process. We had a good meeting with Paul Walton the AONB Manager and put the full range of riders' concerns and the lack of off-road riding available to us. We took him out on to the moor at Embla Vean, in the pouring rain and also presented him with a copy of our Tinner's Way riding route. We were able to voice your opinions on how important the moorland riding is to us and how we see it is threatened if our routes are not put on to the Definitive Map.

He was very supportive of the issues and promised to return on a sunny day to look at the moors with us again.

CORNWALL LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2001-2006 (some equestrian extracts)

This very comprehensive document was produced and published by Cornwall County Council in July 2000. We were recently consulted for comments for a current update. We said "please implement the plans as already written"!

It makes some positive pronouncements:

"In order to cater for the particular needs of equestrian travel, measures must be increasingly introduced to provide pleasant, attractive, quiet and safe routes in the rural environment. **A strategy has been developed to ensure that horse-rider needs form part of the overall Local Transport Plan objectives.**"

"The County Council will seek to continue to develop a network of safer rural equestrian leisure routes by connecting, where possible, the bridleway network with other car free routes."

"The County Council aims to support awareness and enjoyment of horse riding as a leisure pursuit, specific objectives being to:

- Develop a safe and attractive bridleway network linked by designated quiet lanes;
- Address real and perceived concerns regarding equestrian safety.
- Integrate horse riding with other vulnerable user leisure pursuits, where appropriate

Measures will include:

- Providing connections to the bridleway network, to be identified and integrated into the Countryside Access strategy.
- Reducing the dominance of motor traffic on quiet lanes providing such links
- Improving equestrian safety on sections of the existing highway network by the adoption of best practice in equestrian friendly design, and the introduction of equestrian facilities where appropriate within existing measures;
- Consulting with representatives of equestrian groups on infrastructure improvements.
- Identifying opportunities to improve access/links to the equestrian network at key locations."

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan

All County Councils have to produce a plan by 2007 for improving the bridleway and footpath network, which includes correction of the definitive map.

The key to any progress is to get all the various bodies to understand the issues and for them all to work together to achieve the same goals. I think we are getting to the point now where they are all starting to sing from the same hymn sheet. We received a letter from the Rt. Hon. Alun Michael, Minister for Rural Affairs and "The Minister for the Horse" which does bear this out.

"Along with the Countryside Agency there are currently a number of legislative and non-legislative initiatives that we are taking to try and improve the situation for horse riders. I think this shows that the onus is not just on volunteers to get routes on the definitive map."

The whole way forward will hinge on the County Council's RoW Improvement Plan, the Local Transport Plan, Local Access Forums and the Countryside Agency/DEFRA "Discovering Lost Ways" project and Countryside Stewardship Scheme. These are all national frameworks to which we are having input. Alun Michael confirmed that the Horse Industry Team is now set up under Defra to draw up a plan for the horse industry, including improving off-road access. The difficult task now is to get real action. You can learn more by visiting www.defra.gov.uk/rural/horse

Footnote:

Riders may not see immediate changes on their own door step, but there is much happening and much to do, and we need to continue lobbying on every front to achieve a better network.

County Council Parish Reviews – Update

We believe that the County Council's plan for reviewing and correcting the definitive map in 5 pilot parishes will be superseded by new initiatives. The meeting in April which we attended for progressing the review of St. Cubert parish (nr. Newquay) 'failed to achieve consensus' on how to proceed.

Paul Parish Council joins the LMP

Paul parish has joined the County Council's Local Maintenance Partnership scheme. Paul parish is now responsible for the trimming of its paths and bridleways. Please phone the clerk who is Mr. Richard Murdock, Tel 332951 with any problems on the paths in Paul Parish. Please note crazily Paul village itself is actually in Penzance, and not in Paul parish!

Are Your Bridleways Trimmed and Cleared?

Has your parish council cleared your bridleways and paths? Have the contractors cleared high and wide enough? If you are not happy contact your parish clerk (we have phone numbers). If you don't complain, they may decide your route isn't too important and downgrade its priority for clearance. Remind them that bridleways are "roads for horses" and must have high priority.

Problem Update

Bridleway No. 26 – Botrea - Sancreed Parish
We understand the 'unsafe' bridge is to be repaired later this year. In the meantime, make your own decision as to whether you continue to use it or not (it is still being used by vehicles!).

Bridleway No. 7 - Porthcurno to Treen – St Leven Parish
Hopefully the NT will renovate it this Autumn/Winter. We are pleased to see the CC have now correctly signed it as a bridleway.

Bridleway No. 62 – Up from Lamorna Cove – St Buryan Parish. The plan is to step and layer the surface on this 'rocky lane' to prevent future erosion. CC funding (or lack thereof) continues to be a problem in renovating this important bridleway. We are pursuing alternative funding sources together with the CC.

Bridleway No 34 - Chysauster to Castle-an-Dinas – Madron has a short but deep boggy bit near the fir trees. The landowner Clr Roy Mann is currently doing work to try and solve the problem.

Bridleway No 52 – Heather Lane to Nancledra – Ludgvan Has been trimmed back and some low branches removed by Ludgvan P.C. The CC have done work to one boggy area, but more work is required by the badger holes and ideally a hard cut back is required. Motor bikes have created a deep rut at the Heather lane end. – an on-going problem, the solution maybe to install horse stiles.

How do you get down from a horse?
You don't. You get down from a duck.

SADDLES RE FLOCKED and general tack repairs. Qualified saddler, friendly, professional service.
Call Michaela McNeil, Tel: 01209 711086.
(Nr. Tesco's, Cambome)

Lobby to Minister for the Horse (DEFRA)

We have been directly lobbying the Rt. Hon. Alun Michael, Minister for Rural Affairs on various access issues. We expressed our concerns of getting all our ridden routes on to the map before 2026 and the cumbersome Modification Order process to get them on to the map and the particular problems facing Cornwall. We sent him and the Countryside Agency a copy of our Ridden Routes of Penwith report to which we have had a favourable response. We have now had two personal and comprehensive letters back from the minister, with promising news. As a result of the work we have done, there are indications that Cornwall may get included in the DEFRA "Discovering Lost Ways" project at an early date, which is designed to get the definitive map updated to include currently unrecorded bridleways and footpaths thus protecting the paths for posterity.

Repercussions of CROW Act are starting to appear

Just what we predicted is starting to happen. Up on the moor by Bishop's Head and Foot, the landowner has fenced off his 'open access' land on the pretence of protecting species and in a bid to channel the public on to definitive rights of way only. The effect is to close off unrecorded ridden routes to local riders. This is an unfortunate consequence of the so called "right to roam" legislation and an over reaction by the landowner. Most people want to follow proper paths and tracks and do not want to 'roam' all over peoples' land.

Anyone who rides this area and is concerned about the loss of access. Please contact us.

Neighbouring Bridleway Groups

We are working very closely with our neighbouring groups in preserving and improving the routes we ride.

The contact details are:

- Breage & Germoe Association
Secretary: Eileen Keeling, Tel: 01736 762868
- Carnmenellis and Area Association
Secretary: Natalie Levens, Tel: 01326 569755
- Crowan and District
Secretary: Denise Marles, Tel: 01209 715069
- Gwinear and District FP and BW Association
Chairman: George Ansell Tel: 01736 850878
- Lizard Peninsular Association
Chairman: Richard Stock Tel: 01326 290946

If you know of any riders, all terrain cyclists in those areas please let them know of these associations.

What's black and white and turns cartwheels?
A piebald horse pulling a cart.

Equine Body Worker

Roni Whittaker, (also Qualified Sports physio).

Make your horse feel better!

Tel: 07974 959689 for friendly service