

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



FREE TO MEMBERS

No. 13 WINTER 2004/2005

Straight From the Horse's Mouth

Hi everyone. Christmas is only around the corner and the short winter days mean more work and less riding time. Rugs on, rugs off, horse pyjamas on, horse pyjamas off – and we could all shovel manure for England! Why not promise yourself a treat and come out on the now traditional Christmas Cracker ride around the St. Just district for a festive and good sociable ride, with a few stops at various watering holes. This ride is for everyone, get out your tinsel, we look forward to seeing you there.

We have had another very busy period of meetings and letter writing since the last Horse Around. One particular issue; I was incensed to learn that the A30 Vulnerable Users crossing project has been shelved, yet many thousands of pounds have just been spent on the Hayle by-pass improvements. We were promised, at high priority status, a Pegasus crossing at Canonstown, that should have been completed by now. This is a crucial safety project. Busy roads cut us off from precious riding in neighbouring parishes.

Various problems, including me being off riding for 2 months with a bad back, caused a long pause in the horse hike programme. If you have been meaning to come on a horse hike and not yet made it, you haven't missed too many. The Poldice valley away ride was pretty good, being virtually all off-road with some long canters and good going. Everyone agreed we must go again soon. We ran an unscheduled ride around Gwinear parish. The Great Flat Lode, Camborne trip was a pretty invigorating ride. You can read about these three events in this edition. (Thank you to the authors.) The latest horse hike programme includes these again along with some old favourites and some new venues - giving quite a good and varied mix of rides. I hope you will join us.

Adrian and I were mad enough to resume our bike rides with the adventure cyclists after the dry Autumn rides we did earlier, and we were a little concerned to see half the crew had turned up in wellies to ride their bikes! I came flying off over and between the 'ears'. Before landing, it flashed through my mind how much nearer the ground you are to start with! The downside is you have to work much harder 'trotting' up the hills!

Happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year. Make a new year's resolution to get out more and ride those bridleways and tracks. Please come and join us for a seasonal drink at the Engine Inn on Tuesday 14th December.

Margaret



Christmas Drink

Please come and join us for a Christmas drink at the Engine Inn, Cripplesease, Nancledra
Tuesday
14th December,
7-30pm onwards.

Informal meet up and social chat.

Bring a friend, non-members very welcome.

Margaret and Adrian

Christmas Cracker Ride **19th December St Just**



Clearing Bridleway 1 Towednack

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WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

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Horse Hike at the Poldice Valley

We met at the Bissoe Cycle Centre car park, which allowed us plenty of room for turning and loading, and a welcome moment for a late breakfast coffee from the cycle café, whilst waiting for everyone to finally mount.

Joined by Natalie from Carmenellis & District and Alison who is also a member of The Lizard Peninsular Group, we started by riding through an old quarry with steep sides and steep drops which led to a series of single track bridleways.

The day was filled with so many different environments, you wondered what would be around the next corner! One minute we were riding along muddy tracks and tramways, and then through oak woods. The dried fallen leaves blanketed the whole area, and crunched underfoot, giving a real Autumn feel. We have very few trees where I live, just lots of bent gorse! By this time, I was completely lost, having tried to absorb all the landmarks on the way, so that I could do a return visit, so I decided to give my brain a rest and leave all thoughts of being an independent intrepid explorer for another day. I think I will go all technical and buy a dictaphone, so I can talk my way around instead!!

Turning another corner – wow! There we go again, a long dark spooky tunnel. Gill's Arabs decided there could be lions in there, and allowed a couple of other horses to get eaten first!

On the final turn for home, Lo and behold, we came across yet another pack of "boys with their toys" (remembering the vintage tractors on the Halamanning ride). Budding little Evil Knievels were catapulting themselves off the quarry sides and then whizzing around the paths above our heads like wasps on a mission! The horses didn't seem particularly bothered as we were nearly home, and by that time had clocked up just over 10 miles. Thank you to Margaret & Adrian for organising the ride.

Brenda Bolitho

Endurance GB Training Ride

The ride this winter is on Sunday 27th February and will be run as usual from St. Just Rugby Club.

The Entry Fee is £15.00 EGB members (£17.00 non members with proof of own 3rd party insurance. Otherwise £3.00 extra)

The 15 mile route will be well marked with stewards on road crossings. Rosettes to all finishers, entries limited to 40.

Entry forms can be picked up at Eclipse, Long Rock or downloaded from the EGB website.

For more details phone Amanda on 01736 871876

***What did the city worker say after his first ever pony trek?
I never knew anything stuffed with hay could be so hard!***

Winter 2005 Programme of Horse Hikes

Please note these dates in your diary now!

			Organiser or Contact
U	St Just - Xmas Cracker Ride	19 December	Amanda
UU	Gwinear	8/9 January	M & A
UU	Halamanning	22/23 January	Alison
UU	Chapel Carn Brea	5/6 February	Amanda
UU	Poldice Valley	19/20 February	M & A
	EGB St Just	27 February	Amanda
U	Tehidy Woods	5/6 March	M & A
UU	Great Flat Lode	12/13 March	M & A
UU	Drift	19/20 March	M & A
U	St Just	9/10 April	Amanda

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

Horse Hikes often 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 on the Great Flat Lode

Hi fellow horse-hikers,

If you are interested in our Industrial Heritage, this ride was for you!

On Sunday 28th November, 6 of us met at South Wheal Frances Car Park. (easily accessed and only one and a half miles from the A30 Pool exit). Adrian led the figure of 8 ride taking in parts of the Great Flat Lode Trail and other bridleway routes. This whole area is criss-crossed with mineral tramway routes which have been opened up for riding, walking and cycling. Many of the mine-workings are really well preserved and deserve a further visit.



We started on the Great Flat Lode Trail going anti-clockwise and almost immediately had to dismount to negotiate a tunnel. Convenient mounting blocks were strategically placed for the less agile! We passed through Wheal Buller and then struck off to the west of Lanner. We travelled along a long tramway route (the old Hayle Railway) overlooking Lanner village with good views. We rode a large loop on lanes and tracks before retracing our steps. After passing near the starting point we did another loop taking in another part of the Great Flat Lode Trail and the pretty hamlet of Bolenowe.

This 2½ hour, 11 mile ride, was almost all off road and provided some lovely canters:- slow, controlled ones led by Adrian and rather faster ones led by Gill! We had to negotiate a few gates and some 'horse-stiles', a first for my boy. Despite ominously threatening black clouds we didn't have a single drop of rain en route.

Many thanks to Adrian and Margaret for researching this lovely ride which really is right on our doorstep. Why don't you join us on the next horse-hike and find some new places to ride?

Heather Gibbons

Trencrom Hill

The National Trust have advised us that the Horse Path around the hill is being closed until just before Xmas to allow the path to recover as it is very muddy. **Also please remember** you are not allowed up to the top of the hill. Please respect this wish of the National Trust.

Riding Maps of Penwith/Kerrier

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
- No 12 Crowan
- No 13 Gwinear/Gwithian
- No 14 Wendron
- No 15 Sithney

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.

In Brief:

Thank you Walkers!

A big thank you to members of West Cornwall Footpath Society for giving their time to clear break-my-neck lane, Madron. It is much appreciated. A regular group of them go out every Tuesday to clear footpaths and often bridleways and other paths you ride. Also, the Penwith and Kerrier Ramblers Association have been clearing bridleway no. 32 on Conquer Downs, Towednack.

Be Seen and Be Safe

The BHS are campaigning for all horse riders to wear high visibility clothing. It makes sense. Drivers don't see you until it is nearly too late to slow down. The last thing on most driver's minds when they see a dark shape ahead is a horse and rider.

A yellow tabard buys you those extra few seconds and can save you and your horse's life.

Now the days are darker it is even more important that you make yourself as visible as possible. Even off road it is useful as tracks and bridleways are used by walkers and cyclists and they need to see that you are there.

Please, be responsible, set an example to your friends, and also be appreciated by drivers, they do want to know you're there!

Did You Know? The Capercaillie is a Scottish bird and Capercaillie is Gaelic and means "Horse of the woods". Apparently its call sounds like horses hooves thundering along.

Last week I got a lovely Welsh Cob for my husband.

That sounds like a reasonable swap!

Gwinear Horse Hike - Sunday 14th November 2004

The weather was dry and overcast with no wind - perfect for riding. We arrived at 10.45 and parked outside Gwinear Church. Lottie (my horse) wore her red poppy as it coincided with Remembrance Sunday so we also observed the 2 minutes silence.

When Gill and her Arabs arrived we set off up the road for the start of the ride, 6 of us in total. Not being familiar with the area, I do not know exactly the route we took but we meandered across the surrounding countryside on tracks and bridleways, and encountered hardly any roads which was a novelty for me.

En route we crossed a couple of redundant bridges which were relics from the era when there was a railway line between Camborne and Helston. We also encountered a tunnel which the horses passed through somewhat warily which was not surprising as it was dark and echoed inside.

There were plenty of opportunities for canters along the way and we took advantage of these. We skirted the Barrripper village which was very quaint with a river running along side it. We tracked back towards Gwinear and past the pub which to some people's, (and horse's), disappointment had just closed! Margaret's pony was particularly miffed as she remembered the way in from the last time!

The ride was about 10 miles and took approx 2½ hours. I would like to thank Adrian and Margaret for planning this as it took me to places and paths that I never knew existed, and it certainly is a very pleasurable area for riding with a generous network of bridleways in gorgeous Cornish countryside.

Alison Lugg

New Multi-User Trails

The County Council has reached an advance stage in planning four new Trails in the Redruth area. These are:

The Redruth and Chasewater Trail (7.7miles)

(and Yes the spelling is correct)

- Linking the Poldice Valley to Lanner via Carharrack

The Portreath Branch Line (5.5 miles)

- Linking Portreath to Brea via Illogan

The Tolgus Trail (2.8miles)

- Linking Potreath via Tolgus, Redruth to Lanner

The Tehidy Trail (2.7 miles)

Linking Portreath to the Red River via Tehidy Park

The funding for these is part of a £6M mining heritage project, to restore many mine sites in the area and provide leisure access between them all.

The County Council has a policy that all new trails should be multiuser including riders and cyclists and other users where appropriate.

We are so lucky to have all these developments right on our doorstep, You will appreciate this if you have been on our horse hikes to the existing trails around Redruth.

STEEL HORSE NEWS

Welcome to a little section of HORSE AROUND specifically for our Adventure Cyclist members. We hope everyone will be interested. The "Thursday Group" of mountain bikers who call their informal group GROUNDFORCE have been running all terrain bike rides for many many years. They meet up on a Thursday, usually as many as 15 to 20 plus in number and go for some really fabulous off-road runs. You do need to be reasonably fit if you fancy going with them. It is certainly a brilliant way to find out new places to ride your horse. (Groundforce, don't panic – you will not suddenly get a load of horsey people wanting to join you on bike rides!)



Margaret (right) with the Steel Horses on the Penwith Moors

The law is an Ass! – Cyclists cannot accrue public rights

The Countryside Act 1968 gives the public the right to cycle on bridleways, provided that they give way to walkers and horse-riders, but the highway authority is under no obligation to facilitate the use of bridleways by cyclists. (It wouldn't be so bad if they maintained bridleways fit for horses!)

Apparently, use by cycles cannot be used to claim bridleway status. We have just discovered that when assembling user evidence for to claim 20 years usage of a track, evidence of use by cyclists apparently does not count! This obviously is grossly unfair. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 makes clear that "use of a bridleway by pedal cycles cannot form the basis of a claim that higher rights exist". The cycling lobby tried hard to get something into the CROW Act bill which said their use could be used for claims, and failed. This is a question which has been hotly debated, and probably will be again. It is something to do with the fact that they were "granted" the right to ride on bridleways in the 1968 Act, they did not have a proven historical right. However, there is no reason why we cannot quote additional use by cyclists in supporting evidence.

New Sustrans Trails

There is a network of clay trails being opened around Eden and St Austell. The new ones are all multi-user and are horse friendly. More trails are planned including major trails from Bodmin to Torpoint.

Ride-UK Cornwall

We have been working hard with Cornwall County Council in getting funding for the BHS RideUK project for a Horse Trail from Lands End to the Devon Border.

The good news is that at long last we have been granted £65k from objective 1 funding to employ a Bridleways Officer to plan the project and obtain funding for the implementation. It is planned that the trail will use existing bridleways where possible and quiet lanes. Missing links will need to be provided to complete the trail. It is the intention that the trail will link many of the existing trail projects throughout the County and provide linking spurs where practicable to benefit as wider area as possible.

We hope that an early phase of the project will be the establishment of the Tinner's Way over the Penwith Moors as a proper trail.

Vital Horse Path Retained in St Ives

We have liaised with the Mayor of St Ives, Harry Isaacs and local residents to retain horse access along the path adjacent to the playground behind the fire station.

The path provides a vital safe connection through to Towednack via the Old Towednack Road.

The path is a well used, but unrecorded right of way. Via PAROW, Penwith District Council have provided signs to ask riders to keep to the path and away from the playground. Riders are asked to use this path with care and at walk only. We thank all concerned for this successful outcome.



Hayle Towans

Local riders have lobbied and are doing much good background work to retain ridden access to Gwithian, and Upton Towans. Upton Towans is Cornwall County Council owned but is being managed by the Cornwall Wildlife Trust. The County Council's policy is to provide access for all on the Towans, including ridden access, in parallel with the management of a sensitive environmental area. As reported in the Cornishman, Gwinear Parish Council has agreed to support the local riders and their need to be consulted over future access. We are hopeful for a satisfactory outcome.

St. Levan Bridleway 52 update

This lost bridleway which is an old sunken lane is about to be re-opened due to the huge efforts of our Jolly Green Giant. We are waiting for some surface repairs and gating before making the final breakthrough to the cliff bridleway.

We now have the makings of a rather lovely circular route taking in The Logan Rock Inn at Treen, and bridleway No. 7 coast route from Porthcurno runs up to join it. Up until recently, the Porthcurno bridleway was sign-posted as a footpath. We have had this corrected but unfortunately it is still too dangerous to ride owing to erosion exposing large boulders. We are still trying to get the NT to fulfill their promise to make it into a safe usable bridleway.

Blocked Bridleways – A Sawlution?



How many times do you find a bridleway is blocked by a couple of fallen or overhanging branches. A simple solution is to carry a folding saw. They are quite cheap and can be carried in a coat pocket (like a large serrated penknife). The one shown can saw through a five inch branch with ease! We got ours from Cornwall Farmers. In many cases it is much easier and effective to clear a simple obstruction yourself, your fellow riders will be forever grateful.

Cross-Compliance

Yes, a very boring title for an article, but "Cross-Compliance" is actually good news for us Public Rights of Way anoraks. European Union farm production subsidies are changing. Subsidies given for produce will be replaced by the Single Payment Scheme. Farmers and growers will have to abide by certain rules to claim it. Boring? Well here comes the interesting bit. It says under Rights of Way "You must not obstruct or disturb the surface of a public right of way that crosses your land. However, you can plough the path of a ProW, as long as you recreate the path within any prescribed time limit. You also have to look after any stiles or gates on a ProW on your land that are your responsibility. These are all existing requirements." Our County Council has difficulty enforcing this now. Therefore I was a little cynical as to whether this had any teeth, but we have received a letter from the Minister, Alun Michael and he says "I was keen to ensure that cross compliance for rights of way was included in the Single Payment Scheme. I believe the measures could make a real difference by getting obstructions removed on rights of way around the country. We are currently setting up the systems to ensure that the rules are suitably enforced."

Progress?

This year we feel that many of our bridleways are much clearer. This has been achieved by our campaign of highlighting the importance of our bridleways and that they should be cleared to a good width and height.

Some parishes have been a little late in getting their paths clear in some instances due to problems in getting contractors organised to do the work.

The bridleways in Sancreed are especially good this year with wide tracks where previously they were narrow paths.

We thank the parishes for their work and interest in their paths.

There are some problem paths, but we are trying to identify these and work via PAROW and the parishes to get these improved.

Please Keep Us Informed

Don't grumble to yourselves about overgrown or impassable paths, please do let us know. You can also take local action. Contact the clerk of your parish council, let your council know of your concerns and that the paths are important to you. For small obstructions brambles etc, you can clip these yourself, it is only by all doing what we can will our paths be improved.

All parishes in Penwith are now in the County Council's Local Maintenance Partnership scheme which means that the parish councils receive an allowance of about £55 per km for clearing the paths in their parish. However the monies provided only are sufficient for routine trimming and not for major clearance, or major improvement projects.

The County Council is responsible for surface repairs, bridges etc., however its available budget is very limited, hence their inability to respond to most of the problems we report to them.

PAROW News

PAROW (Penwith Access and Rights Of Way Forum) is going from strength to strength. Our initial funding for our paths officer (Jolly Green Giant, Chris Fry) was for one year (from Objective 1 funds). The Penwith District Council Rural Development Officer, Rob Poole is working hard on securing grant funding for future years. Cornwall County Council has provided us with much paths furniture and tools such as chain saw heavy duty strimmer etc. and also made significant financial contribution to the project. Chris has done much excellent work in opening up old bridleways and footpaths and improving many others.

Paul Parish

Paul has only joined the maintenance scheme this year. Its paths have been neglected for years. Until recently all the bridleways have been cleared by volunteers. The parish council is now trying to catch up on the backlog of work, and volunteers and PAROW effort is assisting in this task. The bridleways from Tredavoe are currently being looked at by PAROW. Volunteer effort to help in this task will be much appreciated. If we get them cleared well back now, hopefully the parish will be able to maintain them in a good state in future years.

Problem Update

Bridleway No. 26 – Botrea - Sancreed Parish

The bridge over a small ditch on this bridleway has now been repaired at tremendous cost. The bridge is also used by the vehicles of local property owners. However they have not contributed to its repair cost. The County Council's bridleways budget has paid for it all. Yet other bridleways where riders have had nasty accidents owing to bogs obstructions etc go un-repaired.

The bridge has been repaired because the bridge was surveyed by the Council surveyor and he deemed it unsafe. We are going to ask that the same surveyor rides our other bridleways on which we have reported problems and which are dangerous for horses. The Botrea bridleway was never remotely dangerous for horses, cyclists or walkers. A 10 tonne lorry may have eventually shown up some problems, but this is a bridleway not even a byway!

We won't mention either the significant drainage work that was done two years ago, again not to fix any problems experienced by riders.

We continue to hope that the County Council will be able to fix some of our real problems, but we have no news yet.

Bridleway No. 7 St Levan

As mentioned on the previous page elsewhere, this bridleway down to Porthcumo is dangerous for horses. The National Trust promised to repair it but their promise has not yet materialised.

Bridleway No 13 Paul

We cleared this lovely bridleway with our Paths officer but a nasty ditch problem remains that only County Council can solve (having liaised with the Ranger). After more than two years we are still awaiting information on possible progress. Some riders have now been using it but we would not recommend it in its current state.

Where's Our Promised Pegasus Crossing?

The Highways Agency have told us that the money for the crossing and other safety improvements for 'vulnerable users' on the A30 have been diverted to other more important things such as "traffic management". We are continuing lobbying and have had a meeting with Andrew George, and he has written to the Agency and the Minister on our behalf. We also wanted to bring him up to speed with the work we are doing in surveying Penwith's bridleways and mapping all the ridden routes in Cornwall on to computer. He is very supportive and appreciates the great importance of our paths and bridleways.