

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



FREE TO MEMBERS

No. 14 SPRING 2005

Straight From the Horse's Mouth

Hello Everyone,

The Christmas Cracker ride from St. Just is now a distant memory but we had a very good turnout including the press photographer from The Cornishman. The resulting festive picture of horse and rider gave us a nice bit of publicity.

The new year trotted off with a lovely horse hike from Halamanning, trekking over Tregonning Hill and stopping at the Godolphin Arms for a pasty lunch on a fabulously sunny day. This was soon followed by another very enjoyable ride from Chapel Carn Brea over various moors and commons for lunch at the Queens Arms at Botallack. We had an outstanding turnout of 20 riders for this one! Fortunately Amanda managed various paces to suit all and none of the horses got silly! Thanks to Alison Macarthy and Amanda Nicholson for running these 10 mile rides. We have since been back to the Poldice valley for another superb ride. Heather Gibbons lead the half mile canter from Twelveheads up to the tailings dam. Tehidy Woods proved to be a great new venue for us, a lovely and varied ride.

On the desk bound front, we have been lobbying hard to prevent further cuts of the County Council Rights of Way budget. We have made the point that shaving money off RoW is not going to solve Education, or Social Services short-falls, but just make the Countryside & Heritage Dept., even less efficient. We think our arguments have had some effect. We continue to explore every avenue to attract attention to the bridleway network. The 2004 RoW Condition Survey concluded it needs £5.8M! just to bring the network into proper usable condition!

We have been very busy with PAROW identifying new clearing projects, and helping the Jolly Green Giant. The local Ramblers have also been helping Chris; going out regularly clearing footpaths and bridleways, and we have much to thank them for.

Our AGM looms and we have another very interesting talk lined up for you this year. Equus Health will be talking about the properties of natural products, It is also subs. renewal time. You can renew on AGM night but I welcome renewals through the post before hand. We hope you will continue to support the valuable work we are doing. We need to secure the future of horse riding as a mainstream activity and sport as much as any other. The future for multi-user trails is looking great with good networks and ideas for more springing up all the time. However the riding on your door step is crying out for improvement, and much is now being achieved through PAROW opening up old bridleways and clearing back others. There will be a short 10 minute screen presentation of the work done at the AGM.

Margaret

AGM

This year's AGM will be at the usual venue

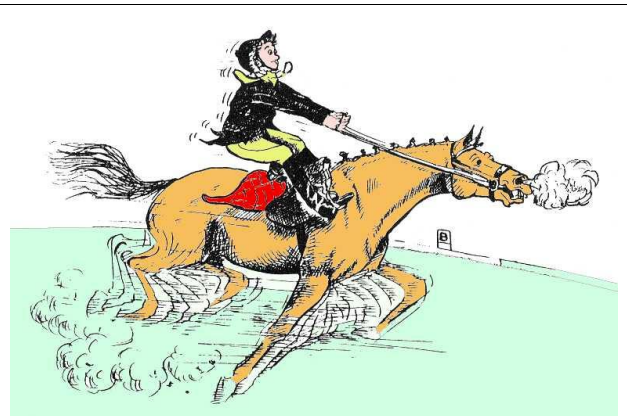
The Yacht Inn, Penzance
(opposite Jubilee Pool)

Tuesday 22nd March
7.00pm for very prompt start at
7.30pm.

The talk this year will be

***“Natural Products and Remedies for
the Equine”***

by Wizzy Doyne-Ditmas of Equus Health
Please do get there early!



Those seaweed pills certainly had good effect!

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Skating on SMA

and More

WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

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Trevesa Farm, Trevega, Zennor, TR26 3BL
Treasurer: Charlie Cartwright

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Xmas Cracker Ride 19 December

Our annual ride before Christmas was on a bitterly cold day, with the last of the previous night's rain and drizzle still in the air when we assembled at the St. Just Rugby club in festive mood. We were met by the Cornishman Photographer who wanted a festive horsey picture. Roana (and Margaret) kindly obliged. We hope you saw it.

We keenly moved off up 'No Go By' Hill and eventually turned off and went over Carnyorth and Trewellard Commons and on to Pendeen. We stopped off at the North Inn where all the riders clamoured for the hot mulled wine, while the horses competed for the grass on the pub lawn! Once mounted up again, our next port of call was lunch stop at the Trewellard Arms Hotel. From there, we headed out for the cliffs at Geevor, then Levant, Botallack Head and The Crown mines. Having taken in the sea views, we turned inland to Botallack and a final warm refuelling stop at The Queen's Arms, before returning to Tregeseal. There were 15 riders and we covered over 7 miles in total.



Stop at the North Inn, Pendeen

Horse Hike from Halamanning 23 January

In the middle of a spell of miserable and murky weather the sun shone for our horse hike from Halamanning. We went up an old mining track in the direction of Trescowe and trotting on to Rocky Lane, we then went over the shoulder of Godolphin Hill and eventually reaching Tregonning Hill. The views were stunning from the summit. With the weather being so clear, we had panoramic views over to Mounts Bay and the Lizard and to the north, Godrevy Island lighthouse could be seen poking its head out from St. Ives Bay. We made our way off the hill down and on to the pub at Godolphin Cross where the horses were content to stand quietly in the warm sunshine, whilst we enjoyed a good pasty lunch. We used the old mounting block outside the Godolphin Arms to re-mount with kind assistance from the landlord.

We moved off heading for the Godolphin estate and eventually we emerged back on to the road to Millpool. Again good views were to be had from here. We cut back through to Halamanning via 'watery junction' where some of the horses enjoyed a good drink. Although the roads were not busy, cars and farm traffic were patient and considerate and we were very appreciative of that. Special thanks to Alison McCarthy for organising the 10 mile ride which everyone really enjoyed.

Spring/Summer 2005 Programme of Horse Hikes

Please note these dates in your diary now

Organiser or Contact

U	Drift Dam	19/20 March	M & A
UU	St Just	9/10 April	Amanda
UU	Gwinear	23/24	M & A
UU	Lizard Peninsular	30/1 May	Alison L.
UU	Chapel Carn Brea	14/15 May	Amanda
U/U	Tehidy Woods	21/22 May	M & A
U	Polgigga/Treen	4/5 June	M & A
UU	Poldice Valley	18/19 June	M & A
UU	Madron	Sat. 2 July	M & A
U	St Just	16/17 July	Sue & H

Our Horse Hike programme will continue in September after a break during the hottest part of the year.

Always check with the organiser or ourselves a few days before. The exact date will be determined by the interest in the ride and/or weather.

Adrian

Margaret and Adrian Tel: 795098 Amanda 871876
Alison Lugg 01326 241545 Sue and Howard 788125

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!

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.

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

The Cornishman – County, Town and Parish

Our rides are regularly reported under "County, Town and Parish" at the end of the "Down Your Way" Section. You will also see a weekly report of the activities of our forum PAROW. Our paths Officer Chris will always welcome volunteers to help him with some of our clearance projects. Please phone him/leave message on: 01736 811124.

Good News - Progress at Porthcurno

Up until last year, the Porthcurno bridleway (St Levan No. 7) was sign-posted as a footpath, and because of erosion was not safe to use by horse owing to slippery large rocks and gullies. We have got the signpost changed to bridleway but have been waiting (2 years) for the National Trust to do promised repairs to the path.

Now, in January 2005, The National Trust, Cornwall County Council, PAROW and Robert Eddy with heavy horse have come together to make it possible. At long last, we have managed to get an agreed action plan for the repair of this bridleway that leads up from the Porthcurno car park to Treen cliff. We have agreed and identified 8 places where a granite step needs to be installed then back-filled with rab. This will make the bridleway usable and safe for horses.

The work is now about to start and will be completed by April. It will make a lovely bridleway along the coast linking into a circular route. Had we not addressed the problems, the route would have remained unsafe and dangerous for horses and no doubt would have been quietly forgotten about and effectively lost to horse riders. It connects to the lost bridleway 52 and then along the coastal path with lovely sea views to Treen and continues to the Logan Rock Inn. We plan to have a horse hike to the Inn once the bridleway is open.

St. Levan Bridleway 52 update

This lost bridleway which is an old sunken lane is nearly ready for re-opening due to the huge efforts of our Jolly Green Giant. As previously reported, St. Levan parish council asked PAROW if we could re-open it so naturally we were very keen. St. Levan 52 requires all the lumpy bits levelling and a side ditch digging. Hopefully this work will be completed in early spring.

Hayle Towans Update

We understand that agreement for continued horse access has been reached on the Towans. Further the County Council has now acquired the old sand working site at Gwithian Towans and again horse access is being provided.

Japanese Knotweed

The County Council do believe they are winning in their battle against Japanese Knotweed on our highways. However on some of our paths we know the problem is not yet being tackled. If you encounter the weed on a footpath or bridleway please do report it to James McFarlane at the County Council, Tel 01872 222000.

This Year's AGM

AGM will be held on Tuesday 22 March at 7.00 p.m. Please do come early as we will be starting promptly at 7:30 as we have a very full evening.

This year's talk will be on
"Natural Products and Remedies for the Equine"
by Wizzy Doyne-Ditmas of Equus Health
Please do get there early!

The talk will be very interesting and informative to all. You may find it useful to bring a notebook.

Without stealing Wizzy's thunder, Find out why Mint is good for the horse digestive system or the properties of Garlic Powder for worming or the value of Rosehip for Vitamin C, and can Camomile help to 'chill out' an excitable horse? We all know about Devil's Claw anti-inflammatory properties but do you know what Meadowsweet can do? And much much more

There will be Equus Health products on sale after the talk and Eclipse Equestrian are stockists for future supply.

Also available on AGM night

WPBA Logo Garments – Please place your orders with Melanie Mitchel She will be on hand with the catalogue of very reasonably priced clothing of T-shirts, sweatshirts and fleeces etc.

Parish Riding Maps

Laminated Parish Riding Maps with notes will also be available. The maps are £1.50 each or set of any 10 for £11.00



Nearly ready to go! The scene at the cliff car park at the start of our most recent horse hike at Tehidy Woods. A lovely ride and we had 10 riders – don't miss it next time around.

For Sale

650W Generator - Still in box – Not used
Ideal for your stable jobs. £60

Tel Adrian 01736 795098

The Horse Maker

A little boy had just returned from a walk in the country with his Granny. 'Mum, Mum,' he called out. 'We've just seen a man who makes horses!' 'Really?' ask his mother. 'Yes, and he'd nearly finished,' said the boy. 'As we walked by he was nailing on its feet.'

Horse Hike from Chapel Carn Brea 6 February

Word must have got around, we had a big turnout of 20 riders for the Chapel Carn Brea Horse Hike, and we were pleased to welcome four visiting riders from the Mid Cornwall group. We also had some new members joining us. See picture page 5.

We set off by way of Tredinney Common then veering across to Numphra Common and on to Dowran. Reaching Leswidden, we crossed over the St. Just to Newbridge road and down Bosvargus and Tregeseal. We turned up on to the moors via Hailglower farm where we had a good canter along a lovely piece of track. Coming out on to Kenyhton Lane, we rode down No Go By hill to eventually arrive at the Queens Arms, Botallack for an excellent lunch. It was a bit of a squeeze getting us all in the car park, so we spilled out on to the road and into a paddock field adjoining the pub. After lunch we journeyed out on to the cliffs, taking in Kenidjack Castle and the fabulous sea views, then down into the pretty valley to Nancherrow and Tregeseal. From here we retraced our hoof-steps up through Bosvargus and returned by the route we came.

Despite the numbers, we managed a good and orderly pace and everyone had a lovely ride. Big thanks go to Amanda Nicholson for organising this 10 mile ride and in pleasant sunshine too!

Poldice Valley 20 February

As usual we met at the Bissoe Cycle Hire shop. This is an excellent starting point for any horse or cycle ride offering good parking and café facilities.

The sleet showers expected on this very cold day did not materialise as we set off in bright sunshine along the valley to Twelveheads. We enjoyed an early canter rising up the valley side for half a mile! We took a breather just short of the tailings dam before heading back down and through the tunnel. We continued along the valley and eventually up through Unity woods, and crossed over the Scorrier to Chacewater road and through Wheal Busy and we completed a circular route using a variety of bridleways and byways, nearly up to the Chiverton Cross roundabout. We returned to the Poldice Valley and Bissoe for refreshment. The ride was over 10 miles and enjoyed riding country very different from Penwith.

St Austell Clay Trails – Trails to Eden

The new network of 'Clay' Trails being opened around Eden and St Austell is now nearly completed ready for opening in time for Easter. The new ones are all multi-user with an excellent horse friendly surface and are horse friendly.

Imerys (formerly English China Clays) have played an important part in the provision of these trails.

We are also in the process of mapping all the other ridden paths between Indian Queens and St Austell. Hopefully Imerys will be able to open more paths on a formal basis.

In the next Horse Around

**Feature on the New Clay Trails
We will be checking them out on bike and horse.**

Bridleway Update

(See also page 6 for more bridleways cleared)

OPEN - Bridleway 6 Sancreed at Sellan has been impassable until recently. It had been blocked for some years at the road end by a large amount of earth which is thought to have been cleared off the road. The inevitable happened. The bridleway grew in and fell into disuse. The Jolly Green Giant has cleared out the growth, cleared a fallen tree that was blocking the stream crossing and with the help of West Cornwall Footpaths Preservation Society, has dug through the big earth bank and it is now reopened.

PASSABLE - Paul bridleway 13, at Lamorna Pottery is passable with care. Two more big trees came down and blocked it again but we have assisted the JGG in clearing it. The nasty ditch is still there, but riders can cross the stream a little further down. This bridleway is vital as it avoids fast traffic on the B3315. It is hoped that the County Council will have funds to restore this bridleway during the spring.

AWAITED – Rocky Lane, Bridleway 62, St Buryan (down to Lamorna). This boulder strewn bridleway has been too nasty to use by horse for some years. It is hoped that the County Council will have funds to complete long awaited repairs this spring.

CLEARED – Bridleway 1 in Towednack This is a lovely bridleway about ½ km long that runs down towards the cliffs. It was very badly overgrown it could barely be walked in places. It is now completely cleared and all the cuttings burnt (starting this job was pictured in the last Horse Around). It is now a lovely ride.

STEEL HORSE NEWS

The Thursday cyclists, "Ground Force", ride the paths and bridleways of Penwith and adjoining districts each Thursday afternoon. Typically covering 20 miles. A recent ride around Helston was billed as a wellie boot ride! We did need them as many of the bridleways were underwater and boulder strewn.

Cycling is an ideal way to survey and discover unfamiliar paths, and also a good way to keep fit. Though we do often wish we were on our horses – especially up hill!

Ken Barclay Six Challenge

This annual event was held just before Christmas, it involves cycling up the 6 most steepest hills in Penwith such as the hill up from Sennen Cove and the hill from Penberth with the nasty horrible hair pin bend. This fund-raising cycle ride raised £130 in aid of Macmillan Nurses. Well done to the 30 plus cyclists who took part.

Riding Etiquette

We all think we are responsible riders.

However we remind all riders to take particular care when passing farms or rural houses. Riding fast past entrances can result in accidents or give the occupants a fright.

We recommend that you slow down to walk in these situations. We know that access has been prejudiced on some paths because of careless riding when near properties. We want landowners and householders to welcome horse access. Much of what we ride is not protected by law so we rely on this good will.

Courtesy at all times will greatly help our cause.



20 riders assemble for our Chapel Carn Brea Hike

Did You Know? - Horse Riding is Healthy

As well as being a popular activity, horse riding is one of the best outdoor activities for burning calories. It is just beaten by mountain biking (we will vouch for that!).

The top five activities for burning calories include:

Mountain biking	480 calories
Horse riding	400 calories
Extreme walking	360 calories
Canoeing	300 calories
Windsurfing/Surfing	300 calories

Source: "Visit Britain 2003 – Great English Outdoors Offers New Hope for Gym Dropouts"



"I've never ridden such a terrible cross-country course in my life", shouted an irate and muddy competitor to a small group of spectators as she and her horse landed, having awkwardly jumped some hurdles. 'You're half a mile from the course,' one shouted back, 'This is our farmyard.'

In Brief

Horse Power

Did you know that 2.4 million people ride horses in the UK, and the associated industry make a multi-billion pound contribution to the economy, and employs around quarter of a million people? Facts like these are now getting the government to stand on its hind legs and get serious about horses.

Sign of the Times?

Do any of your local bridleway (or footpath) signs magically grow legs, unearth themselves and have a hobby of lying face down in the grass? Or maybe your local signs are more ambitious and venture into an adjacent river or stream for a swim! Perhaps you know of one which leaps off its pole and is never seen again.

If you have noticed any mysterious goings on with Public Rights of Way signs, we would be interested to know of their antics and how widespread this phenomenon is!

Pamper Your Pony

Health spa for horses. A new centre has opened in the south west at Axewater Equine Centre, Kilmington, where your horse can have a water jet bath, aromatherapy for injuries, treatment for wounds and to generally improve circulation and fitness. Apparently, this centre of excellence only costs £180 full board per week. *editor's comment:* I think I'll book myself in!

In Days of Old

Long ago, in the days of smuggling, the government employed a Riding Officer whose job it was to patrol the cliffs to look out and detect smugglers. There was 1 Riding Officer for every 10 miles of coast and where smuggling was more prevalent, 1 for every 4 miles. Although he had colleagues patrolling in a boat out at sea, it was a very lonely and hazardous job with risk to his life. The locals shunned him at best. The pay was low and he had to pay for his own horse!

It does raise the question, have we traditionally got a right to ride the coastline? Although for much of its length it would be very impractical if not scary!

Low Flying Choppers

Over past recent years, three horse riders have died as a direct result of low flying helicopters. An Inquiry into the latest death, when a horse bolted with a rider, has decided that the low flying Chinook helicopter was the cause of the rider's death when she was thrown from her horse.

The Ministry have now announced a Help Line to advise when low flying activity is planned – 0800 51 55 44 if you give your postcode. BUT ... our area is designated as a Dedicated Low Flying Area for which no specific daily information is given – that's really helpful isn't it?

DEFRA Horse Website

Visit www.defra.gov.uk/rural/horses You will find the DEFRA website much improved. It offers a single accessible information point for government policy on horses. You can get all the latest information on registering for the Single Payment scheme (see page 7). There is lots of information on all the stuff we've been banging on about, such as the Discovering Lost Ways Project, County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plans, and the British Horse Industry Confederation developing a strategy for the next 10 years.

A Hopeful Future? (for our Bridleways and Footpaths)


You may have heard that the County Council last year commissioned a survey of the condition of all the footpaths and bridleways in the County.

Although we all know of the poor state of the paths the survey was an independent report which is now being used to justify significant expenditure to improve things.

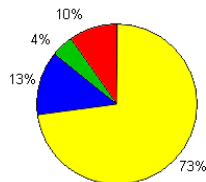
In Cornwall there are:

 **2,232 miles of footpaths**

 **363 miles of bridleways**

 **123 miles of byways
and now also**

 **239 miles of multiuser trails.**



The survey identified that there is a serious problem on average every 600 yards on our paths. The paths of Penwith are among the worst in the County.

The cost of putting these problems right is estimated to be £5.81M.

The County Council has now proposed a phased strategy to address this.

It is going to assign a priority to each path, Gold, Silver or Bronze. It is proposing to borrow over the next three years £2.01M to spend putting right the problems on the Gold Paths which will in practice be half the paths.

We hope to ensure that the majority of bridleways will be assigned the 'Gold' priority.

If the monies are forthcoming, this should mean that our bridleways will be substantially improved.

The planned capital expenditure does not require further increase to this budget and the plan is thought to have a high chance of being approved next month.

We view this potential outcome as a tremendous step forward. With our BHS hat on, we have been lobbying at all levels to get the importance of the Right of Way network and especially bridleways recognised, by the Council members. We have lobbied directly to members, via our local MP (Andrew George) who has been very supportive, and also directly to The Rt Hon Alun Michael (Minister for Rural Affairs and the Horse).

We hope at last our efforts and the efforts of our footpaths colleagues have come to fruition.

We have been successful in that the RoW budget has been preserved over the last 3 years and with a special supplement this year.

This exercise does not of course address the 55% of the paths we ride that are not designated as bridleways and are not protected in anyway. This issue will hopefully be addressed to some extent by the Countryside Agency's 'Discovering Lost Ways Project'. We are lobbying hard to get the project to look at Cornwall at an early date.

What We Have Achieved?

The great step forward we the WPBA have made and together working in our BHS role, is the raising of the importance of our paths and especially bridleways. The County Council Countryside Service now has a totally pro-horse policy. All new trails are going to be multi-user wherever possible. There are not any such Trails yet in Penwith but our first target is to establish such a trail over the moors to St Just along the old 'Tinner's Way'.

Highlighting the poor state of our paths and bridleways at every opportunity and noting their importance to the local economy has resulted in the initiative by the County Council that is also reported on this page.

PAROW, Penwith Access and RoW forum which we pioneered together with the West Cornwall Footpaths Preservation Society, the Ramblers and Penwith District Council is a resounding success.

We have employed our paths officer Jolly Green Giant , Chris Fry, and he has done astounding work. Bridleways have figured highly in his work programme. He has done major clearance on nearly 4 miles of bridleways, and reopened some that have not been open for many years. Clearing does mean cutting back to full width, so that the parishes should be able to maintain them in the future.

The bridleways he has cleared/reopened include:

Towednack 1
Towednack 32
Ludgvan 7
Paul 13
Sancreed 6
Sancreed 28 (ridden path over Bosvenning Common)
St Levan 52
Paul 27
Paul 28 (from Sheffield)

The County Council are supporting PAROW both with equipment and financial help, and view the project as a great success.

What Else?

Two thirds of the paths and tracks we ride are not designated as bridleways and therefore can be lost at any time. There is no quick fix to this problem but we must be vigilant and be prepared to act swiftly if any routes are threatened.

We are working with the County Council and liaising with the Countryside Agency to try and find practical ways forward with these problems.

'Discovering Lost Ways' in Penwith

Do you know of any paths or tracks that seem to have gone into disuse? The reason could be lack of maintenance, grown in, or rubbish or other obstruction has effectively closed the route. If so, please let us know. We may not be able to magically come and get it opened up, but we may well want to consider it for a future project.

RDA Help Wanted

Can you spare the occasional Monday or Wednesday morning? Riding for the disabled sessions at Old Mill Stables, Lelant, do need extra help so that more can benefit from this activity. No experience required – Please phone Heather on 01736 796059 if you are able to help with these rewarding sessions.

The Safety of our Bridleways

You will remember reading in the last Horse Around how the County Council had closed the bridge on Bridleway No 26, Sancreed, on safety grounds, when there was no obvious danger to riders or walkers.

We were justly aggrieved when we see much more serious problems on our bridleways that are not being attended to. The boulders on the Porthcurno bridleway are just one example, deep bogs are another common occurrence and can be a nasty danger to horses.

We have now drawn these issues to the attention of the County Council staff, who genuinely do not appreciate how dangerous situations can be when you are on your horse and especially in confined situations with other hazards present.

The Council are now acknowledging that such 'unsafe' problems should not be ignored. The CC has said "If a situation is reported as dangerous we should be responding to it." This may result in a 6 month closure notice until remedial work can be carried out, but at least it puts the problem high up on their priority list.

(You may now have noticed that the Porthcurno bridleway has been officially closed to equine users until the problems are sorted.)

Payment for Land Grazed by Horses

Farmers are now being paid for managing the land whereas before they were given subsidies for produce. Under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Single Payment scheme if you own land (a minimum of 0.3 hectares), you are eligible to apply for a subsidy. The amount landowners are entitled to will be paid per hectare and is likely to be paid during the first half of 2006. Defra Minister Alun Michael, says that this payout demonstrates the Government's commitment to boost the role of the horse in British society. The payments will only apply to land grazed and kept in "good agricultural condition". You need to register your land with the Rural Land Register before applying. Application packs and guidance notes can be obtained from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) at the end of March but must be submitted by 16 May 2005. **If you don't register now it will result in forfeiting any opportunity to claim.** The RPA can be contacted on 0845 601 8045. You will need to observe all the Single Payment Scheme Cross-Compliance rules. (see last newsletter for further information)

I used to run a riding school, but business kept falling off!!

BHS new changes in the top 3 jobs – New Brooms Sweep Clean

We are optimistic about the recent changes at the top. The new Chief Exec., Graham Cory has come from the Government Horse Industry Team and Noel Edmonds has now taken over from Princess Anne as President.

Noel has positive plans to recruit more members. (so the BHS can be much more influential in promoting improving access to the countryside.) In his call to action Noel explained: "Just imagine how much more influential the BHS could be in terms of promoting equine welfare, raising equestrian standards, improving access to the countryside and strengthening dialogue with the Government if our membership was numbered in hundreds of thousands."

Graham Cory is seeking to employ a "Director of Access" He wants to recruit an access specialist as this is the area where there is greatest scope for the BHS to make a real difference. Graham is totally committed to increasing the effectiveness of the BHS as is the newly appointed Chairman, Patrick Print who is also committed to improving equestrian access.

SMA – A Skating Rink for Horses?

You may be aware that the CC Highways Authority, despite being aware of problems, is extending the use of the Stone Mastic Asphalt (SMA) on our roads.

SMA is laid by an efficient one step process - this is its great attraction. However it is like glass to ride on.

We have recently seen it put down on the North Coast Road near Zennor and further along towards Morvah. It has also appeared on the Old Coach Road near Lelant and on Primrose Hill in Goldsithney.

After resurfacing the County Council are erecting signs saying "Slippery Surface" and these signs will remain for six months!

With wear the surface supposedly improves - BUT not for riders, as we ride the bits the cars do not.

The reports I am receiving indicate that the surface is unridable even on the flat even with studs in! Our fear is of injury to horse and/or rider, and riders being unable to use more and more of our roads. Up until now it had only appeared on the faster roads such as the A30 which are not extensively ridden.

The problems of this surface are widely recognised, and there was a BBC report on it quite recently. Its use is being severely limited on the continent but in the UK its use seems to be spreading regardless of the concerns of Riders and Motorists alike.

Please do let us know of your experience of roads recently surfaced with SMA or of any slippery roads that are preventing you riding safely.

I have had a lengthy discussion at high level within the Highways Department and further liaison has been promised.

If you have direct experience and concerns please report the problems to Dave Simpson, the Divisional Surveyor for Penwith, at the County Council.

Please also let me know of your experiences of SMA and other slippery road surfaces.

Adrian