

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



FREE TO MEMBERS

No. 15 LATE SUMMER/AUTUMN 2005

Hello Everyone,

We hope you enjoyed the Spring newsletter, a bumper issue of 7 pages. We thought it was only going to be a quick flyer, but it just kept on growing!

At the AGM we had an excellent talk on natural remedies from Equus Health with the opportunity to buy herbal and homeopathy products. Eclipse Equestrian can supply the Equus products. Adrian ran a short screen presentation of the bridleway clearance work including old re-opened tracks done by Chris (the Jolly Green Giant) and volunteers.

After a very successful and enjoyable season of running horse hikes we broke for Summer and will resume in September. Our new ride from Poligga, taking in the newly opened old bridleway (cleared by the JGG) above Porthcurno and the NT renovated bridleway that comes up from Porthcurno beach path was a great success. These two newly opened bridleways give some much needed joined up riding for horse owners in St Levan. For us, riding took a back seat during the hot dry weather for rug washing and stable 'decorating' and generally getting some outside jobs done.

With the advent of the good news from the County Council who are now poised to actually spend some money on restoring our bridleways – we are now hoping to see a little bit less paper and more action! (Adrian has been frantically busy producing a one line report on every bridleway in the county to secure priority attention.) The busy round of meetings haven't stopped either. It has been essential to attend new road scheme meetings to ensure existing riding routes are catered for. There was a time when riding needs would have been ignored; now authorities consult us. Times are changing; there is definitely a positive recognition for providing equestrian routes. Adrian has also had his five minutes of fame doing a live Radio Cornwall interview on the proposed Kernow Horse Trail and then an interview on Westcountry TV on the dangers of Ragwort.

Since the May election, we now have a new Minister for Rural Affairs, Jim Knight. Let's hope he wears shining armour and rides a good "white charger"! His first engagement was meeting the BHS so it all looks very promising and his wife rides. Now that we have exhaustively pressed our case for improved riding in Cornwall, we are once again focusing on local Penwith riding issues to secure joined-up riding.

Finally, if you have not renewed your membership for this year, this is the last Horse Around you will receive. (A reminder is enclosed for those of you who have overlooked this little important matter.) *BHS tell us we are not far off being the biggest bridleways group in the country!* We hope we can count on you for your continued support.

See you on a horse hike. Margaret



Outside the Kings Arms, Paul on the Drift Horse Hike earlier this year.

(you may have seen this photo in the Cornishman)

In This Issue

CC Strategy for our Bridleways
Horse Hike Reports
Autumn Programme
Clay Trails Review
Ride-UK
Dog Issues
And more

WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

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Horse Hike from Polgigga

Finding good riding is a challenge, despite our very rural environment, so it was good to try out a new ride starting from Polgigga. My fears of disappointment were allayed as it turned out to be a very enjoyable 3 hour, nearly 9 mile ride.

We set off down to Porthgwarra where we gave into an early ice cream stop. The weather being so lovely, we enjoyed just sitting on our horses looking at the surrounding scenery and out to sea. We proceeded towards the coastguards station at Gwennap Head then took the bridleway across the downs to eventually emerge at Arden-Sawah. Passing the starting point at Polgigga, we took the road to Treen and finally turned off to Trendrennen Farm. Here we christened the newly opened lost bridleway that runs out from the farm to the cliff meeting up with the coastal bridleway above Porthcurno. Without this old bridleway, our circular ride would not have been possible and we thank St. Levan Parish Council and PAROW and volunteers for working so hard to reopen it. We turned left and followed the beautiful coastal bridleway to Treen and stopped for refreshments at the Logan Rock Inn.

Back in the saddle, we retraced our hoof steps back out to the coastal bridleway continuing on to Treen cliff and the famous Logan Rock. Here we turned around and headed back for Porthcurno. We continued along the newly renovated section of the cliff bridleway and descended to Porthcurno. It has been difficult and dangerous to use by horses for many years. Despite the renovation work because of the nature of the path you still do have take care going down it. Crossing the beach path, we came out on the St. Levan road to the Minack theatre. What a view from horseback down on to Porthcurno beach and the Logan Rock beyond as you ride up the hill. We turned right on to a bridleway and followed the crest of the valley - still retaining fabulous views - before rejoining the Porthcurno road and returning to Polgigga. Dawn Jackson gets the award for "Champion Gate Opener and Closer" from horseback. It was a truly excellent horse hike and we have put it on our programme again.



Ice Cream Stop at Porthgwarra

Penwith Parishes Apologise for Late Cut

You may have noticed that many of our paths and bridleways are very overgrown and have not been trimmed. Several parishes have been let down by their contractors. This and the exceptional growth this year has been bad news for our paths. Particular parishes affected are Madron, Sancreed and Paul. We are working through PAROW and the County Council and the parishes to ensure that paths are trimmed in good time next year.

Autumn 2005

Programme of Horse Hikes

Please note these dates in your diary now

Organiser
or Contact

UU	Lizard (Mullion)	4 Sept	Alison L.
U/UU	St Just	17/18 Sept	Sue & H
U	Madron	24/25 Sept	M & A
UU	Tehidy	1/2 Oct	M & A
U	BHS Fun Ride (Nr Chacewater)	9 Oct	Details from Adrian
UU	Drift Dam	15/16 Oct	M & A
UU	Gwinear	29/30 Oct	M & A
U	Polgigga	12/13 Nov	M & A
UU	Chapel Carn Brea	26/27 Nov	Amanda
UU	Halamanning	10/11 Dec	M & A
U/UU	Xmas Cracker	17/18 Dec	Amanda

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.

Contacts:

Alison Lugg 01326 2415 (For the Lizard Ride please phone A&M before 3 Sept as Alison is away)

Amanda 871876 Sue and Howard 788125

Margaret and Adrian Tel: 795098

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!

Grazing Site is "Dish of the Day"

Shetland ponies have been given "grazing rights" in the grounds of Goonhilly Satellite Earth Station. The BT environmental experiment by BT and English Nature is being carried out among the giant dishes at the 160 acre site on the Lizard. The ponies are being used to control some of the complex's luxuriant heathland vegetation. It is designated as an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest. Ed. Comment: If the native Goonhilly pony hadn't been allowed to die out they wouldn't have had the problem!

Horse Hike on the Lizard

Six of us ventured over to the Lizard for a horse hike from Mullion - a new venue for us. The mist cleared to reveal a sunny day. Recent rain had made the bridleway tracks quite muddy, making the going quite technical in places. We forded small rivers and streams, and the valley sides were sometimes very rocky and steep. There was standing water in many places across Predannack Downs. We eventually reached the valley head of Kynance Cove and the famous Steeple Rock towering beyond the cleft of the valley came into view.

We journeyed on to Lizard village green where we stopped for drinks and ice cream, whilst the horses were delighted with the lush grass car park. The area was nearly full of cars and plenty of people were out enjoying the bank holiday weekend. Our return took us back to Kynance then we varied our route and skirted around the perimeter of the old Predannack airfield before rejoining our outward bound track. We had lovely views out to sea and across the moorland, managed by English Nature who have way-marked the riding routes. There were 7 bridleway gates between Kynance and Mullion. Dawn on Missy got plenty of practise opening them whilst yours truly on Roana got plenty of practice shutting them!

In spite of difficult terrain we were able to have some canters. However, we were in no hurry because everyone was enjoying the sights and sounds of the moor. It was late afternoon by the time we got back to our trailers. A big thank you to Alison Lugg for an excellent 12.5 mile ride out in beautiful coastal scenery. **For those who missed out, we are repeating it as the first Horse Hike on our programme.**

Poldice Valley

A small group of members went up to the Poldice Valley to explore a new ride. We met at the usual place, the cycle hire centre at Bissoe, to test out a new hike for our winter programme. We rode a new circular route and we have discovered some excellent new bridleway tracks, returning via Chacewater.

Camel Trekking on the Lizard

Eight camels from Bulgaria, but originally from the Gobi desert, have been shipped to Cornwall and are being trained up to start a camel trekking Centre later this year at Goonhilly on the Lizard. We wish the enterprise every success as any business that can show bridleways as important is bound to help our cause.

Anyone interested in trying a Camel Trek please let me know and I will organise something - Margaret

Attention 'Camel' Riders

Horse riding on the top part of the Camel trail from Boscarne Junction to Poley's bridge up through the wood, has been approved for another year. Apparently it will be reviewed annually. Also, it is planned for some horse trails to be opened up in the nearby woods.

Words of wisdom: A horse is a horse, but a Camel is a horse designed by a committee!!

THE TEHIDY RIDE

The day started off with me being late, due to my so-called short cut through Hayle town, (thinking it would be quiet on a Sunday) and getting stuck in a traffic jam due to road works. I was also unsure of the exact location of the car park, having never been there before and I didn't really want to take the horse box down a bumpy track towards the cliff and then get stuck.

Luckily Brenda and Denise were riding up the track so I knew I was in the right place. Adrian had ordered the weather yet again and we finally set off for the woods about 11.30a.m.



The woods were fairly busy with lots of dogwalkers, parents with children on bikes and babies in pushchairs but everybody made way for each other with smiling faces. The ride brought back memories of many years ago when I used to ride race horses for an old boss of mine in Gwinear around the same bridleways, but had long since forgotten that they had existed.

We had a nice meander through the woods and some nice long canters on the bridleways. Adrian managed to get us lost at one point but nobody seemed to mind and all was resumed and on we rode, (you just can't rely on the staff these days).!!!

All in all we all had an excellent ride on a beautiful sunny day and I am sure we are all looking forward to the next one. Many Thanks to Adrian and Margaret.

Dawn Jackson

In Days of Old

Did you know the reason we all get on our horses from the left side is because in days of old when the cavalry mounted up they did not want to throw their left leg over the horse's back because their sword, worn on the left leg, would get in the way!

Charles Wesley who founded methodism rode around Cornwall going from chapel to chapel preaching. Every chapel had a stable for the preacher's horse.

JOKE: Why did the Pony cough? He was a little hoarse! Neigh Neigh!

Are there any TRECkies out there?

Anyone interested in TREC and keen to help organise a competition here in West Cornwall, please contact Michelle Roule 762 339 as she would like to get a novice level TREC competition started down here.

STEEL HORSE NEWS

We attended the Cycle Forum at County Hall. It was reported that cycling has increased by 11% since 1999. Cornwall CC hope to treble cycling in the county by 2011. The CC are promoting and facilitating a better county network. Attractive and safe routes are having an effect of increasing kids cycling to school. In September, CCC will be promoting a government initiative launching a 40% discount for employers who join the "Blue" scheme where they will be able to buy bikes and associated accessories and provision if they sign up to the scheme. The scheme will be in association with bike suppliers such as Halfords.

The St Austell Clay Trails

Take your bike but leave your horse at home (for now at least).

We checked out the new Clay Trails on Mountain bikes. We parked at Bugle and cycled to the Eden project. This part of the trail shadowed the main busy road but was interesting. It was immediately obvious that this was essentially a trail designed for easy cycling with horses allowed on it rather as an after-thought. The whole trail is the work of Sustrans and although most is not tarmaced the surface could be softer for horses, although local riders are only too grateful to be able to escape the busy roads and have somewhere to ride off-road.

From the Eden project the trail skirts around many spectacular clay pits and mica dams and the scenery is stunning, but the trail surface makes for mundane adventure cycling and you're in danger of 'loosing' your rear wheel on the bends. Where it is wide enough the horse riders have got off the track in search of softer ground and to try and have a canter. There are lots of places where a nice canter track could have been put alongside the hard trail both improving the safety aspect by not mixing speeding cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders. I would say it is a little steep in some places for the average family to take their small children on bikes. (One Dad was exhausted towing his little sprog!) Coming back from Wheal Martyn there is a killer of a hill that even we had to get off and push and I am sure some horse-riders will find it pretty scary to ride down. We are hoping the trails will 'mellow' with time.

There are going to be more linked trail developments especially when the planned new A391 link road is completed. The old A30 at Goss Moor is going to be dug up and an separate equestrian and cycle routes are to be created. This should be completed by 2007.

Other Trails

In the Tamar valley, 60 Kms of trails and cycle paths have been approved. It is planned to build a new bridge near Gunnislake to take the off-road traffic including horse riders.

**JOKE: Why couldn't the mountain bike stand up?
Because it was two tired!**

Ride UK - The Kernow Horse Trail

The longstanding aim of our association and the British Horse Society is to establish a Horse Trail from Lands End to the Devon Border under the BHS RideUK initiative. The great problem in establishing such trails is obtaining the funding necessary to plan and take the project forward. The County Council has had good success in establishing trails on the back of the County's mining heritage, as is seen by the trails around Redruth and the Poldice Valley.

The County Council have now helped us to hopefully kick start the project by hiring a consultant to prepare a professional bid for DEFRA funds to plan the Trail.

The bid has now been submitted and we await the outcome. The case for the trail is strong based on both the need and the benefit to the rural economy, but the outcome of the bid is by no means certain.

The aim of the Trail is to provide a safe horse route from Lands End to the Devon Border using off-road tracks and bridleways where possible and also quiet lanes. It would also provide spur links to other trails and local bridleways.

Our Bridleways Network – Strategy for the Future

As we reported in the last Horse Around the County Council is to spend £2.01M on renovating the County's Bridleways and Footpaths.

Unfortunately the money will be spent only on 'High Priority' paths and secondly the money is borrowed and has to be paid back out of future income.

All paths have been allocated a priority of Gold, Silver or Bronze. We have made a very strong case that most bridleways should be Gold, and further that ALL bridleways should be safe to use, this particularly means that gates should be hinged and openable.

We have not yet seen the final priority assignments but will do shortly. Work will start in October.

If the money is spent wisely and future maintenance is carefully planned we should see significant improvements to the County's bridleways.

STOP PRESS

PAROW (Penwith Access and Rights Of Way Forum)

Funding has just been secured for the continued employment of our "Jolly Green Giant", Chris Fry who has been doing tremendous work in re-opening many of our bridleways and paths.

The funding is coming from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Sustainable Development Fund. (Most of Penwith is classified as an AONB).

PAROW will continue to work closely with, but independent from the County Council in the improvement and maintenance of our paths.

The Broomfield Sanctuary

You may not have heard of us as we're only a small charity and insurance premiums are so high that we can't afford public liability cover to guarantee visitor safety. However, visitors are always welcome providing they accept our situation and join a guided tour. (Just ring us on 788 320 the evening before.)

We started in 1986, so celebrate 20 years next year and hope to publish a small book telling the stories. The first 12 years we moved 5 times because we could only get short leases but in 1998 we were kindly left fields and a stone barn at Croft-an-Vounder, next to Geevor mine. For the first time we were able to put down roots and feel settled!

We currently have 14 horses and ponies, 4 goats and 1 sheep and run membership adoption and fostering schemes to aid fund-raising. Alongside the usual fund-raising events, occasionally we are left a legacy and then we catch up on repairs and refurbishments. We have two full-time voluntary workers and are always happy for outside help with the day-to-day care work. If anyone has free time to fill and this applies to fund-raising as well, please contact Liz on the above number for more information and we will send you our coloured leaflets.

Liz Jupe

AntiSocial Behaviour Legislation

You will have heard much about ASBOs in the media relating to problems in urban areas. The legislation is however equally applicable and useful in the countryside and for some problems on Rights of Way where the problems are persistent.

ASBO Act 2003

This powerful legislation is designed to protect the individual or community from harassment, alarm or distress and to enable peoples' expectations of quality of life. The Bill is in 10 parts and covers everything from Leylandi high hedges blocking out neighbours right to light (6ft. max.) and nuisance neighbours to dogs running out at horses on bridleways and motorbikes illegally scrambling. The Act can even over-ride the European Human Rights Legislation.

Not every area has an ASBO officer and we in Cornwall are lucky to have one serving Penwith and Kerrier. The ASBO Police Officer can act on our behalf. Once a written complaint has been sent to the perpetrator, evidence is collected of further mis-deed and the Officer can seek an order from the Court for the perpetrator to abide by certain conditions. Eg. Not to ride a motorbike in West Cornwall again – the order can be that severe. Apparently one in 3 people have a problem with antisocial behaviour and it is now a national priority and is taken seriously.

If you have a persistent problem and normal remedies have failed the ASBO Officer may be contacted via Penwith District Council.

In Brief

Dartmoor Ponies Under Threat

The true pure bred indigenous Dartmoor Pony whose numbers are now fewer than 500, making it rarer than the Giant Panda. A campaign has been launched to raise funds to help maintain its presence on Dartmoor. See www.dartmoorponytrust.com

Donkeys Rights

Blackpool Council have been considering Donkeys working conditions before the start of the Blackpool beach donkey ride season. They work an 8 hour day and a 48 hour week maximum and must have an hour off for lunch. This can be staggered to take account of the tide and the busyness. They are given the whole of Friday off; a bye law that has been in place for Donkey's years! There have been donkeys on Blackpool beach since Victorian times.

'Billy' Bridge?!

A new footbridge being built at the new Wembley football stadium is going to be named after a police horse that effectively dealt with pitch invasions in the 1960s. In a decisive poll, "Billy" the horse, beat off all the footballing greats such as Bobby Charlton!

BHS FUN Ride 9th October

We are organising this ride around Poldice and Chacewater for BHS Cornwall

Please do support it. Details – Adrian 795098

Bare Foot Racing

A racing training yard at Salsbury Plain in Wiltshire is using natural horsemanship alternative methods to train up race horses. They have taken on training many race horses who have not run well or have never won a race. The trainers allow the horses to be horses – roaming out in the field for most of the day instead of stabled. They don't wear shoes. They undergo stamina training and use the "sea-walker machine". A round horse walker cage partly filled with seawater. They also use a little known therapy (Kenisiology?) that claims you 'talk' to the horse to find out what ails him. Apparently he dips his withers when asked questions. It may all sound rather balmy but nevertheless interesting, as the horses are responding and doing much better in racing.

Heavy Horse at Porthcurno



Robert Eddy And Murphy Working on the Bridleway at Porthcurno

Dogs on Bridleways

We all face unexpected hazards when we ride. Unfortunately dogs are one of these. Many dogs are well used to horses and are no problem but as we all know dogs behind fences or chained near or on bridleways can cause surprise and problems.

We have had a couple of nasty incidents that could have resulted in a serious accident where dogs have run out at horse-riders and attacked the horses' legs. In one case the dog was chained up across the bridleway and the chain got wrapped around the horse's legs whilst another dog attacked both horse and rider.

It is important that such incidents are reported as if the problem persists serious injury can occur.

The County Council Countryside Service need to know because it may not be just you that has experienced the problem.

Please report any problems on bridleways to the Countryside Service Tel 01872 222 000. It is especially important to report any problems that affect your safety eg. Gates which cannot be easily opened whilst you hold your horse.

The police will also help if you report a persistent dog problem to them. Also Penwith District Council employs Dog Wardens and they are able to help in these situations.

Dogs and the Law

Many of us own dogs and most dog owners are responsible and anticipate and prevent problems. It is however useful to be aware of the law.

Under the Dangerous Dogs Act of 1989, if a dog is dangerously out of control in a public place the owner of a dog is guilty of an offence. If the dog while so out of control injures any person, is guilty of an aggravated offence. If a dog causes injury, the keeper of the animal is liable for damages in civil law if it can be shown that the animal's dangerous characteristics were known to the keeper, if it can be proved that the dog had previously caused injury or shown a tendency to attack and that the keeper was aware of this. (This is why it is important to inform the Police/County Council so that it can be officially recorded and to ensure that the animal's potentially dangerous characteristics are known to the keeper.)

The test of whether a dog is dangerous has been held to be:

- If it has a propensity to do certain acts; and
- If these acts are dangerous.

Where a dog effectively prevents use of a way, for example by standing in the middle of a path facing oncomers with snarls and bared teeth, or where it merely frightens users, for example by running round them barking in a threatening manner, it constitutes a public nuisance at common law, since the dog impedes the free use of the way. Such conduct may also constitute an obstruction of the highway.

At the very least, it is an infringement of your right to enjoy unimpeded passage of the right of way.

RIDING MAPS

Our Riding Maps of Penwith and beyond are available as usual. Please contact Adrian for details.

Ridden Paths and the Definitive Map.

As we have mentioned previously over half the paths that we ride and which we rely on to avoid the busy roads are not bridleways on the Definitive Map. As such they are not directly protected as ridden paths in law. Many of these paths are 'white lanes' (as shown on the map) but have never been recorded as bridleways, byways or roads. – Their status has just been forgotten in time. Some of the tracks we ride are defined as footpaths.

Is there a problem? The majority of these non-definitive paths we ride are ridden without problem – UNTIL something changes, which causes a landowner to want to stop riders.

This can often happen when a property adjoining a lane or track is sold. A new owner often unaware of the paths ridden history then stops riders. Many paths throughout the county are being affected in this way.

It is most important that all the paths we ride and rely on are recorded onto the definitive map. But doing so can be a cumbersome legal process.

Discovering Lost Ways

The Government recognises the problem (it is a country wide problem) and has set up the "Discovering Lost Ways Project" to help put many historic paths back onto the map. The project is coming to look at Cornwall soon, BUT we do not believe this project will address all or even many of our missing routes and links. We are trying to find out exactly how the project plans to work with local groups.

Modification Orders

Modification Orders can be applied for to put a bridleway onto the definitive map, but to apply for an Order we have to supply statements by "witnesses" showing that the path has been used freely as a bridleway for ideally a minimum of 20 years.

Generally such Orders are only applied for when use of a route is challenged. However witness evidence is then often difficult to find because people are moving about the county more and the older generations who used many of these paths are getting fewer.

We, as an association, think it is now time to apply for more of the paths we ride to be put on the map as bridleways. We will think carefully of which to apply for. We are aware that the issue can be sensitive. We want to work carefully with local riders and landowners where possible in this process.

If you are concerned about particular paths and think they should be officially designated as bridleways please do let us know. Or, do you know of any land owners who may be willing to dedicate a path as a bridleway? We do need your help in working on this issue at a local level.