

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



FREE TO MEMBERS

No. 16 WINTER 2005/2006

Straight From the Horses Mouth

We have all felt the first icy blast of winter with more predicted. Let's hope we all get through the winter routine happily. Our Autumn horse hikes got off to a great start with a trip to the Lizard led by Alison Lugg. The tracks and bridledways across the Downs over to Kynance are fantastic. This was quickly followed by Sue's ride around St. Just – always excellent, and we enjoyed the extra up and down bits! It was great to welcome riders and new members from the Redruth area on the Tehidy Woods ride. Madron was a new venue and run on a Saturday to avoid Sunday worshippers.

We continue to welcome more cyclists to join us in support of improving off-road riding for 'one and all'. Those of you who got the Rights of Way Improvement Plan questionnaire (either by email or snail mail) I do hope you managed to fill it in and send it off – you've only got until the 16 December to complete it.

This edition of Horse Around covers many County-Wide issues. These developments hopefully are going to have great impact on our local facilities, over the next few years. There is also much work to do locally to ensure we do maximise the benefits from the various initiatives. We are working at both ends of the spectrum - grass roots and top down. We do need your continued help and support! Information from members, on the paths you ride, and the problems you encounter is vital. Anyone who would like to get more directly involved and help us, please do contact me.

However it is now Christmas time and we will be running the Christmas Cracker ride as is our tradition, as always weather permitting. It's not manic or raucous, despite the pub stops – just come along and get into the Christmas spirit and enjoy a social and scenic ride, with as much tinsel as you like.

In similar vain our usual Xmas pub evening, at the Engine Inn, Nancledra, is a good chance to meet other members, have a good chat and maybe order a fleece or sweatshirt with our own horsey logo. We look forward to seeing you there.

If we don't see you at the Engine Inn or on the Xmas Cracker Ride, We wish you a very happy Christmas - Margaret



**Christmas Drink
at the Engine Inn,**
Cripplensease, Nancledra

**Tuesday
13th December**



Please come and join us for a Christmas drink 7-30pm onwards. Bring a friend, non-members very welcome.
Margaret and Adrian

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and - STOP PRESS! RIDE-UK
and more ...**

**Christmas Cracker Ride
18th December**

St Just



WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

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Horse Hike from Madron

We met at Madron which was a new venue for a ride. Our ride took us right over the moors to the North Coast Road.

We set off down the bridleway past the kennels and eventually emerged at Gear Lane, and following quiet lanes we soon arrived at Tredinneck. At Greenbarrow mine, we arranged to meet up with Dawn Jackson who was leading the ride over the moor. The weather was overcast and quiet but it was so clear we could see fantastic views of Mounts Bay stretching out from Cudden Point to Clements Isle, Mousehole, and the stark distinct outline of the Lizard beyond. We were joined by Linda a local rider who was very keen to come along and enjoy company.

From Greenbarrow mine, Dawn lead us up to The Nine Maidens Stone Circle, recently restored. The path no longer goes straight through the centre of the circle but to the side to protect this ancient site. We hope all horse-riders will observe this. Riding on to Carn Galver, we were treated to a splendid view of the north coast. We descended the tricky and difficult path down to Bosigran. This is not a very horse-friendly track and needs a lot of care. (This path is on the CCs schedule for Gold priority.) However, the horses seem to develop a 'fifth leg' to cope with the awkward terrain.

A short bit of coast road brought us to the bridleway leading up to the observatory on Watch Croft, and we continued on past Dakota. We were soon heading past Men-an-Tol and Four Parishes before returning to Ding Dong mine for more panoramic views from what seemed like the top of the world.

Heading back to Madron we turned off the main Madron road down to Boswarva and where we picked up the bridleway running across Trengwainton Carn. We arrived back in Madron having completed a 10.7 mile ride. One member Sandra hadn't ridden the moor for years and was thrilled to have completed what had been an epic 12 mile ride for her.

The Gwinear Ride

The weather was perfect as we met at Gwinear church. We were a little early and consequently our horses were a little wound up by the ringing of the bells. As we set off our horses settled down. The six of us started off down the bridleway from Gwinear Lane through Lanyon to Higher Trevaskis and over the bridleways on Polmenor Downs and on to Penhale Farm and moor. We then reached Barripper via Halgarrack Farm. From Barripper we returned via Old Mill lane bridleway through Roseworthy Barton and eventually ending up on the bridleway through Lanyon and back to our starting point.

This was a lovely ride with lots of open views of the countryside and glimpses of St Ives Bay. Adrian led us through lots of hamlets and we enjoyed lots of canters up grassy tracks with opportunities for some of our group for a faster pace. Considering all the rain there was only one boggy section towards the end of the ride. This was my first ride with the bridleways group and it was a well planned route and an opportunity to explore bridleways that I had never been on before. All in all we had an excellent ride on a beautiful sunny Sunday and I am looking forward to the next one. The horse hikes are an excellent opportunity to get out with other horsey people and enjoy the beautiful countryside around us whilst also ensuring that bridleway use is promoted. Thanks to Adrian and Margaret.

Tracey Beasley

Winter 2006

Programme of Horse Hikes

Please note these dates in your diary now

Organiser
or Contact

UU	Halamanning	10/11 Dec	M & A
U	Xmas Cracker	17/18 Dec	Amanda
UU	Polgigga	14/15 Jan	M & A
UU	Gwinear	28/29 Jan	M & A
UU	Drift Dam	11/12 Feb	M & A
UU	Poldice Valley	18/19 Feb	M & A
U to UU	Madron	25/26 Feb	M&A /Dawn
UU	Chapel Carn Brea	11/12 Mar	Amanda
U	Nancludra	18/19 Mar	M & A
U to UU	St Just	25/26 Mar	Sue and Howard

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. Keen Horsehikers may like to check with M&A as extra rides may be organised to demand.

Contacts:

Amanda tel: 01736 871876 Sue and Howard tel: 01736 788125
Margaret and Adrian tel: 01736 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!

RIDE-UK Stop Press

With our BHS hats on, we have just been informed that the Ride-UK project for Cornwall has been successful in its application for a grant towards the planning and feasibility stage of the project to establish the Kernow Horse Trail between Lands End and the Devon Border.

The total grant monies awarded for this stage of the project is £25,000. £15,000 is from European funds and £10,000 from the County Council's Local Transport Plan's (LTP) funding. The European funding is awarded on the basis of the potential benefits of the trail to local businesses.

We will be working on this project with the County Council over the coming year, and we will give you more details in the next issue of Horse Around.

We thank the County Council's Environment and Heritage Department and the Highways Department for their work and support which has now enabled this project to move forward.

A huge thank you to our members and local businesses who wrote letters of support for the application for funding.

Adrian

At Last Work is Starting on our Bridleways and Paths

As we reported in the last Horse Around the County Council is spending £2M restoring many of our paths over the next three years.

The Council in liaison with parishes and user groups has allocated priority of Gold Silver or Bronze to all paths in the County (Footpaths Bridleways and Byways).

The Gold paths total about half of all the paths. We have campaigned hard and presented good reasons why most bridleways must be Gold. Our sound arguments have been accepted and nearly all the bridleways in the County are now going to be cleared and made usable and safe over the next three years.

There are a few bridleways that are very important which have not been assigned Gold. This is generally because they do not quite connect to the road on the definitive map, despite being extensively used. We do hope to get these bridleways included in the renovation programme; our case is very strong.

All 'Gold' bridleways will be properly cleared to full width and height. Gates will be made openable and safe. Bogs and other dangerous surface features will be attended to.

There will be no large scale resurfacing. The natural bridleway surfaces will not be disturbed where they are safe and usable. Once brought up to standard the plan is that they will be kept clear and in good condition.

The renovations in each district are being carried out according to a parish by parish schedule

The Timetable for the parishes in Penwith is:

Oct-Dec 2005
Marazion, St Michaels Way
Jan-Mar 2006
Perranuthnoe, Ludgvan
Apr-Jun 2006
Penzance, Paul
July-Sept 2006
St Buryan, St Levan
Oct-Dec 2006
Sennen, St Just
Jan-Mar 2007
Morvah, Zennor
Apr-Jun 2007
Towednack, St Ives
July-Sept 2007
Hayle, G-G
Oct-Dec 2007
St Erth, St Hilary
Jan-Mar 2008
Madron, Sancreed
Apr-Sept 2008
Complete outstanding works

Rights of way Improvement Plan

All County Councils are mandated under the CROW Act 2000 to produce a plan for the future of the Paths Network in each County.

As many of you will be aware there is a consultation in progress for what the general public, users, organisations and businesses would like to see for the future of the Footpaths and Bridleways Network.

We on behalf of West Penwith Bridleways Association and also separately on behalf of the British Horse Society are making a detailed representation to Cornwall County Council on behalf of the horse riders, cyclists and other bridleway users in Cornwall.

Essentially the most important requirement is a county-wide network of safe riding routes providing connections between communities and parishes and with many 'circular' routes for localised leisure riding.

We also want our ridden paths protected in law for ourselves and future generations. More than half of the paths we currently ride are not definitive bridleways and half the definitive bridleways rely on non-definitive paths to connect and use them.

We hope that the plan as well as identifying the requirements looks carefully at the practicalities of providing solutions. The biggest problem of all such plans is that delivery of results costs money. The government via DEFRA wants to see an improved and sustainable rights of way network but how much money it will be able to contribute remains to be seen.

However a good plan which clearly identifies and justifies the need is a very important step. It is most important that the CC gets a very clear message from horseriders (and cyclists) how desperate we are for a proper bridleway network.



Cornwall's Rights of Way Improvement Plan



We Need Your Views!

Do you get out and enjoy Cornwall's Countryside
(or would you like to but find it difficult...)?

Cornwall benefits from a beautiful and varied countryside which is enjoyed by both local people and visitors. Public paths, including public rights of way, promoted trails and the Cornish Way cycling network are important ways to access the Cornish countryside. The network allows people not only to exercise and explore the countryside but also to commute and access essential local amenities. However, resources are limited and hard decisions have to be made about future priorities. Cornwall County Council is currently preparing a Rights of Way Improvement Plan addressing all linear access networks in the countryside, including permissive paths and links to Open Access Land. We need your user input to help steer the Plan in the right direction. We will also be seeking input from land managers, countryside businesses and interested organisations, including parishes.

The Improvement Plan will assess how well the existing networks meet the needs of the public for healthy exercise, recreation and sustainable transport, especially for those users who currently find access difficult. The Plan will use your answers to identify potential improvements to both access provision on the ground and the information people need to help them find what they need, whether walking, running, riding, driving ... or just chilling out.

If you would like to take part in our consultation you can obtain a copy of the ROWIP user questionnaire by contacting Cornwall County Council on 01872 222000 and asking for a user consultation pack. Alternatively, you can access the Countryside website and fill it in online. Responses returned by 16th December 2005 will be entered in our Cornish Hamper draw.

www.cornwall.gov.uk/countryside

The aim.... improved countryside
access for all in Cornwall



STEEL HORSE NEWS

The Autumn programme of the GROUND FORCE mountain bike rides has been really excellent, with interesting, varied and sometimes challenging terrain. When we were asked to run a ride we chose from Gwinear and managed to make it 19 miles long, with 14.5 miles off road. Another ride from St Leven Cricket Club took us down the newly reopened bridleway from Trendrennen Farm to the coastal bridleway by Treen and down to Porthcurno.



The newly reopened bridleway from Trendrennen Farm



Crossing the Estuary

Unfortunately the steps on the other side of the estuary make it impossible by horse. You can carry your bike but not your horse! Cycling is an excellent and the only real way to research new horse-riding routes.

Our Thursday afternoon excursions are giving us good ideas for future horse hikes.

New Local Transport Plan 206-2011 (LTP2)

A draft version of this new plan is now available for comment before the final version of the plan is produced in the Spring. The current draft contains several town-based cycle initiatives, and only vague statements in the rural context. We are passing firm suggestions to be included relating to both rural horse riding and cycling. Both have much in common in the rural/leisure environment, ie getting from A to B in safety avoiding busy roads. We are pushing for inclusive reference to vulnerable users and safe connections to off-road tracks where they cross busy roads. It is important that the plans do include such considerations, as some government money will probably be given towards the aims of the plan.

Low Flying Helicopters

The MoD is to give more detailed information on low flying helicopters after criticism from a coroner following the death of a horse rider whose horse was scared by a low flying RAF Chinook. (the big troop carrying/cargo twin rotor-bladed chopper). The minimum low flying height has now been increased from 50 to 100 feet. **Importantly they ask that riders always wear Fluorescent Tabards** because pilots can spot horse riders and take avoiding action as long as they are at least a mile away. Any closer and a helicopter will make more noise taking avoiding action and spook the horse more than if it hadn't.

Conservation Grazing

You may have seen/heard that there is great movement towards using livestock for habitat maintenance. This is being encouraged by DEFRA and there are grants available for fencing etc.

Like all schemes there are pros and cons. The most controversial aspect is that fencing is required to retain stock. This has visual impact but from a horse rider's perspective it can threaten access. Many areas where grazing is planned or contemplated is open moorland we ride. We have been monitoring the situations closely and are working with the bodies involved to preserve our access. The main issue is to ensure that gates provided for public access are not of the kissing variety.

One good piece of news is that on the Lizard Peninsular English Nature has introduced such grazing and has actively promoted ridden access by providing extensive new permissive bridleways, and more are planned. Generally the stock used is unobtrusive and well behaved, sometimes ponies, sometimes cattle.

Sites in Penwith which are planned to be grazed are Trecrom Hill, Chapel Carn Brea and Carn Kenidjack by St Just.

Chapel Carn Brea - Chapel Carn Brea and Trecrom are owned and managed by the National Trust. In preparation for grazing the Trust inadvertently changed the hunting gates on Chapel Carn Brea to kissing gates. We pointed out the problem and the Trust have now kindly removed the kissing gates and are to put proper self closing hunting gates to keep the access that is valued by local riders.

Trecrom Hill - We have had extensive consultations with the Trust on their plans for Trecrom Hill. They provide a permissive horse path around the bottom of the hill which provides a very important link between two quiet lanes. The Trust are to put in new gates at both ends of this route as part of the grazing scheme. They are to put in a cattle grid and horse gate beside it with new Cornish hedging at the car park. On the north side, a horse gate and Cornish hedging will also be put in. The gates will be easy to use with plenty of room to manoeuvre your horse.

The National Trust do however ask that horseriders only ride the designated permissive route. Riding to the top of the hill and the other paths is not allowed. Any abuse of the facility could prejudice the use of the permissive route. The Trust also reserves the right to close the route at any time. This may be done in exceptionally wet conditions, to protect the path from excessive poaching.

We do thank the National Trust and their staff for the attention they have given to these issues.

Carn Kenidjack - This area was recently accidentally burnt which has significantly improved ridden access as it has allowed new paths alongside the old rutted ones. Hopefully the planned grazing will keep the vegetation under control. We do not know when the grazing is planned but we have had consultation with DEFRA and identified all the current ridden access points around the moor. Hunting gates will be provided at those points. It should be noted that there are no definitive bridleways on the moor, all the paths we ride are non-definitive.

Riding (and Cycling) Maps

Our Riding maps have been updated again, Maps are now available for many parishes in Kerrier district. Please ask Adrian for details (01736 795098).

Horse Hikes – why not join us!

Fed up of plodding the same old boring hack? Why not broaden your horizons and get more enjoyment out of your horse by coming on a stress-free and social horse hike. Learn some new rides and good places to take your horse. We run an interesting and varied programme. Not only will you make new horsey friends; the horses get to know each other and make new friends too. The rides are also excellent discipline for the horses. They soon learn good manners. We have a core group of regular riders, but we would like to attract some newcomers to the 'joys' of riding out in company.

Please give me a ring for information/advice - Margaret 795098

Lizard Revisited

Our first ride this Autumn was a return trip to the Lizard. We did this ride earlier this year, but had found the way wet and muddy in places. This time the going was much firmer after having such a dry Summer.

The tracks and bridleways across the Downs over to Kynance are fantastic; excellent views and lovely countryside. For most of the way we were accompanied by a lovely fragrance of wild thyme or marjoram. There were still a lot of visitors around as the car park at Kynance showed, and upon arriving at Lizard Village Green it was full of cars. There was just a nice amount of space for the horses to get their heads down for a well deserved snack whilst we enjoyed our ice creams.

Happy horses and riders got back to the trailers at 4.00 pm. having spent over 3.5 hours in the saddle doing the 12.5 mile ride. For those members who were unable to come - sorry you missed such an enjoyable ride. Big thanks go to Alison Lugg who organised and led the ride.

'Discovering Lost Ways' Update

The Archive Research Unit commissioned by the Countryside Agency will start work in Cornwall in March 2007 to look through historical maps and records to determine evidence for highways that once existed but which do not appear on the Definitive Map as bridleways (or footpaths). The research should be completed by late Summer 2007. Hopefully evidence will be discovered to enable many of the routes we do ride to be made into definitive bridleways.

However we will need to work closely with the Agency and the County Council to ensure that ways are found to prioritise and progress the work so that real results are achieved. This work will also tie in closely with the County Council's RoWIP as reported on the previous page.

PAROW gets tooled up!

PAROW (Penwith Access and Rights Of Way Forum) has secured AONB funding to secure the continuation of the forum and the post of our Paths Officer Chris Fry. We have also secured a 2nd hand Landrover Discovery to transport him and his equipment to get him to the otherwise inaccessible places for his work. Grant monies have also been secured to purchase a flail mower and further strimmers. This is all with the aim of working with the County Council and the parishes in keeping our bridleways and footpaths clear more efficiently.

Two Horse Hikes from Drift Dam

Instead of just one ride from Drift as on the programme we did two on consecutive Sundays.

One to Newbridge and another to a favourite venue the Kings Arms at Paul.

For the first ride the weather forecast was very dismal, but as it was not cold or blowing we set out for our destination, the Fountain Inn at Newbridge. We took the Trevorian bridleway and were very pleased to find that it had recently been cleared back to a good width and height. It will be great when all bridleways are cut back to this standard. We passed by Lesbew and soon after were joined by two more riders. After some road work towards Brane we turned up Burnt House lane, went over the Rings and connected with the bridleway to Grumbla. The forecasted rain started and we all got a bit wet, but as it was so warm we didn't mind. The horses started to steam in this 'jungle type' atmosphere and we had our own mini climate of fog around the whole group. We rode on past Trannack Farm and on to Bosvenning. Soon we were at the pub having a well earned drink. The rain had stopped but the horses continued to steam! None of them had yet been clipped and the talk was of what type of 'hair styles' we were planning for our individual equines.

We retraced our hoof steps back to Bosvenning and had a good canter to the top of the bridleway. We followed the road towards Skimmel Bridge and Tremethic Cross and parted company with two riders from Heamoor. We returned to Drift Dam by way of Sellan and the Treganhoe bridleway. We arrived back at Drift, loaded the horses, and the rain set in for the rest of the day as we departed for home. We had been lucky as we had escaped the worst and had a lovely 8 mile ride.

The next Sunday we returned to Drift Dam for a ride in the opposite direction. The reservoir's low level had risen a little since the previous week, but fortunately the weather was fine for our ride. We rode over to Paul via Lamorna. Once through Chyenhal and on past Kerris we went towards Lamorna and up the bridleway to Castallack.

The views over the valley and out to sea are wonderful. We followed quiet lanes to Paul for a welcome drink at the King's Arms. Eric, Adrian's horse, now recognises where all the 'watering holes' are and speeded up as we rounded the corner and led us into the car park. He was keen to have his half pint of shandy! See picture on front page!



Ready to return fully refreshed!

Refreshed and rested we mounted up and headed back to Drift along some lovely tracks and bridleways. Half term and bright sunshine had brought out a lot of people walking. Once again we had struck lucky with the weather; completing our ride in sunshine before dark clouds gathered and rain arrived again by late afternoon.

Bridleway Gates

One of the biggest obstacles that we encounter on our bridleways are gates that are of rusty heavy iron, or rotten wood, often with one hinge (or no hinges) and held shut with tangled string.

In the context of the County Council's planned renovations of our bridleways we have given our concerns to the Council of the problems that we see with gates. Importantly many of these concerns relate to the safety of horse and rider.

- Gates must be well hinged and balanced. Otherwise it does become a safety hazard if both hands are required to open and lift the gate, whilst holding onto and manoeuvring a horse.
- Fasteners must be easily openable using only one hand.
- Either side of any gate there must be room to manoeuvre and turn a full size horse in safety with no nasty obstructions
- There must be no barbed wire on the gate or posts or in the turning area.
- There must be no serious protrusions, within the gate line, to snag on horse's tack. This includes the fastener.

Gate Fasteners

Surprisingly there is no legal requirement that gates on bridleways have to be openable from horseback.

The fastener that we are all used to is the simple hunting gate pull lever, it can be effective but sometimes awkward. Some new fancy designs have been tried but many have problems.

However the County Council have recently been using a new type of fastener which they are planning to use more widely

- The lever requires sideways pull as does the usual familiar hunting gate.
- The gate can open in either direction.
- The post latch is very neat and does not seriously protrude in the gate line.

We have seen the latch installed and we show a picture below.



The gate shown opens in either direction and is self closing, fitted with special gravity hinges.

The bias is sufficient to enable easy closing but not so strong as to knock you off your horse.

The advantage of this gate is that it does provide for security of stock. Reliable easy to use gates and fasteners are of great advantage to riders but importantly of great benefit to landowners.

Unfortunately the County Council are not planning to upgrade all bridleway gates to this standard or to be openable from horse.

We are pressing for as many as possible to be made openable from horse because many less able riders are not able to dismount and mount without assistance, and providing access for the less able is an important part of the Council's and government policy.

We are also pressing the County Council that where rider openable gates are not provided that simple stone mounting blocks be provided. A large stone 12" to 18" high or thereabouts will often suffice.

How YOU can Help

We would like to hear from you about any particular problems you are putting up with on bridleways. These can relate to gates, but also any other obstructions, dangers, bogs and impassable surfaces.

We will use this information to complement the surveys that the County Council is doing.

The time to have these problems addressed is now during the paths renovation programme.

Perranuthnoe Paths

Work should be done shortly on the paths in the parish of Perranuthnoe. Members who ride that area please let me know of particular problems with the bridleways in that parish a.s.a.p.

Lugvan Paths

The paths in Lugvan parish are currently being surveyed for work to be done early next year. A bridleway with particular problems is the 1.5 mile long bridleway, Heather Lane, Goran, to Nancledra. It has many bogs, narrow in places and suffers motorbike damage. Some clearing work has already been started on this bridleway by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), but the major work on the surface will be done next Spring once the path has dried out significantly. Importantly the work required has been identified whilst the rain has been pouring.

Improved Access to Bartinney Downs

There is now access up to Bartinney Castle and Downs from the bridleway that runs up from opposite Leswidden Farm on the Grumbla to the St Just road. There is now a hunting gate onto the moor near the top of this bridleway. We thank the farmer for allowing us to modify the gate to allow access and to our PAROW paths officer Chris for doing the work, and clearing the path.

Horse Surfing

Extreme stunt rider, Daniel Fowler, who is always looking for new things to try, has been experimenting with developing extreme sports. He towed a professional kite surfer behind his horse along the shoreline in shallow water. Could this be the start of environmentally-friendly water skiing?