

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



FREE TO MEMBERS

No. 17 SPRING 2006

Straight From the Horses Mouth

Hello everyone. It's time yet again for me to put hoof to paper; it seems to come around so quickly. The paperwork that now comes to us on bridleway matters is quite staggering – galloping bureaucracy! At least we are now being included and consulted.

The Gold paths work is now underway, and riders and cyclists should start to see an improvement in the definitive bridleway network and targeted footpath routes. Work is currently going on in Ludgvan parish, with Paul parish soon to follow. (see last Horse Around for schedule list).

Well done everyone who filled in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan questionnaire. Apparently, the County Council “had an overwhelming response back from horse riders”. It just goes to show we can make a difference when the horse world acts together. Our hand has been strengthened by this fantastic response and although the CC seem to be feeling a little uncomfortable with this result, hopefully they cannot ignore it. Well what do they expect if they ask for a Gallop poll! More later in this Horse Around.

We had a truly excellent turn out of 21 riders for the Xmas cracker ride. We called in at 4 pubs in the St. Just district. (a record!) The idea being to raise our profile and to enter into the spirit of the festive season. However, I think we will limit it back to 2 or 3 next year as some riders found it to be too many stops for fidgety horses who preferred to keep going. (Let us know what you think.)

Since January, we have continued with a very active horse hike programme that has been well supported. It has been great to welcome some new faces along to the rides. The 12 mile Poldice Valley, Chacewater ride went down a storm. We also ran this one for the Ground Force cyclists and they enjoyed it too. It was a lot easier on horse-back as we had a couple of really steep bridleways where we had to get off and push our bikes. If you would like to come on a horse hike do get in touch with us. (The programme finishes in July for the Summer and restarts in September.)

We have another interesting speaker for this year's AGM – a horse Chiropractor. Please come along and meet fellow members. It's always a great social and informal evening.

Membership renewal is now due, and a tear off slip is enclosed with this newsletter. The subscription stays the same. You will be able to renew at the AGM, but it helps us greatly if you can do it early by post. Members who have paid for more than one year, or who have recently joined, will not receive a renewal form, and your new membership card should be enclosed.

See you at the AGM.

Margaret

In This Issue

**Spring Programme
Long Riders
Bridleway Updates
Horse Hikes
'Camelkaze' Kids
Access Campaign
and more**

Don't miss our

AGM

TUESDAY 28 MARCH

AT THE YACHT INN, PENZANCE
(Opposite Jubilee Pool)

7.00pm for 7.30pm start

Featuring a talk by

**EMMA STATON – Animal
Chiropractor
specialising in horses**

FREE TO MEMBERS £3.50 TO NON-MEMBERS



**Off to
the
AGM???**

WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

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Xmas Cracker Ride

We had a fantastic turnout for our festive ride. Twenty-one horses and riders assembled at St. Just Rugby Club, many adorned in tinsel, for this fun ride.

We set off in a long procession through Tregaseal, up past Hailglower farm and out on to moors. We crossed Carnyorth and Trewellard Commons and picked up the bridleyway across Carn Eanes before turning down to Higher Boscawell. Our first 'watering hole' was The Radjel which was quickly followed by The North Inn and lunch stop. Back in the saddle, we soon came upon The Trewellard Arms, and another stop before heading out to the cliffs.



Nearly Ready for the ride

We rode the lovely scenic cliff track route from Levant, as far as the newly renovated arsenic tunnels near Botallack Count House, before leaving the coast for Botallack and our fourth and final watering hole, the Queen's Arms. We returned home by way of Truthwall Lane and No Go By Hill back to Tregaseal. The weather closed in with rain just as we finished this 7 mile ride. Our thanks go to Mandy Nicholson for setting an easy pace, allowing for social chat and banter, and for organising this celebratory but very orderly equine pub crawl, enjoyed by everyone.

We were very sorry to learn of the sudden death of Murphy, Steve O'Connor's horse, who has been his best friend and faithful companion on all his long distance travels. Both had enjoyed the Christmas ride. We offer him our sincere condolences and hope that he will be able to find a new horse companion one day soon.

Spring 2006 Programme of Horse Hikes

Please note these dates in your diary now			Organiser or Contact
U	Nanledra	18/19 Mar	M & A
U	St Just	25/26 Mar	Sue&Howard
UU	Great Flat Lode	1/2 April	M & A
	Charity Ride (St Just)	9 April	Jane James
UU	Tehidy	22/23 April	M & A
U	Madron	29/30 April	M & A
UU	Halamanning	6/7 May	M & A
UU	Lizard	20/21 May	Alison Lugg
UU	Chapel Carn Brea	3/4 June	Amanda
UU	Gwinear	17/18 June	M & A
UU	Drift Dam	1 /2 July	M & A
U	Nanledra	15/16 July	M & A

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:

Margaret and Adrian tel: 01736 795098
Sue and Howard tel: 01736 788125;
Jane James tel: 01736 788555; Amanda tel: 01736 871876;
Alison Lugg 01326 241545

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!

U Easy Ride UU Average Ride

This year's AGM - Tuesday 28th March

As usual our AGM will be held at the Yacht Inn.

Our speaker is Emma Staton who is a qualified Animal Chiropractor.

"At the age of 11 I fell from a pony and effectively gave myself whiplash with severe loss of movement in my neck. My mother took me to a chiropractor who in one treatment had me almost back to normal. As a young child I thought this was amazing and said to my parents there and then that I wanted to be a chiropractor when I grew up. A few years after my first encounter with chiropractic I had a pony with a sore back. This time my mother took the pony to Bill Henderson in Devon who as a vet was using some chiropractic techniques. Once again I was fascinated and due to my love of horses thought I'd like to be able to do that too. I never lost those ambitions, and I am now a qualified and registered Doctor of Chiropractic treating humans at Falmouth Chiropractic Clinic, and I have completed my training with the International Academy of Veterinary Chiropractic. I intend to open a clinic for small animals near Redruth in April 2006, and will be travelling throughout Cornwall to treat horses and will continue to treat humans at Falmouth Chiropractic Clinic.

The aim of chiropractic treatment is to improve the functioning of the neurological and musculoskeletal systems; this may be after trauma or it may be for the intermittent lameness that you can't find a definitive diagnosis for (not all reasons for lameness are pathological structural changes that are visible on radiographs) or it may be because you need to find that extra 2% to win the class. Chiropractic is not designed to take the place of regular veterinary care but should compliment it; if you are thinking of using chiropractic treatment you should inform your vet first."

I look forward to meeting you at the AGM where I will be able to tell you a lot more about Chiropractic and answer your questions.

My e-mail is family@staton.go-plus.net , Emma.

Horse Hike from Polgigga

Our first horse hike of the year was from Polgigga, the spectacular sea view ride. We set off from Polgigga down to Porthgwarra. No ice cream stop today being out of season at the cafe. We took the lovely grassy bridlway past Roskestal West Cliff and after a canter across the downs, we approached the lane back to Arden-Sawah. Passing our starting point we did a bit of road work around to Porthcurno. Taking the bridlway crossing the beach path and up the valley side, we emerged along the top bridlway that runs to Logan Rock. We took in the fabulous views from this lovely bridlway before turning up to Treen and the Logan Rock Inn for our lunch stop.

Back in the saddle, we retraced our hoof-steps back out to the cliff and continued on along the bridlway out to Logan Rock. After soaking up the stunning views across to the Minack, we returned along the bridlway back towards Porthcurno. We turned off before the decent to Porthcurno and rode the newly opened lost bridlway up to Trendrennen. This is a lovely ancient lane that St. Levan Parish, PAROW and local volunteers have done tremendous work on to get it re-opened. This has enabled us to put on a lovely circular ride for our members. At Trendrennen, it was back to the coast road and a bit more road work to reach our trailers and home.



Returning up the bridlway to Trendrennen

Long Riders – Steve – Murphy



Steve and Murphy on Xmas Ride

As some of you will know by now, on the 27th of December I sadly lost my special equestrian companion Colina (Murphy), to Colic. Although it was a bitter blow, I have had time to reflect on the enormous effect he has had on my life over the past three and a half years. Margaret has kindly asked if I would like to share some of my experiences with you. I first met Murphy in a village in the Sierra Nevada's near Granada in May 2002. When I first saw him I was not very impressed, his mane and tail had been cut short, he was also difficult to catch that first time. But it did not take me long to change my mind about him, to be honest as soon as I got into that Spanish Vaquera saddle and rode him around the village green, I was hooked. A few days later I bought him. One of the best decisions I have ever made!

We set off from Seville on the 14th of May, and arrived in Penzance on the 10th of September, after covering over two thousand miles on our trek. Some might say that it was a bit foolhardy, undertaking a trek like that with a horse I did not know. All I can say I have never regretted taking the chance, to live my dream, to saddling up and ride into the sunset.

I have never known freedom like it, when we set off in the morning, never sure where we were going to camp that night. We camped in old vine fields, disused factories, forests, by the side of the road, on an estuary, in an open stall at Albergue on the Camino de Santiago, we spent two days camped at the magnificent Monastery at Roncavalles in the Pyrenees, and several Municipal camp sites in France. We were only moved on once, that was in France, we were near the west coast, it was the middle of the night. The French Police woke me and said we had to move on. When I asked them where we could go in the dark, they answered, to the beach, and we did. We camped an hour later in the shadow of a Second World War bunker.

But you do not have to go as far as we did on that trek to enjoy camping with your horse. Last summer we trekked over to Stithians show, and camped for two nights. In September we trekked up to North Devon over the three Moors. When you travel and sleep beside your horse, you get to know one another in a special way, you get to rely on each other. A bond is forged that becomes very strong. You have to work together or things will become very difficult, listen to your horse, he will tell you what he needs.

I am a Long Rider, one of a handful of men and women upholding a 6,000-year-old tradition of nomadic equestrian travel. But before you ask what the Long Riders are, let me tell you what we are not. We are not tourists, trail riders or ring riders. Long Riders know instead the reality of aching bones encountered after a week of riding 25/30-mile a day, or the bitter taste of disappointment that fills your mouth when you come to a village only to discover nothing for you or your horse to eat. They know the way the rain always finds a way to run down your neck no matter how many times you pull up your poncho with your cold, stiff fingers, or the fear that grips your stomach when your horse snorts and shies away from something unexpected on the trail.

Travel on horseback brings with it a special kind of freedom; the view from your saddle cannot be experienced any other way! The sense of well being is a joy to behold. I urge any of you out there that have ever felt the urge to pack your saddlebags and bed roll, then saddle up, and ride away, to go ahead, and do so.

To find encouragement, useful information, and a helping hand, please visit the long riders web site: <http://www.thelongridersguild.com/>. I would also be happy to advise anyone planning a long ride. You can e-mail me stevenson.oconnor@tesco.net you can also view our web site for further details <http://www.pilgrimhorse.info>

Steve O'Connor

The Poldice Valley – My Second Horse Hike

Sunday morning the weather wasn't very alluring, at least it wasn't in Morvah, but I thought it's not raining yet... so here goes. We met at the Bissoe cycle centre, easier to find than I expected with Adrian's excellent directions. So far I've found two out of two! We set off along the Poldice Valley quickly finding lots of water to slosh through. From then on I haven't the faintest idea where we went, and this for me is the appeal; to go somewhere totally new. Miles and miles of tracks, lanes, paths, through woodland (some ducking of trees and branches to do) past farms, small-holdings, mine stacks, lots of horses, lots of poultry, lambs, across a few roads (only one a bit hairy) and eventually, somehow back where we started! Lovely trots and canters with no boulders to break your neck on, nice people to chat to, a lovely way to spend a Sunday – thank you.

Chris Hichens



Arriving back at Bissoe

Arriving back at Bissoe

Charity Ride - April 9th

A 10 mile charity ride is being run from St. Just Rugby Club on April 9th. The entry fee is £10 with all proceeds going to Poltair Hospital to raise funds to buy a bladder scanner.

All entries will receive a rosette.

For more details ring Jane James on 01736 788555

In Brief

Did you Know:

- During the summer, Cornwall road traffic increases by 40%. There is now a poor air quality problem appearing in hot spots like Camborne where the narrow streets trap the NO₂ pollutants.
- 70% of Britain is owned by 1% of the population
- St. John's Wort is a herb now well known for its medical properties. In days of old, it was said that if you stepped on the plant at twilight, you could be carried off on a magic horse and not returned until daybreak.

'Camelkaze' Kids!

The Saudis have thankfully given up strapping children as young as 3 years old onto Camels for Camel racing in favour of robots. Now they use remote control robot 'jockeys' to work the whip and the operators drive along side the race track in 4 x4s. Laws have come in that say jockeys have to be over 18 years to race. Now they have a good and profitable camel racing industry as the price of camels has risen as adult jockeys have improved interest in the sport.

Modification Order Website.

You can now check out the DMMOs (Definitive Map Modification Orders), that are in the 'queue', on the County Council website. It is only on a parish by parish basis and you can't download the whole lot.

Renovation of Bridleway Number 13 in Paul

This bridleway runs off the bridleway from Kerris to the Lamorna-Sheffield road, and goes through woods and comes out by Lamorna Pottery. The County Council has done tremendous work on this bridleway, which was unusable except by the brave. The bridleway has now been restored to the correct route and comes out onto the lane to St Buryan 100 yards north of Lamorna Pottery. Two big ditches have been bridged, barbed wire removed from along side the path, and a new wide gate and horse latch fitted at the Eastern end. A nasty stone obstruction has also been removed.



The new gate and rabbit surface at the Eastern end.

There is a little more work to do as there are one or two nasty boggy bits that need attention. We used the bridleway on the last horse hike from Drift, it saved nearly half a mile of fairly busy road, and it is a very pleasant ride.

We have been campaigning to have this bridleway restored for some time. We are pleased at last that the work has been done.

We hope to have more good news to report as the County Council's paths improvement initiative continues

Did you get the last issue of Horse Around?

Our last Newsletter (no 16) was sent out at the beginning of December.

We have since found that some members especially in the Camborne area did not receive theirs. They were posted. We assume that Postman Pat let us down.

We always send out the next Newsletter before the Horse Hike programme ends. So if you haven't received one by then please do let us know. Our sincere apologies to those who may have missed out on our news and horse hikes.

STEEL HORSE NEWS

Last December, Ground Force raised £250 for the MacMillan Nurses charity. 42 cyclists took part in this gruelling 7 hill charity ride. Well done to all who took part. This annual event clashed with our Christmas Cracker ride – a good excuse why we couldn't join you guys!

Ground Force adventure cyclist and horse rider, Charles Corsi on 19.2 hh Gulliver probably the biggest riding horse in Cornwall. Unless you know different?



Local Transport Plan 2

As reported in the last Horse Around initial draft of the County Council plan focuses on five main towns for an improved town-based network, that will encourage integration of travel times and a network for schools and to the workplace. There is now a clear acceptance by the Chamber of Commerce that traffic congestion cannot continue to go on rising as it is. The County Highways Department want to get more people out of their cars, and shift the balance to cycling and walking by providing better conditions to walk and cycle to work and school. They plan to work with clusters of employers, provide incentives and bring in an element of competition to see which companies can increase employee "cycle to work" percentages. Cornwall is looking for a 12% increase in cycling within the next 5 years. Council offices are reducing the amount of car parking available, but are providing swish under cover cycle storage and generally want to introduce more 'park & ride' schemes.

Rural Cycling and Riding

We have asked that more should be included in the Transport Plan on improving the rural access for cyclists and horse riders. This can mean more bridleways but also can mean safer road crossings and links to avoid the busy roads. We would like to see a joint approach between highways and the Countryside Service in giving us safe places to ride and cycle.

Slippery Roads

The British Horse Society has been working with the County Surveyors Association to produce a guidance document for Highway Authorities on Horses and Highway Surfacing. It recognises the problem but concludes there is no single cause. Some is due to new types of surface, eg SMA, especially when newly laid. It does identify remedies, such as top dressings, different grits and surface scouring. The conclusion is that the most appropriate solutions need to be determined locally.

There is a questionnaire on the BHS Website where you can report your problems and experiences. The report also recommends that your horse has good shoes and road nails to minimise problems

On a local note: We are meeting shortly with the Network Manager of Cornwall County Council Highways Department to discuss these issues, and other highways matters. We will keep you informed of any conclusions

Access and Bridleway update

Rosewall Hill, St Ives

Footpath 62 around the Eastern edge of the hill had been lost to vegetation for many years. It has now been cleared and re-opened under the St. Just Heritage Project. The two landowners are kindly allowing horse riders to use this footpath. This is a valuable path to local riders (including ourselves) as it enables the busy coast road to be avoided. The cleared path is wide, and riding is helping keep it clear.

Bosvening Common - this is now a lovely wide path coming out opposite the Old St Just Road. Chris, our PAROW paths officer strimmed it out again late last year.

Ludgvan 52 – Carter's Grave Lane has been cleared back by the BTCV. There is a lot more work to do on it under the Gold paths scheme as the surface is very bad with badger holes in places.

Madron, Kennel Lane bridleway is in need of urgent attention again. A pony did stumble on the numerous boulders and seriously injure itself. Fortunately the rider, a young girl was all right, and the pony has now fully recovered. As an interim measure, the County Council has removed most of the boulders and loose stone on the surface. The bridleway was scheduled for improvement under the Gold paths scheme but not until January 2008! This date may now be brought forward.

Footnote: We are constantly reminding the County Council of the serious danger posed by the state of some of our bridleways. Unfortunately it does take an incident like this to really bring this point home to them.

St. Hilary bridleway 29 - a badger hole has opened up and will be seen to by the County Council.

Paul 13, Extensive works have been done to this bridleway see report.

The Track past Men-an-Tol

A large boulder has been placed by a farmer blocking ridden access from the Road to the track opposite Men-an-Tol Studio. Only a 1 foot gap is left. Although this is only designated as a footpath, the County Council have assured us that this obstruction will be removed. This track is known as the Old St Ives Road and was the major route for all over the moors (the old Tinner's Way).

Chapel Carn Brea

As we go to print we are very pleased to report that the National Trust have installed new horse friendly, self closing gates, on the access points to the hill. We thank the Trust and its local staff for being very helpful in enabling continued ridden access to the hill.

St Ives Steeple Woodland Project

Members in the St Ives area will already be familiar with Steeple Woods and Knills Monument. The Steeple Woodlands Project is run by volunteers, and manages the woodland and, over recent years has done tremendous work in path clearing and also clearing the Rhododendrons that had taken over much of the area. This clearance is allowing the natural vegetation to re-establish itself. The project team welcome walkers, and horse riders on most of their paths.

They are very keen to improve further the riding facilities and are liaising with us on this. We would like to see more official bridleways. St Ives town and parish currently has only ONE definitive (official) bridleway.

Market and Coastal Town Initiatives (MCTi)

The MCTi (Market & Coastal Towns initiative), is a Government funded initiative, but unlike other projects and regeneration projects is led by the community who actually live in the area. The final result will be a 'community plan' outlining the future for the next 20 years. Initiatives are in progress in St Ives, St Just, Penzance, Marazion and Hayle. Each initiative covers the town and its associated parishes

We are very anxious that the Rights of Way network (Footpaths and Bridleways feature in these plans) and other countryside issues are included in the resultant plans. We have already given input to the St Ives and St Just Forums.

What you can do! As this is for the community, this is your chance to give input directly. It is open to all. Details have been published in the Cornishman but more information is available on <http://www.penwith.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=11741>

The consultations are in progress but its not too late to put you ideas forward. We want all local communities to add weight and support to the wider plan being produced by the County Council.

Our bottom line aim is that the plan should include more 'joined up' riding that is protected in law on the definitive map.

County Council RoWIP – Horse Power!

The response from horse riders to the County Council's Rights of Way Consultation has been tremendous. A big thank you to all of you who took the trouble to respond and those who were fortunate enough to be invited to the special 'focus group' that was held.

I am sure that the final plan document will say all the right things for the improvement and provision of a safe bridleway network. However the plan is only the first step – there is no magic wand or money for its implementation. This is why our lobbying and continued input via every avenue is vital.

The message has to be given to the politicians, local and government of the necessity of a safe riding network.

Horse Industry Strategy

Those of you who are BHS members will have heard of the tremendous work that the BHS is doing in lobbying and liaising with the Minister for the Horse – Jim Knight. The Horse Industry Team has identified the tremendous contribution horses are making to the economy of the country. It has drawn up a strategy for the future and has identified the importance of the bridleway network in that equation. It was completed 6th December 2005. Please see <http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/horses/topics/strategy.htm>

British Horse Society Access Campaign

The British Horse Society, together with The Byways and Bridleways Trust, The National Federation of Bridleway Associations, The Mendip Cross Trails Trust, and The South Pennine Packhorse Trails Trust are working together to campaign and lobby the government to provide greater equestrian off road access now.

To date ramblers and cyclists are enjoying an unprecedented increase in their rights of access, whilst very little progress has been made in securing equestrian access. We therefore consider that now is an opportune time to petition the Government for more equestrian access now.

We therefore urge you to sign up to the Equestrian Access Now Petition, and to encourage all other horse riders to sign up as well.

The link below will take you to a page on the Ride UK website, which gives full details of the petition and how to sign up to it.

Click on

<http://www.ride-uk.org.uk/EquestrianAccessNow.htm> to read and sign the petition.

Conservation Grazing Update

Further to our item in the last Horse Around we can report that some more moorland areas are being looked at for grazing. However we are being fully consulted and if the schemes go ahead horse friendly gates will be installed to preserve existing ridden access.

Silhouette Horse Makes Good Companion

Studies were done on a lone field-kept horse. A wooden horse silhouette was constructed, and painted a cream dun colour and rubbed with used grooming brushes to leave some familiar scent on the model. "Woody" was then erected in a field against a hedge. It proved to be a success for distressed lone horses. Time was spent sniffing and touching Woody, and remained near whilst grazing. This may only prove to be a short term solution to a horse living an isolated life, but the experiment showed the cut-out provided company, protection and reassurance. Other experiments have been done with dummy horses and a foal appeared to adopt the suckling position alongside the silhouette of a mare. Considerable alarm was shown by mares who would not approach these dummy horses, but herded their offspring away.

County Council Gold Paths Initiative. – the planned three year programme of work on our paths and bridleways has started. We will update you on progress in the next **Horse Around**.

Ride- UK - we have started planning and surveying the trail through Cornwall

– More in next **Horse Around**