

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



FREE TO MEMBERS

No. 24 WINTER 2009

Straight from the horse's mouth

Hello Everyone

As the financial tornado continues its stormy path and the failing banks and city high fliers continue their horse trading, we mere 'earthlings' who do not get a 'golden parachute' ponder our financial situation. However, we have our horses and a simple country life so may be it will be easier for us to deal with the hardships that may lie ahead. – The Carrot Crunch!

Our horses are in danger of developing webbed feet with all this constant wet, and soggy fields. Their cavorting moments have made their fields like the battle of the Somme! Soggy bridleways have also greatly curtailed the Autumn programme. No one need be disappointed as we will run the ones we cancelled in the New Year.

The Autumn horse hikes got underway with a very enjoyable Madron horse hike, swiftly followed by the Tinner's Way Charity Walk and Ride. We managed to get the Lady Downs bridleway across the moor flailed out just in time. The moorland section of this bridleway has not been touched in 11 years plus. Yet in two days we managed to cut out a new track alongside the watery ditch, that passed for a bridleway, to create a lovely rideable track.

The PAROW tractor and flail are going to really make a difference once the weather allows us to resume cutting. 'Moor' on this in this Horse Around. We then ran a Nancledra ride from the Engine Inn, and as we go to press we snatch a beautiful fine day to try out our brand new Tehidy ride.

We are hoping the weather will be fit for our festive Christmas Cracker ride. We do hope you will come and support it. It is always a fun and very social ride. Don't be bashful, dress up your horse with a bit of tinsel and enjoy the spirit of the occasion. It will start from Chapel Carn Brea.

We are also back at the Engine Inn, Crippleasease, Nancledra for informal Christmas drinks and chat by a nice fire. Do come along. It is also a chance for you to tell us of any problem paths or rides you'd like to do.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a secure, peaceful new year.

Margaret

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Christmas Get Together

*Informal Drink and Chat
at The Engine Inn, Crippleasease
Nancledra Wed 17th December
7.30pm onwards*



Riders and some of the walkers, at Nancledra for the Trek over the Moors in support of Water Aid

Water Aid - Tinner's Way Ride

We had an excellent turnout of 15 riders supporting the Walk for Water Aid. We riders donated £135 to the cause which raised £1000 in total. Thank you to the riders who supported this event and well done everyone. It is planned to run it again next year for another charity – probably Shelterbox. It's a great way to support a charity event and to raise the profile of the Tinner's Way as an established riding route. (see full story inside)

WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

Chairman: Adrian Bigg, Treveffa Farm, Treveffa, Zennor, TR26 3BL

Treasurer: Beverly Jenkin, *Secretary:* Margaret Bigg,

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Web: <http://www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk/westpenwithbridleways>

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Horse Hike from Madron 7th September

We were just a merry band of four that set off from the bottom of Bone Valley on one of those rare sunny days of this summer.

Anne Bressington, assisted by Sandra Barnes had planned the route, most of which was familiar to me, this being home territory. Yet I can never miss an opportunity to see what I regard as one of the finest views in England – the view from halfway up Watchcroft.

So the route in brief was up Bone Valley, skirting the top of Newmill to Tredinnick, on past Bodrifty along the track heading towards the North Coast with a wiggle on the end across the moor to end up on the road heading down towards the Gurnards Head Hotel. It would seem that our leaders and their horses were regulars at this drinking hole as they had their own system for 'horse parking' whilst we sat outside and had a tippie and a bag of crisps in the sunshine.

Remounting again we continued upon the coast road with its spectacular views, past Bosigran, through Rosemergy and shortly afterwards turning left up the bridleway which took us up Watchcroft to Garden Mine cottage. You simply have to keep turning around to absorb the view and if you have never done this ride then put it on your list of 'rides to do' because it is simply breathtaking. Along the track onto the Madron to Morvah road, turning right onto the 'rabbit run' gated lane which is about 1/2m mile after Lanyon Quoit. We then returned via Madron Carn with a pleasant canter along a grassy track and back to the bottom of Bone Valley. The ride was about 12 miles and took four hours.

Thank you Anne and Sandra – a perfect ride to be remembered for a long time.

Elizabeth Harris

Tehidy Horse Hike – 7 December

After two postponements we have just had a brilliant new ride. We parked on the NT cliff car park north of Tehidy Park and did a 13 mile ride over to the newly renovated Wheal Peevor mine stacks and trails. (East of Scorrier)



We found a friendly hiker to take this picture of us all at the Wheal Peevor Mine Stacks

We did a figure of eight circular and came back via Portreath and the newly opened trail alongside Tehidy Golf Course.

Wanted - Steady Riding Out Horse –

A member is looking for a really steady, confidence giving unflappable riding horse of around 15 to 16 hh. Please Contact Margaret in the first instance if you have such a horse for sale or loan. 01736 795 098

Winter 2009 - Horse Hike Programme

Please note these dates in your diary now			Organiser or Contact
U	Xmas Cracker	14 Dec	Amanda.
U	Madron	10/11 Jan	Anne
U	Polgigga	24/25 Jan	Beverly.
UU	Gwinear	7/8 Feb	Alison M
U	Drift	21/22 Feb	M & A.
EGB Training Ride (St Just)		1 March	Amanda
UU	Great Flat Lode To Poldice Valley	7/8 March	M & A.
U	Chapel Carn Brea	21/22 Mar	M & A.
UU	Tehidy	28/29 Mar	M & A.

Other rides may be organised according to demand. We always welcome suggestions for new rides.

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

Anne Tel: 01736 330623 Amanda Tel: 871876; Beverly 871151

Hikes are ridden at your own risk. BHS Affiliation covers our members for Public Liability Insurance on organised rides.

Horse Hike from the Engine Inn, Nancludra

At the last minute we had a change of venue. We postponed the Great Flat Lode ride to a later date. Instead we had a nice ride from the Engine Inn, Nancludra. This local ride had a good attendance and setting off into a breezy head wind, we trooped down from Giew Mine to Nancludra school. After a few quiet lanes we took the bridleway from the bottom of Nancludra up to the track leading on to the long hill up to

Georgia and Bakers Pit Cornwall Wildlife Trust reserve. . We negotiated the new side gate by the recently installed cattle grid with some difficulty I think we can suggest some safety improvements to this and the gate that leads on to the moor. (My horse leant over the barbed wire fence whilst I tried to maneuver her to reach the horse gate latch handles.) Soon we were enjoying the fabulous views, from the top of Castle Gate, over Penzance and Newlyn and of the sweep of the magnificent Mount's Bay. We descended the long bridleway linking to the Chysauster road. We left the road at Carnaquidden to pick up the bridleway leading up to Bishop's Head and Foot. Then we headed back towards St. Ives across Ladydowns along the newly cleared bridleway. This made progress much easier over the moor. The strong wind now on our backs made the going even more pleasant to admire the views of St. Ives Bay and Godrevy Island and Mounts Bay and the Lizard. This is one of those wonderfully magic spots from which you can take in views of both coasts simultaneously. Once off the moor, at Embla Vean, our party of riders made their way back to the Engine Inn Pub by way of Higher Amalwidden. A very breezy 9 mile ride completed, at a very relaxed pace in great company. You may have heard of the "chatter-happy ponies" but today it was more the chatter-happy riders! Thank you to Ron and Janice for welcoming us at the Engine Inn and allowing us to park our horse trailers.

St Ives Storm Grids - Update

We have just heard from County Council Highways that they have just spoken to their specialist surfacing contractor; who will take a look on site next week to try and give some advice on making the grids less slippery to horses shoes. One thought is applying crumbed rubber but how to stick it is the problem as they think it is likely to pluck out of the resin.

They have got themselves a problem. Although some horses are reported to have crossed ok, clearly this is not satisfactory or safe! Most regular riders are having to use the pavement which is actually illegal.

We will keep you informed.



Would you like to cross these on a main road?

Steeple Woods Path – St Ives

After a long wait we understand that the County Council is going to remove the barriers across the path at the base of Steeple Woods allowing an important route to Steeple Lane to be reopened for horses. The land is owned by Penwith District Council and managed by the Steeple Woods Project who are keen for this path to be a bridleway.

Currently it is a definitive footpath, it is now being reopened to horses on a permissive basis.

Hold Your Horses - South Wheal Francis Barrier

The South Wheal Francis low gantry car park barrier has still not been resolved. We ran a very good website and email campaign protesting about the injustice of making us horse riders park outside on the road when there is a perfectly good roomy cp we could use. However, we have been told by the Head of the Countryside Service, Mike Hawkey, to wait until the Spring when the new One Cornwall authority takes over. The councillors against reopening the car park will be gone then. We will certainly be pursuing this again then. Mike Hawkey said, "I give you my word that a solution will be found". We have since learnt that Mike East from North Cornwall will be taking over the role of Head of Service. We will continue to pursue this issue!

Tehidy – New Trail by Golf Course Opened



Pictured left is our Tehidy Horse Hike along the new Tehidy Trail. Which is now bridleway. The path previously went through kissing gates and a Golf Tee. The local Ramblers tried to stop the trail being created and forced a Public Inquiry – at unnecessary expense. – We won!

PS. can you spot Roana's ear?

Tinners Way Ride for Water Aid

On 13 September 15 members gave their support and joined the Tinners Way Ride from Nancledra over the moors to St Just and on to nearly reach Lands End. We set off in advance of the walkers making our way up on to the Penwith Moors by way of the bridleway at Embla Vean. After the first half mile of the bridleway, recently cleared by us and PAROW, we picked our way across Lady Downs eventually emerging at Grove Corner. We continued on across the moorland over to Bodrifty, skirting the outside of the ancient settlement to link up with the rough cart roads leading on up to the Nine Maidens Common. I have never seen the paths and tracks so wet, muddy and boggy at this time of year. Fortunately, by careful navigation, we didn't encounter any really horrendous 'horse-eating' bogs. On reaching Four Parishes, Chris Cooke plus 4 said their good-byes as they had to ride back to Ludgvan, and 2 more back to Newmill by way of Ding Dong Mine. This left 8 to complete the full Tinners' Way section. From the 3rd checkpoint at Men-an-Tol, we rode on to Chun and Woon Gumpas. Here we passed check-point 4 and stopped as one horse had 'a puncture' - a front shoe nearly off - so tools were sort to take off the clanking shoe. We then trundled on to Kenidjack Moor and past Tregeseal Stone Circle. Here the trail drops down to St. Just - as the original ridgeway route used to connect the towns of St. Just and St Ives. (Tin was taken across the old ridgeway to be loaded into boats at St. Ives.)

The mist descended and the light rain set in. We rode on to Hailglower, then Bostraze, crossing the north road on to Leswidden Common and on to Dowran. Soon after, 3 riders left us to go across Numphra Common and Bartinney to meet their transport at Chapel Carn Brea. The remaining 4 came off the old ridgeway, that once continued on to Lands End, and plodded down to Lands End Airport and along the north coast road to Higher Tregiffian Farm where trailer awaited the journey home. Many of the riders did 16 miles or more in total. What a great sense of achievement and a fabulous day out and one to be repeated next year.

A big thank you to Sheila Jackson, Lands End Accommodation Providers (LEAP) who organised the event for such a worthwhile cause.



*Eric and Roana
Leading the ride
from
Nancledra School*

Discovering Lost Ways Project - Stakeholder Working Group Update

The stakeholder group, including the BHS, Natural England, CLA, The Ramblers Association etc has now met and has already identified many of the issues that we know are problems - including the complicated and impossible modification order procedure for getting our bridleways on the map. The message does at last seem to be getting through that most 'Lost Ways' are not actually lost, we do ride many of them; they are just not recorded on the definite map. We watch developments with interest.

The Coastal Access Injustice

The Draft Marine Bill has just been published which includes the provision of a walking trail around the coast of England. Once again horse riders are not being properly included. The government is still fobbing us off, saying we can negotiate for access with landowners. We know that this will not yield any tangible permanent access for us. If it was that easy, why is legislation to provide access for walkers required?!! It is blatant discrimination against horse riders. If you have not lobbied Andrew George MP (or any other MP) on this please do so.

You can help by downloading a postcard to send (see item on www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk).

Break-My-Neck Lane, Madron

By the time you read this initial work should have started on this bridleway. We (PAROW tractor and flail) are to work with Cormac on the initial clearance prior to significant improvement works to the "break-my-neck" section near the bottom. Currently this bridleway is ridden only by the brave. The major works are likely to be completed after Christmas.

Gwallon Bridleway – St Hilary 81

This bridleway does not exist on the ground because it was mapped in the wrong place. There are several Cornish hedges across the route. We have beyond doubt evidence as to where the bridleway should run – it is in the original parish survey for the path.

Despite bringing all this to the attention of the County Council they have done nothing about the issue either by opening up the mapped route or correcting the definitive map.

We are now in the process of preparing a formal "Section 130a Order to serve, on the County Council, a request to secure the removal of the obstructions. The Ramblers Association have had great success with the serving of these Orders – it is now time for us to act!

The County Council can either open up the mapped route or the route along the correct line where this is not in doubt.

The County Council have to reply on their course of action within one month of receipt of the form.

Bridleway 4 Ludgvan

This bridleway runs up to the Nancledra Road but on the definitive map stops at the parish boundary well short of the road. This section has been blocked for years. With agreement of the landowners, PAROW has now cleared the path through.

Riders are asked to stay to the edge of the field next to the road where the old lane has been merged into the field.



Before



After Clearance

Mulfra Modification Order –

- Stuck in The Circumlocution Office??

Anyone who has been watching the tv production "Little Dorrit" will know how inefficient the Circumlocution Office is and that anything submitted means an interminable wait for an outcome.

The Mulfra footpath Modification Order submitted by the trekking centre in 1999 will have been awaiting decision and action for 10 years come February 2009. We have contacted Cornwall County Council legal department (or should we say "circumlocution office") on many occasions to view progress. As we go to press the latest is they are currently writing up the report. (Probably with a Quill Pen!!)

STEEL HORSE NEWS - Trails for Riders and Cyclists

We attended a trails development meeting at Launceston in October looking to get a share of £6.4M for the 'top section' of the Kernow Horse Trail. All trail projects for the north Cornwall area were invited. Around the table were representatives from Devon CC., the Forestry Commission, and South West Lakes Trust, Cornwall Tourism, Launceston MCTI and others. We were there with Cornwall County Council to forward Ride-UK (The Kernow Horse Trail).

The aim was to put forward a strategic and co-ordinated plan to the Regional Development Agency to get a substantial chunk of the next round of EU monies.

Funding is being sought on the back of sustainable tourism and local economy expansion through multi-activities facilities. It is foreseen there will be an enormous demand for non car access. Devon CC reported they have sold Exeter airport and are putting in £5M into cycling! As 10% of the ferry traffic are French passengers and off-road cycling is exploding in France, work is being done to promote the new cycle trail facilities now being invested in. Eurotunnel are now making it easier to transport cycles and they have seen a 7% increase in numbers. As the objective is to make the south west region a world class area for off-road cycling, horse riding facilities will directly benefit from this strategy.

The Forestry Commission chap says they are also investing in providing cycling on their land. It is planned that Bodmin will become a cycling hub and attract people to Cornwall. And rather than operating in isolation, they wish to join to other projects such as the Kernow Horse Trail as it fits nicely with their plans. He also liked the idea of our trail generally being more suited to the adventurous mountain biker. They are seeking to invest £2M in an off-road cycling centre at Cardinham Woods (and may be the Camel Valley). The woodland horse riding trails will be a separate facility. (The Forestry Commission ultimately have a very ambitious plan to link the Forest of Dean with the New Forest for cyclists).

Devon CC is investing in a major 70 mile trail, the Ruby Way and Granite Way, and is wishing to link to Holsworthy and Bude. The trail is to be a mainly off road multi-user trail.

South West Lakes Trust is a charity but with a commercial arm managing all the reservoirs in the region. The SWLT chap said there is a demand for cycling and horse riding. This is a big turnaround for SW Lakes who had previously banned horses on the basis of Cryptosporidium pollution. Horses have now been exonerated from being the cuprits. Horses carry very little of the bacteria. Now they are even considering using ponies to graze the surrounding land at Crowdy reservoir at Bodmin Moor!

Ride-UK – Kernow Horse Trail

As you can see above things are happening; maybe not yet at our end of the county, but we do sense a culture change, and came away feeling very positive about future access to the countryside.

With regard specifically to Ride-UK The bid (above) being put forward to the RDA includes £300k for our RideUK project and also bids to start the link from the Camel Trail to the Tarka Trail (Devon) using the old railway line to Launceston. This would complement and add to our Kernow Horse Trail, as would a link from Bodmin down the valley and on to Torpoint.

Devon - Horsey Heaven – Devon CC sold Exeter airport and apparently out of the proceeds they are planning a "Horsey Heaven" Horse trails project around Devon. Pity Cornwall didn't sell Newquay Airport!

PAROW – Penwith Access and Rights of Way – www.parow.org.uk

As we reported in the last Horse Around we employed a new Assistant Paths Officer to work along side Chris Fry our (Jolly Green Giant). This has proved to be a very fortuitous as 10 weeks ago Chris tripped diving down his stairs at 6:30 in the morning to attend to his dog. He dislocated and badly broke his ankle. He is only just coming out of plaster. This happened only 10 days before his partner Sara gave birth to a baby girl.

Kirstan has been soldiering on clearing our paths and bridleways and has been doing a brilliant job.

On the funding side, we are still trying to finalise the acquisition of the promised grant monies and also we are seeking another grant from Natural England Access to Nature Lottery Fund.

BHS Access Cornwall

Many of you will be aware that as well as our interest and work on the bridleways in Penwith we are also the British Horse Society Access Officers for all of Cornwall.

Bird watchers have a strange hobby of ticking off birds they have seen and recording them in a little book. Well Adrian and I profess to having an even stranger hobby – visiting and photographing every bridleway we can find in Cornwall, and putting them on to the web on the map location. It makes for interesting days out! But we always come back from such days 'off' with more work to do acting on the problems we find and attempting to get the Council to put things right. I expect we would win the 'Golden Anorak' award should there be one!

We hope you do regularly visit

www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk

Check for latest news and our new Online Mapping and reporting of our ridden paths and bridleways.

The special software Adrian has developed to put the maps onto the Web using the new Ordnance Survey "Open Space" mapping facility we have called "Dobbin Map" (Display Of Bridleways and Byways INformation).

The British Horse Society's National mapping project "Emagin" is also shortly going to display maps of National Trails on the Web by using our Dobbin Map Software.

Also visit

www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk/westpenwithbridleways and www.parow.org.uk for more local information.

In Brief...

Ride and Drive

The world is addicted to oil. In just 8 years, it is projected the world will be consuming nearly 50,000 gallons of oil every second. By that time, the world will not be able to meet the projected demand. Time to brush up on your horse 'ride and drive' skills?!

Aminopyralid Herbicide

Remember we reported in the last Horse Around about the effects of a very potent herbicide. Some of our members subsequently noted that the herbicide they had used was no longer available and that it had contained Aminopyralid. After enquiries to the manufacture by some of our members, we were contacted by the concerned Marketing Manager of Forefront wanting to know what exactly we had reported. We sent him the article and asked for further comment about the issues, we heard no more.

Horse Banned from Pub

Peggy, a bay mare, has been banned from her local pub after carpets were fitted. Peggy for many years followed her owner into the Tyneside pub for her special treat of a pint of beer and a packet of pickled onion crisps. However, she now has to partake of her favourite beverage outside on the grass as she has been 'kicked' out of the pub. However, the landlady did concede that the horse was cleaner than some of her customers!!

If I were you Peggy, I would go to The Shire Horse, or The White Horse Inn or even The Nags Head!

The Politics of the Mad House

Hebron, in the West Bank district of Palestine has received funding from the British Government for horses and carriages to re-start a tourist industry. The idea is to encourage tourists to visit the Old City and market place. The cynics are saying the political upheaval will not be fixed by such help.

If our government is prepared to chuck money at such a doomed project abroad; it beats me why we are struggling to get improved horse access in Britain to help our rural and tourist economy!

Occupation Shortage in the UK

Vets and race horse trainers are amongst the skilled labour required to fill the skills shortage in Britain. Applicants need to earn points to meet the criteria to enter the UK labour market. Once again, it is recognised what part the horse plays in our economy, yet can we get the government to move themselves on improving our bridleway network? Shame on them on their lack of joined up thinking!

Cow herding on Horse-back

The National Trust own Studland Heath in Dorset, covering 750 hectares. They have around one million visitors a year. They are grazing the heath using Red Devon cattle to keep the area accessible and fenceless!! They have employed a "cow girl" on horse-back to move the cattle around and on to areas that need grazing. The five year old Highland pony, Ozzy is really enjoying the work. The NT say it is a very environmentally friendly way of managing the heath rather than using vehicles.

Path Clearance on Amalveor Downs

When weather has permitted we (PAROW) have continued clearing the bridgeway over Amalveor downs and the connecting tracks. We have now made a tremendous difference to access for all.



This is one of the tracks we had to ride

We have caught the moor just in time. If the gorse was any higher the task would have been impossible. With practice we now find we can clear nearly half a mile of track/firebreak in a day with the tractor and flail that Natural England purchased for us (funded by the Heath project for that purpose).



We still have 'moor' work to do but it is now too waterlogged. Unfortunately we are not allowed to cut in the spring and summer because of nesting birds.

The finished result is a lovely track to ride and walk and this also importantly acts as a firebreak. It is now worthwhile riding up onto the moors for a ride. We never did before. What is the fun of riding a foot wide and foot deep gully through metre high gorse.

We hope to agree further clearance work for access and firebreaks on other parts of Penwith Moors in liaison with our partners.



Kirstan and Adrian take a well earned break



The Natural England Heath Project - Conservation Grazing

An open meeting was held recently to discuss the grazing issues.

A large number of people who opposed the scheme attended.

The County Council environment team gave an excellent presentation of why management is necessary and the important role that grazing can play.

Natural England also gave a presentation along similar lines but they did not present a long term plan for the management other than the immediate fencing and subsequent grazing by local farmers.

The "protestors" did ask some important questions relating to future management that were not answered by Natural England.

A vote at the meeting, unsurprisingly, asked that the fencing work should be suspended. However in practice that was a token as most of the work has been done.

It is now important that all concerned about the moors do work together to ensure that the moors are managed appropriately for access, flora and fauna, wildlife, agriculture and archaeology.

To this end we hope a working group of all interested parties will be constituted.

Progress on grazing that we know of is:

Trencrom Hill – ready to commence

Bakers Pit – ready to commence

Porthgwarra – After problems, not sure what is happening

Kenidjack Common – fencing work started??

Carn Galva – fencing and cattlegrids in coast road complete.

Nine Maidens – Commoners withdrew application, we are not sure what will happen.

Old North Road – Don't know whether work has been done there, no one has let us know. (this is separate from the Heath Project)

We have been fully consulted on access to all these sites. Bridgeway gates have been/are being provided at all known access points.

The National Trust has already cleared many old tracks on Carn Galva greatly improving access. Also they have told us that the gates will be tied open when there is no cattle.

ADVANCE NOTICE – Annual General Meeting

Provisionally Scheduled for Tuesday 24 March

With talk by Victoria Andrews of Simple Systems – on their special "Natural" Feeding Regime

DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?

Please email wpba@btinternet.com.

(together with your name)