

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



FREE TO MEMBERS

No. 25 SPRING 2009

Straight from the horse's mouth

Hello Everyone

I hope you all escaped the flu and other winter bugs and have survived the horrendous weather unscathed. We have certainly had a real winter to remember. I heard it said that this winter would have been more severe if it wasn't for climate change as we are now entering a cyclical period of harsher winters, but it's being tempered by the effects of global warming. Whatever the reasons, I don't think much riding has taken place in the cold and wet.

The weather continued to mess up the horse hike programme. It has either been blowing and raining or if not raining the route too waterlogged to ride anyway. Nobody has felt inspired to trudge around our soggy tracks and bridleways and get blown off their horse! However, we did start off the year with the Madron 'warm up' ride of just over 6 miles. We had quite a lot of riders for this easy ride to Newbridge. Anne and Sandra are building up a repertoire of some nice local rides from the Madron area.

For us January was full of meetings with 5 in the first week after the holidays. Here's just a sample that illustrates the wide range of 'stuff' we need to respond to. PAROW of course is on-going local work, the Mineral Tramways meeting; our input is essential, then the National Trust asked for site meetings to discuss the self-closing gates on Trencom, the Penwith moors and also the new horse gates beside the newly installed cattle grids on the coast road. Here we were able to inspect and advise on safety improvements. Then there was the Cornwall Countryside Access Forum, essential to represent horse riders or we get 'overlooked'. Then there was the Cycle Forum to keep up to date with new trail developments and to ensure horse riders can be included in development and horse-friendly features incorporated, and also to stop them tarmac everything! Oh and there was the 'small' matter of the proposed massive wind turbine (largest in the UK, 130 metres) to be installed next to a bridleway and a multi-user trail at Eden that could be seen from Oakhampton! With local objections and objection from ourselves, Eden backed down at the last minute and are now going to look for a more acceptable local sustainable energy policy. We had much input in assisting the opposition. Then there is the meeting with Toby, the CC Senior Ranger, to discuss managing the on going improvements to the Penwith bridleway network and the problem of unsuitable and dangerous gates. And it's barely February at this point. You can't just turn up for these things, you have to go prepared. So another year of "the headless chicken" for us!

We have a packed newsletter – keeping you informed of local and the wider issues affecting the routes you ride.

It's membership renewal time. Those of you on 2 year memberships will automatically get your new card with this Horse Around. It's also AGM time and we have an interesting speaker coming to give a talk on "Simple Feeding systems" on Tuesday, 24 March. You can renew your membership on the night if not before by post. Collect your membership and discount card then. It promises to be a good social night too and I look forward to seeing you all there.

Margaret

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and more ...

Annual General Meeting 2009

Tuesday 24th March

7.00pm for 7.30pm prompt
at the Yacht Inn, Penzance
(opposite the Jubilee Pool)

**This year we are pleased to welcome
Victoria Andrews of Simple Feeds.** You will
discover how you can feed your horse on a
natural mainly fibrous diet, with no animal
derivatives.

A fantastic 'workhorse' – 'Moor' inside



New Bridleway path being cut to avoid the horrible rutted bog that we had to ride!

WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

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

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

Email: wpba@btinternet.com

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

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Horse Hike -- Tehidy Woods to Wheal Peevor.

(This was held last December and is on the programme again at the end of March)

All good things are worth waiting for! Inclement weather having twice delayed the ride to Wheal Peevor it finally happened on one of the most beautiful days in early December. We parked on the NT North Cliff car park on the Portreath to Godrevy road, nearly opposite the main north entrance to Tehidy. The cliff car park is not signposted as such, just marked public byway, it is large enough to turn several articulated lorries and has panoramic views out to sea. I give you this detail as I really do think you should do this ride or at least ride around Tehidy Woods which is a pleasure in itself.

We left the car park and rode along the cliff road the short distance to the Tehidy Park entrance where we rode through the woods skirting around the Tehidy Park development to the Main Entrance car park passing river, lake complete with ducks and swans and (noted for future trips) a little information centre and café with outdoor seating even!

Up a track past the golf course, then some roadwork to the edge of Illogan Woods via the hamlet of Bridge and various trails and bridleways to finally end up at the newly renovated Wheal Peevor mine stacks at Scorrier. Here I believe we traversed some more of the Mineral Tramway Coast to Coast trail - a lovely surface to ride on, and back to Bridge, then along more track to Portreath centre, Illogan Woods, passed Gwel an Mor holiday village, back into Tehidy Woods again (using two brand new bridleways) riding on their excellent path surfaces and back to where we started.

The sun shone, the weather was warm, the scenery varied and lovely and new routes were learnt. Such was my enjoyment of this ride that I returned the following Sunday to ride through the woods and it was a winter wonderland - it was the day of the sleet and hail when you ventured beyond west Penwith - actually if you forget the initial icy crunch when you rose to trot and landed on the crust of hailstones that had formed in front of your upper leg it was truly magical!

Thank you to Margaret and Adrian for researching and organising this ride.

Elizabeth Harris

(The statistics –
8 riders, 13 miles and about 3 hours, if I remember rightly.)

Spring 2009 - Horse Hike Programme

Please note these dates in your diary now

Organiser
or Contact

U	Cancelled (mothers day)	21/22 March	
UU	Tehidy	28/29 Mar	M & A
U	Drift	4/5 April	M & A
U	Gwinear	18/19 April	M & A
U	Polgigga	25/26 April	Beverly
UU	Great Flat Lode To Poldice Valley	9/10 May	M & A.
U	Engine Inn, Nancledra	16/17 May	M & A
UU	Lizard	30/31 May	Alison L.
U	Chapel Carn Brea	13-14 June	Amanda.
U	Drift	27/28 June	M & A.
U	Bissoe – scenic ride	18/19 July	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

Amanda Tel: 871876; Beverly 871151

Alison L. Tel: 01326 241 545

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

Horse Hike from Madron

The 2009 horsehike season started well with this warm up ride. of a little over 6 miles. However since then a combination of bad weather and other circumstances have led to the postponement of most of the programme.

Beverly and Peta-Jane hacked over from Sennen and St Just to make the meet at Madron and they must have covered over 20 miles! It was blowing a gale but at least it stayed dry and was not cold. We rode off up to Tremethick Cross

where we carefully negotiated crossing the fast open road to St. Just.

We took the lane leading towards Sancreed and although we had a lot of road riding, no one minded as everybody was busy chatting and enjoying the countryside views. We turned off the road to take the Trannack Farm bridleway track up the hill then down to Bosvenning and on to Newbridge. We arrived at the Fountain Inn on opening time and were made most welcome by the new landlord. The roaring log fire inside looked so very inviting, but I don't think we could have managed to fit in all the horses as well as us. Eric the horse had to enjoy his pint of bitter shandy outside!

After 'warming' refreshments, we mounted up and crossed over the main road and took an old cart track to Trewern and Boswarva before joining the bridleway across Madron Carn. A couple of the horses enjoyed a moment of dancing-and-a-prancing; obviously finding the short canter exhilarating. We all emerged safely at Carn Lodge where we said our goodbyes to our 'long distance' riders, whilst the rest of the party returned to Madron. Thank you to Anne and Sandra for organising this ride. The length and terrain suited everyone for the first ride out together of the year.



Newly restored Wheal Peevor Minestacks near Scorrier

There are three close together but not close enough to get in this shot. (inset - a reminder of our photo at this spot)

Worth a visit – by car just off the A30, there is a new car park.

Improvements to our Bridleways and Paths

The County Council's three year Public Paths Improvement Programme is now in its final stages. Over this time great improvements have been made to many of the bridleways and paths we ride. We thought it would be useful to remind you of some of our major achievements working with the County Council and with our sister organisation PAROW.

- Complete renovation of Kennel Lane, Madron
- Complete renovation of Rocky Lane, St Buryan
- Renovation and reopening of Paul 13 bridleway through the woods by Lamorna Pottery
- Renovation of Break-my-Neck Lane, Madron - ongoing
- Resurfacing of most of Carters Grave Lane, Ludgvan
- Reopening of lost Bridleway 52 St Levan after 30 years (joint CC and PAROW)
- Reopening of all the cliff bridleways at Porthgwarra
- New gates and clearance on Towedack 41 (Engine Inn bridleway)
- Clearance of bridleway 1 in St Ives.
- Major Clearance and surface improvement of bridleway Towednack 1 (PAROW)
- Major Clearance of Bridleway Towednack 18 to moors (PAROW)
- Gate improvements on bridleway Marazion 1
- Bridleway Ludgvan 4 cleared and reopened through to the B road using the old non-definitive lane in Madron. (PAROW)
- Reopening of Bartinney Hill to riders including cutting out new and old paths. including path across Numphra Common. (PAROW)
- Reopening of 'Devils Lane' St Just (PAROW)
- Reopening of Track across Bosvenning Common to Old North Road (PAROW)
- Reopening of Moorland bridleway and tracks above Towednack (PAROW)
- Paths on "The Rings" by Caer Bran reopened
- Bridleway Clearance in Perranuthnoe (PAROW)

PIIP Outstanding Work: Although the programme officially comes to an end on 31 March, outstanding work will be allowed to run beyond that date. There is work to be finished in St. Ives, Morvah, Madron and also Sancreed. There is much work to be done in Gwinear and Gwithian parishes. PAROW is planning to help the CC and clear some of the bridleways with our tractor,

PLEASE REMEMBER: Much of these achievements are due to us keeping a good membership and enthusiasm so that we can continue to keep horse access high on the County Council's and the new Cornwall Council's agenda.

Moorland work by PAROW

We have struggled to find a 'dry slot' in the weather to get back up on the moors above Nancledra to continue clearing the grown in paths crossing the moor. This bridleway section of The Tinnars' Way is now cleared to a lovely wide track. Kirsten (with help from Adrian) has also cleared out other footpaths and tracks after liaising with the National Trust and local landowner. 2.5 miles of moorland routes have been cleared to firebreak widths. This will also assist the National Trust with any controlled burning and future management plans they may have.



*This is what faced us
– no sign what so ever of the old path to Zennor.*



Photo from the same spot after cutting



It is now worth going onto the moor to ride and walk. Moorland Birds and wildlife will also greatly benefit from these open corridors.

Conservation Grazing Update – (The Natural England Heath Project)

Penwith Moors Forum

A Penwith Moors Forum has been formed and held its first meeting. The purpose of the forum is to enable all groups who have an interest in the moors to meet and discuss the issues of concern.

The membership of the forum (limited to 12) includes representatives from Save the Moors Group, the National Trust, Natural England, The County Council and PAROW and Parish Councils.

The first meeting has been held and the agreed Terms of Reference for the Forum were summarised as;

- Continuing dialogue and discussion
- Bringing problems to the attention of the Forum for discussion
- Finding solutions to these problems and providing feedback on the outcomes

Ian Cooke and Craig Weatherhill attend for Save the Moors Group
Adrian attends to represent Access together with the County Council

It was accepted that fencing had been completed and that it had been done hastily to meet the financial deadline. All agreed that this rush had been undesirable and mistakes had been made. The Save the Moors Group restated their opposition to the fencing and grazing, but acknowledged that it now seemed a fait accompli.

Craig Weatherhill raised the issue of the unsatisfactory gate installations near Hailglower Farm. However that issue was already being addressed. We already had had a site meeting with Natural England and the County Council, and action had been agreed including provision of mounting blocks.

Craig Weatherhill welcomed the clearance and opening of the tracks on Carn Galva by the National Trust, but asked why this had not been done in previous years.

One outcome we want to see from the forum is a management plan for the moors which includes improvements to access.

Key Issues We are Dealing With.

Gates on Carn Kenidjack/Carnyorth Common



Gate near pond – Gravity shut was far too strong, now corrected. Why are we now having to go through mud? – this will be addressed.



Gate up from Hailglower - Gravity shut was far too strong, now corrected. But terrain through gate terrible – needs addressing.

New Gates onto Carn Galver



This is on the track from Four Parishes.

There will be a side Gate for riders and walkers – however this one may not have a bridlegate handle – an issue we have taken up with the NT.

Cattle Grid on Watchcroft Bridleway - now removed

This cattle grid had just recently been installed (illegally) on this Bridleway - as an alternative siting off the track was not possible. The plans for this and another further grid down the bridleway has been scrapped.



Cattle Grids on Coast Road



We have had two site visits the gates are nice (as gates can be!) but the gating has to be redone because the side fences currently allow cattle to walk past the grid!

Warning: The grids do make a noise when vehicles pass!

When these were being installed there were no warnings and horses were illegally turned back – until we complained – we had a full apology from the County Council Highways

THE GOOD NEWS:

The National Trust has cut out some lovely paths on Carn Galva and 'formalised' access by horses. There are two access points off the coast road - one near each cattle grid.

The other good news is that we have been consulted and listened too and our needs of access provided for. No one likes gates but Natural England and NT have tried to make the gates as user friendly as possible.

THE BAD NEWS: - Self Closing Gates – Because of a recent 1971 Animals Act judgement on liability, farmers are insisting that gates should be self closing so that "walkers" cannot leave them open. Unless these are adjusted correctly, they can be very dangerous or impossible for riders mounted or dismounted. There has already been one nasty accident on a bridleway in Madron with such a gate that was closed by springs. This was after we had reported the gates as unsafe to the County Council. The CC has now removed the springs and we are working with the CC on guidelines for safe gates. More on this in the next Horse Around.

VANDALISM: - Unfortunately there has been significant vandalism to the installed fences and also to fencing that has been there for years and on land that is not part of the grazing scheme. The Save the Moors Group has stated that they do not condone it. *Unfortunately the action does nothing to further the cause for better access as it may harden landowners attitude to all who want to go out and enjoy the countryside.*

Gwallon Bridleway – St Hilary 81- 130a Order

We reported in the last Horse Around that 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.

The bridleway is critical as currently riders have to cross the Marazion Bypass.

We have now submitted a 130a Order. This serves an Order on the County Council to remove obstructions from a Public Right of Way to enable free passage. The Order has progressed to Linda, the CC Enforcement Officer and she has said, although it may take some time – “*you will get your bridleway*”. We will keep you informed of progress.

We have at least one other 130a Order we wish to submit – details in the next Horse Around.

PAROW UP DATE –

Chris, our Jolly Green Giant paths officer is making a steady recovery from his broken ankle. He is now back at work in an administration capacity only. However, Kirsten, our Little Green Giant, has been doing loads of good work clearing bridleways in Paul with the tractor. He has done a tremendous job of the Castalack bridleway. He has also been clearing by hand, whilst standing nearly up to the top of his boots in mud, the Chyenhal track we like to use on our Drift Dam horse hike.

However the future funding of PAROW is still in the balance despite early promises. The Rural Development Agency has been handing our money back to the Treasury instead of giving it out. They keep making excuses and delaying giving out offer letters. They gave ‘plaques’ out before Xmas in celebration of the money we were supposed to have got.

Thanks Pete - Many thanks to Peter Smith who has been busy trimming back the tracks on Sancreed Beacon. Peter does this for free to help the local horse riders enjoy their riding. A big thank you Peter!

Report on Stakeholder Working Group

We are pinning a lot of hopes on the government’s Stakeholder Working Group to rectify the problems with the definitive map and thus improve access for horse riders. Their conclusions and recommendations are to be completed by the end of this year.

What we have seen so far is encouraging. Here is a sample of the key issues raised at their first meeting.

- That Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) take too long – (look at Mulfra!)
- Local authority members should not be involved in the decision-making process as to whether historic rights exist
- Make process less open to exploitation and de-railment. Eg. Objections could be ruled invalid unless the grounds for objection is clearly stated – (Tehidy Woods, the Ramblers objected to the new bridleway for no good reason!)
- Recognising OS maps reveal anomalies and gaps in PRoW (hundreds in Cornwall).
- A way is needed to undo previous mistakes in recording – eg. Where alignment or status of route is wrongly recorded – (Gwallon 81!)
- Paths recorded with inconsistent status or wrong status
- Problems arise where RUPPs (Roads Used as Public Paths) were wrongly re-classified in the past – (many of Cornwall’s RUPPs were down-graded to footpaths – Mulfra was once a RUPP!!)

The Stakeholder Working Group was born out of the old Discovering Lost Ways project. (see last newsletter)

However, what will be interesting is the proposed solutions. Will they deliver the required efficient processes for putting things right?

ONE Cornwall – Business as Usual

You may have seen in the press that the new One Cornwall Logo for the new Unitary Authority has been scrapped. The old logo remains, just a name change to Cornwall Council.

It also seems that it stays ‘business as usual’ in the Council’s Countryside (Living Environment) Service with no drastic changes to staffing or management. However their budget may still be cut.

The injustices of recent legislation – CROW ACT and Coastal Access

We thank all of you who have lent your support to this issue by writing to Andrew George or other MPs. We have subsequently had a further reply from Andrew George in which he seems to have taken on board our concerns, and he has written asking further questions off the minister.

We wrote again to both Andrew George, MP and Sir Martin Doughty at Natural England succinctly pointing out the total lack of inclusion of access for equestrians in all access legislation since the so called “right to roam” CROW Act and now the imminent coastal access Marine Bill. We pointed out that in a Hansard reply the secretary of state replied “*Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) allows voluntary dedication by land owners and long leaseholders of public access rights over their land. To date 156,246 hectares of land has been dedicated in this way for public use on foot. To date there has been only one dedication of this kind, which created access rights for horse riders over 0.25 hectares of land in East Riding of Yorkshire.*” A flea on an elephant’s back comes to mind!

Andrew George has replied ...”*I have written to the Minister for Natural & Marine Environment to seek his advice and comments on the specific questions about equine access under the CROW Act and comments about the possible failure of the Marine Bill to improve equine access to the coast.*”

We await the minister’s reply (and excuses)

It is still not too late if you have not already done so. Simply log on to bhsaccesscornwall. Some of you have forwarded on replies to us and we have sent them on to the BHS to enable them to formulate the case for inclusion. All the southwest MP replies were sympathetic to our case. They now understand that horse riders, cyclists and the disabled are being excluded. We all pay taxes, so why should one group ‘walkers only’ solely benefit. There are plenty of coastal spots that are suitable for multi-user access.

STEEL HORSE NEWS

Trails Development and what's new in Cornwall

We attended the Cycle Forum in February. We still await the result of the combined multi-user trails bid including a section of our Kernow Horse Trail, for the east of the county. This includes a proposed cycle 'hub' at Cardinham Woods with special adventure cycling facilities.

Tamar Valley trails

There are 8 Tamar Valley trails very near completion, giving 35Km of official new trails to explore relics of mining heritage and industrial archaeology in beautiful surroundings. More when we know more. Further details on www.tamarvalley.org.uk

Mineral Tramways update.

Although the Mineral Tramways project officially finishes in March, the funders are allowing money to be spent up to the Autumn. This stretched timetable will allow the county council to finish off much outstanding work. They are in a race against time.

There is a proposal to put in a trail from the road at Thomas Shaft at Carnkie that then goes on to link into the Great Flat Lode. Work has now started.

The CC is desperately trying to acquire the Grenville New Stamps site near Troon as it is central to other county council sites and giving more public access for all users. It is located opposite King Edward mine north west of Troon.

Marshalls Shaft access is about to be put in at Troon.

Improvement works at Unity Woods is completed. The Redruth to Chacewater connection to the coast to coast trail at Twelveheads has been improved and drainage work done.

In the Poldice Valley some re-grading and re-compaction of the surface is planned and drainage work near Carn Brea village section of the Great Flat Lode.

The County Council has put out cycle counters at various points on the Coast to Coast trail and these have registered an increase from 50 cycle passes per day in 2007 to 150 a day in 2008 at the most popular places on the trail.

The Portreath branchline trail is to run along footpath 6 that connects with the old Duchy College site. The steps have been taken out and a new renovated surface of road planings mixed with subsoil completed, making a track with some give in it suiting both horse riders and cyclists. The new connecting track above Illogan woods, linking Illogan to Trengrove farm is complete but the final connection ultimately linking north with the Duchy College route has yet to be completed. The Portreath incline will be a footpath only, but the CC are still waiting for planning permission before doing a Creation Order for the incline. However, they are going to build the ramp up on to the incline in advance of the legal work so the connection will be complete in advance of deadlines. We are pleased that the Ramblers are supporting the upgrade of footpath 6 to a bridleway but this does come with the proviso that the incline becomes a footpath only!

- We did ride this path on the Tehidy ride.

Did You know?

Cyclists can use their evidence of use to claim Restricted Byway status for a path (allows non-motorised vehicles) but not to claim bridleway status. This is because cyclists were allowed to use bridleways by special legislation in 1968 but they don't have the same intrinsic right of use as horses.

Illogan Woods – The Tank trap

Some of you may know the ancient path through Illogan Woods at Portreath. It is recorded as a definitive footpath, BUT interestingly the following sign is at both ends of the path.



We consider that this sign is an act of dedication as a bridleway. There is much local support for the path to become one. The path has been ridden for years, but there is a problem if you have a large horse or pony.

The problem is the "Tank Trap" blocking this old lane.



This "fantastic" WW2 obstruction is all of 29" wide. A bike can just get through as may a pony or small horse!

Apparently this horrible breezeblock structure has a grade II listing! It therefore cannot be removed or modified to let horses or disabled buggies through.

We are about to work with local riders and the parish councils to make a Modification Order application to claim it as a definitive bridleway. We may then be able to get a diversion created around the obstacle.

It is a lovely ride through Illogan woods and would add further enhancement to our Tehidy Woods horse hikes. However you currently need a slim and small pony else you cannot get through. Some riders over the years have managed to bypass the tank trap. But currently it is too muddy and overgrown.

Endurance GB Training Ride

On 1 March, 48 riders turned up at St. Just Rugby club to take part in the annual EGB training ride, covering twelve and half miles around the coastal tracks, then turning inland to ride the tracks and moors. Riders go at their own speed, some use this for training, others to have a slow amble somewhere new. The weather was a lovely cold but sunny day and all riders got around safely and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. One to put on your calendar for next year.

Amanda

Mulfra Modification Order beyond a joke!

We reported in the last Horse Around that it is now 10 years ago since this Modification Order was submitted. Other DMMOs have come along since and have been processed and decisions made. We think it is outrageous that we are having to wait so long for a County Council Order Decision to be made. Essentially the Order is for to claim a bridleway access route on to the moor at Mulfra. The last information from the CC said they "are preparing the report".

Recycle your old phones/inkcartridges for charity

If anyone has any old mobile phones or inkjet cartridges, I would be glad to pass them on to the Dogs Trust to help them with their fundraising.

Dogs Trust, work hard to give our canine companions a second chance of happiness, and you will also be doing your bit for the environment. I could collect them at the AGM or at any other time.

Thank you,
Beverley Jenkin tel: 871151

Pesticide update – Is it all 'Rocking Horse' Poo?

The chemical company marketing Aminopyralid herbicide has now taken out adverts in countryside magazines in an attempt to allay fears. We're not convinced, but make your own judgement by logging on to their website www.manurematters.co.uk. (read last 2 newsletters for full story)

If you read their website carefully they shoot themselves in the hoof by admitting there is a problem.

Parking for Horse Trailers

Although we have not yet resolved the issue of the height gantry across the entrance to this very useful car park at Wheal Francis we use for the Great Flat Lode horse hikes, we have forced the County Council to think about the problem generally in the county. Their great fear is of travellers encampments. On the new Goss Moor trails a new car park is being planned with a height restriction barrier, but because we have been standing on our hind legs and creating uproar, the solution now being offered is for a special parking area for trailers and boxes in the form of a very long layby on the approach lane, adjacent to a grassy area. We think a similar solution will be used at Wheal Francis. Apparently, it is very difficult to move travellers on if they are encamped on County Council land but on official highway car parks or on the highway they can easily and quickly be moved. A layby is deemed as part of the highway.

Those with trailers will appreciate how difficult it is to find appropriate parking.

Rural Speed Limits

The government is proposing to reduce the speed limit on rural roads to 50 mph. where 69% of fatal car crashes take place. But their 'rural' road is often a main road to us. They are not yet to our knowledge considering a lower limit still that is appropriate of many of the roads we ride.

In Brief...

The Flying Postmen

Is it any wonder that we encounter Post Office delivery vans charging around our lanes when the PO are putting extraordinary pressure on their foot deliveries. Postmen are being told to 'walk' at 4 mph! A good walking speed on the flat is 3 mph. Our horse hike mileage averages 4 mph over a 3 hour ride and that includes trotting and some cantering! Postman's Knock! Just to illustrate the point, soon after writing, our 'flying postman' ran into Adrian on a blind bend only half a mile from home. Adrian stopped and the postman drove into the hedge bank and struck his bumper. He was clearly going too fast and ended up out of control. Had we been riding our horses we could well have been killed!

Horse Portraiture and landscape Painting

The classical period for those early British equine artists was from 1630 to 1770. George Stubbs and John Wotton both produced those wonderful elegant equine paintings we often see today reproduced on placemats.

Ancient Roads and Narrowboating by horse

The M62 trans Peninne motorway was built along the old packhorse route.

Spaghetti Junction The 3 motorway interchange at Birmingham has 3 canals under it. They had to design the risen sections to accommodate the canals underneath to enable horse towing barges to continue operating.

Horse drawn barge trips of 11 miles are run at Tiverton in Devon on the Grand Western Canal. Apparently there are only 6 such operations of horse drawn barges in Great Britain

Thrown out of Tescos

The Daily Telegraph reported that a horse rider was asked to leave Tescos because she had manure on her boots and smelt. Apparently she replied it is only 'au de horse'!

I think the security guard was probably being reasonable and it serves as a reminder not to give the general public more reasons or excuses to be anti horse.

Radio 4 "Costing the Earth" programme quote

"Wealth in the 21st Century will be created by the improvement of the environment."

British Horse Loggers

Prince Charles is the patron of the British Horse Loggers. Horse logging is the low impact way to extract timber and avoids the use of having to build unnecessary roads in small scale woodland. Horses can draw out logs effectively and safely through standing timber without causing any damage or disturbance to the woodland or flora and fauna. Prince Charles is passionate about the use of horses in woodland management. Last summer, a demonstration was hosted on the Duchy of Cornwall Arrallas Estate in Ladock Wood showing the considerable benefits over other extraction methods.

Horse Fighting

In southwest China horse fighting is a traditional custom with a 500 year old history which takes place during the traditional Miao festival. It is held twice a year, in preparation for harvest and in celebration of the harvest. Pretty barbaric don't you think!

White Horse of the South

You've heard of the "angel of the north", well we are now going to get a 50 metre high "white horse of the south" commissioned to adorn a hillside above the channel tunnel. Editor's comment: pity they can't 'commission' money for bridleways – maybe it will be a white elephant!

Bike Polo – the new urban sport of bike polo is catching on in European cities. It's broadly the same as horse polo but instead played on old bikes on an old area of fenced in tarmac and a simple goal at each end.