

# HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



FREE TO MEMBERS

No. 26 AUTUMN 2009

## *Straight from the horse's mouth*

Hello Everyone,

Following on from the moorland work above Towdnack, Kirsten (our PAROW little green giant) moved to Bartinney, by Chapel Cam Brea, to do similar excellent clearance work there under the guidance of local endurance rider, Mandy. Kirsten has cut out many tracks and we thank Mandy for organising landowner permissions and assisting Kirsten in finding safe routes for the tractor. This can be scary work on a hillside particularly if the ground is uneven. Local riders and walkers are delighted with the result; giving them a couple of miles of good riding. More on this story later.

April ended with 8 inches of rain falling in a few hours between Zennor parish and St. Ives and the tragic loss of 3 young lives. The coast path was closed for a 7 mile stretch as 5 bridges including granite ones got washed out to sea. We certainly have never experienced anything like it. It was like firemen had trained a fire hose on our bedroom windows and we could hardly hear ourselves speak with the torrents of rain that lashed for more than 2 hours in the dead of night. It has not done much for our bridleways as the Embla bridleway surface leading on to the moor ended up on the road and it is now a deep gorge, back down to bedrock, and it is still closed. Much damage has been done to other routes including the Carnaquidden bridleway. Despite the flooding, and washed out bridleway tracks, I do hope you have been getting in some good riding over the Summer.

Due to popular demand, we re-started the horse hikes with another ride from Tehidy. It was great to have along a whole new set of riders who had not done the ride before. It turned out to be a brilliant day out with good going under foot and all the horses behaved exemplary. This was soon followed by well attended horse hikes from Drift Dam to Paul, Gwinear over to Barriper, Polgigga to the Loggan Rock Inn along the coast at Porthcurno, and the Great Flat Lode at Camborne. Some rides resulted in pictures reproduced in the Cornishman at the St Michael's Mount Inn, Barriper, at the King's Arms, Paul, and in the August edition of Cornwall Life a photo of our Tehidy Horse Hike on the new section of trail. This same photo (opposite) appears in the new trails leaflet promoting the route from Tehidy Country Park to Portreath. There will be a grand launch of the mineral tramways project in September. (more inside)

The St. Ives flood defence scheme failed in the April floods and many businesses were flooded but I am pleased to say that since then our concerns about the slippery 'cattle grids' are being addressed. I don't suppose we will have been very popular with the residents as they are having to close the Stennack road at night to do the work!

Sorry this newsletter is later than we wanted but the Bodmin Moor issue especially, has taken a lot of time. We have also been trying to find time to ride our horses!

Happy Riding - Margaret

## *In This Issue*

**Horse Hike Programme**  
**Gwallon Bridleway**  
**Bodmin Moor Permit Threat**  
**Steel Horse News and Trails**  
**St Ives Grids and Mulfra Update**  
**Horse Hike Reports**

*and more ...*



**Horsehike on new Tehidy Trail**  
**"The Pine Tree Route"**

## **Walk or Ride the Tinnors Way**

In aid of Shelterbox

**SUNDAY 13th September 2008**

Approximately. 10 miles

Starts at Nancledra Community Hall and finishing at St Just.  
Commencing at 10:15am

Organised by Lands End Accommodation Providers (L.E.A.P).

**Riders Please Contact Margaret and Adrian 01736 795098**

*(We would like to help coordinate horse transport)*

*Walkers please contact*

Jo Hill, Tel No 01736 788458 or email [hill.jo@shy.com](mailto:hill.jo@shy.com)

shelter  
BOX

Date for your diary:

**Xmas Drink and Chat**

at The Engine Inn, Cripplesea, Nancledra  
Wed 16<sup>th</sup> December, 7.30pm onwards

## **WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION**

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

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

Email: [wpba@btinternet.com](mailto:wpba@btinternet.com)

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

Tel: 01736 795098

## Horse Hikes from Polgigga and Drift Dam

- from a junior member's perspective

My name is Kayleigh Redford, I am 9 years old, live in Heamoor and I joined West Penwith Bridleways Association earlier this year. I used to have a Welsh Mountain Pony called Poppy who I rode on the lead rein. Last October we sold Poppy and bought a 17 year old New Forest pony called Bracken. I was very nervous when I first started riding Bracken but he is such a good pony I am now getting more and more confident.

I decided to do my first bridleways ride at very short notice, my mum and I arrived at the yard one Sunday in April in the hope of me doing my first canter on Bracken. When we got there 2 friends said that they were going on a bridleways ride at Polgigga and I asked my mum if we could go (it was a 1 horseshoe ride). We weren't prepared so had to hurry up and get Bracken and Alfie (my mum's horse) in from the field, groomed and loaded in the trailer ready to go.

When we arrived at St. Levan and I saw how many people were there (12 other riders) I started to get very nervous but everyone was really kind to me. We went quite slowly until all the horses settled down (except my mum's) and it was lovely. We had to ride down a very steep hill to the cove but everyone gave me lots of encouragement and my pony was very well behaved and went slowly for me. When we really got going I had so much fun and even had 3 canters. We rode all around the St. Levan area and then down to Porthcurno and up over the cliff path to the Logan Rock pub for a drink in the car park before turning back to Polgigga. The funniest part of the ride was when we were on the green opposite St. Levan Cricket Field and Bracken decided that he wanted to have a wee. Everyone stopped to wait and then every horse except Willow did the same, we were there for quite a long time but the horses were much happier afterwards!

Even though I was very nervous to begin with, by the end of the ride I was confident enough to look forward to another one. I had so much fun and everyone was really kind to me. I would like to thank both Adrian and Margaret for organising these rides and for all the other riders for being so understanding towards me.



Kayleigh on Bracken leaving the Logan Rock Inn Treen

## Spring 2009 - Horse Hike Programme

Please note these dates in your diary now			Organiser or Contact
UU	Tinners Way Charity Walk and Ride	Sun 13 Sept	M & A
U	Madron Warm up Ride	Sun 20 Sept	Anne
U	Mineral Tramways Official opening Tehidy Ride(s)	Saturday 26 Sept	M & A
UU	Polgigga	3/4 Oct	Beverly
U	Bissoe	17/18 Oct	M & A
UU	Sancreed	24/25 Oct	Gill
U	Great Flat Lode	31/1 OctNov	M & A
U	Chapel Cam Brea	14/15 Nov	Beverly
UU	Gwinear	28/29 Nov	M & A.
U	Xmas Cracker Ride (St Just)	12/13 Dec	Amanda
	Xmas Drink Nancledra	Wed 16 Dec	
	New Year Ride	9/10 Jan	

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  
Anne. 01736 330623 Gill 01736 810552

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

### Horse Hike Refreshment Stops.

On horses hikes we do often stop at a pub for refreshment and especially on the Xmas Cracker ride. We do ask riders to support the pubs when we visit and use their car park and facilities, they do appreciate our custom and you will want them to be there in the future.

In June I did my second ride. We started off at Drift Dam and 7 of us rode all the way across country to Lamorna and then on to The Kings Arms at Paul for a drink and photograph (which was in the Cornishman) before hacking back to Drift Dam. We had a lovely canter along a gently sloping grassy path and all the horses behaved themselves. I had a lot more confidence on this ride as I knew my pony and the other riders would look after me. Both rides were about 3 hours in length but the time went by really quickly as I enjoyed myself so much. I am now looking forward to the next ride but really wish more children would come so if anyone reading this who is not a grown up and wants to have a great day out on their pony please think about joining in on these rides.

Kayleigh

**Don't forget to visit BHS Access Cornwall**  
[www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk](http://www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk) for **Access News**.

Also **Online Interactive Riding Maps** for all areas of Cornwall

### Riding by Permit Only – the future?

See Item on Bodmin Moor in this Newsletter. There is also a government Forestry Commission Access Survey - Let your views be known. Link via [www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk](http://www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk)

**Why do walkers and cyclists go free and riders have to pay?**

## Horse Hike from Mullion to Lizard

The weather couldn't have been better for this horse hike on the Lizard Peninsula. It is not the place to be caught in the rain, wind or fog on horse back. We meandered through Mullion village to reach tracks leading out to the moor at Windyridge farm. We passed Predannack airfield, then on to fantastic open moorland where Highland cattle (the shaggy brown ones with the big 'roof racks') are employed in conservation grazing. As we negotiated one of the many gates, the Highlands crowded around us but soon moved away quietly and allowed us to pass. There is a lovely view of The Bishop rock through the cleft of the valley at Kynance Cove. Not surprisingly, the NT car park was full of cars as many people were out enjoying the beautiful summer day. We reached the Lizard Green where we tucked into pasties, home made cake and washed down with a cup of tea. The grass was long and lush on the green. As we ate our pasties, happy horses munched into lush grass they normally only dream about!

Mounted up we took the byway out towards the cliff, over a dodgy bridge that is really too narrow for the bridlemway. This leads up a hill and crosses a field to rejoin the access road to Kynance Cove. We were well on our return trip as we crossed the moor and retraced our hoofsteps down to the little river in the cleft of Kynance valley, where my horse Roana stooped to try and drink the river dry!



### Homeward Bound

Riding on up the stoney bridlemway track and back to where the Highlands were grazing, we opened and shut the many assorted gates we passed through. Some we could do from horse-back but the upright handles are waiting to ensnare unwary riders' reins or the side catch to snag your leg on are not ideal. After a ride with lovely views all the way we arrived back after 4.00pm. It was a long ride of near 16 miles. Many bridlemways were getting overgrown but we got through OK and had a super ride.

A big thank you to Alison Lugg for organising the ride and her mum for the pasties. Thanks also to Philip Bray who lead the ride and opened all the gates. The rear gate monitor was yours truly.

We saw Cornwall and the Lizard at it's best - Orchids alongside the trackways, the smell of wild thyme and stunning scenery both inland and out to the blue sea yonder. From horse-back what a fantastic way to enjoy our countryside. The horses also enjoyed a lovely ride out in country they rarely visit.

## SUCCESS - Gwallon Bridlemway – St Hilary 81

We reported in the last Horse Around that this bridlemway does not exist on the ground because there are several Cornish hedges across the route.

We submitted a 130a Order on the County Council to ask them to remove the obstructions. Linda Holloway, the CC Enforcement Officer told us "you will get your bridlemway". She was right!

Linda has liaised with the four landowners involved and they have been extremely helpful and agreed a solution, which involves re-routing the bridlemway along field edges and through a wood. The legalities of diverting the bridlemway still have to be sorted but the new route is well on the way to being opened up the work being kindly done by the landowners. Praise be to Linda!



### New bridlemway path being constructed

The bridlemway does require three horse friendly gates to be provided. These cost £180 each. We riders will have to find the money to pay for these. The landowners are doing all the work and paying for the diversion. So it is a fair deal.

We the bridlemway group have agreed to pay half the cost of the gates and we are asking local riders to raise the other half. If you do ride in Marazion and have not yet contributed to this cost please contact either Alison McCarthy or Jill Thomas ( Eclipse). We do need your support to get the work completed and the bridlemway open. The route is there but will not be open until we have provided the gates.

The bridlemway is critical as currently riders have to cross the Marazion Bypass. The new bridlemway comes out next to the bypass underpass where it connects with other bridlemways and cycle way.



The map here shows the bridlemway 112/81 cross hatched in red – soon to be opened

On behalf of all riders we would like to thank the land owners and Linda for enabling this route to be opened for riders, cyclists and walkers.

We will let you know when the route is open

## **Tehidy to Wheal Peevor Figure of Eight**

Nine riders set off from the North Cliff car park opposite the Tehidy car park in glorious sunshine. The only difficulty was deciding if you needed a coat or not. Into the woods, all horses behaving themselves impeccably even though two of them had never seen woods before as they live on top of the moors. As we rode the well made tracks, we drew admiring glances from lots of families with little girls on pink bikes and a couple of little boys with bows and arrows. Tehidy Country Park was a joy to ride and must be remembered for future rides.

We left the woods, crossed some fairly major roads without difficulty, through Illogan and on towards Portreath. My thanks go to all the car drivers who never failed to give us a wide berth. Along the Coast to Coast Trail we quickened the pace. What a pleasure to be riding a flat level surface with no boggy bits or boulders. All the horses rolled along at a steady trot or canter without any difficulties. We only had to stop for the occasional cyclist or gate. When we left the Mineral Tramway my mental GPS stopped working and I hadn't a clue where we were at the time. We reached Wheal Peevor, the newly restored set of three mine stacks above Scorrier, with spectacular views. We then continued along more well surfaced bridleways with more views looking back to Portreath.

Eventually we were back on the Coast to Coast Trail going in the other direction to Portreath where we stopped for a pint at the Portreath Arms.



**Refreshments at the Portreath Arms**

(Also see picture on front page)

Adrian's horse, Eric, had his usual ½ pint without breaking the glass. By now I was wondering how I was going to get back up again as my hips felt like they had been unscrewed! Some of the gang were endurance riders though and had no difficulty. From here it took us no time to canter along a newly surfaced track and back to Tehidy for a photo shoot on the new Pine Tree route by the golf course. Thanks to Adrian and Margaret. One of the best days hacking imaginable.

Emily Barraclough

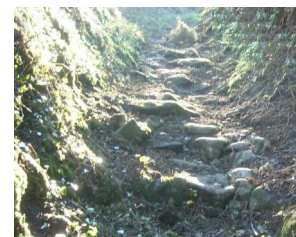
## **MULFRA MODIFICATION ORDER - UPDATE**

Our enquiries off Cornwall Council continue to establish why this important MO to claim the track up onto Mulfra Hill is not being processed – originally submitted in 1999! It seemingly is all to do with the CC's priority system and some confusion over the route being claimed. We have now been promised a list of all MOs and their priorities – apparently it is now 7<sup>th</sup> from the top. We have also asked some other questions critical to its success or failure.

## **Break my Neck Lane – Madron**

Cornwall Council completed renovating this bridleway earlier this year. They have done a fantastic job in transforming this rocky gullied unrideable path into a lovely well drained bridleway.

**Before (right)  
– a steep rocky gully**



**After (Left)**

**A transformed path**

## **In Brief...**

### **Expensive Horse Dung**

We've had the bankers well and truly with their snouts in the trough, and this was soon followed by some MPs with their eye watering and embarrassing expenses claims. £388.80 claimed for horse manure! They might now have slammed the stable door shut, but the horse has certainly bolted. I think they all need a new whipper in! (which of course they now have with a new HoC Speaker)

### **Afganistan Elections**

They used 3,000 donkeys to transport the ballot boxes to the rugged remote places of Afganistan for their recent momentous first democratic elections.

### **The Palio Horse Race**

Amongst the street singing and dancing that takes place every July and August in Ceana, Tuscany they hold an annual Street Horse Race where 10 horses are ridden furiously and bare backed through the town negotiating treacherous turns. This 90 second historical race has its origins in a medieval church festival, but is probably more to do with male prowess, where horses and riders do get injured. There is now a strong call to get this event stopped. The government wants to ban whips and spurs. Animal welfare activists want to ban it because of the risks to horse and rider and as it seems cruel.

### **Toxic Seaweed**

In Brittany they have had to close some section of mud-flat type beach areas due to rotting seaweed. It forms an innocuous crust but once broken, by being walked through it releases sulphur and other dangerous gasses. A horse collapsed and died whilst being ridden along the shore and the rider passed out and was taken to hospital. She is okay but it is worrying to think it could happen so instantly without warning. There is concern that it is also happening on parts of our south coast. The experts say it is due to nitrates from farm run off enriching the seaweed and smothering the oxygen in the water. High temperatures also help to create the problem.

### **Bizarre Seahorse Rescue**

A seahorse was found on a garden path inland from the southwest coast. The quick thinking lady, who had just come home with her shopping, scooped up the seahorse with a fish slice and put it into tepid water and contacted Weymouth Sealife Centre. 'Pegasus' as he was then named was taken to the centre where he made good recovery! Staff said, he was a very lucky seahorse as they cannot survive very long out of water. How he got there is a mystery but he may have been dropped by a passing seagull,

## **Gwinear Ride – a ride full of surprises!**

On one of those glorious gift days in April, six bridlway's members gathered in a leafy lane just outside Gwinear to tack up before setting off on a ten and half mile circular ride – for those of us who live west of Penzance, any riding amongst trees is a treat and this day was no exception.

Lizzie Matthews and her lovely skewbald horse Jiggy and I and my little dark bay horse Wizzy had boxed over from St Just. When Tracey Beasley and Helen Bode joined us on two little piebald ponies, together with Adrian and Margaret on the ever faithful troopers, the light bay Eric and strawberry roan Roana, we made a very colourful little cavalcade as we set off. We turned on to a bridlway and soon found ourselves outside a stunningly beautiful old medieval manor farm at Lanyon where an historic society were holding a meeting!, We needed our way through the cars and onwards along the bridlway to Higher Trevaskis where, surprise, we found ourselves in the middle of a huge farm/packing station!

Adrian lead us gently along the bridlway, ever conscious of how everyone's horses need to settle down in a group, and after passing alongside some open fields, all of a sudden we saw flashing lights indicating a railway crossing! "Hurry up!" Adrian cried out - and those of us who had not been on this ride before were a bit alarmed thinking he wanted us to cross the railway - but no, of course not, he was just warning us to get ahead of a speeding train which ran beside us for a little while before turning away! I must say all the horses – and ponies were very good, only Tracey's little pony jumped a bit – so thank you, Adrian for the warning!

And that is one of the really good things about these rides, Adrian and Margaret do spoil us – they do all the groundwork, and know exactly where we are going, what to watch out for, the names of all the mine engines or other points of interest - and then they stump you, when they ask you to do a write-up for their newsletter! What I love about the rides is seeing new places, and realising what a great bit of country we are lucky enough to live in, but enough of the eulogising, on with telling you about the Gwinear ride – or rather what I can remember!

As I have already said, it was a beautiful spring day, and the trees were beginning to shoot out green buds, and everywhere the blackthorn was covered in white blossom. After a little while, riding across Polmenor Downs we continued along bridlways to Penhale Moor and up an old railway bridge. I think it was up here that the views were spectacular, you felt as if you could reach out and touch both sides of Cornwall! We then turned back off the bridlway along the track of the old dismantled railway line, half a mile long! Another surprise and a lovely ride!

Adrian then lead us around some lovely big daffodil fields AND ever onwards we went, winding our way around some very zigzaggy paths down now towards Baripper, - and because there were only six of us, having the odd canter here and there! We stopped for a drink at the St Michael's Mount Inn - one of the best for the horses as they very kindly supplied a grass topped wall for them to munch!



**Outside the St Michael's Mount Inn**

Afterwards Christopher (my very kind husband!) took a photo of us all outside the pub, then we set off to head back to Gwinear, following more tracks which wound back north passing an old pump house and disused mine shafts. At one point, we went down into a wood with a stream running alongside us, which was a particular treat, it was so peaceful! We headed on through the woods, towards an enormous viaduct. its massive ivy-covered granite arches looming up like cliffs. the ride took us into a short tunnel beneath the viaduct - quite spooky for the horses, but no-one seemed to mind, and we all clattered through quite happily.

After coming out the other side, and down more windy bridlways, much to our surprise, yet again we found ourselves crossing the packing station! Ah, we all said, now we know where we are! And sure enough another train went past hooting as it went as if to confirm this!

And so it was back Gwinear down the leafy lanes, and we all agreed, it had been a really lovely ride! All the horses had behaved well (except for one little cry of "I can't stop my horse" from Lizzie which only lasted a brief moment when Jiggy thought she'd like to lead!) So thank you, Adrian and Margaret! (And thank you too for finding my hat and gloves!)

Peta-Jane Field

## **Membership**

Membership was due last April, unless you had paid for multiple years. Currently we have 101 paid up members. We have previously had up to 140. If you haven't rejoined yet for the current year to March 2010 we would encourage you to do so. WPBA is not just about horse hikes, it is ensuring we preserve the routes we ride and cycle for the future.

As a group we do have fun hence the horse hikes but we have also achieved significant improvements to the bridlways and other ridden paths. A reminder for your membership is included with this newsletter if you have not yet rejoined.

**We do need you!**



## Great Flat Lode Horse Hike

We were very lucky to have a glorious sunny May day for our Horse Hike on the Great Flat Lode Trails by Camborne. We met on the narrow road outside South Wheal Francis as we are still prevented from using the car park by the over-head gantry installed across its entrance. Having caused chaos and mayhem by parking and unloading horses on the road, we mounted up and got on our way.

We followed the trail to Wheal Buller then took the Tresavean trail above and towards Lanner in the valley below. This certainly was a wonderful time of year in the countryside, with everywhere looking at it best and we could see for miles in many directions. We rode a short loop of quiet road then joined a bridleway that returned us back on to the trail. Different views across the valley to Carn Marth and out to the coast were gained on the return to Wheal Buller. We crossed over a road and rode a tour of the Wheal Uny engine house before descending into the pretty villages of Churchtown and Brea. We rode through and up the steep hill and turned to ride the bridleway track along the side of Carn Brea. We looped back nearly to Churchtown and then took the long bridleway back up to Wheal Buller, then retraced our outward bound route above Carnkie where there is a grand view of all the many old mine buildings and engine houses nestling in the valley below. This had been another very enjoyable 12 mile ride with lots of steady canters, where it was safe to do so, and as usual the horses behaved well being calm, relaxed and very happy.



On the Great Flat Lode above Carnkie

## Bodmin Moor Permit Threat

Many of you will have seen the publicity on [bhsaccesscornwall](http://bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk) and in the Western Morning News, regarding a proposal by the Association of Bodmin Moor Commons Landowners to charge riders £50 a year for riding anywhere on Bodmin Moor. We only found out about the proposal by chance, it was being quietly introduced until we alerted local riders who until then knew nothing about it.

Local riders are furious (an understatement). There are many issues involved. The BHS is working hard to try prevent this scheme going forward. If it did succeed, permits for the Penwith Moors could be next!

Visit [www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk/BodminMoorUpdate.htm](http://www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk/BodminMoorUpdate.htm) for full details and background.

## Penwith Moors

We could write a whole page on the issues of gates and conservation grazing, on Carnyorth Common, Carn Galver etc

In summary:

- Cattlegrid installed and removed (as it was illegal) on the Watchcroft bridleway.
- Dangerous Self Closing Gates on Carnyorth, mounting blocks on wrong sides.
- Most gates are now just acceptable but many too narrow and gullied.
- One gate caused a serious accident and injury to horse.
- Cattle Grid by Hectors House is also illegal as it is across a definitive footpath – still to be resolved.
- Natural England are extremely slow at addressing any problems.
- Nowhere for cattle to graze except on the paths and stone circle
- The situation remains very unsatisfactory,

## Overhead Car Park Barriers

Barriers such as the one at South Wheal Francis are a worrying. They not only stop horse boxes but also holiday makers who carry bikes, boards, and canoes on their roof racks from using leisure spot car parks.

We raised the issue again at the recent Mineral Tramways Partnership meeting. It is clear that the problem of travellers illegal camping is serious and expensive to the Council if not prevented on their land. Currently the barrier is seen as essential until other provision is available for travellers. This is despite it being totally inconvenient to riders and many other residents and tourists. Apparently a recently got locked in Portreath Car park by a barrier at tea time!

Due to us raising this issue, Cornwall Council are now acknowledging that height barriers are causing a countywide problem for visitors, locals and horses riders, but a full solution seems to be a long way off.

The good news is that special parking provision for horse boxes is being planned for a new car park at the Goss Moor Trail. this will be separate from the main car park and will be classed as "highway".from which travellers can be removed if they arrive.

It was agreed that the possibility of a similar type of solution will be investigated for the Great Flat Lode car park.

## St Ives Drainage Grids

You may remember that sequences of drainage grids have been installed in many places on the main road down into St Ives, which were dangerous to attempt to cross on horses. After much discussion with Council Highways we eventually have at long last achieved a solution, finally prompted by a letter from Andrew George to the Council. They are coating the grids in a super non-slip resin material which looks and rides really great and safe without slipping or clanking.



Non Slip Resin, and it looks and is safe to ride over

## STEEL HORSE NEWS

A Cycle or Ride around the Luxulyan Valley

On the other side of St. Austell, beyond the much publicised Clay Trails by Eden, is St. Blazey there lies the little known Luxulyan Valley. It is rich with mining and clay works relics and an amazing engineering project of man-made water ways, leats, and aqueducts.

The mainly natural surface trail up the quiet wooded valley starts at Pont Mill, by the river Par once used by sea going vessels this far inland. The trail follows the river up the valley for just over 1.5 miles to a car park at the head of the valley. From there we explored a little network of trails along the steep valley side. We cycled the top track along side a leat and tried not to fall in as we avoided the mud. We then crossed the huge Treffry viaduct that once used to carry a horse-drawn tramway, and underneath the stone sets is a unique aqueduct flowing to leats on either side of this amazing valley. Further on, the wheel pit is worth a visit just to see the huge cascade of water that once would have dropped on to a massive 40ft diameter water wheel. There must be around 4 miles of off-road horse/bike trail. We did not explore the section on the other side of the viaduct where the path links into the Saint's Way. As is to be expected, we came home with some issues we need to raise with Cornwall Council where horse riders and cyclists have to climb up and down a wall to reach the top trail and a wooden stockade built across the trail stopping horse riders proceeding – for no obvious reason - on a trail we are welcomed to use!! We managed to thread our handlebars through but no way a horse!



*Posts stopping Horses but not Cycles*

We are currently working to see if this unnecessary obstruction can be removed.

Whilst in the area, and nearer to Par, we visited a currently unusable bridleway (sign-posted as footpath) which runs along an old towpath along the Par river bank. We are currently working to get this bridleway re-opened and useable again as it is a fantastic route. Once the problems are sorted, it will make for a worthwhile ride out by following the Saint's Way into the Luxulyan Valley and certainly will be a great facility for the locals.

For more on off-road cycling go to [www.1sw.org.uk](http://www.1sw.org.uk)

## WPBA Member and Successful Endurance Rider Jill Semmens - really wants to be a jockey!

Earlier this year, Jill was selected to become a member of the senior development squad of Endurance GB. But according to Jill this was not her greatest equestrian achievement! "I think winning a Members Race at a point-to-point on Bandit, my 16.2hh thoroughbred cross, was the best thing I ever did on a horse," she says. And today she confesses that she still would love to be a jockey! When Jill Semmens started riding aged about four, most probably she didn't imagine she'd be successfully competing in a 75-mile race ride in Belgium some forty odd years' later!

"I was brought up on my parents' farm, Trevedra Farm, which is above Gwenver Beach just outside Sennen. My first pony was called Champion, and my sister Wendy, our cousins and I used to ride all over the place. I can even remember a time when we rode from Sennen Beach over to Gwenver and got caught by the tide - it was just after the Torrey Cannon disaster - and we had to lead our ponies off the beach using the paths cut by the salvage teams. In those days, we were able to ride across the top of the cliffs between Treffigian and Gurlands Farm and down the dunes onto Sennen Beach."

Jill hunted with the Western Hunt and competed with the Penwith Riding Club before she was introduced to Endurance Riding - her first ride was at Minions - by long-time fellow international endurance rider Jane James. As Jill works full-time, endurance riding suits her because it is a summer pursuit and training can be done during the long daylight hours. Initially Jill rode Bandit, but soon she decided she needed an Arab type of horse. Endurance riding came from the Middle East, where Arabian horses have been raced long distances over deserts for many years. Jill bought the liver-chestnut Anglo-Arab Evermore Exciting (he is known as Harvey at home) as an unbacked three-year old stallion. Over the past few years, Harvey has proved himself to be a superb endurance horse, eventually carrying Jill to a triumphant fifth place at Mont le Soie in Belgium, when she was the first British rider home. More recently, together they won the 50-mile race ride at West Moor, Bodmin.

"He is a very forward going chap, you can almost hear him saying, 'Come on, come on, let's go!'" Jill laughs. But she has decided that after doing so well, Harvey deserves a rest. So for the rest of this season, she will be competing on Kash, her six-year old pure-bred bay Arab. He is doing well, but Jill as explains, "His attitude is completely different from Harvey's. He is a much more laid back horse and is always hungry, too! He can't go two hours without wanting to stop and eat!" Jill has a very good training programme, which involves walking for two weeks before introducing the trot and canter and she is a great believer in hill work at the canter, too. Two days' a week she takes her horses up a steep slope on Bartinney Hill. "I hack out regularly too, otherwise we'd all get very bored!" Her dedication and discipline is paying dividends as Kash recently completed 40 miles in Wiltshire.



*Jill on her Anglo Arab Evermore Exciting (Harvey)*

Nevertheless, what Jill is really looking forward to is bringing on another youngster, Aslan, an iron-grey three-year-old Arab gelding who, she says, floats across the field on air. Jill admits she wants to have a go at Arab racing. "I do have a competitive streak," she says. I think our British Team Endurance Rider really wants to be a jockey again. So you'd better look out, you Arab racers! Once Jill hits the tracks, she will be a winner! But not before she has completed a 100-mile endurance race ride with Harvey next year.

*Peter-Jane Field*