

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



FREE TO MEMBERS

No. 28 SPRING 2010

Straight from the horse's mouth

Hello Everyone

Another Christmas has come and gone and we are already a quarter of the way through 2010. The years seem to be flashing by. Our traditional Christmas Cracker ride was well supported and the Get Together at the Engine Inn was also a very sociable evening. Now we are looking at the AGM coming up already. It's been a tough winter but we have got off more lightly in the far southwest. We just got rain, rain and more rain whilst up country got the white stuff. The horses 'ploughed the fields and splattered the good grass off the land. But they've been fed and watered by our unstinting hand.' (apologies to the hymn!) Now with the recent dry weather the poached ground has set like concrete. Every bridleway and track continued to be as bad as ever under hoof. Horse hikes had to be cancelled but recently, we have had some lucky breaks to run a few good rides in reasonable weather. Chapel Carn Brea, Great Flat Lode, and a new venue at Marazion brought out a lot of riders. The recently opened new Gwallon bridleway will enable Marazion to become a regular ride.

An informal Trec competition took place on the last day of February with a crash course and demo in the morning before real action in the afternoon. The relaxed atmosphere was great. I reckon everyone watching was itching to have a go – more on page 5.

Excellent news about PAROW, our sister organisation that clears your bridleways and much more - see page 5.

You may have noticed how every Summer a small army of Penwith Parks Dept. workers appear out of hibernation to cut roadside grass, manicure the roundabouts and flower borders etc. They seem to have a mountain of machinery for these jobs. I have always thought where do these people go in the winter and why can't we conjure up these "Imps of Spring" to clear our rural network? See Cornwall Council report for some interesting developments.

One interesting aspect of attending endless meetings is we get to hear about current thinking and new plans for Cornwall. You can read about a presentation given at the Cycle Forum on eco towns. See Steel Horse News. Guaranteed to raise a cynical eyebrow.

Our organisation continues to be well supported with 145 members, the highest ever. (more when families are included). We are one of the biggest groups in the country. Thanks to you all.

This year's AGM will welcome Lindsay Setchell of 'Hoofing Marvellous' as our speaker on Barefoot Riding, and will be a very informative evening. I do hope to see you there.

Margaret

In This Bumper Issue

***Gwallon Bridleway Opened
TREC comes to the far South West
Carnyorth Common Update
Steel Horse News and Trails
Horse Hike Reports
Horse Hike Programme***

and more ...



***15 Riders gather at Marazion
on a misty morning for a Horse Hike***

***Annual General Meeting
Tuesday 30 March***

***Featuring a Presentation
on Natural Hoofcare and Barefoot Riding
by Lindsay Setchell of 'Hoofing Marvellous'***

The AGM will be held at the Yacht Inn, Penzance,
opposite the Jubilee Pool
Starting at 7:30pm
PLEASE BE PROMPT!

WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

Chairman: Adrian Bigg, Treveffa Farm, Treveffa,
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Horse Hike on the Great Flat Lode

The start of the year was not good for horse hiking, snow, rain, ice and mud,

At last, a bit of reasonable weather enabled us to run one of our favorite horse hikes. The Mining Trails around Camborne and Redruth were ideal after so much persistent wet weather. It was a real pleasure to ride out on some firm and dry tracks.

We parked as usual at the South Wheal Francis car park. This time we were able to park inside the car park as Cornwall Council has provided us with a key to open the height barrier. This is great for us but not for other riders who have to park outside. We are still trying to get Cornwall Council to provide a parking place for boxes and other higher vehicles.

We set off along the trail above Carnkie and past Wheal Buller, first going under the small tunnel under the busy road to Four Lanes. We then took the Tresavean trail high along the valley side above Lanner, we then rode a circular loop along quite lanes, with expansive views of Stithians reservoir. Rejoining the trail we headed back towards Wheal Buller.

Despite it being breezy and very cold we met many other riders enjoying the trail. There is nothing like these facilities for horse riders in Penwith. We then headed down to Churchtown and Brea villages, and enjoyed a detour up through the old Wheal Uny mine engine houses. After riding through the pretty and quiet villages, and up the steep hill towards Carn Brea, we reached the trail around the edge of Carn Brea which is a lovely track.

We then returned past the the mine sites and back up to Wheal Buller and on to South Wheal Francis.

Both horses and humans enjoyed an exhilarating 11 mile ride. We had some lovely canters, and it was good to get out together after a long winter of many cancelled rides.

Once back at the car park we learnt that Chris (Peta-Jane's husband and chauffeur) had been challenged by a local resident who took our registration numbers and wanted to know how we had got into the car park. He then proceeded to say that bridleways were not for riding horses on, but only for leading them, and that he was organizing a petition to get horses banned!

It takes all sorts – doesn't it.

Margaret

Spring 2010 - Horse Hike Programme

Please note these dates in your diary now			Organiser or Contact
UU	Polgigga	28 March	Beverly
	(Easter Holiday)	2/4 April	
U	Madron	10/11 April	Anne
U	Halamanning	17/18 April	M & A
UU	Poldice Valley	24/25 April	M & A
	Charity Ride in aid of the Mermaid Centre	Sun 9 May	Leigh Jackson
UU	Great Flat Lode	15/16 May	M & A
UU	Tehidy Woods	22/23 May	M & A
	(Spring Holiday w/e)	29/30 May	
U	Chapel Carn Brea	5/6 June	Amanda
U	New Ride TBA	19/20 June	M & A
U	Nanledra	26/27 June	M & A
UU	Lizard	10/11 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, Anne 330623
Leigh Jackson 01579 370575

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

Juniors on Horse Hikes

All juniors must be accompanied by a responsible parent or guardian who can look after them and their safety on the ride, and can vouch for their riding competence.

If you have a good idea for a Horse Hike or wish to organise one, do please let us know!

U Easy Ride UU Average Ride



Before

Transformation of Byway 19 Marazion.

This byway leads to the bypass and then on a non-definitive path below the bypass. Both paths have been cleared by PAROW with our tractor and flail and strimmers



After clearance by our PAROW Paths Officers

Christmas Cracker ride from Chapel Carn Brea

Here in West Penwith, we must be doing something right! Another glorious winter day for one of the best supported Christmas Cracker rides ever!

And what an array of beautiful glittery Christmas horses festooned the Chapel Carn Brea car park! Had there been a best turn out prize, Catherine Woodford and her beautiful liver chestnut Arab Piers would have won it hands down. Adorned with gold tinsel - which was painstakingly and immaculately plaited into his mane and complemented his dark chestnut colouring to perfection, Piers looked every inch a Christmas horse! Helen Jay sported a wonderfully mad squiggle of lilac tinsel on her hat and her chestnut mare, her horse Lady had a matching lilac tail piece and plaits in her mane. Wizzy allowed me (Peta-Jane Field) to decorate her with red ribbons and silver tinsel. Lizzie Matthews added a subtle touch, entwining deep purple tinsel around Kelster's bridle. Jill Plumbley and Sarah Aackersley had tucked festive tinsel pom poms into Squeakey and Peaches' tucked breastplates. *Tracey? Melanie ? and Donna ? from Trescrowan Livery Stable, Bone Valley added their Christmas spirit to the party.

Thus it was a suitably twinkling Christmassy cavalcade which Mandy Nicholson lead towards Bartinney and the twinkles reached the horses feet too, with much jostling and jogging as we headed off. Very wisely, Mandy insisted on a good steady walk around the bottom of Bartinney and along the path to Dowran, where we met up with Bev Jenkins and Andrea Simmons. Draped with stunning wreaths of tinsel, Archie and Carrie added even more glitter to our merry band!

After stopping, briefly at Peter's place so he could take another photo, up along the path across Leswidden Common. We jogged, with much laughter and chatting as the horses were still quite excited about being at such a super Christmas party! But Mandy kept us well in check even from the rear. Crossing the A3071 we headed off along the wide track above Tregeseal Valley and clattered on down the lane past Bosvargus Farm. Most of the horses had calmed down by now - except for Melanie's who had been taken home for bad behaviour! (She joined us later at the North Inn on her little 20-year old pony who had a wonderful time more of that later!)

A brisk trot took us all up Tregeseal Valley and onto the Kenidjack Moor where some brave souls attempted to open the gate by the pond, before I dismounted and held it open for everyone! We had a lovely steady trot/canter up the moor to the cairn and then across down the newly cut trail above Trewellard thanks to PAROW. It needs a lot of riding to break up the gorse or maybe even another visit by a heavy vehicle as there were quite a few ruts and holes. A good track nonetheless, but one to be taken carefully at the moment.

Then it was over the hill and down into Trewellard, and here the party spit up into two groups of faster riders and those who wanted to go more steadily. Jill, Sarah, Lizzie, Donna and myself took our horses to the North Inn while everyone else stayed at the Trewellard and so the story about the 2009 Christmas Cracker ride also splits up here and I'll let Helen take over to tell you about where all the others went. Mandy, Beverley, Tracey, Catherine, Andrea and I (Helen Jay) left the Queen's Arms happily refreshed, the horses also having had a munch alongside the pub, and headed westwards down onto the cliff above the Crown shafts. Our brisk pace was soon tested when Andrew (on his trusty bike) forewarned us that we couldn't go down as far as the stream at Tregeseal because of a scrambling event of what seemed to be a couple of dozen bikes whirring up and down on the Boscean side of the stream. We tracked along cautiously on the opposite side of the valley, but the horses were very frightened. We set off at a pace towards the Tregeseal crossroads, ringing the other group to forewarn them. I left the party hastening up to cut back through St. Just past the Church, shouting Happy Christmas to one and all.

Jill, Sarah, Lizzie, Donna and I (back to Peta-Jane again!) were rejoined at the North Inn by Melanie who had taken her 'upright' horse home returning to join us on her old pony! Lead at a sensible pace by Jill, we had a terrific ride back along the cliffs to Botallack. The day was still quite stunning, winter sunshine and no wind, which made the scenery even more breathtaking than usual. We all agreed we were very lucky to be able to ride in such a spectacular place!

We trotted past the Botallack Count House before heading to the Queens Arms where we met up with the others who were just about to set off for home. After a quick drink, off we set again, up past the Trewellard campsite and along the stony track by Kurt Jackson's house, past the pond again and down Tregeseal, back along the track above Bosvargus, across the A30 to Dowran, where we said goodbye to Jill and Sarah. We took this route as we'd heard there were rallying bikes on the cliffs and the tracks on the moors were still quite washed out and stony (and none of us fancied tackling the gate again!) Skirting Bartinney, Lizzie and I then lead Donna and Melanie safely back to the Chapel Carn Brea car park.

As Helen says, A dazzling days weather for an equally dazzling dozen riders. What a great spirit and general camaraderie - West Penwith Bridleways is an active group of interesting and passionate people - much of the ride was spent busily discussing the next jolly the Christmas drinks get together the next Wednesday!

So a big thank you very much, Mandy, for organising and managing such a popular, successful - and hugely enjoyable - Christmas ride for so many people!

Annual General Meeting – 30 March

This year's AGM will be at the Yacht Inn, Penzance as usual. It will feature a talk and presentation on Natural Hoofcare and, Barefoot Riding by Lindsay Setchell of 'Hoofing Marvellous'. Even if your horse always has been shod, Lindsay has much new thinking to impart.

Lindsay is based in SE Cornwall and travels the county helping horses lead natural unshod lives.

This promises to be a very interesting evening, please come along and bring your friends.

At the Yacht Inn – 7:30pm - Prompt Start

Membership Renewal

It is membership renewal time!. This year we are planning to increase the membership subscription by £1. This is necessary because of the ever increasing cost of postage which goes up again in April. We have already absorbed a couple of increases.

We know that you appreciate receiving your copy of Horse Around and we plan to continue to produce 4 copies a year.

Those of you who have already paid for this coming year are not affected by the increase until April 2011, and will have received your new membership card with this newsletter.

If your membership is due, notification is included with this newsletter.

For those of you who find renewing by post tedious you may now renew (or join) online. (credit/debit/paypal)

RENEW ONLINE

www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk/westpenwithbridleways/JoinOnline.htm

(address is case sensitive)

Peta-Jane Field and Helen Jay

Horse Hike from Marazion

On Sunday, 21st February, fifteen riders gathered in the car park at Marazion for an eleven-mile horse hike that would include the newly-opened Marazion bridleway. Despite drizzle, we enthusiastically set off up Green Lane, a quiet road (at least, until we arrived) which gave everyone a good opportunity to settle their horse into the group, chatting to old friends and meeting new ones.

At the end of this lane, we passed by farmyard and followed the bridleway up through fields to join the road that leads down and under the Marazion bypass. After a short while we then turned right up a lane, through a farmyard and bore right onto a track and byway across land belonging to the St Aubyn estate. This is a beautiful path past some woods and occasional fields. We also enjoyed our first canter of the day.

The track ended with a special horse stile: two large pieces of timber that discouraged motorbikes but which all the horses negotiated with little or no difficulty, despite the ranges of size and experience amongst them. We turned right onto the road and trotted past Friendship Woods. Just after St Hilary School, we crossed a busy road without mishap and were then back on bridleways again.

By now, the sun was out. As we wove our way along a series of tracks and bridleways, we were able to take in some stunning and astonishingly far-reaching views. The recent rain had turned some of the muddier stretches into a quagmire. However, it was all passable and even those horses that were more averse to mud accepted their lot.

I guessed we must be working our way around Halamanning but, in truth, I had lost my bearings a bit until we emerged in the heart of Goldsithney. None of the pubs in the vicinity were obviously ideal for a large group of horses and riders, so we decided to push on to Marazion without a break.

We tried to call in on some relatives of Margaret and Adrian in the housing estate at Goldsithney, to the horror of a black and white cat who looked frankly appalled at our invasion, then we continued to Gears Lane. This was also a bit muddy, but not so bad that we could not have another short run.

Passing Tregurtha we joined Plain an Gwarry Lane and then turned up the bridleway before the nursery, two-by-two in the ruts left by tractors. We then turn off left to use the newly opened Gwallon bridleway, keeping single file as the bridleway was now along the edge of a field with crops in it. We stepped over into the next field, bearing right initially but following an arc anti-clockwise, then down the field to a new gate. It felt slightly odd to be taking this new route through fields, but already, there were clear tacks to help guide riders.



Going along field section of new bridleway

This was a well-paced and thoroughly enjoyable ride that linked a substantial number of bridleways and by-ways. We are very fortunate indeed that – through a lot of hard work and goodwill – we have access to the Marazion bridleway again and no longer have to cross the by-pass. It would be wonderful to see this ride make a regular appearance on the schedule and I am looking forward to exploring further some of the parts of this route that were new to me.

Gwallon Bridleway is opened

After a long delay because of all the rain and snow, the landowners have at last managed to install two of the gates that riders and WPBA purchased. Other works have also been finished to create a new path along the edge of the house (with the electric gates). All on our inaugural ride (see this page) though the gates superb. They are self closing but importantly two way and they do not shut too quickly.



One of the gates leading to where the bridleway runs along the top of the garden.



The new bridlepath (red) comes out just by the underpass under the Marazion bypass. Previously to get to Marazion from the other bridleway (black dots) you had to cross over the bypass. You see this crossing as you drive along the bypass – very nasty. Note: The official legal diversions still have to be completed on the new bridleway route.

The gate was very easy to negotiate and one of the best I have encountered. It opens in either direction and is weighted so that a push sends it back into its latch with little difficulty. At the same time, it does not have one of those fierce springs that cause so many bridleway gates to snap like a giant mousetrap as one tries to ride through. We were a considerable train and all passed through easily. We followed the track down, through a second excellent gate, and passed back under the Marazion by-pass. We took another wooded track that ran adjacent to the by-pass, then turned right up a narrow track marked as a by-way. Eventually, we emerged at the top end of Marazion, passing the Community Centre and school, and then down along the main road. Marazion was not too busy in terms of traffic and the vehicles we encountered all had extremely considerate drivers. Some of us took the opportunity to detour along the beach at the end to rinse the all-pervading mud from our horses' legs, at least until they returned to their fields.

Demelza Curnow

Trec Comes to the Far Southwest

Lots of local riders showed up at Rosevidney to watch lots of other local riders have a bash at Trec. This local demonstration competition was organised by WPBA committee member Peta-jane Field and Lizzie Matthews to stimulate interest and to learn about the sport. Its great appeal is the precision riding through an obstacle course: providing an interesting challenge to both horse and rider. The spectators sat shivering at the far end of the arena as a freezing gale from 'Siberia' blew under the unfinished barn wall! We all watched attentively as riders bended and weaved over the various obstacles whilst trying to remember the course.



Christine Hitchens on big chunky Domino (left) daintily negotiated the 'S' as good as anybody we saw.

It certainly proved a challenge requiring your horse's control, agility and patience.

Wizzy with Petajane lived up to her name on the initial canter that was supposed to be as slow as possible. Wizzy did settle down and soon was playing "follow my leader" pictured right.



Going over a pallet "bridge" was new to some horses – good exercise for when going over wooden bridges on our horse hikes. The most disjointed part was the getting on and off and making the horse stand in a corner like a naughty boy, for 10 seconds, before remounting and continuing on. This part was more like a riding and road safety test!! Trec certainly offers good training for a horse in listening, obedience and control. The great thing is it's quite informal and riders don't have to get all poned up. Let's hope it becomes a regular feature on the horsey calendar. It's great fun.

Uncle Rob Comes Up Trumps!

We have been extremely anxious about the future funding for PAROW and our paths officers Chris and Kirstan. PAROW has been living from hand to mouth every month over the last six months. Cornwall Council has been keeping it funded but could no longer continue to do so. No PAROW could mean no more fantastic bridleway and moorland cutting!!

Now we can all breathe a sigh of relief at the great news that Rob Poole our Rural Development Officer has saved the day by submitting a successful bid into the West Cornwall Local Action Group. On the 23 February Chris and Kirsten had cleaned out the workshop and oiled and stored tools and machinery for what they thought was the last time, to mothball the workshop unit. It really was 11th hour stuff, when the news came through that funding has been approved to keep PAROW going for another 12 months at least and provide secure employment for the two paths officers. With a new lease of life plans can be now made. The funders expect to see certain milestones reached and much project access work will be focussed on the moorlands. More about this in the next newsletter. PAROW will still be doing parish contract work for Paul, Perranuthnoe and Morvah and other bridleway work. PAROW has been given new impetus and is working to a positive plan. Also see the item on the Tinnars Way on the next page.

Carnyorth Common Update

Since our report in the last Horse Around, in January we did yet another full survey of the gates at the various entrances to the common.

Our conclusions were detailed in yet another full report that was written for the national British Horse Society debate (gate problems are not unique to Penwith)

This report has achieved results as, it also went as far as the Chief Exec of Natural England.

NE at last had a meeting with us to look at the issues.

They have agreed to modify the gates: to ensure that they all open to 90 degrees and stay open long enough to navigate a horse safely through. They also have agreed to change/reposition some of the catches so they are less likely to be caught on your horse. We in liaison with Cornwall Council are going to change the fastener completely on the gate to Devil's lane and try and improve the gate and access.

Unfortunately it is NOT possible to widen the gateways as this would require replacement of the gates with wider ones. Those 5 foot gates are actually supposed to be fitted between the posts not across. The legal standard on bridleways is a width of 5 feet between the posts

We can do nothing about the one way opening, this was a requirement of the farmer for stock security.

PAROW will continue in improving the paths and tracks by clearing the gorse in liaison with Cornwall Council and Natural England.

General Gate Issues

We locally and the British Horse Society continues to be concerned about gates and their safety.

We are trying to get the issues and standards clarified especially in the light of the trend for more self closing and one way opening gates.

The BHS will shortly be issuing further guidance on this.

In the meantime we have written to Cornwall Council for an explanation of their current policy on gates and their safety.

Issues to be addressed are:

- Gates only on one hinge,
- Catches impossible to open
- Gates tied up with string or wire
- Gate needing to be lifted with two hands to open - at risk of injuring your back.
- Gates broken with spikes of wood or rusty metal.
- Not to mention self closing issues or obstructions around a gate

The Tinnners Way

Some of you will be familiar with the Tinnners Way route over the Penwith moors which runs from St Ives to St Just. Although walked and ridden by some, it is very difficult in places and is not known to many.

At long last enthusiasm for improving and formalising the trail is spreading. We are now working with West Cornwall Footpath Preservation Society, the Ramblers, Save Penwith Moors and Cornwall Council to plan a "Tinnners Trails" initiative.

We will be also engaging with The local Town and Parish Councils, and landowners to ensure that any future project has the full support of all.

It is early days but we are hoping that PAROW will be able to make some improvements to the route this year, but we are making no promises at this stage. Funding for such projects is currently difficult to find.

The FACEBOOK for Horses

Horse owners are urged to get on 'NED' the National Equine Database. The NED website is the only central place to find information on more than a million horses, ponies and donkeys and is supplied with data from official UK sources. NED contains details of every passport issued by a UK Passport Issuing Organisation which contains the name of the horse, its age, gender, height and colour. Sire and dam and competition records can also be seen where provided. Horse owners are urged to ensure they register with NED, associate themselves with their horses and check and register stolen horses or horses missing on loan in a bid to prevent thieves from applying for new passports of these horses and selling them on. Since its launch in Nov 2008, more functions have been added. Owners can now enter their horse's microchip and any freeze mark number id. details to help minimise fraud. NED do charge a small fee for updates you make to the data.

We think it well worth it and have identified our horses to ourselves and updated their data. You can also supply photos to the site. <http://www.nedonline.co.uk/public/>
Or email info@ned.uk.com for any questions.

Cornwall Council Paths Improvement Work

All our Public Path Improvement works have been on hold until all the coastal Zennor flood damage work had been completed.

One major outstanding job still to be done is repair of the bridgeway from Embla Vean (Nancledra) up onto the moors. Cornwall Council inform us this will now be starting early in April.

There is still work to do in Sancreed and Madron, Gwinear and St Erth

One good result of the new Unitary Authority is that there are staff (previously employed by the old District Councils) for grass cutting etc in the summer. During the winter they had little to do.

During the winter they are now being redeployed on some major clearing of footpaths and bridgeways and other works. This is helping the Countryside Service significantly. The Tredavoe bridgeways have benefitted from this programme.

Bridgeway Sign Posts - We also are anxious that ALL bridgeways are signed from the road. We will be following this up with Cornwall Council, as signs should be present for bridgeways in parishes that have been completed under the improvement programme.

In Brief

Polo In the Park

Apparently there is an initiative to introduce horse polo to ordinary inner-city dwellers. In particular, they want to give children the opportunity to get involved by bringing the sport to urban parks. Polo has an image problem in that it is perceived as an activity for the well off and this idea is being promoted to change that.

The Horse Boy by Rupert Isaacson

This is a story about a father's miraculous journey to help to alleviate the problems of his autistic son. After the boy responded to riding on a horse with his father, they travelled to Mongolia where horses and shaman priests are part of everyday living. What followed had a profound effect on the boy's condition. Horse Boy has also been made into a film called, "Over the Hills and Far Away".

Said on a Horse Hike in Tehidy Woods

As we rode through a busy car park a little boy called to me questioningly "Is that a real horse?" Parents and children love to see us all riding through on a Sunday – it beats just feeding the ducks!

The Gaucho becomes an 'endangered species'.

The Gaucho cattle men of Argentina are becoming much fewer in number as ranch owners chose vehicles to round up the cattle instead of using the traditional Argentinian horsemen. Gone with them is a traditional way of life of living under the stars with their horses and cattle.

Southwest Equine Protection

The Southwest Equine Protection currently has 20 horses in their care with a further 6 waiting to come in. The charity believe the recession and cold weather have made some owners realise what a big commitment owning a horse is.

Be for ever an optimist

A little boy who woke up on his birthday saw a huge pile of manure in the backyard. Not being disappointed, he grabbed a shovel and started digging. Thinking ... There must be a pony in there somewhere!

Stakeholder Working Group

A Stakeholder Working Group was set up by the government to look at problems we face with disjointed public rights of way, and to recommend a simpler way of putting right the definitive map before the 2026 cut off date for claiming pre-1949 routes. (See previous newsletter). They are due to report officially at the end of March. It is believed they are going to recommend some changes to enable the definitive map to be amended more efficiently. How a possible change in government will affect things is not known.

IMPORTANT CAMPAIGN ISSUES

Access to the Coast

The Coast and Marine Bill after much lobbying is now moving to the implementation stage. The government's survey says that 57% of Britain's coastline existing satisfactory access is on public footpaths. 44% of the coast has no existing satisfactory access and will require a route to be secured. Where existing access is satisfactory more than a third is on existing public road or promenade, often through urban areas. Only 6% is multi-user cycle route or bridleway.

Despite all our lobbying the Act failed to provide any statutory provision for equestrians but relied on voluntary provision from landowners. It is therefore essential that we are in a position to lobby landowners for such provision, where appropriate, either by dedicating higher rights on public rights of way or by using Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, or providing at least permissive access.

To this end the BHS is undertaking a full survey of current and potential future access along all of our coastline, and is looking for members who live or ride near the coast to help. This access survey will also importantly include access to beaches - we do not want to lose any current "de facto access" that exists.

Access to Forestry Commission Woods

The BHS and riders have made significant representations to the Forestry Commission via its recent consultation process over the unfairness of the Commission's provisions for equine access which often involves permits, where cyclists and walkers go free. Direct meetings with the Forestry Commission have to date failed to get any clarification of their policy (current or future) on this issue.

The BHS is continuing its campaign and we do need your continued help. We are asking all equestrians to lobby their MP. to help. Visit www.bhsaccesssouthwest.org.uk/Campaigns.htm and download and print a letter to sign and send to you MP. - PLEASE DO HELP WITH THIS CAMPAIGN

The Proposed Horse Tax

As reported in the last Horse Around the government is proposing that every animal owner including horse owners will have to pay a levy for each animal. This levy in theory would go towards the management of any future disease outbreak. The administrative burden of collecting this tax on individual horses would no doubt cost as much as any money recouped.

Ministers are now under pressure to reconsider these controversial plans to introduce this new tax on horse owners after over 10,000 people signed a petition opposing the move. If you have not already signed the petition please consider doing so.

Visit <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/Horse-Rethink/>

Cyclists Only

Throughout the country there are many trails and cycleways provided for cyclists on which horse riding is barred, or is only available by permit.

Once again equines are suffering unnecessary discrimination. There is currently an online petition instigated by the Trails Trust to ask for an end to this discrimination. Visit <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/Access4All/>

It is MOST IMPORTANT that these petitions attract a good response from riders otherwise government ministers can use them to demonstrate that there is in fact no support for them from horseriders.



Tehidy Woods Horse Hike

One place you can at least get close to the coast is at the National Trust Bassets Cove car park. Just north of Tehidy Country Park. A byway takes you down to the car park. Unfortunately you cannot ride along the coast in either direction. BUT at least it is a place where there is plenty of room to park horse boxes for the start of our Tehidy Horse Hike.

Pictured left are Anne and Margaret on our ride on 7 March. Only a small group were able to go on this ride. We had a brilliant time and the sun shone. We did a shorter 7 mile ride, exploring all the trails around the woods and to Illogan and the new Gwel-an-mor/Portreath bridleway.

We have a ride from here on our new programme. For those who have not done this ride it is one not to be missed.

Steel Horse News

Eco Towns -

At the February Cycle Forum we had a presentation on Eco towns. "Living a greener future" by aiming to build carbon neutral towns.

St. Austell is one of 4 national "eco towns". Another 4 will be announced by the government soon. A total of 5,000 homes are to be built located in 6 sites around St. Austell, starting with Par docks and in addition building a hotel and also a marina is proposed and perhaps a new railway station. Homes are to be built within 10 minutes walk of public transport, primary school, and neighbourhood services. The aim is for 50% of trips to be made by non-car means – that is journeys made to outside the eco town environment. There will be ambitious targets for non-car use including electric car power provision. 40% of land will be green space of which at least half will be for public access. These will be car-free areas, but no proposals yet for car-free development. Every home will have a computer read out facility giving information on times of next bus or train etc. There will be an affordable transport system with a service available every 10 minutes!

Cycle Routes

Attractive internal cycle routes and workplace cycle facilities will be developed. The aim is to provide local employment. There will be commuter cycle routes but signage is likely to have the time in minutes instead of a distance, this is calculated on a travel speed of 10 to 12 mph on the flat, and adjusted for steep hills etc.

Importantly many leisure cycling routes are also going to be provided

Provision for Horses

We will be watching to ensure the trails will be multi-user where feasible. We are pleased that Sustrans plan to use road planings or other recycled materials to provide an unsealed surface where ever they can rather than carbon unfriendly tarmac.

This is all very laudable but if you are all cynically laughing by now, yes I would agree with you. How is it possible that all this development could actually be carbon neutral?

Spokes & Sprockets

Tamar Valley

Much has gone on in the Tamar valley in developing some interesting cycle trails. The trails have only just been officially opened and are between Tavistock, Gunnislake and Morwellham Quay. There is also a serious mountain bike down hill course, the Maddacleave Downhill trail, in the forest with technical drop offs and other challenging terrain. You have to get a day pass or membership to use it. (Visit Woodland Riders website.) Horses and cyclists are allowed on nearly all the trails. We have yet to check these out. They certainly look worth a visit.

Go to www.tamarvalley.org.uk for more information.

For Horse Riders

There are loads of new horse trails, however horse box parking is a bit of an issue as you currently have to buy a "parking licence" in advance – we are hoping this will be relaxed.

Mount Edgecombe Park

We took our bikes to explore this stunning place tucked away in a forgotten far corner of Cornwall near Torpoint. We were expecting just to find the stately home with neat manicured boring paths. What we found was a hilly country park with grass and woodland and lovely off road moderately challenging bike (horse) ride with some nice rugged bits through a wood.



The vistas were hugely panoramic, overlooking Drakes Island and the Tamar estuary and its approaches towards Plymouth.

These quiet multi-user trails do a circuit of the estate much on fantastic coastline. We explored lots and needless to say that the short bit of coastal definitive bridleway had land slipped into the sea. The multi user trail is now the alternative route but it is worth doing the old wide bridleway on horseback even though you have to return the way you came. None of the routes walking or multiuser-trail were signed so the rider is relatively free to follow which ever track takes your fancy although because of the landslip a couple of the routes do end in flights of steps – one set we carried our bikes to the top – but it was worth it for the rugged ride through the forest. If on horseback just turn around and retrace your hoofsteps to pick up another trail. If you live within an hour's drive it is well worth boxing out for a lovely interesting ride. If you explore as we did, you can extend this 5 mile ride easily if you ride down to the coast road leading to Fort Picklecombe or you can go around again.



One of the paths to ride or cycle

Remember with all these shared facilities to respect other users and give way. Cyclists should give way to horse riders.

There is a formal car park at Cremyll, which is near the main entrance to the estate and best for getting your bearings. There is a free but smaller car park at Maker Church that will take a couple of horse trailers.

Don't forget to visit :

BHS Access Cornwall

www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk

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

Now also BHS Access South West

www.bhsaccesssouthwest.org.uk