

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



FREE TO MEMBERS

No. 30 SPRING 2011

Straight from the horse's mouth

Hello Everyone and welcome to another edition of Horse Around, and a special welcome to recent new members.

We have come through yet another cold and soggy winter. I have heard that next winter could be as bad if not worse. How 'they' know this I'm not sure. However, the many wet weekends and difficult riding conditions resulted in many planned horse hikes being cancelled. Nobody wants to turn out to ride muddy and slippery wet paths in the wind and rain. We need some consistent fine and dry weather so we can all get our horses going again.

The national debate and outcry to sell off our forests has been much in the news. The sell off of the publicly owned Forestry Commission land to private buyers has thankfully caused more than quite a stir. It is good to know that the general public are not easily duped into believing that **our** woodlands and forests would still be accessible under such a deal. It took 500,000 online petition signatures to set the government into a flap. Horse riders now know what we need to achieve success in future campaigns. You have already affected change on a nonsense report by the AONB Cornwall office after we asked you and BHS Cornwall members to respond by email. Read more in this edition of Horse Around.

The other issue high on riders' agenda is the recent outbreaks of scary equine diseases. We have therefore invited Joe Ivey of Rosevean Vets to our AGM to give us a talk and update on the latest situation and on likely future threats from abroad. Membership is now due and the renewal has gone out with this newsletter. Some of you have paid for 2 years and you will automatically get a new membership card enclosed. Please do continue to support us as we are achieving improvement work to our riding network. This brings me nicely to some excellent news.

We continue to work with our sister organisation PAROW which employs Chris and Kirstan to do much practical work on clearing paths and improving our riding network. We hopefully, by the time you read this, will have received good news about our latest bid for funding for the next two years.

There is still much turmoil in local government and we are still waiting for the 'dust to settle' in the Environment Department at Cornwall Council. We believe that the department may survive a severe budget cut. The budget is so small anyway and would not make a significant saving on the scale of things.

Finally, here's hoping for a better Spring and a lovely Summer – we all (human and equine) certainly need to feel the sun on our backs. We have a new horse hike programme for you. Do come along and enjoy some pleasant, easy and relaxed riding – weather permitting of course!!

Margaret

We currently have 150 members, and are one of the biggest bridleway groups in the country. Your support really does help our cause.

In This Issue

Horse Hike Reports
Ride4Life
Bridleway Issues
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Steel Horse News

and much more ...



*19 riders set out on the new year's horse hike from Madron
(As featured in the Cornishman)*

Annual General Meeting

**Featuring a talk by
Joe Ivey of Rosevean Vets
on
Emerging Equine Diseases
and Associated Issues**

**Tuesday 22 March
At the Yacht Inn, Penzance
(opposite Jubilee Pool)
Start 7:30 prompt**

WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

Chairman: Adrian Bigg, Treveffa Farm, Trevega, Zennor, TR26 3BL
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Email: wpba@btinternet.com

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Christmas Cracker Ride

Our traditional Christmas Cracker ride took place in cold but good weather. A terrific turnout of riders assembled at Chapel Carn Brea car park as a fierce cold wind blew up. Because of the numbers, riders split into two groups and the faster paced group set off first across Tredinney and Numphra Commons over to Dowran. The second party followed carrying on to Botrea and over to Tregeseal valley, up No Go By Hill and then enjoyed a nice canter up Devil's lane, then trekking on to the moor. Whilst the first group went to the North Inn for their first stop of Christmas cheer, the second party took paths and tracks that brought them out to Trewellard for their first port of call at the Trewellard Arms. Here, all the riders met up briefly; the car park full of horses and riders - all decked out in tinsel. Down Levant road and Geevor and a lovely ride along the cliffs followed. The first and faster party went to the Queens Arms, at Botallack, whilst the second continued along the cliffs to Tregeseal valley.

At Tregeseal riders found themselves in the middle of a motor bike scramble event as they rode up the valley side to St. Just which had become their marked course. Although the horses were at first a little alarmed, they seemed happy and secure in their group. Soon after, the riders were in St. Just and enjoying a drink at The King's Arms. It was amazing timing that the first group caught up the second just as they were about to mount up and head back for home.

The weather remained dry and enabled everyone to have a truly marvellous ride out over moorland and cliff. There is no finer way to enjoy the countryside scenery and this 12 mile ride out amongst horsey friends surpassed everyone's expectations. A big thank you to Amanda Nicholson for organising such a super ride.



Riders ready to leave the Trewellard Arms

Don't forget to visit :

BHS Access Cornwall
www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk

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

Horse Hike Programme - Spring/ Summer 2011

Please note these dates in your diary now			Organiser or Contact
U	Helston/Loe Pool - a new ride -	20 March	M & A
**	AGM (Penzance)	Tues 22 March	**
U	Nancladra	10 April	M & A
U	Madron	17 April	Anne B.
UU	Mining Trails (Lanner)_	8 May	M & A
UU	Gwinear	22 May	M & A
U or UU	Tehidy Woods	5 June	M & A
U	Morvah	19 June	Chris H.
UU	Lizard	3 July	Alison L.

Other rides may be organised according to demand. We always welcome suggestions for new rides. **Always check with the organiser or ourselves a few days before.** The exact date will be determined by the interest in the ride and/or weather.

Contacts: Margaret and Adrian Tel: 01736 795098
 Anne Bressington 330623, Chris Hichens 788729,
 Alison Lugg 01326 241545

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

Membership Renewal

If your membership is due, notification is included with this newsletter. Many of you did renew for two years which saves both you and ourselves on administration. If your membership is already paid until 2012, your new membership card has been enclosed with this newsletter.

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

RENEW ONLINE

www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk/westpenwithbridleways/JoinOnline.htm
 (address is case sensitive)

AGM -You may also renew your membership at the AGM. All welcome at the AGM, but non-members will be asked to join or make a donation.

Madron Horse Hike

The first horse hike of the new year from Madron had an overwhelming attendance of 19 members starting out on a really quiet and easy "warm up" ride. We assembled outside Madron church on Sunday 9 January on a beautiful day. The sun was shining and no wind made for a lovely pleasant ride out.



More Happy Riders ready for the ride

We started by going through the centre of Madron and onto Kennel Lane, and then eventually taking back roads to Carfury and on up to Green Barrow mine and Ding Dong. From the moor, views over to the Lizard across Mounts Bay were stunning. The going was quite soggy under hoof after all the recent rains. And with more rain forecast for the coming week, everyone felt privileged to get such a timely break in the weather. The riders crossed the moor and emerged by Lanyon farm. Turning left on to the road and passing Lanyon Quoit, they then took the track on the right known as 'Rabbit Run'. This brought our happy trekkers out by Madron Carn and the bridleway across the Carn was taken. Not too long after, roads and a scenic route lead them back to Madron a total of 7 miles. A big thank you to Ann Bressington for organising this very popular ride. It is quite an achievement to complete a well ordered horse hike with such numbers of keen and enthusiastic horses,

Please do wear Hi Viz

Why do so many riders just not wear Hi Viz? Summer may be coming, but in summer without hi viz you cannot be seen in a shady lane when drivers are in the sun.

Drivers will think that when they see a rider without Hi Viz that they do not need to be seen and can just be ignored.

Hi Viz is immediately seen by drivers and often from a great distance, it DOES have good effect .

Wearing Hi Viz does not mean you are a novice or incompetent rider – it just means you want to be seen.

Please think about the safety of your precious horse even if you are not worried about you own skin.

It is also important to note that if an accident does occur and the rider is not wearing hi viz, then the rider can potentially be judged to be as much negligent as the vehicle driver. Insurance companies will not necessarily pay out in the circumstances.

Wearing hi viz means drivers can see you three seconds earlier and helicopter pilots and air ambulance crew can spot you half a mile sooner!

Ride4Life

Last September many bridleway members took part in the Ride4Life "Pink" ride in aid of breast cancer charity. This event, run from Trescrowan Farm, Heamoor, courtesy of Mike and Richard Uren, was organised by Sue Knapman. This is the second of these rides and once again it raised over £1000.

We did not have space in the last Horse Around for the pictures, so here is a sample of the riders who all participated in the spirit of the ride.



Natalie Mitchell on Hannah, Alice Reed on Dolly and Chelsea Reed on Tilly

The route took riders from Trescrowan and headed down Kennel Lane towards Madron and then took an arranged off road field route to by pass Madron and eventually to reach the bridleway over Madron Carn. Going on past Lanyon Quoit and then over the moors to Ding Dong/Green Barrow Mine the riders returned via Carfury to Bone Valley and Trescrowan.



Pinkest Junior – Lucy Grant from Penzance on Mulfra Truffles

We are sure the event will be repeated next September, details in the next Horse Around

STEEPLE WOODS – BRIDLEWAY THREATENED

A care home Development is threatening to decimate the only, and beautiful, definitive bridleway lane in St Ives. There is a large campaign against the development which will destroy the green area from Steeple woods to the coast. We have objected accordingly.

PAROW Future Plans

Most of you will be aware that we work closely with our sister organisation Penwith Access and Rights of Way Forum (PAROW) which is grant funded and employs two paths officers who over the last 7 years have made a tremendous improvement to many of the paths and tracks we ride and walk. The current funding is about to expire and we have been putting together a bid for further Local Action Group funding for the next few years. Rural development officer Rob Poole has worked tirelessly on our behalf to this end.

In these difficult times of cuts we have been very concerned about future funding. As you receive this newsletter we are expecting confirmation that we have secured our funding.

If our bid has been successful we plan to make improvement to the paths on the "Tinnars Way" over the moor. There is great enthusiasm, from all, for such work and better promotion of the route which is also part of the planned BHS RideUK Kernow Horse Trail.

PAROW will also continue to improve access for all in West Cornwall and continue to work closely with Cornwall Council and user groups.

Chapel Carn Brea – Horse Access - Update

WPBA has worked closely with the National Trust, PAROW and local residents to get this ancient trackway cleared. PAROW cleared it out after seeking agreement. There was a drainage problem and PAROW has now installed new drainage to protect the path and stop water running down towards Newshop. The work required a significant amount of timber and our bridleways association, the land owner and PAROW has contributed to the cost

The NT has agreed to move back the awkward bridleyway gate to allow much safer access on to Chapel Carn Brea. They are also going to cut wide 'firebreak' tracks around the base of the hill that will also improve horse access. We have now achieved a rather pleasant circular ride. We will still look for further improvement to horse access in the future. Dartmoor ponies are currently being used to graze off the hill. The NT are planning more clearance on the hill that should provide better access for riders and grazing for the resident ponies.



Above, Looking down along the cleared old lane

Below, one the many drainage gullies installed.



Bridleway Problems Update

Good News - Embla Vean Bridleway, Nancledra to the moors. This was washed out by the Zennor Floods 2 years ago and has been closed ever since. Cornwall Council has done a complete restoration on this bridleway. They have restored a good wide track right up to the moor, and renovated and improved all the old leat drainage system. It was very wet whilst they did the work which gave them good opportunity to see the drainage problems as they did the job.



Work In Progress on Embla Vean Bridleway, Towednack 18

Tredavoe Bridleways, Paul.

These have also been closed after becoming dangerous because of rain damage. Work will be done on these shortly if it has not already been started.

Balnoon Track

We reported the use of the track from Balnoon to Halsetown had been challenged. We have now found out that the land is in fact Section 15 common land on which the public have the right to air and exercise, and this right includes horse riding. We are working with Cornwall Council to try and get our right to use the track enforced.

Bridleway from Higher Trenowin to Lower Chellew, Ludgvan. This has been blocked by a large farm gate tied across the bridleway. We have asked Cornwall Council to address the issue.

Gwithian Green Common.

Any riders who use the car park on Gwithian Green are asked to avoid unnecessarily riding on the common itself especially when the conditions are wet.. Gwinear and Gwithian PC have reported damage to the ecology by horses.

In Brief

The White Stallion of St. Ives - There is a legend that a ghostly white stallion is sometimes seen, by fishermen returning from sea, roaming the cliffs above St. Ives. The story goes that his rider regularly went swimming, but one day he got caught in the treacherous current and drowned. The distressed ghost horse is supposedly seen wandering and looking out for his master and sometimes with his master on board.

Horse Stomach Ulcers - Did you know that ulcers are becoming a big problem. It is reported that over 95% of all race horses have some level of ulceration, and over 60% of leisure riding horses also have ulceration. Stress, work levels and feeding regimes play a huge part in this situation. (Also see "Gut Instinct" in Mar/Apr 2011 edition of BHS British Horse magazine)

The Bigger Picture

The Coalition Government – Access to the Countryside

Prior to the election, the Lib. Dems. manifesto included the following statement “The Liberal Democrats will increase the general right of access to the countryside, along the lines of the model introduced by the Liberal Democrats in Scotland.”

We also sought out a statement from the Conservatives and received an email which said “We wish to protect and wherever possible expand access for equestrians, and will encourage new opportunities for riders, walkers and cyclists to enjoy the countryside. Legislation is not the only means to achieve this and we want to see more voluntary agreements with landowners to increase access where demand exists. Conservatives will ensure that we give every opportunity for walkers and riders to explore the countryside without compromising the interests of those who live and work on the land.”

Since the election all we now hear of is cuts and particularly to environmental funding. A change of attitude to access is what is really required.

On Coastal Access

It is very likely that the government will scrap the Coastal Access plan to have a continuous route around Britain. This legislation was not going to give horse riders much as it was another “walkers only” Bill. Horse riders were told to go and negotiate with landowners for access (see above), and we are being given the same old message by the new government.

Our Forests

On Forestry the BHS was lobbying hard for equality of access to our forests as enjoyed by walkers and cyclists. (riders generally have to buy a six month permit!)

The Government then once again tried to “sell off the family silver”. Fortunately, people were having none of it. The plan was to sell off half of Forestry Commission land to give “a new approach to ownership and management of woodlands and forests”. This was very bad news for equestrians unless we get the same rights as walkers whose access is already protected under the right to roam legislation,. That would never happen.

“The 38 Degrees” high profile national website petition took off big time and with the support of yourselves and other riders. The government had no option but to back down. Instead there is to be a panel to look at access issues, and the BHS is trying to get a place at the table.

Stakeholder Working Group

The Stakeholder Working Group was set up by the previous 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 historic routes. We still hope that the new government will invoke the recommendations of the working group, but clearly it is not a high priority. Our disjointed RoW network is typified by the bridleway problem reported also on this page (right).

Horse Tax – After much lobbying by the BHS we understand the idea of a horse tax has been dropped.

Natural England Consultation – Lobbying does get noticed

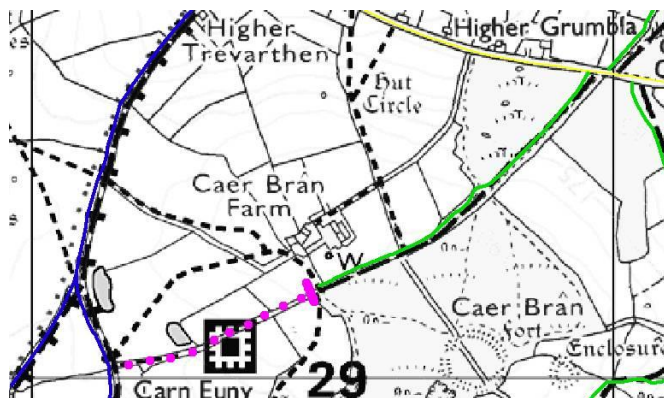
Well done everyone who sent on our equestrian views of the total lack of reference to access mentioned in this consultation. Judging by the number of emails we had back from you, we know you responded very well. We have since learnt that Mark Weston, BHS Director of Access who attended a Natural England “Invitation Event” and also met with Natural Environment parliamentary under secretary, Richard Benyon, both mention the large number of responses that had been received from equestrians in respect of the consultation. So many thanks to you all for your responses – your efforts are being noticed!

NEW PROBLEM

Sancreed Bridleway 17, Grumbla to Brane.

We previously reported on the work Cornwall Council has done on this bridleway to restore water damage.

However the top end section of the bridleway old lane is not definitive bridleway. The map below shows the definitive bridleway (green) the purple dots show the old lane (not recorded as bridleway or footpath).



The whole of the track through to byway (blue) has been freely used since time immemorial by riders and walkers. The bridleway is useless without the through connection. This situation is typical as 50% of our bridleways are on a similarly undesignated connection.

However the owner of Caer Bran Farm has now told the Sancreed Parish Council paths officer that he does not want horses to use the old lane and that he owns it and is disputing that there is a right of way along it.

To emphasise this point he has installed a “gate” barrier on the lane with a very high step that is nasty for horses to get over safely. We do not know his ultimate intentions.



New gate barrier/wire fence on the track

Whatever his intentions he has declared publicly that he disputes there is a right of way along the track.

This means we now have to prepare a definitive map modification order application with evidence of use to claim legal right to use it. Otherwise our rights and ability to claim it will diminish over time.

We are working with Cornwall Council to try and find a resolution to this issue without the long delays associated with Modification Order applications.

Also see Stakeholder Working Group item also on this page.

History of Cycling and the Law - This three part series is also very relevant to equestrian rights.

This item is based on information taken from the Rights of Way Law Review. We plan to continue and give more insight into this subject in the next Horse Around.

The 'velocipede' (a two or more wheeled machine) was not manufactured commercially until the early 1800s. Users were being fined for riding on pavements as early as 1819. In the 1860s, the crank pedal driven machine was developed, but still primitive. By 1880 demand for improved comfort and safety encouraged better cycle design resulting in their use on roads becoming widespread. Soon 34% of all journeys were by bicycle. (Sustrans would have been ecstatic with that today!) The predominant users of roads in the 1880s were pedestrians, equestrians and horse drawn vehicles. The bicycle was likened to 'a strange horse-vehicle'. County authorities introduced byelaws to regulate the use of bicycles on the highway – the first parliamentary control of cycling – designed to protect other highway users. In law, the bicycle was confined to roads.

As traffic increased, by 1968 it was recognised that cyclists had become vulnerable road users and the Gosling report proposed they be permitted to use footpaths and bridleways. The proposals were considerably watered down and the Countryside Act of 1968 gives cyclists the right to ride on bridleways. The right does not change the definition of bridleway, but a condition attached is that cyclists must give way to pedestrians and horse riders. A local authority has the right to pass a byelaw to restrict cycling on a bridleway. This is unlikely, as such a right cannot be permanently extinguished. Highway authorities are not obliged to improve the surface of a bridleway to accommodate cyclists. – Say "No" to tarmac.

Next time – Cycling on Footpaths and Pavements and the introduction of Cycle Tracks (the law is full of potholes!).

Eco Town Shambles

Remember the big fan fare announcement over the launch of the new environmentally friendly town construction schemes supposedly carbon neutral and offering lots of cycle/bridleway routes and green spaces. The whole 'pie in the sky' scheme seems to be imploding faster than a Japanese nuclear power reactor.

The planning designation of "Eco Towns" seems to have been diluted and funding reduced (what a surprise I hear you all say). The development around St. Austell appears to be continuing under the 'Eco bubble'. Two thousand houses are going to be dumped - each expected to have cars for transport and no guarantee of any green infrastructure.

We now find ourselves having to urgently submit a letter of objection as they ditch the green corridor plans in favour of building yet more boring mega-sized housing estates, and with no mention of bridleway infrastructure connecting to the Clay trails etc..

Devon Cycle Trails – NO HORSES!

Further to our report in the last Horse Around we have had a good meeting with Devon County Council RoW team to try and get horses allowed on more of their existing "cycle" Trails. Remember that horses have been allowed (and with great success) on the Camel trail for several years now.

Devon do now have a strict policy and process of true multi-user trails on future developments. This is a great success and has only come about after considerable pressure being exerted by the BHS for the full inclusion of horse access. However we are still working with them to get horses to be allowed to use the existing trails eg. Granite Way and Tavistock to Plymbridge. There is some hesitation on simply removing the No Horses signs, despite them being ignored by local riders in many places.



New BHS President

Martin Clunes, who starred in "Men Behaving Badly" and other tv roles is to be the next BHS President. He has recently been on TV with his horse Chester in the excellent documentary series Horsepower in which it revealed Martin's passion for horses. He has twelve!

Dog Attacks

The BHS are working with the RSPCA on a new Dog Bill. Currently an owner can only be prosecuted for attacking sheep and not for attacking a horse or other animals. Dog owners can only be got for causing distress to humans. This needs to change and the new Bill proposes to include damage and distress to horses.

Horse Accidents website

Last November, the BHS launched a dedicated horse accidents website designed to provide statistics and data which will be used to lobby the Government for better riding conditions. The website, www.horseaccidents.org.uk invites riders to easily report equine related road incidents that usually go unrecorded unless a human is injured and taken to hospital from the scene of the accident. Also the website wants to record incidents involving low flying aircraft, road surface dressings, dangerous dogs, fireworks, wind turbines, and issues with gates. Please use this website as sharing your experiences could make all the difference to other riders and to help the BHS campaign with the hard evidence and statistics to lobby the government. To date they have received reports of 66 dog attacks, 51 road incidents, 9 slippery road surfaces, 11 firework related incidents and gate problems and more.

Ragwort

As Summer approaches so does the Ragwort. This continues to be a national problem. Ragwort is on the increase. If you find it in your fields, dig it up and burn it. Despite its bitter taste, some horses actually get to like it. Liver failure causes a horrible death in horses so we urge horse owners to act. Contact BHS Welfare for further information on how to deal with this yellow peril.

"Facebook" for Horses: To associate with your horse on the National Equine Database, NED, visit <http://www.nedonline.co.uk/public/> or email info@ned.uk.com for any questions.

Thousands of UK horse owners have already taken advantage of the additional security they get from 'associating' with their horse(s) on NED. Have you?