

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



Free to Members

No. 35 Spring 2014

Straight from the Horse's mouth

Hello Everyone,

According to the Mayan calendar 2013 was predicted to be the end of the world but I suppose they could have got it wrong by a year! Seriously though the stormy weather has been both relentless and horrendous for us horse owners. Pasture like paddy fields after 3 months of heavy weather; and our chickens have nearly turned into ducks!

But, yes, we are still here, (2014 the Year of the Horse) and we apologise for not producing an Autumn Horse Around. During 2013, your committee has been on an emotional roller coaster ride since last June when we were successful in getting the Natural England grant for "Paths for Communities", but more of that later. Last Summer did produce some very good weather during the school holidays, however the road traffic was phenomenal, and I do worry for school children out on their ponies. Getting to safe riding is a problem for all of us so we were very angry when we learned that Cornwall Council closed off the Castle-an-Dinas bridleway – ironically due to the extra movement of heavy lorries taking stone to the new Sainsburys development! This meant riding on the road to meet the same heavy lorries plus the Summer traffic!! How stupid is that? More on that later.

The second horse hike for 2013 took place from Chapel Carn Brea on a very cold and blustery day. Mandy said the best part was stopping at the pub for a Baileys to warm up! Nine riders was a good turnout for the conditions. The weather was also kind for Anne Bressington's super ride around the Penrose estate and across Loe Bar. This was well attended. Disappointingly, we had no takers for the Morvah ride and only a few locals out for the Nancledra horse hike, and Gwinear was run for the first time for a while.

Frustratingly, I was not able to ride my horses for 6 months, due to excruciating Sciatica whenever I rode. Thankfully, I am now fixed and back in the saddle. However this 'rest' enabled us to do a bit of cycling instead. You can read about our explorations on the Exe Estuary. See Steel Horse news.

We have some really good news stories to report – Paths for Communities, and Mulfra read more inside.

Now we are surprised that hardly anyone has grumbled that no horse hikes have been run since the summer. We hope you are going to get back into the swing with our new programme. We will hoof off with Madron warm up ride and then a favourite, Tehidy Woods – see you there!

And finally we are very sorry to lose Peta-Jane who is moving out of Cornwall, and who has done such sterling work in seeing our P4C project through to completion. We wish her well in her new home in Devon.

Margaret.

In This Issue

Horse Hike Reports
Paths for Communities Projects
Mulfra Hill
Sancreed Beacon
Steel Horse News

and more ...



Line up of the Coloured Cobs and Eric on the Great Flat Lode Horse Hike

Annual General Meeting 2014

**Featuring a talk
by Kate McCarthy, Equine Sports Massage
Therapist**

Equine sports massage and muscle treatments can benefit every horse from the elderly family pet to the most advanced of competition horses.

Tuesday 25 March

At the Yacht Inn, Penzance
(opposite Jubilee Pool)

Start 7:30 prompt

**We will also be giving a short picture
presentation of our St Euny Well P4C project**

**Please also visit www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk for
more news and online riding maps and reporting.**

WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

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Membership via Email

Many of you have responded to our invitation to receive this newsletter by email rather than on paper. This helps in keeping our costs down and much effort in printing and envelope stuffing. HOWEVER we realise that many of you would prefer a paper copy and we are very happy to continue to send you Horse Around on paper if you find email impracticable.

We would like to ensure that we do have an up to date email address for you as it helps to keep you informed in between newsletters. Also please note we are now using MailChimp to communicate with you more efficiently.

Those of you for whom we have an email address should have already received renewal information electronically.

Membership Renewal

If your membership is due, a renewal invitation is included with this newsletter. Many of you did renew for two years which saves both you and ourselves in administration. We will now be issuing membership cards for the full two years if you join for two years. Ideally you can collect your cards at the AGM. If you join online or by post and you opt for email newsletter we will now send you your card immediately. Otherwise, if you are receiving paper newsletters, please enclose an SAE with your renewal if you want your card immediately.

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

RENEW ONLINE

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

Membership Benefits:

Our members can already get a discount at Penrose Outdoors in Truro and Millets upon production of your membership card.

Mountain Warehouse in Penzance, Truro or Falmouth now also give discount (15%) to WPBA members upon production of a valid WPBA membership card. They have a full range of good outdoor wear for all types of outdoor activities.

Yet another good reason for staying a member of WPBA.

Horse Hike Programme – Spring/Summer 2014

Please note these dates in your diary now			Organiser or Contact
U	Madron	6 April	Anne
U or UU	Tehidy	13 April	M & A
U or UU	Mining Trails, Camborne/Redruth	27 April	M & A
U or UU	Chapel Carn Brea	4 May	Amanda
U or UU	Helston/Loe Pool	11 May	M & A
U or UU	Gwinear	1 June	M & A
U or UU	Drift (Sancreed)	15 June	Beverly
U or UU	Lizard	6 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 may be determined by the interest in the ride and/or weather.

Contacts: Margaret and Adrian Tel: 01736 795098
Anne Bressington 01736 330623,
Mandy Nicholson 01736 871876, Beverly Jenkin 01736 871151

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.

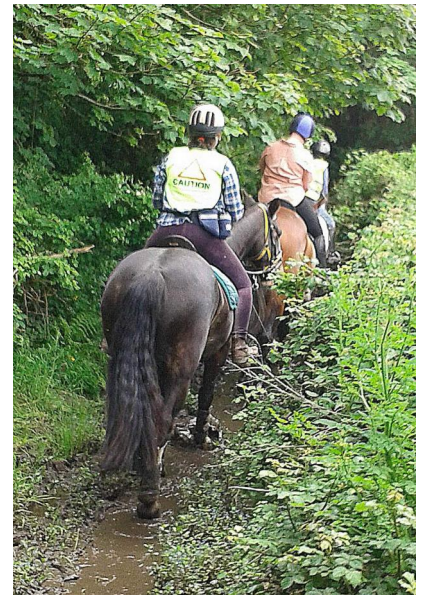
If you have a good idea for a Horse Hike or wish to organise one, do please let us know!

Grading of Rides: U Easier Ride UU Average Ride
Grading is for guidance only – please do check with the organiser for details of length etc. Where possible rides are tailored to those who attend.

Horse Hike from Gwinear

We had not run a Gwinear horse hike for quite a while so we really enjoyed a very nice ride on a Sunday in June. Five of us met by Gwinear Church and did a circular 10.5 mile ride to Barriper via the bridleways over Polmenor Downs. We stopped in Barriper for well earned refreshments at the Mounts Bay Inn. Some of the bridleways were getting overgrown but were just passable. Please do look out for the next Gwinear ride on this year's program.

Below – A well deserved drink - Right wending our way along Mill Lane bridleway



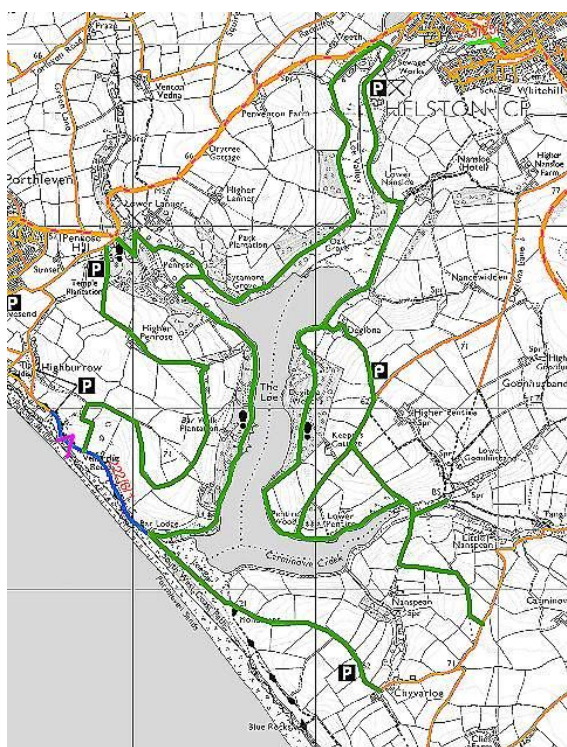
National Trust Paths for Communities Project Penrose

Those of you who have been on the Helston Loe Pool Horse Hike will know what a lovely ride there is through the old Penrose Estate and around Loe Pool. We have been able to do this ride on a permissive basis with full support from the National Trust.

Last year the Trust contacted us to let us know they were planning improvement to the available riding routes under Natural England's Paths for Communities grant scheme (P4C) and sought our help in planning the routes. The P4C scheme has run for one year (2013/14) with a total fund of £2M for the whole of England. £2M is not much money spread over the whole country. The money was to be targeted at creating new definitive bridleways with the support of the landowners who are prepared to dedicate new bridleways.

The first plans the NT put forward were a little cautious, and not providing all routes as bridleways. However we made positive suggestions for what was really needed, and our liaison gave them confidence to make their plans very bold.

We are delighted that the plans ultimately put forward, delivered all that we had suggested and more, with full definitive bridleways all around Loe Pool and with definitive bridleway connections to all local communities. The total project cost is £150k.



New Bridleways for Helston

A total of 10 miles (yes 10) of bridleways are being dedicated. The map shows the new bridleways in green.

Very importantly a new bridleway link is being provided to reach Porthleven to replace the byway link that fell into the sea many years ago.

The work on all these new paths is now more or less complete and will be officially opened on 4 April.

Old Lane off Gypsy Lane Helston

We have been liaising with a landowner and local riders near Helston over a wish to divert a small section of an unrecorded right of way along an old lane (off the Unclassified County Road Gypsy Lane). The landowner is providing a new short section of lane and is dedicating it as definitive bridleway. The new path will be more convenient for riders and away from the houses.

We are taking this as an opportunity to see if the other landowners alongside the rest of the old lane will be happy to dedicate the whole lane as a bridleway – much better than putting in a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) which take years to come to fruition.

Express Dedication at Common Law

If a landowner is happy to have a new definitive bridleway over his land, there is a very simple process to get the path recorded as bridleway on the definitive map.

Previously Cornwall Council used to say that it had to enter into a dedication agreement with the landowner. Cornwall Council has been very unwilling to easily go down this route.

However the simple procedure is Express Dedication at Common Law (EDCL). The landowner simply "expressly dedicates" a route as bridleway by signing a simple document. This act is in itself a "legal event" the bridleway exists and Cornwall Council has to record it on the definitive map. No other Orders are necessary.

It has taken some time for Cornwall Council to accept the validity of this process but their legal team has now accepted the process. This old common law process is not new, just "forgotten". Natural England recommended this process for creation of bridleways under its P4C scheme.

If a landowner dedicates by this process, Cornwall Council has to record the route.

Are there any routes you ride where you think landowners may be willing to consider dedication?

LAST AGM - Allen & Page Feed Specialist Talk

For those who were unable to attend the AGM you may be interested in some tips I noted down from the talk.

First advice, always read the feed contents on the bag. You need to be aware that highly processed soya is very high in chemicals. A component of oil is used to extract the last bit of soya from the beans! Therefore if it says "hi pro soya" you may wish to avoid it.

Be aware that high Molasses content is responsible for Laminitis. Sticky cool mix, with barley and oats etc. is high in Molasses and is very high in starch. It is necessary to feed less than 10% of sugar and starch to a laminitic. Even though there may be a 'Lami logo' on hi fi lite it is still high in those components. Thoroughbreds cope better with modern feeds. Cobs and heavy types are better on high fibre. Glucosamine is very good for joints but avoid the ones with a sulphur content.

Any horse with ulcers just feed hay. Keep the diet nice and simple as supplements are difficult for him to digest. A couple of carrots a day are plenty enough natural sugar.

When soaking feed do not pour boiling water on it because it kills the vitamins and minerals.

Margaret

West Penwith Bridleways Association Paths for Communities Project St Euny Well

During 2013 your committee worked exceedingly hard to formulate our own application for grant funding from Natural England's Paths for Communities scheme (See previous item on NT Penrose).

The site of the project is 4 miles from Lands End and the project was to complete the bridleway link from Chapel Carn Brea to Brane through St Euny Well and to fund a major path restoration over the troublesome bog on the western side of the well.

Peta-Jane Field headed the project team. Putting together such an application and getting community support is not a trivial exercise as our committee found. We sought cooperation from all landowners which is necessary for doing the work and for dedicating the route as bridleway. (The current definitive bridleway along the base of Bartinney Hill does not connect to the road at either end – what are known as missing links or definitive map anomalies).

We thought we had correctly identified all the owners of the paths to be improved and dedicated. We got their agreement and were successful in getting offered a grant for £16k to do the work. The work required was not trivial because of the volume of water that flows across and through the path.

Work started on the path but was quickly interrupted by property owners adjacent to the old lane to the well from Brane, who claimed ownership of the lane. This claim was subsequently disproved but not before we had decided to make an alternative plan. This was made possible because of the generosity of adjacent farmers on the other side of the disputed track, who offered to donate the edge of their field as a new bridleway parallel to the disputed old lane.

This enabled our project to go ahead but only with the further support from Natural England who, realising the importance of the project, kindly were able to increase our grant to £23k to accommodate the building of the new section of bridleway.

The work has now all been completed and local riders are now enjoying a route that has been problematic in Winter for decades. The work has been severely tested by the terribly wet winter, and the drainage is working perfectly.

We give appreciative thanks to our Contractor R C Olds of Camborne who have been extremely patient and supportive throughout the difficulties of the project. We also thank all the landowners who have supported and helped us achieve our goal.

Jane Yates of Natural England has given us tremendous support throughout the project. We also must not forget Mark Weston the Director of Access at BHS HQ, who provided the £23k bank rolling for the project. We have to spend the money before we can claim the grant!

Finally we again thank Peta-Jane for her commitment and tenacity in seeing this project through to completion. It is sad that she is now leaving the county and will not be able to enjoy the results of her labour.



**Peta-Jane our project manager
Christening the new
bridleway on Sprite**



Looking up towards Bartinney Hill from the start of the new path above the well.



Looking back towards where the bridleway is to run with the old path to the well on the right



The same view with the new paths being built



A closer view of the new bridleway

Another Horse Hike on the Mining Trails Camborne

It was last May when we last visited the Camborne Mining Trails on Horse Hike. Ten of our members assembled as usual at South Wheal Francis car park, near Four Lanes for a 10.5 mile mining trails ride. The Great Flat Lode is a popular and easy horse hike. For many of the group, this was their first outing in 2013 with their horse trailers due to the prolonged terrible weather of last winter!

After leading the horses to negotiate the low tunnel, the riders mounted up and got under way. It was a lovely sunny day with a cool breeze which made for pleasant riding. The horses settled nicely as they passed cyclists and walkers on their way to Wheal Buller. The tranquillity was soon shattered with the sound of an extremely loud and lively clay pigeon shoot nearby. This greatly troubled some of the horses as it was so close and some riders had difficulty in calming them. Fortunately Eric and Bobby (leaders) took it in their stride. However it was a relief when we reached the road - safely away from the disturbance. We then carried on to the start of the Tresavean Trail leading over to Lanner. A long loop was ridden enabling the riders to return by the same route and to experience lovely expansive views from a different direction. Passing the end of the Wheal Buller track, they pressed on to the mine buildings above Brea Village. Descending into Brea and across to Carn Brea the riders completed a return loop and rejoined the track to Wheal Buller and back. Thankfully, the shooting had stopped by the time the riders had returned to their horse trailers. Everyone had enjoyed an otherwise relaxed and satisfying horse hike.

Please do look out for this Horse Hike again on this year's program.



Highs & Lows at the Boconnoc Endurance Ride

Saturday morning and the alarm sounds at 4 am, I throw myself out of bed and drag the bewildered dogs out for a walk, must be a RIDE day. We planned to do the 84km ride with Catherine Woodford and Pigaró, he and Archie have ridden together before and seem to work well with each other.

We head off on the blue route but 20 minutes out we realize we're on the wrong path, we retrace our hoof prints and set off again. Carry on with just a small detour up a farm lane until we get to the Deer Park, Archie executes a sharp handbrake turn to the left following the markers, luckily one of the helpful trail bike riders spots us and puts us back on track, apparently someone has been moving the markers! We return to the venue, meet our crew again and follow the yellow route, this takes us past the beautiful lake, on past the big house and out towards the lodge. Here the grateful horses have a drink and a sloosh, it's very hot and humid, and we ride back through the crop fields into our vet stop. Lots and lots of cooling down the horses then my day comes to an abrupt end as Archie trots up extremely lame, seems he's knocked his left hind tendon and it's hot and inflamed. We have to say goodbye to Catherine and Pigaró, who go on to finish successfully. Home for me to cold hose Archie's leg.

Sunday and I drag the dogs out at an unearthly hour again, now they're certain I've lost the plot, Alfie the springer and I are going to have our first taste of crewing.

Carrie ridden by Andrea Simmons, Honey and Cathy Angove are riding 34km.

We see the girls off and go up to the obelisk and lie in wait with our buckets and slosh bottles. Honey the haflinger, was very pleased to see the sugar beet water, her and Carrie cooled off and back to the venue to get things ready for their return.

Coming back to the finish both the horses look tired, so it's off to the vet with bated breath. Carrie looks very calm and completes with a grade 2 and Honey takes it in her stride and trots up sound.

Many thanks to the organisers and helpers, what a mammoth task it must have been to arrange it all.

Beverley Jenkin

PAROW UPDATE

At the time this goes to press we still do not have any news on the latest attempts to secure funding for our two paths officers. PAROW CIC is still operating but only on commissioned work.

We have been successful in getting some new kit including a new flail but we are currently awaiting to see if an application to the Fishing Local Action Group for a project based around fishing communities has been successful.

PENWITH LANDSCAPE PROJECT

As Chairman of PAROW and PAROW CIC, Adrian is on a "Shadow" board which is putting together a bid for grant funding for improving and managing the landscape of West Penwith. It has drafted a vision statement that recognises the uniqueness, archaeology and heritage, and the importance of a resilient living working landscape. It also recognises the importance of access for all. Cornwall Wildlife Trust is the main partner and should be submitting a significant Heritage Lottery grant application in early Autumn. PAROW is also a partner in this project and hopes to play an important part in the project's delivery.

Sancreed Beacon – ACCESS RESTORED!

A good example of cooperation between landowners, farmers and riders.

For some considerable time we have been hearing of plans to bring Dartmoor ponies onto Sancreed Beacon as part of a "conservation grazing" scheme. The ponies finally appeared earlier last year.

However, also appearing with the ponies were padlocks and chains on all the access gates, together with notices apologising for the inconvenience but explaining that this was a necessary measure "for a few days" while the ponies settled in. The notice was supplied by Cornwall Heritage Trust, together with their phone number – for any queries. Several weeks passed and the gates remained padlocked. We became aware of this and contacted CHT to enquire when the gates would be re-opened.

The Trust were most apologetic and explained that there had been problems, initially, with the top gate (a little way up from Sancreed Village Hall and adjacent to the popular pull in and picnic area) which, it seemed had been left open by horse riders and was now no longer working properly (all the gates are of the self closing variety). Understandably they were most anxious that the ponies should not escape onto the road. Further investigation discovered that the ponies had been lining up by the gate in order to receive the sandwiches and other treats forthcoming from visitors to the Beacon. In their eagerness to scoff whatever was on offer they had leant against the gate and, most probably, were the real culprits responsible for its non functioning state!

We spoke to the local farmer responsible for the day to day care of the ponies. He was extremely co-operative and very anxious to find a solution. Kissing gates were mentioned but we made it very clear that these were not acceptable to us.

A horse box gate (double gate) was constructed at the point where problems had occurred. We were able to give him the BHS specifications for this and to trial it before it was finished. It works perfectly and a handy rock has been strategically placed as a mounting block in case anyone needs to dismount!



The new box gate next to the layby on the Grumbla Road

We then had a site meeting with CHT, the local farmer, and Natural England. Each access point was examined and away found to restore horse access safely. CHT assured us that it is their aim that EVERYONE should be able to enjoy the sites which they own and should there be any further problems we are confident that we will be able to work with them to resolve issues. The Committee members involved in this would like to thank William James and Cornwall Heritage Trust for their understanding and positive attitude. We are now all able to enjoy riding on the Beacon once more and in addition PAROW has done a considerable amount of strimming which has opened up and improved all the tracks.

Gill Plumbley

Access on St Aubyn Estate

Riders in Goldsithney/St Hilary will be aware that in the past there have been some issues over using some of the paths and tracks connecting to the byway and bridleways that on their own do not connect. Also a small number of riders have allegedly been straying onto agricultural grass land.

Last September local riders met with Andrew Davey, St Aubyns Estate General Manager, his Farm Manager and Roger Calfe of St Hilary Parish Council to discuss the issues.

Andrew Davey has reported to me that the meeting was entirely positive, in particular with shared agreement on a number of actions required to try and eliminate problems.

Included in the agreed actions were :

- Estate to cut an alternative ride on the other side of the track from the grass field
- Estate to erect suitable signs
- Estate to write to local riding establishments to outline this meeting and remind all riders not to ride on the grass
- Rider reps to spread the word
- Rider reps happy to speak to individuals if we can identify 'offenders' in future
- All to meet again in 6 months to review

I am continuing to liaise with Andrew and I have discussed the issue of riders currently being denied access directly across the lane into the byway to Goldsithney.

I am hoping that with continued good communication and responsible use of currently agreed access that some further access improvements can be achieved.

Bits and Pieces

In America in the 1930's it only took 10 years to go from 90% horses to 90% cars!

Horses and Carriages in New York

Horse and Carriage tourist rides are under threat in New York. Apparently the mayor wants all 220 horses and carriages swept off the streets as he does not believe that horses belong in a modern city. It seems he is pandering to animal rights activists and also big real estate companies who are politically motivated and have the clout to get them banned. The fear is that many horse industry jobs will be lost and such a ban is likely to spread to other cities of the USA such as Boston. A decision will be made in a few months time.



British Horse Society Update

BHS membership in the southwest continues to grow at a very healthy rate bucking all the trends, despite it being one of the poorest regions in the country. Membership has now passed the 11,000 figure. It was only in 2012 we reached the 10,000 figure. Hopefully we are doing something right!

Remember to report any riding accidents or incidents on www.horseaccidents.org.uk. We do need the statistics to support campaigns to get improvements for our safety.

Adrian

(BHS Regional Access and Bridleways Officer for the South West)

Modification Order to record Bridleways on Mulfra Hill

This Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) was submitted by Mulfra Trekking Centre in 1999.

It has taken until now for Cornwall Council to process it. This is despite numerous requests from ourselves and other riders that it should have been processed much before now. The issue was that access to the moor from Mulfra was blocked by an adjacent property owner. Riders have been denied access for the last 15 years.

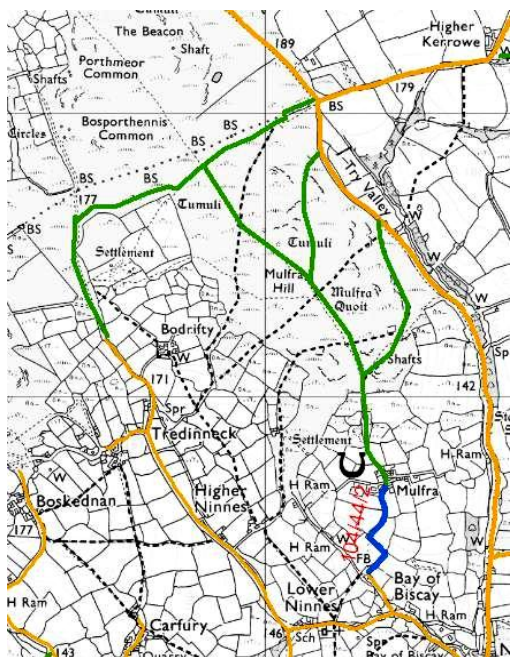
Cornwall Council last year processed this DMMO application and concluded that there was substantial evidence of use of this path and others on the moor for at least 20 years prior to use of the route being challenged. Cornwall Council therefore "Made" the Order for the routes to be recorded as bridleways.

However it is a two stage process, the Order is then advertised and anyone has the right to object. If there are objections that cannot be resolved the application has to go to Public Inquiry (PI) which makes the final decision on whether the evidence does show rights of way exist. If the Inspector decides in favour the Order is then "Confirmed". The bridleways are then recorded onto the definitive map and they legally exist.

An application cannot be defeated just because someone does not want it to be a bridleway, or they think it unsuitable. The decision is made purely on the evidence for whether a right of way exists or otherwise.

The Order was originally made and advertised in MAY 2013. It is believed most objections were resolved, but not all. It is not believed that any outstanding objections present any new evidence against the order.

However the Order has now been re-advertised on 6th February 2014 because it was feared that all notices had not been correctly served and thus leaving the order open to possible legal challenge. This notice period expires on 21 March. Hopefully after that date a final decision will be speedily made on whether a PI is necessary. If a PI is necessary it is most helpful if riders who have used the routes can attend and give evidence. Let hope it does not come to that.



The routes being recorded are substantial, as shown in green on the map left.

Cornwall Council "Asset" Survey

Although Cornwall Council has little money to repair paths, in its wisdom it has recruited a team of 12 "inspectors" to inspect all environmental "assets" including Rights of Way, Open Spaces, Historic Buildings etc

All rights of Way are being inspected - not a trivial job. BUT the inspections will not be as thorough as required (as we had asked for) - Importantly Health and Safety issues will be fixed BUT low branches and side growth are not being considered as an issue requiring any priority attention. We are continuing to raise our concerns about this.

We are awaiting the results but are not holding our breath. We hope that something useful does come out of this horrendously expensive exercise. See following item.

Bridleway Clearance

We all know what a serious safety hazard grown in bridleways present to riders. Strictly the liability for clearance of growth from hedges and above is the responsibility of the land owner. Cornwall Council now have a policy relying on landowners to do such clearance BUT they have no mechanisms in place for enforcing landowners to do so. Another issue is distinguishing between growth of hedges from the surface of the bridleway versus the hedges that are truly alongside.

Further they are relying on riders to inform the Council of such problems. We are continuing to press the Council on this issue as we consider such problems to be a Health and Safety Issue. **PLEASE DO REPORT SUCH PROBLEMS TO US AND TO THE COUNCIL.**

All riders want is clear and safe bridleways to ride. It should not concern us who is responsible for the actual clearance, it is Cornwall Council's statutory responsibility to ensure that the paths are clear, useable, and safe.

Castle-an-Dinas Quarry Bridleway

The bridleway through Castle-an-Dinas Quarry was closed in June for "safety reasons". Cormac Solutions, on behalf of Cornwall Council, then issued a closure notice until at least January 2014. We challenged this closure and it was deemed illegal. It is up to the quarry to ensure the safety of riders by whatever means necessary. They have now provided an alternative route for riders and will be applying for a diversion order to make this route permanent. We have yet to inspect it.

Damaged Bridleways

Many Bridleways have been severely damaged by last winter's and now this winter's rains. Cornwall Council was planning to effect repairs on Break My Neck Lane (Madron 59), Lamorna Bridleway (St Buryan 62) and on Chysauster Bridleway. The latter is dangerously washed out and has had to be closed. We are waiting news from Cornwall Council on when repairs are going to be done. BUT in view of the other major flood and storm damage, all along our coasts, we fear that our bridleways will take low priority.

Clearance on Bartinney Hill and Numphra Common

Those of you who ride on Bartinney Hill may be aware that Peter Smith from Dowran goes up there regularly and clears many of the paths. We are truly grateful for his work. We know that he loves to see the horses on the hill and also go past his house in Dowran and stop for a chat. Thanks Peter we do really appreciate it.

STEEL HORSE NEWS

The Exe Estuary Cycle Trail is worth doing - well all the Sustrans 'sanitized' routes are worth doing once just for the scenery and this was no exception. From Exeter Quay there is now a continuous cycle ride all the way down both sides of the estuary. On the west side you can cycle all the way down to Dawlish Warren nature reserve and back up to Starcross. Riding high along the top of a narrow dyke 'footpath' requires concentration. Passing Powderham castle and crossing the main southwest railway line then on to Starcross and jump on the ferry with your bike to cross the estuary to Exmouth. On this east side the route goes down as far as Budleigh Salterton, a lovely little regency seaside town. The views are fantastic and varied as you pass through all the little places, on the return, such as Lypstone and Torcross then returning to Exeter Quay. Both legs of the estuary cover 26 miles in total, but if you fancy the full challenge described here it would be a lot more and would be a lot to do in a day. Adrian and I enjoyed cycling good lengths of both legs of the trail and are keen to return and do the stretches we missed. Much is off road and easy cycling but you don't go for the terrain challenge - it's the amazing views that make it all worth it.

We 'rights of way anoraks' noticed that the dyke section (not suitable for a 'family' cycle trail) had a banked drop on one side of a narrow path and a concrete lip and a drop to the sea on the other side and it was marked as a footpath yet it was legitimate cycle trail! Walkers had to climb up on the concrete to let us pass! There was also another section on the other side of the estuary marked footpath. It really is time to 'blow up' the rights of way law and bring it into the modern age and allow all non-motorised users (horse riders and cyclists) access where practical.

Tamar Mining Trails - these trails, which total around 10 miles, are also worth a visit they are just by Gunnislake - running up and down the wooded Tamar Valley with remnants of the mining industry and interpretation boards and visitor centre. However, these are also fantastic for horse riders, offering some great canter sections. Trailer parking is available (at quiet times).

Next time we will report on our visit to Haldon Forest and the new cycle trails at Lanhydrock which officially open this month. Is there any new provision for horse riders and are the NT still requiring a permit to access the bridleway which is in Lanhydrock Estate? We are investigating!

Ride the Beast!

We called in at Cardinham Woods to check out the bridleways in view of the recently opened cycle trails (in May 2013). As we had our bikes with us, we cycled part of the single track 12kms "The Bodmin Beast" (blue trail - moderate difficulty). It was fantastic fun - a one way switchback ride over the steep hillsides - very exhilarating. There are two Red trail sections to try (for the experienced only) We are keen to return and have another go. These trails are definitely not suitable for horses!

Horse Access to Forestry Commission Woodland

In Cardinham Woods we couldn't find a single bridleway that was signed. We are taking this matter up with Cornwall Council and the Forestry Commission.

However the good news is that horses are now welcome on all the major tracks with out any need for a permit despite the cycle project seemingly ignoring horse access - other than for the "Share this Space" signs which include horse and rider.



The Entrance to the Cycle Trails is pictured. Horse riders have to duck the barrier as it is only just over 6 foot high.

Note the excellent "Share this Space" sign



We are also pleased to confirm that you no longer need a permit to ride in Forestry Commission Forests in the SW. Riding is unrestricted in Commission owned woodland. Riding is not permitted in leasehold woodland at Boconnoc, Clinnicks, Largin, Dunmere and East Wood. Carriage drivers will still require permits as they are taking a vehicle into the forest.

Common Land: a Manifesto for Horse Riders

Some of you may be aware that several applications have been made under the 2006 Commons Act to re-register areas of land as commons, where the original application was rejected for what now have been deemed invalid reasons. Ordinary commons status automatically gives Open Access for walkers. BUT only Section 15 S193 old Urban District common land gives right of "air and exercise" including horses. Two areas of Common land now have been given S193 status, Caryorth Common and much of Chun Common (adjoining Woon Gumpus that is already registered s193). This is great news as we can now ride there by right. Registered commons cannot be enclosed or developed in any way without the permission of the Secretary of State.

The Open Spaces Society (OSS) has proposed a manifesto for horse-riders on all common land. OSS case officer Nicola Hodgson said: "Common land is immensely important for recreational horse-riding. It provides extensive areas of open country where people can ride safely, in wonderful landscapes which have remained largely unchanged for centuries. While walkers have rights to roam on all commons, horse-riders have rights on only some. We should like to see greater attention given to the rights and interests of horse-riders on commons."

OSS would like to see:

- A universal 40-mph speed limit on all unfenced roads across common land, to safeguard horse-riders enjoying the commons. This would also safeguard grazing animals and avoid the need for unsightly, restrictive fencing.
- Landowners to dedicate riding rights on commons, in addition to the rights of walkers.
- Fencing and other barriers minimised. Often land managers want to introduce grazing, for perfectly legitimate reasons of improving the habitat and managing the vegetation, but they tend automatically then to want to fence the common instead of using alternatives such as slowing the traffic and installing cattle-grids.
- Where there is fencing, land managers should avoid the use of barbed wire and ensure that there are ample gates which are easy for horse-riders.

Land managers should consult horse-riders and involve them in any plans to manage the common, as recommended in the Department for Environment-approved document A

- Common Purpose and the Open Spaces Society's Finding Common Ground.

Further the OSS says:

"Horse riders are a vital part of the community which uses and enjoys the commons. We join with our friends at the British Horse Society in arguing that riders' rights should be respected and improved, so that our magnificent commons are a joy to horse-riders as well as walkers."