

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



Free to Members

No. 36 Winter/Spring 2015

Straight from the Horse's mouth

Hello Everyone

Yes, we are still here!! All horse owners lead busy lives, and that includes us. Our apologies for not issuing a newsletter before now. Most of you are on email so you do get word from us from time to time. So just to bring things up to date: What fantastic 2014 Summer weather we had. (Such good weather meant a good crop of quality hay.) It made up for the previous Winter's unprecedented rainfall and 13 major storms all told; the first on 23 October, St. Jude's day, and the last, just after the Dawlish railway got washed into the sea, was on 14 February 2014, Valentines day.

The vegetation on our bridleways and riding routes was particularly bad last Summer making some of our precious few routes nigh impassable. We have been battling now for 3 years with Cornwall Council to get a side growth cutting policy out of them. We have made progress. More later on this. We also have some good news about PAROW in that the paths officers are active again. More on that inside.

The St. Uny Well new bridleway was formally opened last May. The opening was well attended and WPBA committee laid on a celebratory drink. Lizzy Matthews gave a short well received speech before a ribbon cutting ceremony to declare the new section of track open. We had good press coverage of the event in the Cornishman.

We ran most of our usual horse hikes last year: Madron, Loe Bar at Helston, Lizard, Tehidy, GFL and they we all well attended and enjoyed.

A new horse hike programme is just starting and we have hoofed off with an easy ride from Madron to get everyone motivated. I hope the reports on last year's rides will get you in the spirit. If you would like to run a horse hike or have ideas for rides do get in touch with us. We would like more people to be familiar with the routes and be able to lead rides in the future.

The best news is saved to last. After waiting 15 years the Modification order submitted in 1999 for recording bridleways up onto and over Mulfra Hill has been processed and the Planning Inspectorate has just "Confirmed" the order. Congratulations go to Rosslyn Phillips for her determination and tenacity at seeing this whole saga through.

Our AGM this year will feature a talk by the Riding for the Disabled Association who do sterling work in helping people to improve their confidence and self esteem and give them a positive experience. Please come along. We hope to see you there.

Good riding

Margaret

In This Issue

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and more ...



Looking out to sea on a glorious day last summer on the Lizard Horse Hike

Annual General Meeting

**Featuring a talk by the
Riding for Disabled Association**

It's what you CAN do that counts"

Tuesday 17 March 2015

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

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

WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

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Madron Horse Hikes

We have just run (15 February) the first horsehike of 2015 which was similar in all respects to the one on 6 April 2014 last year. There were 12 riders this year and 13 last,

The weather was sunny, warm and pleasant for both of these rides. Anne does always seem to have the magic touch with the weather.

As the church bell chimed 11.00 am and the worshippers safely inside, the ride set off for Kennel Lane. The bridleway was taken to Gear Lane then a right turn was followed down Break my Neck lane to Ninnes. Emerging out on to Newmill, then on past Trythal school, at Tredinnack we took a secluded track on the right that took us on to the moor. A series of meandering tracks delivered us to Nine Maidens and then further to arrive at Four Parishes.



2015 Ride – ready to leave Madron Church

Great views in all directions for miles could be seen. Eventually, we came off the moors by way of the Men an Tol track and took the quiet road to Lanyon. The last off road section was beyond on the right, an unsigned track known as Rabbit Run. This brought us out near the bottom of Madron Carn, but as there were thought to be cattle on the Carn, we opted for lane to rejoin the Madron road. An easy quiet horse hike of 8.5 miles was enjoyed by everyone, particularly after some gloomy winter weather!

Thanks Anne for the lovely rides



Mary on Smokey and Anne on Straffy

Photo on the April ride Last Year

Horse Hike Programme – Spring/Summer 2015

Please note these dates in your diary now			Organiser or Contact
U or UU	Mining Trails, Camborne/Redruth	1 March	M & A
	EGB Pleasure Ride	8 March	Amanda
U or	Nancludra	22 March	M & A
U or UU	Helston/Loe Pool	29 March	M & A/Anne
U or UU	Drift (Sancreed)	12 April	Beverly
U or UU	Tehidy	10 May	M&A
U or UU	Morvah	17 May	Christine
	Lizard/NNR ride	31 May	M&A
U or UU	Chapel Carn Brea	7 June	Amanda
U or UU	Gwinear	21 June	M&A

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, Chris Hichens 01736 788729
Amanda Nicholson 01736 871876, Beverly Jenkin 01736 871151

If you have any concerns about the suitability of a ride for you and/or your horse please do speak to the organiser in advance of the ride.

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.

Sally Stevens

It is with great sadness we report the loss of Sally James. Sally was an iconic figure in the local horse world and a solid supporter of WPBA. I didn't know her that well, but remember whilst out riding when this voice came out from behind a hedge and said "that pony is too fat!" of course it was Sally - who had been working in the fields. Others will remember her overseeing tests – she was one of those very knowledgeable horse ladies.

Bridleways on Mulfra Hill – Fantastic News!

As we reported in the last Horse Around, a Definitive Map Modification Order(DMMO) was submitted by Mulfra Trekking Centre in 1999 after the landowner at the foot of the hill denied access to riders to reach the hill from Mulfra and access has been blocked since then.

After taking 15 years for Cornwall Council to process it. The new map team at Cornwall Council last year did an excellent job of processing it. (The previous legal team seemed to delay processing because of the complexity of the order.)

However legal wheels grind slowly and a Public Inquiry was eventually scheduled for January just gone.

However the GOOD NEWS is that the only remaining objector (who originally caused the problem) eventually withdrew her objections, and the Order has JUST BEEN CONFIRMED without the trauma and expense of a Public Inquiry.

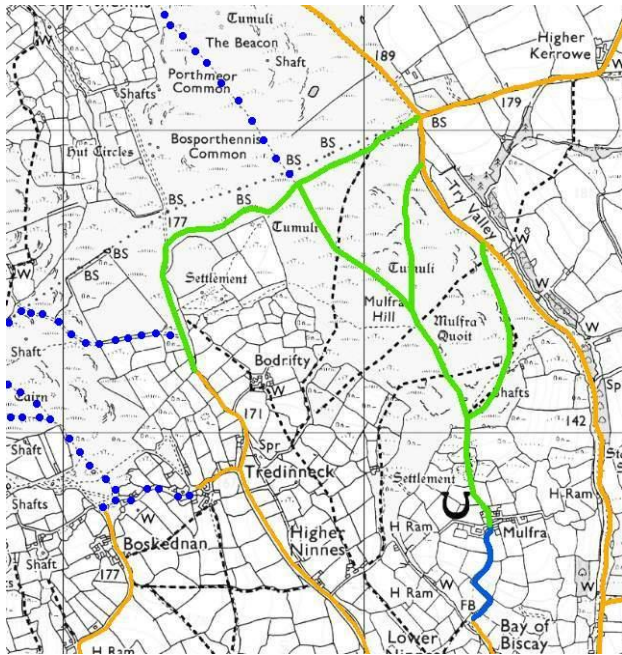
As the inspector's report highlighted, the objector gave good evidence of horse use prior to the closure of the path! The path had been freely used by riders for 20 years prior to the objector closing the path to riders.

It is just such a shame that a whole generation of riders (for the last 15 years) has been denied access onto Mulfra Hill.

We will now be working with Cornwall Council to get the paths re-opened, obstructions removed and the paths improved. We anticipate that our association and PAROW may need to do some of the remedial work.

Our congratulations and thank you go to Rosslyn Phillips for her determination and tenacity at seeing this whole saga through. Roz originally started the Definitive Map Modification Order in 1999 and she was a founding member of West Penwith Bridleways Association.

The real achievement is not just in getting the route onto the hill reopened BUT getting a total of 2.5 miles of bridleways recorded onto the definitive which included all the routes we ride over the hill from South, West and East, and including part of the Tinnars' Way. and the path that PAROW instated down past Bodrifty Settlement.



The newly recorded bridleways are shown in green.

Byway (road) is solid blue.

Other connecting ridden routes are shown in blue dots.

We should now consider getting these recorded onto the definitive map and safeguarded for all time

Remember - a Modification Order 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.

No Flies on the Great Flat Lode

I got a phone call from Anne Bressington to say she had a few keen riders wanting to go horse hiking. The horse hike programme had finished for the Summer with the Lizard ride and only a small contingency of 3 went on Alison's spectacular ride. (You missed an open downland coastal ride and picnic lunch on Lizard Green with the best pasties and ice cream in the area!)

Summer had really got going by now with the heat and the horse flies. It was a bit hot for horse hiking so we suggested "Let's keep it short so what about the Great Flat Lode – missed earlier in the programme?" Yes, Anne and company were up for that. A hurried email went out and the responses soon came back with around 10 riders wanting to go. A spectacular thunder storm rolled in with a vengeance on the preceding Thursday night with more forecast for Saturday night and also threatening the Sunday ride.

Decision made, only Peta-jane couldn't finally make it and off we went. Although a very hot day, up on the GFL it felt fresher and comfortable – a good choice of venue during such a heat wave. We lead our horses under the tramway tunnel and mounted up very orderly on this occasion (not helped by the mounting block built on the wrong side!) We trekked past Wheal Buller (no horses to be seen anywhere!) and on to connect with the Tresaven trail above Lanner.

The trail was virtually deserted as everyone had probably gone to the beach! On reaching the end, instead of riding around the road, we picked up the bridleway (by Jan Bowerman's place) on the other side of the road and did a lovely detour down a hedged lane to a pretty little hamlet nestled at the bottom by a stream. Once we emerged, we rejoined the road and headed back to and along the trail, experiencing the vast panoramic views from a different direction.

We returned to our trailers at Wheal Francis car park feeling that 8 miles was quite enough on such a day, but there were no flies on the Great Flat Lode. Lovely!

Margaret

Update on the National Trust Paths for Communities Project Penrose

As we reported in the last Horse Around the National Trust have provided around 10 miles of new bridleways around the Penrose Estate and across and around Loe Bar and Pool. We were key instigators of this project as we had previously piloted the route with our horse hikes and with the cooperation of the Trust.

Last May we ran another horse hike around the Loe Pool, a report on this ride follows.

Since then we have continued to liaise with the National Trust as they have been putting the final touches to the project.

An outstanding section was a complete bridleway link on the south eastern end of the Pool at Carminoe Creek, where a new board walk has been provided but which is only suitable for cycles. The bridleway links on both sides of the end of the creek have now been completed. This allows riders to avoid the board walk by reaching the lane at end of the creek from either side.

We also have cycled the new trails on the western side of the Estate above Porthleven. These are also excellent although care is needed if riding the coastal byway (up from Loe Bar). There are also some new hydraulically closing horse gates on the new bridleways. These are adjustable so we have asked the NT to slow down the closing time to be around 20 seconds which is achievable with these special gates.

For pictures of these trails see under "Steel Horse News".

Horse Hike Around Loe Pool and Penrose

Last May, 14 Riders assembled in the Helston Boating Carpark for the ride. This time we decided to do the ride in a clockwise direction and do the new trails on the east of the Pool through Debigna Wood. However because the new trail at the end of Carminoe Creek was not yet open we had to go via Goonhusband to reach the end of the creek adding a further 1.25 miles to the ride. Upon reaching the creek we wanted to return directly along the southern side but the new bridleway had a large number of cows grazing right near the entrance (they were not there the previous week) so we decided to make another detour via Tangies making the ride even longer.

We then went up via Nanspean and Chyvarloe before dropping down to cross Loe Bar and up on the other side to reach The Penrose Estate Lodge from where we followed the estate paths back towards Penrose House and then continued past the North of the Pool back along the main drive to the boating lake and home. We all enjoyed a lovely ride with lovely new perspectives.



Riders starting out on the Ride from Helston Boating Lake Car Park

Equine Sports Massage Therapist Talk

Last March, at the AGM, we had a very interesting talk given by Kate McCarthy who is an equine sports massage therapist and I know that some of you have since had Kate to look at your horses.

I made the following summary notes:.

*What to look out for in your horse:
A change of behaviour could indicate a problem with a stiff or sore muscle. Uneven shoe wear indicates there is a muscle problem higher up. They should wear from the toe to the outside. *Note that horses find it hard work walking around muddy fields.*

A muscle knotted in the horse's back will cause him to use different muscles, usually the shoulder, to compensate. Horses are very good at doing this as they 'borrow' from different areas. The muscle then becomes tight. The result is shorter movement, and he hollows his back. When the top line becomes tight, it ends up with the muscles on the top of the legs working harder. An injury in the shoulder can end up with a problem in the hind.

*What you can do:
Around 60% of the horse is soft tissue. By stimulating the muscles, you stimulate and boost the blood supply and this fixes every area that requires blood as it helps to expel toxins. Use the flat of your hand to feel for spasms and knots. Stroke the horse all over to find any tender bits or uncomfortable places. Start at the head, then look for signs of relaxing – licking and chewing, stretching or extreme yawning. Move down through the neck and shoulder and then stretch out the foreleg – forward and back and cross their leg! This stretches out the muscle fibres. However, do be careful not to force any stretches!*

Then work on the back by kneading and massaging then out to the hind quarters. Do some carrot stretches. The horse should move through its back and shoulders. By doing this regular session, it promotes a nice shiny coat as the blood flow improves. It also builds a bond between you and your horse, and helps keep him happy and injury free.

The Final Chapter, P4C Project, St Euny Well

Our Project was formally opened on 30 May 2014. We had good attendance and good press coverage.



The landowners Richard Cock, Trevor and Melville Wherry cutting the tape declaring the bridleway formally open.

The landowners who had generously dedicated the new routes as bridleway cut the ribbon.

As a reminder: The project was funded by the Natural England Paths for Communities scheme (P4C) to a total of £23k. The British Horse Society lent us the £23k (bank rolling) as monies can only be claimed once a project is completed,

Our bridleways group as well as time and effort contributed a further £998 towards the cost of the project.

The above figure includes the cost of an application for Retrospective Planning Permission which we were forced to apply for after complaints from a local parish.

The Bridleway Dedications

Since our last report we have completed the landowner dedications and they have been accepted by Cornwall Council RoW and Legal Teams. We now await for the new bridleway section to formally appear on the definitive and OS Maps. This may take a little time.

More Good News

You will remember that because of objections from the property owners adjacent to the old lane to the well we had to get a new bridleway dedicated in parallel next to it.

However having finally resolved the ownership of the old lane we have now got that also dedicated as a bridleway. SO we now have TWO bridleways one which goes via the well and the other that bypasses it. Although horse riders may now legally use the path through the well, we hope that riders will use the new path thus protecting the well.

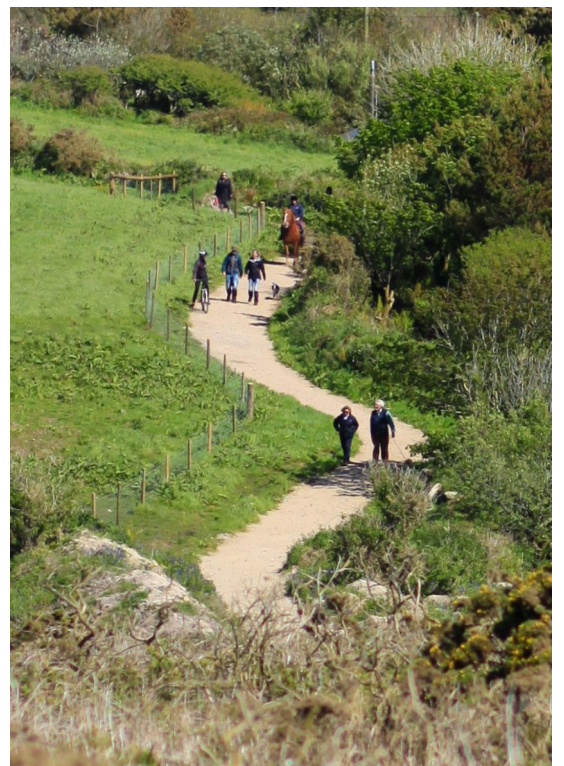
Cornwall Council have made an attempt to sign the new bridleways but we have asked them to reposition the signs and add more signage. We have also asked them to enforce the removal of rubbish deposited on the path by the adjacent property owner in an attempt to discourage use. We also await a "Public Bridleway" sign to be erected at the Chapel Carn Brea end now that it legally connects to the road.



Enjoying the new bridleways



The Project Committee Amanda, Peta-Jane, Gill and Lizzy



High level view of the new section of bridleway

- ***What do you call a horse playing a violin? Fiddler on the hoof!***
- ***Why is manna from heaven like horse hay? Both are food come from aloft!***
- ***Which route should you take through the woods when riding a fizzy horse? The psycho path.***

Tehidy Horse Hike 1 June and 30 November

The Tehidy Ride is always very popular, Last year was no exception with a ride on 1 June and then a ride which we ran at short notice at the end of November.

In November we did a simple ride of about 7.5 miles around Tehidy Woods Country Park including riding out along the West Drive. We then rode the permissive path along the south of the park to the Café and then along the south of the Golf Club to dogs leg and cross the Illogan to Portreath Road to take the road towards Palnters Lane before turning off to take the Trails to Gwell an Mor holiday village and return to Tehidy Park along the East Drive and back to the NT car park on the North Cliff.



Riders having a break by the Tehidy Café on the November Ride

The ride earlier in the year followed a similar route but with an extra 2.7 miles added after reaching the West Gate then along the red river bridleway and returning to the West Gate via quiet lanes.



Joe Barnett and Demelza Cumow on the West Drive last June



This is an example of the new hydraulically operated self closing gates that have been installed. Closing times can be set to be as long as 20 seconds

STEEL HORSE NEWS

As cyclists, we think these publicly funded cycle trails are absolutely fantastic but it's amazing that public money is being put into providing free 'cross country' courses for cyclists and yet as horse riders we can't even get the public bridleways in these places sign-posted!

The way the Forestry Commission makes an income is to charge for car parking and provide cafes and other activities and facilities. Horse riders are now allowed in Cardinham Woods without permits but not especially catered for despite the extensive provision of new cycling trails. It seems that cycling attracts investment in way that horse riding does not. How have we failed?

Haldon Forest trails – in the Autumn of 2013 we dropped in to ride the blue trail. The car park was packed with cars with bike carriers and we had a job to find a slot. The place was buzzing, but once on the blue trail there seemed enough capacity to have an amazing run without hindering anyone else. There are also horse trails in Haldon some shared with cyclists. Again horse signage is poor.

Lanhydrock Cycle Trails – opened in March 2014

The National Trust is now attracting even more visitors to their Lanhydrock property with a brand new additional car park, cycle hire business and café built to cater for their new cycle trails. They have provided green, blue and red trails which each offer a different off road skill level.

This has been built across the road from the Cardinham FC cycle facility – which is much more of a challenge despite the same national colour coding.

We checked it out when we called in after the school summer hols, and have cycled the green (easy) and blue (moderate) routes, but have yet to explore the red trail. There is no doubt they are a lot of fun and can be visited over and over again to enjoy. There is even a skills centre where you can practice riding over big roller coaster humps and drop offs. Again all great fun.

All the trails, including the Green trail, are generally around a metre wide, one way and are not suitable for horses or pedestrians to share with cyclists.

Lanhydrock we understand still charges horses to ride even to reach the definitive bridleway in its grounds. Equine routes are NOT signposted, yet there is a sign that says you may meet horses!

Taking up these issues, of proper provision and signage for horses, with the National Trust and the FC is very much on our "to do" list. We will report further on this in a future Horse Around.

New Trails on East of Penrose Estate

We mentioned in the item on page 4 the excellent newly constructed bridleway trails above Porthleven.



This is the Coastal Byway that runs from Loe Bar and now with the new trails horse riders and cyclists can now reach Porthleven. It was not possible before owing to a section of the byway having fallen into the sea.

Lizard Horse Hike - 6 July

On a superb day a small group of riders started from near Teneriffe Farm on a nine mile horse. The ride first skirts along bridledways alongside the old Predannick Airfield and then along permissive paths on the National Nature Reserve past "Jolly Town" and then via Kynance Cove to reach Lizard Village. The trip over to the Lizard Peninsula is well worth the journey as can be seen from the pictures below and on the front page.



National Nature Reserves Bridleway Dedications

Natural England is in the process of looking at dedicating new rights of way on the National Nature Reserves (NNRs) as part of a government initiative. The Lizard NNR covers Goonhilly Downs as well as the land between the sea and Predannick Airfield.

NE have already provided permissive bridleway on these reserves and we will be working with NE to hopefully get them made Definitive Bridleways under this initiative.

To this end NE are about to look at all the infrastructure, gates etc. to make more horse friendly, and they want to hold an opening promotional event eg Sponsored Ride or Horse Hike. We have provisionally pencilled in May 28/29th for this event which coincides with BHS Access Week. We will keep you informed when this has been finalised.

The Invisible Fence Project – A solution to avoid cattle grids, gates and fences in open spaces where cattle are grazed.

In Epping forest, Natural England has been working in conjunction with local graziers in trialling various options of non-contraversial fencing. They have come up with a successful solution that requires no ugly restrictive fencing. The invisible fence works by fitting the cattle with solar powered radio collars which ping an electric shock should they stray over the boundary marked by underground (radio) wire. This leaves horse riders and dogs to pass and repass without problem. Any one interested in this directional virtual fencing can look it up on the internet called the Boviguard System.

PAROW UPDATE

PAROW was finally successful in getting funding for a one year project. The funding came from the Fishing Local Action Group to improve access around and to fishing communities. However PAROW CIC has also had to earn between £10k and £15k to provide required matched funding.

The good news is that the paths officers Chris and Kirstan are now in full employment with PAROW and have been able to resume good work on the paths we walk and ride. The bad news however is that the funding terminates in September and currently we have no continuation funding identified.

PENWITH LANDSCAPE PROJECT UPDATE

We were hoping that this project was going to get a significant Heritage Lottery grant for starting the project in 2016. However the Lottery funds were over subscribed this year and the project has been asked to resubmit a bid next year. The bid is 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. PAROW is also a partner in this project and hopes to play an important part in the project's delivery.

Cornwall Council Bridleway Maintenance

"Asset Survey"

As we reported Cornwall Council recruited a team of 12 "inspectors" to inspect all environmental "assets" including Rights of Way, Open Spaces, Historic Buildings etc

All rights of Way have now been inspected but getting access to the results for our Rights of Way is difficult. Even Cornwall Council RoW staff appear to be finding it difficult to getting full access to the information! The information we have seen shows a good number of bridleways that are overgrown – BUT on inspection the reports do not appear to distinguish accurately between those that are rideable and those that are really obstructed by overgrowth.

None the less Cornwall Council are now taking the issue of overgrown bridleways more seriously and we got the issue discussed extensively at Cornwall Countryside Access Forum. We also have been promised access to the Asset Survey result if technicalities can be resolved.

Action on the Ground

Cornwall Council now have a policy relying on landowners to do side and top growth clearance as the liability for clearance of growth from hedges and above is legally the responsibility of the land owner.

This year Cornwall Council have taken action in Penwith and to get the landowners to clear the paths (as unfair as it may seem to some). Landowners can either do the work themselves or pay for contractors to do it. Successful action has been taken in St Hilary, Towednack, Ludgvan and St Erth.

A really major achievement is the clearance of "Carters Grave Lane", bridleway 52 in Lugvan. We have been trying to get that cleared for the last two to three years. The job has now been done by the landowner(s) and riders are really appreciative of the work they have done.

Another bridleway that has been cleared is bridleway 17 past Trannack Mill. We have not seen this ourselves but we are assured that it is now clear and usable

After these successes once the bird nesting season has finished Cornwall Council working with the BHS is planning to have a wider project to ensure that all bridleways are clear and usable.

Bridleway 55 Madron, Castle-an-Dinas to Chycauster Road

This is still closed awaiting repair – We have been chasing this with Cornwall Council as it is critical bridleway – we are still awaiting firm news as to when repairs will be done.