

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



FREE TO MEMBERS

No. 6 AUTUMN 2002

Straight From the Horse's Mouth

Welcome to our Autumn bumper edition of Horse Around which was nearly your winter one due to the fabulous weather we've been having. Outdoor jobs have taken priority over slaving over a computer!

I hope you all had a great summer leisure riding and competing. I've noticed many members' names cropping up in results published in the Cornishman on occasions. Those with horse transport are the same riders who generally do competitions, and consequently have missed out on a lot of our summer Horse Hike programme. However, many riders have been out enjoying the horse hikes which have proved very successful. The Great Flat Lode ride at Camborne was a particular favourite of mine, but all the horse hikes have been excellent. The most recent ride was the Goldsithney Horse Hike, an easy gentle ride with paces to suit all. We look forward to seeing you on the coming winter rides.

We have enjoyed 2 pub evenings, one at Nancledra and one at Rosudgeon, where we enjoyed a social drink, got to know new members and looked at maps and discussed riding routes and problems. We will continue to run these from time to time. *Don't miss the next one at New Bridge, on October 16th*, which should be convenient for many of you.

Our membership continues to grow steadily with only a few people not renewing after our first year. WPBA has grown very quickly since our inception. We feel we are making steady progress and have recently met with the County Council's new Access Manager, more about that later. We are making good progress with the parish surveys and mapping of ridden routes and we will be able to tell you more soon.

Finally we would like to thank the National Trust for being very helpful in trying to improve horse access on their land. We hope to have more news in the next Horse Around.

Margaret

First Goldsithney Horse Hike – See Inside



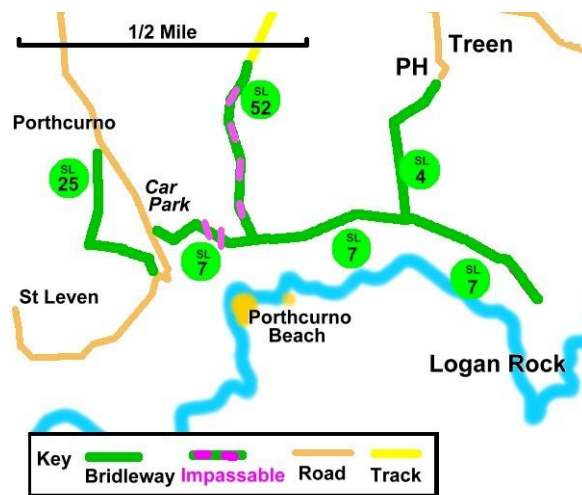
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Featured Bridleway – Porthcurno-Treen



Bridleway No 7 in St Leven Parish is a lovely bridleway and part of the coast path leading to Treen Cliff. It connects to bridleway 4 leading to Treen and the Logan Rock Inn. This of course makes for a very purposeful ride. HOWEVER, at present the route up from the beach path at Porthcurno is impassable by horse without risking injury to horse/or rider. The path is eroded exposing large rocks and gullies.

It is on our problem list. Fortunately the National Trust owns most of the bridleway. We have surveyed the problem with the NT and they are going to schedule restoration works to make it usable. They are considering using a heavy horse to get the required rocks up the track. We will let you know of progress.

The other connecting bridleway No 52 does not exist.

As a long term aim we would like to see a coastal bridle route open from Lands End to Treen. Porthcurno to Porthgwarra is known to have been ridden. The bridleways west of Porthgwarra offer good potential for a route but much research of options needs to be done.

WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

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Treasurer: Charlie Cartwright

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HORSE HIKES

Our summer program went very well with three new venues, Nancledra, Goldsithney and The Great Flat Lode Camborne. You may have seen write ups under 'And Finally' in the Cornishman and on our WEB site with some pictures.

www.westpenwithbridleways.fsnet.co.uk.

The Great Flat Lode hike was our first 'away' hike and was a brilliant ride, with lovely tracks passing Wheal Buller right over to Lanner.

First Goldsithney Hike

We met up on Sunday 8 September at Halamanning Just as the 15 riders, 2 as young as 8, were setting off, the heavens opened and it persisted down for a full 10 minutes. We sheltered under trees in a long line, before resuming the ride in brilliant sunshine! We soon dried out after getting a soaking.

We rode over to Trescowe, then Chyrase, over to Colenso and then to the Coach & Horses at Kenneggy Downs for lunch. Once again in the saddle we went back across Greenberry Downs, Woodstock and back towards Goldsithney through Perran Downs. We covered approximately 6 miles.

Thanks go to Melanie Mitchell and Yvonne Sharda who led and planned the ride and who did an excellent job at managing such a large and diverse group of riders with paces to suit all participants. Everyone is looking forward to the next one. Also a big 'Thank You' for the donations given for our funds.

Another Ride from Drift Dam – an ever popular venue

It was Sunday 30 June and after a postponement of a fortnight due to bad weather, Carne and I set off from Higher Bostraze to meet the group at Drift Dam. The outlook for the day was cloudy with showers later so we hoped to make it back home before the rain returned. There were eight riders in all and the route took us via Tresvenack, Chyehal, and Lamorna Cove, stopping for Lunch at the King's Arms at Paul before continuing home. We managed to avoid the Llama who joined the previous ride along the same route at Castallack and took a new path suggested by George down the hill into the cove, and then up along the cliff top.

The bridleways were drier than on the previous occasion and we managed some longer canters. It was surprising how much the paths had grown over since our last visit, but not having to negotiate the mud was a bonus! Once again, we stopped for lunch at Paul and were made to feel really welcome by the landlord, who even made use of a little 'present' left by Carne in the car-park for his roses.

Even though it was my second ride with the group along this route, I noticed different aspects of the scenery that I hadn't seen before and got the feeling that the landscape would have something different to offer throughout the year. It certainly is one of the most beautiful parts of West Penwith and of the ten miles we rode, three quarters of that is off-road.

I thoroughly enjoyed the day and Carne tells me he did too as he found a new friend in Irish Pete who belongs to George. The two were firm mates by the end of the ride.

Sue Small and Carne

Autumn Programme of Horse Hikes

We are planning hikes as follows over the Autumn and into the New Year:

Drift Dam	19 th or 20 th October	M&A
Poldice Valley	26 th October	M&A
Chapel Carn Brea	9 th or 10 th November	Amanda
Nancledra	23 rd or 24 th November	M&A
Goldsithney	30 th Nov. or 1 st Dec.	Melanie
Xmas Cracker, St Just	14 th or 15 th December	Amanda
Drift Dam	4 th or 5 th January	M&A

Always check with the organiser or ourselves at least a few days before. We do need to have an idea of likely attendance, and the exact date will be determined by the interest in the ride and/or weather. Please phone us early to find out more about these rides.

Margaret and Adrian Tel: 01736 795098
Melanie 710839 Amanda 871876

Most Hikes will find a suitable hostelry for a lunch stop.

Hikes are ridden at your own risk.

BHS Affiliation covers our members for Public Liability Insurance on organised rides.

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

Away Rides

We found over the summer that many who wanted to ride outside of our area had other commitments, shows etc. Unfortunately those who have horse boxes do tend to do the shows.

We have put a date on the program for a Poldice Valley Ride but generally we will organise the 'away' rides on a 'demand' basis.

The venues we plan to go to are:

Gwinear - some lovely bridleways

Poldice Valley - with option of Coast to Coast, fantastic new trail.

Great Flat Lode – again brilliant 'tramway trails'

The Lizard - Yet to be fully researched.

If you have transport and would like to sample these delights please phone 795098 to let us know. We will then arrange a ride to suit your schedules if practical. - Adrian and Margaret.

Another 'Get Together'



To give you a chance to let us know of the riding problems or just meet for a drink and chat.

AT
THE FOUNTAIN
INN
NEWBRIDGE
Wednesday
16th October
7:30pm

Hope to see you there!



Nancledra Horse Hike

The Engine Inn

Arab Racing

It is with great reluctance and under intense pressure from Margaret & Adrian that I have agreed to write about Arab racing, as it seems a long way removed from bridleway rides.

Basically, Arab racing is the amateurs version of who you see on Grandstand on a Saturday afternoon but without the jumps. You need a horse either a pure bred Arab of any size and age or an anglo or Part Bred (properly registered, bloodtyped etc.)

Races are run over distances from 5 Furlongs to 2.5 miles and are VERY FAST. You can ride yourself – if you can “make the weight” and can pass a test to prove you are competent and you need a racing saddle to be effective. You also have to be pretty committed and professional in your approach as standards are very high.

Improvisation is useful as once your horse is pretty fit, you need to teach it (and yourself) the realities of racing gallop. (Marazion beach is a good place to do this!)

All except international races are started by tape or flag so you don't have to find a way to get your horse used to starting stalls. (a long length of knicker elastic makes a good starting tape).

The bad news is that like any competitive horse sport, the costs of transport, feed, entries etc. all tend to add up. The good news is that you can win MONEY! The adrenaline rush is amazing – especially if you are in with a chance of the winning end! I have also found that Arabs are very adaptable and can often happily race one week and do dressage or a Horse Hike a couple of weeks later. Training a horse to race doesn't mean you have to gallop flat out every day – once a week is usually fine but you do need to be quite disciplined about your fitness programme.

As for venues, these are licenced racecourses all over the country. The nearest being Devon & Exeter and all racing is strictly controlled by the Jockey Club.

The season is May to October

You too can be Lester Piggot reborn!

Gill Bumam

Did You Know? – Historical Horse Facts

Whilst watching the trooping of the colour ceremony one little interesting historical fact was mentioned. The last row of the mounted regiment were the farriers. Two of them were carrying silver axes held up in one hand. Apparently, all the horses hooves were marked and registered, and when one fell in battle, the farriers had to chop off the numbered hoof so it could be recorded which horse had been lost. Horses were valuable army property.

Also:

Did you know that French Cavalry horses were trained to sit down like dogs, so that horse and dismounted rider could hide from the enemy behind bushes!

Thank you Lands End Trekking!

On the 27th July Lands Ends Trekking Centre put on a sponsored ride with all proceeds to WPBA. The sum of £182.50 was raised, a tremendous sum. We were totally thrilled with this, and much appreciate the effort spent in organising and publicising the event. A big thank you to all who supported the ride, and to all sponsors, and we hope you enjoyed the day. The monies will be reserved for bridle path improvements.

Tarmac on Bridleways!

You have been riding a lovely unmade track which is a bridleway or by-way for years. One morning you find it has been tarmaced and is now a road in all except name. *Who allows this to happen? Is there any way of stopping it?*

These are the questions we have been asking. Cornwall County Council suggested it was primarily a planning matter under the jurisdiction of Penwith District Council. Penwith District Council said “not a planning matter, speak to the County Council!” An example of such tarmac is Bridleway 9 in Paul connecting Kerris Vean to the B3315.

Since we raised this issue, we separately informed the CC that we were possibly able to arrange for repairs to be done to the surface of a certain bridleway. We were informed that the CC must be consulted over the proposed surface.

Tarmac is both a change to the surface of a highway, and is the construction of a road. The first is a CC matter, the second is planning matter! The County Council have now confirmed to us that they do need to be consulted, but “that does not often happen”. In respect of Paul Bridleway 9 the CC have “placed a report with a view to seeing if they can get a central strip cleared to facilitate horse use”. WE still are going to pursue the planning aspect further with the PWDC.

So, watch out when a property on a track is ‘renovated’ - tarmacing the track to connect with the highway is often the next step.

If surface improvement to a track is necessary for vehicular access leaving a grass central strip is a very good compromise solution. It is more in keeping with the rural surroundings, provides a good horse surface and reminds drivers it is not a road!

If you see preparations for tarmac, or tarmac itself please ask the CC and PWDC about it, and please tell me. - Adrian

Banish Flies!

Summer may well be about over now and so are the dreaded flies!

Both my horses seem to have thin skin and can't tolerate any flies landing on them. I feel like I'm riding on the Star Ship Enterprise, constantly having to hit and swipe at on-coming invaders! It certainly ruins the ride. After trying all sorts of different fly sprays, most very expensive, I was given a recipe that was not only cheap but worked for my boys, so I thought I'd share it with you. As with all new things do a patch test first.

It consists of one part Citronella to 10 parts vinegar. Buy an empty spray bottle from B&Q and mix together thoroughly. Always shake well before use and avoid the eyes! It might be a little late for this season but you might like to try it next year. Happy riding.

Mandy Nicholson

Thank You to the Big Man with the Big! Yellow Digger.

Thank you Clive Morris for donating and delivering a large load of enviromentally friendly rab for our use in repairing brileways. Also for removing a large granite bolder used to block a gateway during the eclipse and never removed. You're a gem!

New Faces at County Hall / Policies

The County Council have the first responsibility for protection and maintenance of our rights of ways.

Although we do not know the details of their budgets etc. they have recently received an injection of funding and you may have seen adverts in the Cornishman a few months ago for several associated countryside posts.

One result is that there is a new dedicated 'Access Manager', Mike Eastwood, and a new Access Liaison Officer, Liz Barnes. We have had a very useful meeting with them and discussed some of the many issues which concern us. We hope that our input will be useful in Mike's task of improving the CC's support of our Rights of Ways.

Under Mike there are two groups one concerned with mapping and the definitive map, the other which does the field work.

One aspect of the CC's policies that has become clearer is how priorities are assigned to the path maintenance activities:

Local Maintenance Partnerships (LMP): - The County Council wishes to see all routine paths maintenance carried out at local level by the parish councils. The CC thus encourages all parishes to enter into the LMP scheme, where the parishes are paid directly about £45 per Km per annum for routine maintenance of the parish's public paths.

The CC will give technical advice and support, carry out roadside signing and major structural works and provide practical assistance for path improvements.

It is CC's current policy to give minimal low priority support to the rights of way in parishes that are not in the scheme.

Priorities for Maintenance and Action on Bridleways: - The CC only has responsibility (and currently any interest) in designated bridleways and footpaths. Current interpretation of this policy means that priority is only given to bridleways that connect to a public road at both ends or another bridleway that leads to a road. If a bridleway is connected to a road by a farm track, ridden for years but not designated, the CC views it as a dead end and it receives little interest or support. *(We would very much like the CC to reconsider this policy look at the whole picture and as a matter of policy encourage and enable more through and connecting routes)*

Contact with the CC: - It is now CC Policy that all contact with the CC on ROW matters is through the new Countryside Liaison Officer. The Field Officers are no longer directly approachable. (We are not sure how this affects other bridleway groups, some of which do seem to have a close working relationship with their field officers and seem fairly happy with the support and work done.)

Bridleway Signing

It is County Council's policy to sign every bridleway and footpath where it leaves a road. Thus if the bridleway is reached by a short section of track that has not been designated, the bridleway is not signed.

You may have noticed brand new wooden signs appearing. Whilst this is very welcome, just because a spanking new sign has been erected it does not mean the bridleway is passable!

The sign 'Public Path' means the path may be a bridleway or byway, but "we", the County Council want you to think it is only a footpath! For example, opposite Lamorna Pottery, the designated bridleway (Paul 14) that connects to the bridleway (Paul 9) from Kerris is signed 'Public Path'. It is not currently rideable, yet it would avoid having to ride on the busy B3315.

The County Council's response to this situation was "*The Field Officer for the area does not wish to encourage use of this route, which is very difficult for horses to use due to the nature of the terrain*". We find this reply totally unacceptable and will be pursuing it further. We want the bridleway path improved to make it rideable.

The Poor Relation

The County Council has a duty to keep highways open and free of obstructions. Footpaths and bridleways are 'highways' in the eyes of the law. If a load of rocks fall and block a road or large potholes appear, the CC is there speedily to remove them or effect repair. If the same happens on a footpath or bridleway the same commitment is not evident. How many footpaths and bridleways are overgrown or blocked? We the horse riders get a really bad deal. If you are on foot you can easily make a diversion to over-come a problem or climb over a large rock, pothole, or around that bog etc. The effect for riders is a completely blocked route. The CC then give many reasons why the problem cannot be attended to: 'Sorry not a designated through route', 'Sorry the parish is not in the LMP', 'Sorry the terrain is not suitable for horses', 'Sorry no effort available' etc.

Ridden paths have had a poor deal right from when the path designations were made, hence our fragmented network and having to rely on use of undesignated paths and tracks. Every obstacle is put in the way of getting our paths correctly designated – there is no common sense way – only proof of 20 years use.

If you agree that bridleways are getting a poor deal, and that a good network of off-road riding is required to avoid the busy roads, and that the CC should be doing more to assist. Lobby your County Councillor – ask him or her for his/her views on the rights of way network and explain the importance of safe riding routes. The cyclists have had their say, with results, so make your views known. We will lobby on your behalf, but, councillors need your vote and so take much more notice of personal letters. Please take the time and write to your Councillor.

Your County Councillors:

Hayle North - Mrs T Lello (LD) 29 Treeve Lane, Hayle, TR27 5DQ

Hayle South - Mrs S M J Oliver (IND), Trenoweth, Viaduct Hill, Hayle, TR27 5HT

Ludgvan - Mr R A Mann (IND), Little Chysauster, New Mill, Penzance, TR20 8XA

Marazion - Mr N C Walker (LD), Trevean Farm, Rosudgeon, Penzance, TR20 9PF

Penzance East - Ms T E Williams (LD), c/o Cornwall County Council, County Hall, Truro, TR1 3AY

Penzance South - Mr M J Payne (LAB), Sirhowy, 9 Charles Street, Newlyn, Penzance, TR18 5QB

Penzance West - Mr S G Richards (LD), 6 Belle Vue Terrace, Penz., TR18 2BZ

St Ives North - Mr A P Mitchell (LD), 36 Parc-an-Creet, St Ives, TR26 2ES

St Ives South - Mr G E T Tonkin (LD), Dewetha Ger, Westward Road, St Ives, TR26 1JX

St Just - Ms R M Ewer (LAB), 3 Botallack Moor, St Just, Penzance, TR19 7QH

Bridleway Problems

Below is a quick update of our problem list:

WPBA 001 Bridleway from Chapel Carn Brea to Brane ends on undesignated boggy track by St Euny Well

The solution is a modification order to designate the track as a bridleway. Sancreed Parish Council have agreed to support it. We do need witnesses who have ridden it at any time over the last 20 years – please contact Gwendolyn Collins 01736 333292

WPBA 002 Padlocked Cattle Grid on a Byway

The CC have got the padlock removed but an access problem to a through route still remains.

WPBA 003 Impassable Bridleway at Porthcurno

NT are looking to do repairs.

WPBA 004 Blocked/Dangerous Boulderstrewn Bridleway at Lamorna

St Buryan PC are looking at this problem

WPBA 005 Impassable Bridleway at Lamorna

We are still pursuing this with the CC (see article Page 4)

WPBA 006 Cattle Grid on Bridleway at Crippleasease

This is being addressed by the property owners who are applying for a diversion order satisfactory to all.

WPBA 007 Gates in bad repair on Higher Leah bridleway St. Buryan

Not considered to be a through bridleway by the CC!

WPBA 008 Ennis Bridleway never cleared/instated, Paul

Not considered to be a through bridleway by the CC!

New Items Added Are:

WPBA 009 Carters Grave/Heather Lane Bridleway Nancledra

Impassable in winter. - We are asking the CC to address this.

WPBA 010 Madron Kennels Bridleway. Washed out boulder strewn section.

We are also in discussions with the Wild Life Trust re the possibility of a permissive bridleway in Nancledra

Works done by the CC in our area over the last 18 months

We asked the CC for a report on any bridleway specific work done. The only two items reported were as follows:

Drainage and Surfacing improvements to the Embla vean Bridleway

Towednack. – This in fact is redoing work done three years ago, when the CC dug out a new deep 'river bed' off the moor to serve as the bridleway. This problem is likely to repeat itself each winter!

Major Drainage Work on the Botrea Bridleway in Sancreed – We cannot understand why this work received any priority. It is also a vehicle track. For horse use no problems have ever been seen!

We are very disappointed in this report but hopefully we will be able to persuade the CC to help us overcome some real problems over the next year.

Horse Crossing Points

Success! Have you noticed new horse signs on the A394 Marazion Bypass? We asked the County Council to look at the crossing point where there was only a sign in one direction and right on the crossing. They have been very helpful and now have put two signs repositioned well in advance of the crossing. A 'big thank you' to the Highways Department.

Getting across busy roads is becoming more and more difficult if not impossible these days. The CC have told us that if 5 or more horses cross a road a day then they will consider putting up warning signs. **So, if you know of crossing points on any road which would meet the above criteria please let us know.**

For Trunk Roads, eg. the A30 to Penzance, the Highways Agency is responsible. Apparently they have already done an initial survey and are now liaising with the BHS, with plans to start to provide safe crossings. We have submitted a request for a safe crossing at Cannons Town.

Area Contacts: If you live in the Goldsithney/Rosudgeon area and have a bridleway problem you wish to discuss with someone, in the first instance, please get in touch with either: Melanie Mitchell on 710 839 or Alison McCarthy on 763 223. We hope to provide more contacts in the next *Horse Around*.

Overgrown Bridleways or Footpaths?

What should you do?

i. Find out in which parish the path is, and check if the parish council has joined the 'Local Maintenance Partnership' – please see the list below.

ii. If the council is in the scheme you should pursue the matter with the council via the parish clerk, contact numbers are given below. Check on the OS map whether the path is designated as a footpath, bridleway or byway, as strictly, the parishes are only committed to keep designated paths clear. However you may find the parish willing to help on undesignated paths.

iii. Please let us know of any problems you are unable to resolve locally. You can always consider organising a clearing session, we can help you organise this.

What is the standard for a bridleway?

The CC advise the parishes that bridleways are cleared to a width of 2.5 metres and importantly to a height of 3.5 metres.

Which Parishes does our Association cover?

Parishes In the Local Maintenance Partnership: (Thus are paid by the CC to keep all their paths maintained to a reasonable standard)

Breage - Mr J R Coward Tel: 763679
Germoe - Mrs J Goodwin Tel: 763001
St Buryan – Mrs M E Hosken Tel: 810349
St Erth – Mr P L Wilson Tel: 757610
St Just – Mrs E George Tel: 788412
St Hilary – Mr R Calfe Tel: 763311
St Leven – Mrs S J Symons 871258
Madron - Not Yet Known
Perranuthnoe – Mrs Y Neale 710322
Sennen – Mr D J Gallie - 871349
Towednack – Mrs J Curtis 363049
Zennor – Mrs R Swallow 799113

Parishes not yet in the Local Maintenance Partnership:

(Thus take little interest in the paths and bridleways and receive no support from the County Council)

St Ives , Sancreed (but have decided to join),
Marazion, Morvah
Paul, Penzance