

HORSE AROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY



Free to Members

No. 37 Autumn 2015/Winter 2016

Straight from the Horse's mouth

Hello Everyone

I hope you have been getting out and doing plenty of riding. Our roads this Summer have certainly been busier – no doubt we are reaping the 'rewards' of the Poldark effect.

I am pleased to say that the horse hikes have been well supported and the weather has been clement enough for us to run them. It has been good to have some new faces enjoying the rides. The Penrose ride was particularly fantastic as we can now follow the lakeside all the way on the east side out to Loe Bar. Penrose is now giving us quite a few different options for rides.

We have had a positive meeting with the Natural England manager on the Lizard to discuss how to improve the riding over there. We have a small team of WPBA members who live that way and know the terrain, who are liaising directly to improve connectivity of the routes on the ground. Alison, who has run the Lizard horse hikes for us over the years, is discussing the awkward gates and if they can be improved.

We visited Mulfra to survey what needs to happen now. We then had a site meeting with the Cormac Ranger back in June to discuss our proposals. We wanted everything done in time for school Summer hols! You can read more on this later.

Not only do we continue to work for more access we have to fight a rear guard action to protect what we have, whether it be to get our bridleways cleared of side growth or getting obstructions removed. Read how you can help with reporting and also "Trouble at Well" later.

Your bridleway group started in 2001 after the Foot and Mouth crisis and grew in size for many years. Our membership has decreased in the last 3 years as we struggle to get riders to renew. Please do encourage any lapsed members to rejoin, as we continue to work for local riders.

The school holidays are over and Autumn is knocking on the door. Although that is a bit dispiriting conditions will be generally more conducive for riding.

Come and join us on a horse hike and enjoy some varied and social riding.

We hope you enjoy this 9 page bumper edition of Horse Around. Thank you to all our contributors

Margaret

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and more ...



*Riders on the Horse Hike from Chapel Carn Brea
Pictured at the Botallck Mine.
(The Wheal Leisure Mine in BBC Poldark)*

******* A Mulfra Thank You. *******

Ros Hibbert has asked us to thank on her behalf all the riders who supported her in her successful quest in getting the Mulfra Bridleway recorded on the map, by completing evidence forms and also by giving help in the administrative process. Without your help the successful outcome would not have been achieved. The bridleways are on the map (all 2.5 miles). We are now working to get them signed and made rideable. See separate article)

WEST PENWITH BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

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Web: <http://www.bhsaccesscornwall.org.uk/westpenwithbridleways>

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Horse Hike from Chapel Carn Brea

Nine riders met at Chapel Carn Brea car park on the 7th June on a lovely clear sunny day. We rode across Bartinney moor, along the lane to Dowran where we greeted Peter a stalwart supporter of our bridleway group. He regularly and singlehandedly trims out our ridden paths in the Bartinney area.

From there on to Bosvargus lane where we met farmers wrapping silage bales. Psyclone's eyes were out on stalks at this sight so Penny took the lead on brave Wilf and led us on down to Tregeseal.

On to the cliff path with stunning views of Cape Cornwall, and around to 'Ross Poldark's Wheal Leisure', unfortunately no one could spot Ross with his scythe in his hand!

All this had worked up quite a thirst so we stopped off at the Queens Arms for a pint or two. Fortified, we rode up to Devil's Lane where Joe and Donna set the pace for a canter up to Carn Kenidjack, we spotted a group of young longhorn cattle, but luckily they preferred to stay in their grassy meadow rather than come onto the moor.

We had a little canter up to the communication mast on the summit of the hill, and then made our way back across the moor, past Hailglower Farm, Lower Bostraze and retraced our hoofprints back to Chapel Carn Brea.

A lovely day out in good company in ideal weather.

Beverly



Returning Over Carn Kenidjack

Horse Hike Programme – Autumn/Winter 2015/16

Please note these dates in your diary now

Organiser or Contact

U or UU	Madron	27 Sept	Anne
U or UU	Mining Trails, Camborne/Redruth	11 October	A & M
U or UU	Nancladra	25 October	A & M
U or UU	Drift (Sancreed)	1 November	Beverley
U or UU	Helston/Loe Pool	15 November	A & M
U or UU	St. Hilary(Halamanning)	29 November	Debbie
U or UU	Xmas Ride (Chapel Carn Brea)	6 December	Amanda
U or UU	Tehidy	17 January	A & M
U or UU	To Be Arranged	7 Febuary	
U or UU	To Be Arranged	21 Feb	

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 07766 891128, Debbie Smith 01736 763 830
Amanda Nicholson 01736 871876,
Beverly Jenkin 01736 871151/07530 242524

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.

Keeping Our Bridleways Clear

Cornwall Council has less and less money to spend on its statutory duties to keep our Rights of Way clear and usable. As we reported previously landowners are being held to account to clear top and side growth from hedges.

However one of the biggest problems that we do have, and this is County wide and not just in West Cornwall, is getting riders to report problems to Cornwall Council or ourselves.

We our bridleways group (and the BHS Cornwall) are going to have a concerted effort to identify issues and to hold Cornwall Council to account for problems reported.

We are going to remind riders via email of how they can help.

Also please see a further item later in this Horse Around.

Mining Trail Horse Hike - 1 March

The Great Flat Lode Mining Trails was the second horse hike of 2015. The weather forecast was doubtful, strong winds and heavy rain preceded the night before. Magically a weather window forecast opened long enough to go ahead and risk snatching a shorter ride than usual.

Ten riders set off from South Wheal Francis car park in bright, breezy and sunny conditions. We lead the horses through the trail connection tunnel then mounted up orderly. Everyone was happy for a quiet and easy ride as there were some young horses. We rode out past Wheal Buller and over to pick up the Tresavean trail to above Lanner, where we looped round through a tiny place ... before returning. The wind picked up on the return and rain threatened. The horses sensed the homeward journey and became rather enthusiastic. Despite Margaret getting Bob's reins tangled and attached to the Wheal Buller bridledway gate (I suppose we all have to do it once!) we arrived back safely. We all got the horses loaded and just as we left the car park the predicted showers rolled in. It is always good to get out and ride and a 7.5 mile ride in good social company made it especially worth it.

Nanledra Horse Hike - 22 March

We met up at the Engine Inn at Crippleseat for a horse hike. We set off along the road towards Penzance but soon turned left to take quiet lanes to reach Tren crom Hill. It was excellent riding weather; a lovely still and bright day that allowed for a leisurely pace to take in the expansive views including the top of St. Michael's Mount. Approaching Tren crom from the north side gave views of the magnificent sweep of the Hayle estuary. On reaching Tren crom Hill the rest of the ride was mainly off road.

We rode the horse track around the base of Tren crom hill and emerged on its southern flank to link up with the connecting track at Goned Viscoe to Carter's Grave Lane. We were delighted to find that the full length of this bridledway (the longest in Penwith) had been cut back tight and cleared out beautifully. We continued on to Cucurrian and came out on to the Nanledra road. Splashing through the ford, the horses cleaned off their muddy feathers. A track was taken up the valley side enabling the riders to enjoy more grand views high above Nanledra. We then descended to Georgia Bridge and on to the Higher Amalwhidden bridledway. Turning right on reaching the road, we made our way back up the other side of the valley to the Engine Inn by way of the bridledway to Giew Mine. Everyone enjoyed this 8 mile ride and a couple of canters added to the exhilaration of the day.



I was able to ride my Roana on this ride as we hacked from home and Tegenn rode my Bob. (pictured) (Roana has refused to box travel in recent years) We completed 12 miles from home and back.

Our thanks go to the new landlords at the Engine Inn for their kind permission to use their car park.

Margaret

'Trouble at Well'

We reported on the success of the Paths for Community Project, in the last Horse Around, in creating a new bridledway connection past St Euny well Sancreed.

However as we also reported, we subsequently resolved the ownership of the disputed old lane to and past the well, and Cornwall Council accepted dedication of it as a bridledway in parallel to the new section.

However the adjoining property owners were not informed of the Dedication by Cornwall Council and over the last nine months have tried to block access for riders with garden rubbish and broken slates.

When local riders attempted to clear the bridledway things became serious and the police were called.

Cornwall Council then became involved and after much pressure from our association they have now sorted the situation (with necessary back up) and informed the property owners of the legalities and have cleared and correctly signed the bridledway.

The situation now seems quiet with no more obstructions and the signage remains in place.

Cornwall Council could have saved much trouble by acting sooner and informing the residents that the way had been dedicated as a legal bridledway by the rightful landowner.

We do thank Cornwall Council for finally resolving the issue and also we thank local riders for their perseverance in ensuring our rights are preserved.

It is most important that these situations are quickly dealt with to maintain ridden access to our bridledways.



Adrian, Penny, Donna, Joe and Tracy - Photo by Margaret on Roana

Sounds

The sound of silence is good for horses and humans. Simply because humans cannot hear a noise does not mean that horses are deaf to it. Horses respond to low frequency vibrations preceding earthquakes and to high frequency sounds beyond our range. It is thought that horses not subjected to the noise pollution of modern man have keener hearing than domesticated horses. Tribesmen are known to have a hearing acuteness far beyond the range of modern man. In humans some noise frequencies, particularly those associated with the communications industries, are linked to allergies, depression and fatigue that interferes with the immune system, yet we remain addicted to the sound of tv and radio.

Mulfra – What happens now?

Despite the old lane from Mulfra up to Mufra Common being upgraded to bridleway from a footpath after waiting 15 years for the Modification Order to be processed, no work has yet been done to enable riders to use it safely.

We have visited the now bridleway path and surveyed the routes from Mulfra to the quoit and also from Grove Corner to Bodrifty settlement. The main issue is the old lane up from Mulfra which requires clearing and also surface obstructions cleared or made avoidable.

The relatively recently installed 4 ft gate at the bottom and associated hedge is now an unlawful obstruction, despite it being "authorised" when the route was a footpath.

We have had a site visit with Hamish Gordon, the CORMAC Ranger. In principal we have agreed some improvement work that can be relatively easily done to make the bridleway usable but have since received stalling emails that are excuses for not proceeding.

It is disconcerting that the Cormac paths officer queried with ourselves whether 4 foot was adequate for horses when it is a legal requirement under the Highways Act for bridleway gates to be 5 foot wide. The whole gate and hedge must be removed as it is now unauthorised and cannot be justified for "The containment of stock" .

We have asked our PAROW paths officers (see item on PAROW) to clear the old lane and that is on their list of things to do and hopefully now imminent and with volunteer help if necessary. Cornwall Council have said that we have its permission to do basic clearance.

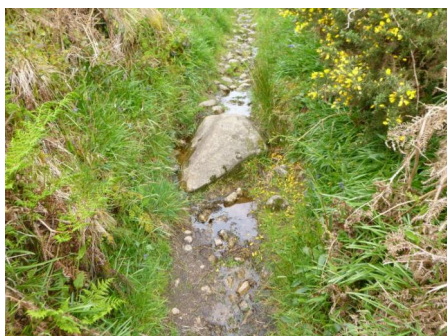
There is also the issue of the gate and hedge and importantly the signage, the Bridleways are still signed as Footpaths

Things may stay just as they are unless we continue to pursue Cornwall Council. The now unauthorised gate should be removed and restored back to an open lane entrance. We want improvements made to the path and we want good signage from the roads with bridleway way markers sited at key points. We are pushing hard to get the bridleway made usable. Local riders have waited long enough for this victory and now we want to make sure it is usable.



The narrow gate and fence and hedge is now an unauthorised obstruction and must be removed

The old lane is badly gullied in places with several large rock obstructions. This picture does not show the steepness of the bridleway or the height of the rock.



Tehidy Horse Hike - 11 May

Whilst William Fox-Pitt was busy winning Badminton, us lesser mortals were enjoying a nine mile Tehidy horse hike. As we left the north cliffs car park at Basset Cove, we were suddenly confronted with a convoy of old American cars and an eclectic mix of other vehicles and motorbikes. We were just about to cross the road and go along to the Tehidy Park entrance as the 'Wacky Races' went by!

The horses soon gained composure and apart from an incident on west park gate drive when Penny's reins snapped and her horse charged off for 20 yards, the horses remained settled throughout the ride. The car parks were ram jam full and it felt like a bank holiday with families enjoying a day out. The horses were unphased by the dogs and children as I think they have come to expect to see that now.



We decided to do a different route from recent times. We had a slightly shorter tour of the park than normal then headed off past the golf course and out towards Ilogen. All quiet lanes until we reached Bridge, where we crossed the Portreath road and picked up the Coast to Coast multi-user trail into Portreath itself. We rode through the centre of Portreath then took a quiet back road and then a woodland path that lead into the back of Duchy College farm buildings. We did a detour around the holiday village of Gwel-an-Mor and picked up the mining trail leading back into Tehidy woods. As Jo had not had quite enough woods, we decided to do an extra meander up towards the wardens' lodge and as usual we nearly got a bit lost but soon found our way back to the main track to the north entrance. Once back on the cliff, we all hurriedly loaded the horses as the wind was blowing hard as it often does there!

The park itself is great for a sheltered ride even when the weather is windy.

Margaret

Drift Dam Horse Hike

On Sunday On Sunday 12th April 2015 12 riders left Drift Dam and headed out across the A30 towards Chyenhal. Unfortunately just after joining the old lane we all had to do an about-turn as the hawthorn and ivy had become so overgrown the track was inaccessible. Plan B was put into place and we continued along the road through Chyenhal and headed out towards Lamorna. All horses were well behaved and the riders enjoyed a good chat along the way. We picked up the bridleway again at Trevelloe and rode a tricky trail through the woods down to Lamorna Pottery.



After riding along the road for a short while we turned off and rode up the very steep hill to Castallack. Again the bridleway was very overgrown from above and some of those on the larger horses actually dismounted and walked through. Poor Chris Hichens almost got strangled when her coat became lodged in an overhead branch but her steady cob Domino allowed her to back up and disentangle herself. A few rips to clothing was also sustained to some unfortunate riders by this point.

BUT there was worse to come ... 2 LOOSE PIGS on the Bridlepath!!! As can be imagined, the horses grew wings but we all made it safely past and the pigs were allowed to continue on their way, grunting in disgust at a bunch of horses who dared to invade their locale. Much to everyone's relief, the horses calmed down immediately and we all headed out towards the local watering hole, otherwise known as Paul Pub. We all dismounted, girths loosened to give them a breather, and some riders frequented the pub for a well earned beverage whilst others held the horses.

All refreshed we mounted back up and headed out past Paul Cricket Ground and through Sheffield before picking up the bridleway for a lovely canter back towards Chyenhal and then across the A30 to Drift Dam. In all, the nevertheless enjoyable ride took about two and a half hours.

Penny Redford



Coming Out of the bridleway from the woods opposite Lamorna Pottery

Riding For the Disabled Association

At the March AGM we had an interesting and heart-warming talk given by Jan Shearn and Josie Perritt.

Riding for the Disabled Association was started in the 1960s. There are now around 500 groups in the UK serving the needs of approximately 30,000 disabled and special needs people. Each group is an individual charity with separate trustees that are affiliated to the national organisation that is based in Warwickshire.

Their mission statement is: *to deliver a real and lasting therapy that not only benefits mobility and co-ordination, but encourages confidence and self-worth whilst having fun.*

The first group in Cornwall was established at Chiverton. In 1976 a new group broke away and started at Old Mill, near St. Ives.

The West Cornwall RDA run five sessions a week, at Old Mill stables, for both adults and children who have physical problems or learning difficulties. They work with many mainstream schools, and also Nancealverne school which is for only very severe problems. There are 'new' problems to help with as 40 years ago no one knew of Autism, ADHD or MS. People who have life changing accidents come to RDA. One such person is Josie Perritt whose heart rending story of how she started riding after a horrific car accident that left her lonely and isolated gave her a new life.

They use good quality horses that walk march and not old Dobbins as one might imagine. The horse moves every muscle you would use if you could walk. This in itself is good therapy for those who cannot walk. The warmth of the horse can make the muscles relax. But the experience of riding suddenly gives a profound feeling of ableness and brings confidence back to the rider. Josie got really hooked and even bought her own horse. She eventually became the sole representative for Cornwall for 10 years as Dressage rider. Control and working with the rhythm of the horse is good for co-ordination.

The RDA has a small paid staff in Warwickshire and organise competitions. All horse para-olympians started with RDA.

They operate with 12 helpers to 7 riders as they may need 2 side walkers as well as leaders. It costs around £300 per week to hire and insure and equip the sessions so a lot of fund raising has to be done. They are always looking for volunteers to help with the riding. (No experience necessary as training given.)

If anyone is interested in helping please contact Jan Shearn on: 01736 361 968

Castle-an Dinas Bridleways

Many of you will be familiar with the Castle-an-Dinas folly landmark to the SW of Nancledra. The hill is also home to a granite quarry that has now for a few years been owned by Cornwall Council and run by Cormac,

There is a bridleway (Lugvan 28/Madron 62) that leads from Castle Gate on the Penzance to Nancledra road through the Quarry site and eventually down bridleway Madron 55 (known as the "Fir Tree Route") to the road that goes past Chysauster Ancient village from Badger's Cross.

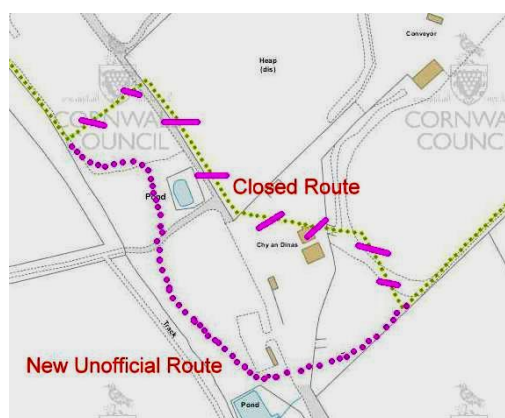
The latter bridleway has been closed for two years having been washed out by the rains.

The really Good News is that this bridleway has now been restored and rebuilt to a superb standard by Cornwall Council. It is a most important route.



The "Fir Tree Route" - restored

The picture shows just one small section. Over 300 yards of the bridleway have been resurfaced – a fantastic job. Hopefully this work will resolve a bad drainage issue on the bridleway.



However the **Disappointing News** is that the bridleway through the quarry is not resolved. The Quarry, a few years ago, unofficially diverted the bridleway to avoid the quarry offices and quarry workings. However they have failed to officially divert the route OR provide a suitable surface on the new section of path they have created.

We are still trying to get Cornwall Council to provide a properly surfaced and definitive diverted route. As this whole situation is under the total management of Cornwall Council it is disgraceful, and we are considering making a formal complaint if it is not now speedily sorted.

The other connected issue is the old lane that runs from the lane from Badgers Cross past Helangove Farm to the quarry road and bridleway and also route past Higher Helangove. The new farmer owner of the lane has stopped riders using it. A Modification Order Application was put in a while ago to try and prove that it is a public right of way (bridleway). It will be a difficult issue to resolve and the outcome not certain when the Council do finally get around to processing the application, and especially as parts of the private quarry road are included in the application. Further we understand that the Quarry have now, as a security measure, locked the entrance to the quarry bridleway off the old lanes.

Gwallon Bridleway St Hilary 81

You may remember back in 2009 we successfully got a new route for the bridleway agreed and opened by the landowners. The definitive route had never existed and goes through a house.

The landowners applied for a diversion to the new route but Cornwall Council has never processed this application much to the frustration of all and especially the house owner where the bridleway officially goes through his dining room!

Cornwall Council in their wisdom found that a mineshaft was marked on old maps near the new route, so said they had got to establish it was safe before processing the application. No one has seen this mineshaft and we have not lost any riders down any large hole as far as we know.

We yet again are trying to get them to progress this. They keep saying they are awaiting the necessary information from their Geotechnical advisors – for 6 years!

In the meantime other issues are arising on the new route which need addressing.

Bridleway 61 Gwinear

This bridleway has been temporarily closed where it crosses the railway line as the old bridge is being replaced by Network Rail. We had some affection for the old iron bridge which we use on the Gwinear Horse Hike. We called it the whistling bridge because of the sound the wind made blowing through it. The bridleway closure notice runs through until 6 October. We hope that all has gone to schedule and that it will be reopened on time.

PAROW UPDATE

As we reported in the last Horse Around, Penwith Access and Rights of Way (PAROW CIC), with grant money has been working full time in path clearance and improving access in West Cornwall. We now have managed to get the grant funding extended until mid December but we again have no funding after that date. We are looking for further grant funding but it is not easy. We have secured limited grant funding from "Village SOS" to pay for Cornwall Community Council in identifying possible sources of funding and making applications.

The Penwith Landscape Project bid (Cornwall Wildlife Trust led) has been resubmitted to the Heritage Lottery grant and if successful the project could start later next year. PAROW is a partner and earmarked to help in delivery of this project if the bid is successful. – Fingers Crossed!

Little Antron Unclassified Road - Ramblers REACT

Those of you in Breage/Helston may know the unclassified road that crosses the busy A394 Penzance Helston road.

This is a very useful link to the Porthleven Area. Some are wary of the crossing but many find it OK if care is taken.

The "road" to the south through Little Antron is unsealed and is of bridleway standard. It had become overgrown again in recent years and Cornwall Council Highways rather than the Right of Way Team are responsible for its clearance, but it is of very low priority to them hence not cleared.



The path before clearance

However this year the Ramblers have organised clearance days on this route under their "REACT" initiative (Ramblers Environment Action Team), working with Cornwall Council.



The path after clearance

We did try and get some riders to help but for the majority of the work, local riders were unable to get along because the working days were mid week.

We will publicise future REACT projects on bridleways in our area. We also should put forward suggestions for bridleway projects and offer our help for the working days.

STEEL HORSE NEWS

Bude – A little Known Multiuse Trail
(and we have discovered the reason why!)

Although the Bude trail is only a couple of miles long, it does provide useful links for a pleasant traffic free cycle or horse ride.

This is one of the last multi-user trails Cornwall Council committed to build. It starts from the main car park at Bude by the canal and runs along the old railway track bed to the hamlet of Helebridge where the historic canal and tow path spur ends. Short canal barges, carrying 20 ton loads, were hauled up a steep hill by a pulley system to the village of Marhamchurch. This now forms part of a byway that links to the trail. From Helebridge the trail shadows the A39 to begin with before winding its way to a place called Budd's Titson. We ran out of time to explore further on. We went back on another day but was in disbelief at what we found. From Helebridge, the trail is signed and continues, but only for around third of a mile. There is a lovely wide grass strip suitable for a lovely long canter which delivers you to a newly installed good strong and wide wooden bridge over a river. All looks very promising. The surfaced trail continues along a short distance before sharply turning into a grassy field. We followed a track in the grass beside a new fence only to be confronted with a rusty barbed wire fence and brambles before a drop into a river! This unfinished section to, who knows eventually where, should never have been started unless all the landownership issues had been legally completed. What a huge waste of tax payers' money – the bridge alone will have cost thousands of pounds! This should be of acute embarrassment to Cornwall Council. We intend to pursue this issue and ask what next?

Lanhrydrock Update (near Bodmin)

The new cycle trails in the woods have now been open for some time and we have cycled them a few times now and they are great but are one way and are not suitable for horses. However there are some "multiuser" sections but horses only appear on one sign and we understand officially that horses still need a £10 permit for access. This is disgraceful as cyclists always go free everywhere.

We are shortly going to survey all the estate and try and get the NT to provide free and signed access on all suitable tracks (as now is provided at Penrose).

[The Iron Curtain Trail](#)

[Anyone up for this?!!](#) If you are looking for a real cycle challenge you can now cycle [The Iron Curtain Trail](#) of 4,000 miles! Just opened this year.

Penrose Loe Pool Horse Hike 29 March

As reported in the last Horse Around, the National Trust has completed the bridleway route at the SE end of the pool by joining to the lane at the end of Carminowe Creek. They also have now improved all the gates on the new bridleway through the field on the south of the creek. Previously a new board walk suitable only for walkers and cyclists was the only way to cross at the end of the creek.

With this in mind we ran this ride entirely on the Eastern (Helston) side of Loe Pool.

Around 9 riders left the large car park opposite Helston Boating Lake and took the new bridleway skirting the pool and through Debigna Woods. On coming out from the woods we continued skirting the pool and followed the new bridleway along the northern side of Carminowe Creek passing the end of the boardwalk, then crossing a field to reach the lane. After going down the lane for a short distance, we turned right to take the new bridleway on the southern side of Carminowe Creek and continued staying on the southern edge of the Creek and Loe Pool to eventually reach Loe Bar. This new bridleway on the southern edge has now been completed with a simple short boardwalk over an otherwise nasty ditch. This was a lovely part of the new ride.



Horses taking a break and paddle in Loe Pool

On reaching the bar we did NOT cross the bar but turned left up on another newly dedicated bridleway and then turned right to make our way along the coast to Gunwalloe.

We then returned by yet another new bridleway via Nanspean to rejoin the old lane at the head of Carminowe Creek that we had briefly ridden earlier.

We continued up this lane towards Goonhusband and eventually joined Debigna Lane briefly before turning left onto yet another new bridleway through Nancewidden to join the bridleway we started on and back to the carpark.

The views from this ride are fantastic and it is good to be able to avoid crossing the bar, as that does need good weather and can be a little scary climbing the bridleway off the beach at the Western end.

The total distance was 8.5 miles.

You may see the route we took on:

www.bhsaccess.org.uk/dobbin/southwest/Ridingmap.php?map=Hacks/SW00001

Bridleway Obstructions

Highways authorities in our case Cornwall Council have a statutory duty to prevent the obstruction of highways, including rights of way and they have considerable powers to deal with obstructions, including prosecuting the person(s) responsible if they choose to use those powers.

Sections 130A-130D of the Highways Act 1980 provides for a procedure for individuals (the general public) to request the removal of obstructions within defined timescales and to apply for a magistrates' court order to force an authority to remove an obstruction

The procedure can only be used if the obstruction is without lawful authority and is:

- A structure (for example an object such as a wall or fence),
- Or anything deposited on the highway which is a nuisance to users of the way
- Or caused by overhanging vegetation, low branches, blocking the way for riders.

Also, it can only be used if the path is either a footpath, bridleway, or restricted byway, or a way shown on the definitive map as a restricted byway or byway open to all traffic.

The procedure can't be used:

- if the structure is a building
- or the path is 'out of repair', rather than obstructed (a path is 'out of repair' if the surface is damaged).

. - See more at:

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/advice/improve-the-path-network/how-to-get-an-obstruction-removed.aspx#sthash.rDYv96xJ.dpuf>

Cornwall Council now has an Enforcement Policy that prioritises addressing obstruction problems that have been reported (to the Chief Exec) via this process that is reporting the problem on what is known as a Section 130a Order. (Form 130a downloadable off Ramblers site.)

In effect this means if you report an obstruction without using this mechanism it is unlikely to get attended to. It is a very simple form to complete.

We therefore recommend you use this process to report obstructions as listed above including overhanging vegetation/side growth but not vegetation growing up from the surface of the path.

The Golden Horseshoe Ride

The Golden Horseshoe is a 100 mile endurance ride on Exmoor, split over 2 days, 50 miles each day. It is considered to be the toughest endurance ride held in Britain. Other classes are offered; The stag is 75 miles(50/25), The Extra, 3 days(25/25/25), The Experience(25/25) and 1day (25). I always thought that Piers (arab, ex-racehorse, chestnut, you get the picture) would hate the going at Horseshoe - big hills, mud, lots of water and river crossings, but there were rumours that this may be the last Horseshoe in it's current format, and after much deliberation, I entered The Experience. No going back now.

Sunday dawned bright and sunny, and my friend Val and I rode to the venue to have our horses vetted ready to ride Monday and Tuesday. Piers found the hustle and bustle of the venue a bit too much and got wound up. Both horses passed the vetting, but by Sunday night Val felt Seadeke was not quite right and withdrew. I was on my own. Hey ho; had a large glass of mead anyway.

The heavens opened on Sunday night in true Exmoor style. Piers was cold and wet. I was not due to start until later in the morning, but the Horseshoe and Stag riders had been out since 7.30 am and we're battling with wind and rain already. We loaded Piers and travelled him to the venue, on top of a hill. Great!

The heavy rain eased slightly while we were waiting to start. Piers still found the venue exciting and was getting wound up. The polite word for Piers is difficult and I was getting more nervous by the minute. Before I knew it we were being called to start. We started at 1 minute intervals: Piers didn't want to go over the start line Eventually he did and before we got out of the first field we were caught up by PETA Jane Field on Sprite, who had moved from St. Just to Exmoor last year. I told Piers to follow the local girl and he settled down. Our route took us north of Exford and the first big ask was a swollen river crossing. Piers didn't hesitate and ploughed through.



Peta-Jane
On
Sprite

We had steep hills, hard tracks, a small amount of roadwork and open moorland, which was very boggy after the overnight downpours. The rain had eased; we had a few sharp showers but still had a keen wind. We caught other riders, and other riders caught us. PJ and I pushed on, and to my surprise were up on gold speed as we crossed the finish line. Hard work done, just the vetting to go. 30 minutes went very quickly. To vet. Pulse 46, no penalty. Trot up - sound. Live to fight another day. Went back to Westermill and had a very large glass of mead.

Tuesday was wet and windy again. Venue now like a bog. Trot up for the vet and we were ready to go again; well I was, but Piers didn't want to go through the start and tied to take me home. Roll up PJ to our rescue again and he followed Sprite over the start line. We had to cross the river again, Piers now an old hand at swimming. The route took us to the south side of Exford and the going as a bit better today. We climbed up the Punchbowl and the views were spectacular. We were making good time again, with Sprite bowling along and Piers just doing his own thing at the back, until I didn't duck quickly enough as we went under some trees. PJ is used to me squealing like a girlie and generally ignores it, but thankfully stopped this time to find me hanging on after being bashed by a low flying branch. Ouch! Soon on our way (banged head; no damage there then. Knocked sense into me? Absolutely not.)

The finish loomed and we had made better speed than Monday, still on for gold. We'd come this far but still had the vetting to go. 30 minutes. To vet. Pulse 63. Squeaked in. Trot up. SOUND. Yahooooooooo! A pulse penalty had dropped us to silver but I was so pleased. We had survived Exmoor without Piers killing either of us. PJ and Sprite had an excellent low pulse and collected a well earned gold award. Cracking result.

That evening we attended the prize giving in the village hall. 10 riders completed the 100 miles with 1 rider getting gold. Returned to Westermill and had a bucket of mead! This was the toughest challenge I had given Piers, and despite everything he came up trumps.

Catherine Woodford

In Cornwall there is a horse for every 50 people. That is better than the national average of 63 people for every horse in the rest of the country. There are around 3.5 million people who ride in Britain.

The British Horse Society is the major national body that is actively working for improved access for all horse riders nationwide.

BHS membership is steadily growing, and it currently stands around 12,000 for the south west region. For the whole country membership stands just shy of 90,000. If this national figure could rise to over one million, it would mean the BHS would command more influence with government.

It is time that the current access RoW legislation is updated to be more flexible and give more inclusive access for all.

Currently, the Welsh Assembly are considering improving access for all countryside users. The important bit is they are reviewing, by questionnaire, "should horse riders and cyclists be allowed to use footpaths where practical?" also "Should more groups, eg. horse riders have legal access to Open Access Land under the CROW Act 2000 - (we currently don't.)

Riders to need a strong voice to get England also to look at major changes. The BHS can provide this voice and ensure that England is not left behind more forward thinking on access provision. Often what happens in the "devolved" parts of the kingdom eventually happens here. eg Eg. 5p charge on supermarket poly bags has been around in Wales, N. Ireland for some time now and from the 5 Oct this will apply to England.

The British Horse Society is constantly campaigning, monitoring and responding to consultations on issues and schemes that can or may affect access.

See <http://www.bhs.org.uk/access-and-bridleways/protecting-and-improving-access>

Locally, the BHS has have worked with National Trust to get 10 miles of definite bridleways on to the OS Map at Penrose Estate; for today's riders, and is working in these times of cuts to ensure that riders get a fairer deal in Cornwall.

Please do consider supporting the BHS to help its work. Different membership options are available including Gold Membership that includes full 3rd party insurance for you and your horses.

For membership details or to join please visit <https://www.bhs.org.uk/membership>

Map My Hack

If you have a smart phone with a GPS app or a GPS take it with you when you do your favourite rides. Record your route and then upload it to our new BHS site. Knowing everywhere that is ridden will help us to preserve where you ride and enable us to show the demand for safe traffic-free routes for riders.

<http://www.bhsaccess.org.uk/dobbin/MapMyHack.php>