



Dear All,

I'm recently back from welcoming my latest grandchild, and there is a deluge of emails about blocked bridleways. This is probably the most important aspect of the Society's role. It does, however, involve a huge amount of time, effort, and diplomacy on the part of the relevant officers, working parties, negotiators and local [or Park] authority rangers. The difficulties frequently seem to have long histories, and are only persistent problems, because there is no solution that satisfies everyone. I can assure you that your officers are doing their utmost, and the reorganised field officer network should produce results, both through good liaison with local authority access teams, and the increased regularity of surveying the county's bridleways.

We have been offered the possibility of Access Training by the BHS\* [free for BHS members]. If you know of anyone who would be interested, please let us know.

## ADVANCE NOTICE



## SPRING SOCIAL

May 4<sup>th</sup> 2012

Hackthorpe Village Hall

A talk by  
Rory Stewart MP

Further details to follow in next Newsletter



Rory Stewart MP has agreed to speak at our Spring Social. I have always found him an interesting and thought provoking speaker. So please put May 4<sup>th</sup> at Hackthorpe in your diaries. I hope it will be as enjoyable as the social after the AGM, an excellent quiz, produced by Gay Parkin and Pamela Bonnick.

We are currently looking into amalgamating our Packs and Tracks event in the Spring, with the Westmorland Agricultural Society's Country Fest, a 2 day event at the Westmorland Showground. We shall keep you informed about progress via newsletters.

### Tina Galloway

#### *\*Access Training Days*

*Access training days are a way of learning all about the Laws and technical information surrounding equestrian access and the issues surrounding your rights to ride or carriage drive off-road.*

*Come and meet like-minded riders and improve your knowledge in a friendly environment.*

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On a blustery September day Karen, Lisa, Sarah and Pamela met Cumbria County Council Rangers Andrea and Tony for a days training and clearing of an over grown bridleway at Flitholme, near Warcop.

Karen had been longing to use the tools acquired for clearing work and brought them along for us all to try out. There was quite a choice of good tools plus hard hats, goggles and gloves.

Tony the Ranger went through all the necessary procedures and use of tools, health and safety etc. and we picked up our gear and set off. He had already contacted the Landowner and agreed the work etc.

The bridleway started off well with a good new gate and opener and cut grass, this went as far as a private lake and then the overgrown bridleway was very obvious! It is part of the Lady Anne's Way but not even passable for walkers. However we soon got started cutting back prickly Blackthorn bushes laden with sloes at which point Pamela ceased trimming and started picking, not wishing to waste the produce when it had the potential to become Sloe Gin!



The brushings had to be stashed to one side but there wasn't much space so Karen jumped on them to reduce their size and ended up with blackthorns in the soles of her wellies, which proved very difficult to extract. One lesson learnt already. Hawthorn bushes were across the path and needed severely cutting back as the path is quite narrow in places.

As we worked we were aware of the proximity of the A66 which runs parallel to the path and all the big lorries on it only a field or two away and this being an important off road route as the only other way out of the hamlet of Flitholme.

After an hour we were all well into our work and starting to favour a tool especially Sarah and the long arm loppers and Pamela and the hand pruning saw. Towards the far end of the path only a tunnel big enough for a badger was visible so all 6 workers set to and cleared a way through with low over head branches a problem until the long arm loppers became invaluable. Then there was old fence wire in the way so Tony went back to his van for wire cutters, which enabled him to cut off the worst bits.

Andrea found giant Sloes, which turned out to be Bulaces we think, a kind of wild plum, and we picked a bag full for her to turn into a liqueur. What fun we shall have next year with a hip flask of tasty stuff to keep us going, don't tell Health and Safety.

Lisa looked the part in her hard hat but the goggles were going a bit far and soon removed. Tough gloves proved very necessary when dealing with Hawthorn and Blackthorn, which were the main culprits for making the route impassable.



After two hours or so the track was so dramatically different and completely cleared. We all felt it was a job well done and had enjoyed doing it.



A few weeks later we had an email saying that the families living in Flitholme who had horses could now ride the route and get out of the Hamlet as that was their only way! It also meant they could access other routes they had been unable to before the work. They were very grateful to us. Now that's job satisfaction.

**Karen McLellan and Pamela Bonnick**

## FROM A VOLUNTEER'S CASEBOOK

As part of my volunteering work for Cumbria County Council's Access group, I come across many interesting BW problems, and I would like to share some with you.



The first is more of a success than a problem, and shows what can be done if the funds are available! On a volunteers' outing near Morland, we were shown a brand new BW bridge over Morland Beck. We didn't actually follow the BW on to Morland – apparently it can be very wet in winter (or in summer, come to that!) – but the bridge met with wholehearted approval.

Next, a strange one near Torpenhow. We were sent to clear scrub from part of a BW, and I may say we did an excellent job, but the BW itself is completely inaccessible! There is a stile at the bottom, and a wire fence at the top, so quite what that's all about I don't know!

Something a lot more sensible now. Going up into the fells from Hilton lies Scordale, a magical valley full of old mine workings and outcrops of the Whin Sill. A BW follows the beck all the way up and over the top, eventually reaching the Maize Beck and Cow Green reservoir. The problem was a short stretch which, on the map, goes up a steep rocky gill, totally a no-go route for horses, and even on foot we struggled. A permissive BW skirts this awkward area, and we went to put signs up



showing the diversion before it went onto the statute book, or whatever happens in this sort of case. The



The diversion is absolutely fine, and above it the BW looks to be no problem at all. However, this valley is in the Warcop Danger Area, and access is strictly limited. You can go on Sunday afternoons after 1 pm, and on 12 weekends in the year, the dates being posted on the internet at [www.access.mod.uk](http://www.access.mod.uk). It is well worth a visit, and I'd love to hear from anybody who has ridden up this super valley.

Last, a mess! I went to help the Ranger, Tony Burns, recently, beside the River Eden near Temple Sowerby. We were actually working on a FP, but our approach, over the by-pass and down to the river, was a BW. Right on the river bank, side by side, were a kissing gate for the FP and a gate for the BW, leading down to a ford. On the other side is a farm called Julian Bower, and a lane to Cliburn. There had been several days, nay weeks, of rain, and the Eden was majestic. I have no idea what the Eden is like in spells of drought, and maybe it is possible to ford it here – does anybody know? If it is indeed a valid route, then the area round the BW gate needs a tough work party! There are other fords across the Eden marked on the map, and I'm hoping to go and have a look at them soon.



When I was at school, sometime ago now I might add, my "Domestic Science Teacher" (cooking for those who can't remember) used to say we were too far from the sea to have fresh fish. I used to think it was a strange thing to say as Coniston to Greenodd is about 10 miles and actually Cumbria has quite a length of coastline.



In historic terms this coastline was very important. Not only as Cumbria had a number of ports, where goods were traded, so routes to and from these sea towns were created but also travelling across the sands was often shorter and quicker than the roads. Of course, travelling across the sands was not always the safest way from A to B. As is still the case today you can only cross when the tide is out. Poor visibility, shifting river channels and holes left by boats all presented considerable risk but the difference in miles to a journey was considerable.

The milestone in Cartmel shows the across sands route over Morecambe Bay to Lancaster as 15 miles compared with 36 miles via Kendal on the packhorse route. Later the turnpike along the route of the A590 and the A6 was still 25 miles in length. Even with the advent of the turnpikes travellers still used the sands routes saving the cost of the tolls.



In 1781 a regular service was started from Lancaster to Ulverston with the owners claiming they had "procured a sober and careful driver who is well acquainted with the sands, and humbly hope that their plan will meet with due encouragement as this is the most cheap, safe and expeditious method of crossing the sands to and from Ulverston".

In fact the route continued from Ulverston to Ireleth onto Millom and to Ravenglass, a route taken and described by John Wesley in 1759. Others also recorded their journeys with varying accounts of both difficulty and enjoyment.

Interestingly Flookburgh, as it's name suggests, had a borough charter in medieval times and was an important stopping place between Lancaster and Ulverston. As such it boasted numerous places to stay and was, in deed, a much bigger settlement in those days than Grange and Kents Bank. Sands traffic would

leave Flookburgh in a westward direction to join the sands again at Sand Gate until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when the route to Cark became more favourable.

Sands Guides were and still are an invaluable source of local knowledge about where to cross the sands, especially the channels of the main rivers. There was the inevitable loss of life but perhaps not as many as one would think, with 141 drownings recorded in the Cartmel Priory Church records in the three hundred years to 1880.

Traffic continued to use the sands route across Morecambe Bay until 1857 when the railway was completed from Carnforth to Ulverston.

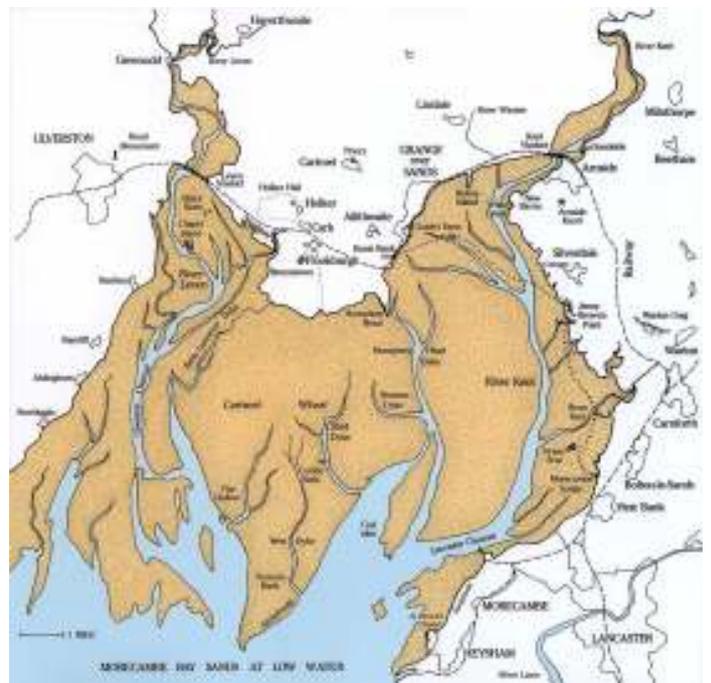


John Wesley 1759 Extract from his Journal

*"But I have taken my leave of the sand road. I believe it ten measured miles shorter than the other: but there are four sands to pass, so far from each other, that it is scarce possible to pass them all in a day: Especially as you have all the way to do with a generation of liars, who detain all strangers as long as they can, either for their own gain or their neighbours. I can advise no stranger to go this way: He may go round Kendal and Keswick, often in less time, always with less expense, and far less trial of his patience."*

You might well ask how much public transport has improved over the years?

**Carole Barr**



**BHS ACCESS CONFERENCE, 16 October 2011**

On behalf of the CBS Committee I attended this conference in the company of Helen Kerry, (Bridleways Officer for Cumbria BHS) and also a member of this society.

It was held in the splendid new BHS building, which has recently been built on the site of the old HQ and is a big improvement. We followed a busy programme, which lasted, from 10 am till after 4 in the afternoon.

After an opening talk from Mark Weston (Head of Access) we started off with a presentation from Andrew Chester of Natural England on Coastal Access. This is quite relevant for us as Cumbria is one of 6 regions singled out as pilot areas. He stressed the point that horse riders were not to be forgotten in this regard and said that they hoped to appoint a local contact for each stretch of coast, with whom concerns could be raised.

Next up was a lady from the National Trust who told us about an area of the South Downs belonging to the Trust and on which, she said, they were keen to encourage riders. After this, we had a man from Sustrans (the cycle people) on multi-user paths who was keen to point out that they saw no problem in sharing paths with horses (though some of us may have felt differently!) and mentioned that they (Sustrans) had in fact been able to create many new bridleways. He was also keen to promote their current campaign "20's Plenty" to press for lower speed limits on some roads.

Next, a lady from Cornwall CC gave a talk on the Local Authority Enforcement of Equestrian ROWs, in which she stressed that as a last resort it is possible for a member of the public to ask for an Enforcement Order to be served on a serious long-standing obstruction, and in extreme cases the police can be involved. This method of approach was seen as often being better than going to court.

After questions and a good buffet lunch, the afternoon session began with a most interesting presentation on the Health Benefits of Riding, in which Prof. Andrew Church of Brighton University pointed out the many benefits of getting out on a horse and backed it up with some interesting research. This was very well received by the Conference, as it will give a lot of credibility to our campaigns for access.

We then had a couple more talks about the discovering Lost Ways project, creating multi-user rights of way from the Trails Trust (apparently this can be done by working with the landowner direct, without the involvement of the local authority) and about the BEF Hoof project, which aims to promote the sport of riding in the wake of the Olympics. The Conference finished with a rather (I felt) futile 'gates trial' which did not really prove anything and a chat about the Green Book which aims to help historical research into the ROW network.

After all this information we felt at saturation point but after a cup of tea were able to go on our way feeling that we had had an interesting and helpful day - when asked to suggest improvements we both felt it might have been useful to have had more general discussion, maybe in the form of short workshops, as a lot of people seemed to have a pet subject or grouse which they needed to air but didn't have the opportunity. It was good though to be able to 'network' with the various speakers and BHS staff at lunchtime.

All in all an enjoyable and useful day

Gay Parkin

**MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS 2011/12****BAD NEWS!**

Please send cheques made payable to  
Cumbria Bridleways Society to:

Miss Tracey Harris  
4 Woodbank  
Endmoor  
Kendal  
Cumbria  
LA8 0HG

Or e-mail me for a Standing Order Form  
[tracey.harris4@mypostoffice.co.uk](mailto:tracey.harris4@mypostoffice.co.uk)

**Subs are due 1<sup>st</sup> November**

**GOOD NEWS!**

**STILL only £8.00 for Single or  
£10 for Family membership**

**NEWS FROM THE FIELD****Bridleway Clearing Party – See page 2**

Following the successful clearing party held on 21<sup>st</sup> September, we are now keen to do another and also to have a go at adjusting gate hinges, so are there any out there...?

**Mapping:**

Lisa Hartley and Pamela Bonnick are looking into ways of mapping good riding routes online so that all members could access them and add their own. Please feel free to submit your favourite rides and share them with others.

**South Lakes & Barrow:**

Several members were concerned about the state of 2 BWs near Scales. After chasing it up with the Countryside Rangers we found out that the paths had been surveyed and are due for a serious makeover before the spring. This shows the importance of a good dialogue with the Council, a relationship which we continue to build.

We need to split the South Lakes and Barrow District as it currently has 17 Field Officers. If anyone is interested in helping Margaret Carter with the role of District Officer please get in touch.

**Carlisle :**

We are aiming to build contacts with the Forestry Commission who have responsibility for many BWs in this area.

**Allerdale:**

Sadly, Andrena Hattersley has to give up the role of District Officer. We thank her for all she has done. Anyone interested in taking on this role please let me know.

**Karen McLellan**

01228 562709 or [karen1of4@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:karen1of4@hotmail.co.uk)



**Please read this and think about signing up.**

***It is easy to do and only takes a couple of minutes.***

There is currently an online petition for more bridleways. However, it is being kept quiet (I think the Government hope people won't find it and sign it so they don't have to do anything about it....). However, Endurance GB have discovered it and published the link in their UK newsletter. It has been spotted and we thought we ought to do something about getting more people to sign it.

I have some details below, which are copied from the EGB magazine:

"The Government is under pressure from riding groups to equal the number of bridleways in the country (currently approx 20,000 miles) up to the same level as footpaths (approx 91,000) miles to help reduce horses on the road/accidents while promoting outdoor activity and safe use of the countryside for all sexes and ages.

This will only happen if people sign the online petition. To sign and help get riders equal rights to walkers/ramblers please go to:

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/15341>

## CONFIDENT RIDER WORKSHOP

**With Christine Worthington**

**Date: 5th January 2012**

**Time: 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm**

**Venue: Over Kellet Village Hall**

**Investment: £25.00 per person**

Whether you want to have a relaxed pleasure ride, improve your performance, increase your confidence, deal with competition nerves or generally get the most out of your relationship with your horse—Coaching using NLP (Neuro-linguistic programming) techniques is the answer.

This workshop will enable you to:

- 1 Set achievable goals
- 2 Find out what is getting in the way—and deal with limiting beliefs
- 3 Learn strategies to be more positive
- 4 Overcome nerves/fear issues
- 5 Deal with procrastination and improve motivation

The focus is on you the rider, helping you move forward—whatever your starting point — covering all disciplines and pleasure riding.

**Reserve your place by contacting: Helen Wain on 01524 736606 or email [helenwain@talktalk.net](mailto:helenwain@talktalk.net)**