



NEWSLETTER OF THE
LONG MYND AND DISTRICT BRIDLEWAYS
ASSOCIATION

The Portway

Rainbow Rides in the Dyfnant Forest

Lucy McFarlane

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Last week Cath and I sampled one of the 'Rainbow Rides' in the Dyfnant Forest. These routes have been developed by a joint initiative of the Dyfnant and Vyrnwy Horse Riding and Carriage Driving Association and the Forestry Commission Wales. The forest lies just south of Lake Vyrnwy.

There are five riding routes and two specifically for carriage drivers. We followed the indigo way markers of the Cerrig Yr Helfa Ride, advertised as 16 miles, with lovely views over the Arran and Berwyn Mountains.

The rides mainly follow forestry tracks which can be stony and hard on the feet. However, there are stretches of grassy paths and I believe the aim is to provide more of these as sections of the

forestry are felled. You regularly

emerge from the woodland to enjoy wide views over the Welsh countryside.

The riding routes start and finish at Pen y Fford, near Llangadfan, where the parking is ample. There are hitching rails and four corrals which are very useful for putting the horses in on your return. There is also a building with a supply of leaflets. Unless we missed something there did not appear to be any water so remember to take some with you. The journey from Ratlinghope to Pen y Fford took 1 hour 15mins. The carriage driving routes begin at Hendre, a few miles further north.

You can spend a whole day within the Forest with no traffic and only a rare sighting of any other rider, walker or cyclist. The facilities have been well thought out and it is a wonderful starting point for a ride. The Association holds regular pleasure rides if you would rather join an organised event. A visit to the area is well recommended.

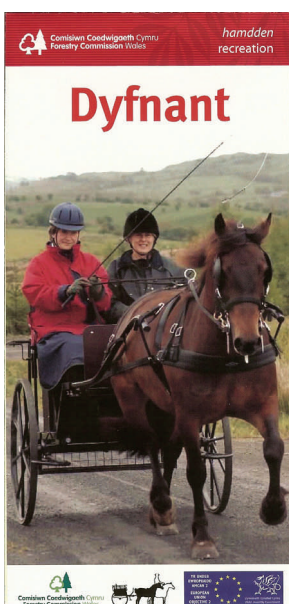
www.forestry.gov.uk
www.dyfnanthorses.org.uk



Pen y Fford—the start of the ride



Cath setting out through the Rainbow gates



Neurological Science Unit.

Editors Note;—our best wishes to Bron Coombes for a speedy recovery from his recent treatment at the Birmingham Neurological Science Unit. July's quiz raised £60 in aid of this wonderful facility. Thank you to all who took part. The next quiz is on October 10th. See page 6 for details.



Thoughts on Barefoot

Gill Nash



Riding horses barefoot is a relatively new choice for horse owners. Most of us automatically assume that if our horses are in work they need to be shod to prevent the hoof wall wearing down, especially if the horse is worked on hard or stony surfaces.

There are some good reasons why riding horses barefoot is both beneficial to horse and rider but its success depends on a variety of factors. First of all, I would like to mention some of the history behind shoeing and barefoot.

The Feral Horse inspired barefoot:

The horse is biologically and physiologically designed to travel 25 miles per day or more in search of food. Depending on location many feral horses do this mileage over rocks, stones, hard ground, gravel as well as pasture. Their unshod hooves adapt to the terrain they move on and grow according to the demands made of them. In fact, a horse's hoof can be regarded like a muscle. The more it is used and exercised the stronger and more resilient it becomes. These are the principal ideas behind barefoot.

As regards shoeing, history leads us to doubt that horses were shod before medieval times. Xenophon, the 4th century BC Greek author, philosopher and cavalry commander describes how horses hooves were toughened by turning them out on an area where large stones had been laid to toughen their feet.

The ancient Hittites and Egyptians did not shoe and contrary to popular belief neither did the Romans or their subordinated tribes. Shoes are not mentioned in Roman literature nor depicted in artwork of the time. All these ancients did thousands of miles with their unshod horses.

So why did shoeing become fashionable?

When it became necessary to keep horses in a more urban environment where movement was restricted and stabling more common, their feet were not up to job demanded on them. Lack of movement made that 'muscle' weaker and treading in faeces and urine compromised horn quality further necessitating the application on an iron shoe if the horse was to be worked. Slowly it became the norm and the fashion for horses to be shod.

The pros and cons of shoeing

The advantages of shoeing is that regardless of how the horse is managed he is ready for work on almost any surface and any time and the owner can entrust most of the necessary hoofcare to the farrier. However, the disadvantages as barefooters see them are numerous. Within the confines of this article, I can only mention a few: Metal shoes and nails vibrate, particularly when the metal is in contact with a hard surface such as the road. This compromises the horse's shock absorption system and the vibration can damage internal tissue. Metal conducts heat

and cold into foot making it harder for the horse to maintain optimal metabolic temperature, sometimes leading to unexplained colic and digestive problems. With metal shoes, peripheral loading is unavoidable, while in natural weightbearing the sole and frog would also play a part. Restricted by a shoe, the hoof cannot flex and expand naturally. Attached to the wall, the shoe restricts outward growth of the hoof capsule (which is cone-shaped) resulting in the hooves getting smaller and less *functional*. Dysfunctional hooves are the route cause of most lameness problems, especially navicular.

The pros and cons of barefoot

Based on the wild horse model, barefoot trimming aims to attain and maintain a fully functional hoof with thick soles and walls which grow according to demands. A barefoot horse is best kept naturally with 24/7 turnout in a herd environment as far as this is possible. This of course can be difficult. If your horse has to be stabled most of the time and you are just riding a few hours a week barefoot will probably not work for you.

However, it can work well as long as general exercise is plentiful. In fact, the Houston Police in Texas have most of their horses barefoot and with less than

(Continued on page 3)

".....a horse's hoof can be regarded like a muscle. The more it is used and exercised the stronger and more resilient it becomes".



Thoughts on Barefoot Contd.....

Picture right: fNF = Solar view of front hoof after shoe removal. This horse was shod regularly for 8 years. Notice the long narrow shape and weak, narrow frog. In spite of poor functional hoof shape, this horse was happy to be ridden barefoot on all surfaces after 3 months.

(Continued from page 2)

an acre available for 30+ horses there is limited turnout. But these horses get hours of exercise every day on hard, flat road surfaces which are excellent for conditioning unshod hooves.

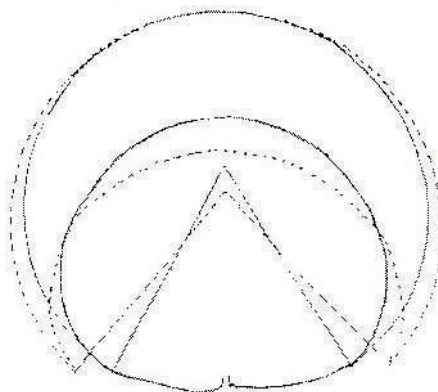
While the majority of horses adjust quickly to barefoot, there can be problems after shoe removal which in severe cases can take up to 18 months of regular trimming (two growths of the hoof capsule) to resolve. During this time the owners may find that their riding is compromised. The advantages of going barefoot, apart from the financial are:- your horse will less prone to lameness of any kind, you will not need to feed hoof supplements; you will never need tendon boots, overreach boots etc. Your horse will be safer to ride on all surfaces, including snow, mud or hard icy ground. Your pasture will keep better in winter and of course a kick from an unshod horse is less dangerous.

Many people wait until a lameness problems become chronic before they investigate barefoot as an option. This is a pity as barefoot often proves to be an inexpensive and quick road to soundness.

A 'barefoot' search on the Internet will reveal numerous websites giving more information as well as positive and negatives views on this subject.



Solar view of the same foot after 3 years being ridden barefoot. Notice how much wider the frog is and how the foot has regained its natural healthy shape.



The dotted lines show how the unshod hoof flexes and expands on weightbearing. The dotted lines show how the unshod hoof flexes and expands on weightbearing.



“Your horse will be safer to ride on all surfaces, including snow, mud or hard icy ground.....”



Letter to the Editor - 4x4s Marilyn Pietroni



“Usually, I read my Portway with great pleasure..... Not so this May”.

Dear Portway,

Usually, I read my Portway with great pleasure, admiring the professional way in which it is composed and presented and enjoying news of various equine expeditions. Not so this May.

I own a 4x4 and occasionally drive across the Long Mynd. Apparently this somehow defines me as a 'marauder'.

As a long distance rider, I sometimes need to tow my trailer to a starting point from which my husband and I can ride our two trusty steeds, Alicia and Bakkara (described in an earlier issue of the Portway soon after we rode part of the Jack Mytton Way for the first time). I also use my 4x4 for the occasional dressage show with another of my horses. I do not own another car.

To quote your lead article, I 'should be banned'. My 4x4 should not be seen on

the Mynd. It has no place there.

I find that I am classed *prejudicially* as 'marauding around our green lanes, destroying the riding surface and generally making a nuisance of (myself)...' causing the National Trust to spend huge amounts of money making repairs ...etc etc...' And so on. One 4x4 driver is mindlessly grouped with all others, it seems. So I am classed indiscriminately and subjected to this ill-considered tirade.

In fact, it is more likely that severe weather, water run-off, erosion and subsidence are the cause of the road breaking up.

In fact, I drive with great care, especially around horses.

The article is based on a kind of 'us and them' *prejudice* of which horse riders should beware and of which history tells many a tale. It pits one group against other, indiscriminately, instead of searching for ways of co-operation, mutual respect, understanding and

compromise which are the essential stuff of country life. It seeks to establish a moral high ground based on a smear against all members of a group (4x4 owners and drivers) without thinking through the implications.

I found it distressing to read. I think it has no place in a newsletter of this quality.

Editor's note: It wasn't my intention to include horse riders hauling trailers in my polemic in the last Portway. Merely convoys of SUVs ruining unsurfaced county roads such as that from Shooting Box to Coates.

What do other readers think?



Discovering Lost Ways—The project has closed

A review has concluded that securing a complete and accurate Definitive Map were beyond the scope of this research focused project. Some findings were:

- The original estimate of 20,000 lost ways remains valid, but the costs and timescale of processing these through the current system are unacceptable;
- Over 50% of identified ways are not lost, many can be seen, but they are simply not recorded on

the definitive map;

- The loss of these used, but unrecorded routes, would mean a significant decrease in access to the countryside at the cut-off date;
- A small minority of lost ways may be inconsistent with modern land use and can cause practical problems for owners.

Natural England concludes that the methods used must stand a good chance of realising the certainty of recording rights on the definitive map within a real-

istic timescale, and the review has highlighted the limitations and constraints of the current methods and context of re-searching, submitting and determining claims. It is clear that a more holistic approach to the rights of way agenda is required. NE are establishing a new group of key national stakeholders to develop a way forward.

Reports and data produced through DLW will be available on the internet in July.



Another equine e-petition to the Prime Minister

Use of the 10 Downing Street website to place horse-related e-petitions to the Prime Minister seems to be increasing in popularity. This one was placed recently;

"We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to open more bridleways for horse riders and carriage drivers. Due to the amount of horses in the UK reaching a all time high I think there should be bridleways opened as the roads are a very dangerous place these days as most drivers have no consideration. Also stables should be notified of any bridleways opened in their area."

The Government's response was;

"The Government is committed to improving off road access for equestrians, as it has shown through its support for the Strategy for the Horse Industry published in 2005 and its work with the Equestrian Access Forum, which represents the main equestrian access organisations around the country. The Government recognises the difficulties that horse riders face on the roads, and the needs of equestrians, who are not well served by the current access network. Guidance from the Department for Environment, Food and Ru-

ral Affairs (Defra) encouraged local authorities to take specific consideration of horse rider needs in drafting their Rights of Way Improvement Plans and many local authorities have done so.

After Natural England's review of the Discovering Lost Ways project, it decided to set up a stakeholder working group to look at the various issues surrounding the completion of the definitive map. While this does not mean that Government is, at this stage, committing to any further legislative reform, it will be an excellent opportunity to feed in any ideas for improvements that the Equestrian Access Forum has developed, and which may help improve the recording and establishment of restricted byways and bridleways".

On another access topic, the Summer edition of "British Horse" reports that the government proposes in a current bill to create a national coastal access trail four metres wide in England, wider than most bridleways. A range of organisations, including equestrian and cycling have joined together to

ask the Government to make the new trail open to all non-motorised users. A right of access for all non-motorised users to the coast and foreshore already exists in Scotland without major problems, yet the Government has decided to exclude equestrians from the new access right.

The Government has said that equestrian access to the coast can be extended by using existing legislation, but this will not help us because this is the very legislation that has left horse riders with access to just seven per cent of coastal rights of way. "British Horse" urges you to lobby your local MP, even if you do not live near the coast, to press for the new access rights to include equestrians. Otherwise Governments might just continue to forget horse riders when introducing new access legislation.



Why not go to the BHS National Access Conference on 21st September at Penrith?



The British Horse Society National Access Conference 2008

Are you interested in doing more to influence the increase and improvement of equestrian off-road access across the country? Then why not go to the BHS National Access Conference on 21st September at The George Hotel, Penrith? The conference will feature a range of speakers, including people from; The Ministry of Defence, The Highways Agency, the Regional Access Bridleway Officer for Yorkshire, and representatives from the Pennine Bridleway Team and Devon County Council.

The Conference is free to members of the Long Mynd and District Bridleways Association, and runs from 9am to 5pm with lunch provided. Call 01926 707712 to book your place.

Forthcoming Events

What's On—some dates for your diary



Hack for a Snack

Saturday 23rd August 2008

The Slade—Picklescott. 12-2 pm

Another in the “Hack for a Snack” programme, this time courtesy of Allan McVittie at The Slade, Picklescott GR441995. All Association members welcome. Walking and driving members are also welcome. There will be a small charge to cover food. **If you plan to come, we need to know numbers asap—contact details below;**

Please email: mike@longmyndbridleways.com

Phone: Mike Bowen on 01743 792238 (home) or call or text on mobile 07973 407031

AGM & Autumn Quiz

Friday 10th October 2008—7-00pm (Quiz starts 7-30pm)

Crown Inn, Wentnor

The Autumn Quiz will be preceded this year by the Annual General Meeting. The AGM will commence at 7pm with the quiz following immediately. Forms to make your nominations for Association Officers accompany this Portway.

Message from Les & Sue Lee

The quiz held on 4th July raised £60, which wasn't bad considering we were one or two teams down this time. A big thank you to all you faithful quizzers once again.

This time the monies raised will be donated to the Neurological Science Unit at Birmingham. Unfortunately Bron Coombes (one of our regular quizzers who has been to most of the quizzes since we started) had first hand experience of the work of this Unit recently when he underwent surgery there. He and his wife Sally were full of praise for the treatment received and the outstanding work of the Unit generally. I'm sure you will all join us in wishing Bron well.

The winning team “Hopelessly Lost” knocked our usual winning team “The insufferables” off the top spot by half a point! It was a very close fought thing all the way through with not much separating all the teams. Most importantly, though, the atmosphere was its usual good humour and a fun time was had by all.

The next quiz is on 10th October. Could I please make an appeal for raffle prizes? If you could have a hunt round for unwanted items that would make suitable prizes it would be very much appreciated, and of course the money all goes to good causes.

Teams of up to four people. £6-00 per team. **Contact Sue & Les on 01743 791621** to book your team-table—bookings are essential. Bring your friends, non-members welcome. Please book in good time as the pub need to know how many tables to put out for us. Why not book NOW after reading this and put it clearly on your calendar?

Thanks once again to those who come along. We look forward to your support in the future. And for those who haven't tried our quizzes yet—please come and help us to raise money. It's a great atmosphere and a fun night out with nobody getting too serious about it. And pub food is available at reasonable prices!

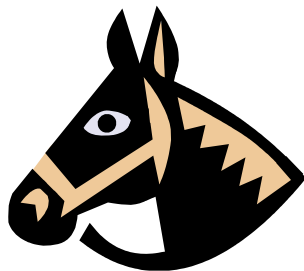
Riding and Road Safety Courses

Berriewood starts 25th October. Also Walcot starts 28th September.

Telephone Sue Lee on **01743 791621** (leave a message if Sue's not there).

Don't forget the email service for monthly reminders and updates of LMDBA events.

To be included email Moira Clements on: moiraclements@btinternet.com



More Forthcoming Events

What's On—some dates for your diary

Christmas Dinner 2008

Saturday 13th December—Station Inn Marshbrook

This year's Christmas dinner will be at The Station Inn, Marshbrook at 7-30pm.

At the time of this edition of The Portway going to press, the proprietors were still finalising the details of the menu and the price. If you think you might want to come to this year's Yuletide bash, please contact Moira Clements on 01588 650394 or moiraclements@btinternet.com, and as soon as the menu is available she will post or email a copy to you. Full details and a reminder will, of course, be in the November Portway, but don't forget places will be limited so you will need to book early!



Pony Club Teddy Bear's Picnic

Pole Cottage, Long Mynd

Thursday 14th August 12.30p.m.

Picnic is £3.00—teddy bears free.

Must have names beforehand—call Lynn Townsend, Tel 01694 722667. Bring headcollar and string to tie up.

A Horse's life at Berrington

Wednesdays in August (6th, 13th, 20th, 27th)

11am—4pm at Berrington Hall National Trust property between Ludlow and Leominster.

Fun Rides—and other things

Sunday 17th August

United Pack Fun Ride from Norbury near Bishops Castle. £15 adults £8 children.

Sunday 24th August

Fun Ride Upton Magna

Sunday 31st August

Fun Ride Eaton Mascott—An 8 mile ride across the beautiful Eaton Mascott estate and surrounding farmland. Numerous optional jumps for all abilities. First rider 10am—Last rider 2pm. Adults £15—U16s £10. Enquiries 01743 761138

Monday 1st September

10 mile endurance ride from Prolley Moor organised by the Pony Club. Cost: £5-00.

Tel: 01694 722667 for details.

Sunday 7th September

Fun ride Sansaw

Hunter trials Llanymynech

Sunday 21st September

Fun Ride Sansaw

Sunday 28 September

Fun Ride Adcote

Sunday 12th October

Team Show jumping at Bow House. Anyone interested in being in a team? Teams of 3 or 4—£9-50 per competitor.

What height would you like to jump? Height of classes: 2ft 6in; 2ft 9in; 3ft 0in.

Tel; Sue Lee on 01743 791621 for details.

Sunday 19th October

Pink Fun ride—Town Farm Hughley. All proceeds to breakthrough breast cancer. Riders must wear something pink or have some item of pink on their mounts!! Includes Jack Mytton Way and some lovely countryside under Wenlock Edge. First rider 10am Last rider 2pm. Adults £15-00; U16s £10-00. Enquiries 01743 891744.



Don't forget to sign up to the monthly newsletter from

www.funridesuk.co.uk

for updates on rides in the local and not so local area.




THE PORTWAY

NEWSLETTER OF THE
LONG MYND AND DISTRICT
BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

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Portway Publication deadlines.

The Portway is a quarterly publication. The next edition is due in November 2008. The deadline for copy to reach the editor is:

Saturday 18th October 2008

Membership Secretary

Lucy McFarlane
Coates Bungalow
Ratlinghope
Shropshire SY5 OSS
Tel: 01588 650412

The ever-popular Horse Owner's course Sue Lee

Once again I plan to run BHS Horse Owner's Certificate courses in the autumn, to give people something horse-related to do in the dark evenings.

These popular courses are open to anyone with an interest in horses. Whether you're experienced or new to horses; perhaps you don't ride yourself but have a child who does; or maybe you'd like to come along with your son or daughter (BHS recommend minimum 12 years though I have taken slightly younger) so you can learn together – these courses are enjoyable and useful to all.

The BHS requires people to start at Level 1, to form the basis for the other Levels up to Level 4. If you hate exams don't worry, though worthwhile having the exam is not compulsory. Many people I've taught on the course just like to come along to be with like-minded people and to learn and talk about horses away from home pressures for an evening each week.

I hope to start new Level 1 courses at Lydham, Radbrook and possibly Church Stretton, whereas courses for existing students will be at Lydham (Level 2), Pontesbury (Level 3) and Church Stretton (Level 4). Courses run for 11 weeks starting late Sept/early Oct and price will depend on the number of students in the group, from about £65.

Want to know more? Then telephone me on **01743 791621** (leave a message if Sue's not there).

Your Committee



Officers

Chairman	Mike Bowen 01743 792238
Vice Chairman	Helen Foster 01694 771283
Secretary	Lucy McFarlane 01588 650412
Treasurer	Moira Clements 01588 650394
BHS Ex Officio	Don Pearse 01694 722350

Local Co-ordinators

North West (Group 1)	Sue Lee 01743 791621
North Long Mynd (Group 2)	Lynn Townsend 01694 722667
South Long Mynd (Group 3)	Moira Clements 01588 650394
North East (Group 4)	Helen Foster 01694 771283
South East (Group 5)	Judy Collyer 01694 781367
East Central (Group 6)	Sally Coombes 01694 724646
Pulverbatch (Group 7)	Linda Russell 01743 718409
Tugford (Group 8)	Bronwen Williams 01584 841259
Titterstone Clew (Group 9)	Gill Eyre 01584 890797



Next Committee Meeting
Friday 17th October 7-30pm
Cleeton Turn Cottage—Cleeton St Mary