



MID COTSWOLD TRACKS & TRAILS GROUP

Helping to improve our tracks and trails ... from this generation to the next

COTSWOLDS ON HORSEBACK - THE LAUNCH



We were blessed with good weather for the launch of Cotswolds on Horseback - a bright day, although a little breezy.

BHS Director of Access, Mark Weston, came to Adam Henson's Cotswold Farm Park to launch the publication and the day's ride, with William and Lois sharing the honours of cutting the ribbon.

William was the Group's founding Chairman, and Lois is the present Chair.

20 volunteer Group and BHS members, led by Lois, spent almost 3 years working on 28 circular routes routes, liaising with and assisting the Gloucestershire Rights of Way department on improving some of the gates and surfaces, etc. - a truly mammoth task.

Eight of these routes are published in the pack on laminated sheets, and cost £6.95 from <http://www.britishhorse.com/products/the-cotswolds-on-horseback-2011.html>

(please note that the OLD version of the book is available second-hand from Amazon, but some of these routes are no longer considered safe)



New version

Old Version



So far 21 routes are available to download from BHS EMAGIN site:

http://www.emagin.org/Routes_by_region/South_West.aspx

with another 6 due to be added shortly. We hope to add to the Cotswold chain of riding routes in the future, including a South-North linear route, which would extend the route coming up from the Mendips on to the north Gloucestershire border with either Worcestershire or Warwickshire, crossing the east-west Sabrina Way en route.



A GRAND DAY OUT



GETTING PUBLISHED - ROAD SAFETY

Some MCTTG members answered questions on their experiences of riding and driving on the roads, as part of Catherine Chapman's thesis: EQUINE ROAD SAFETY: PUBLIC ATTITUDES, UNDERSTANDINGS AND BELIEFS FROM A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN THE UK.

Catherine has just heard that it has been accepted for publication in Accident Analysis and Prevention.

WELL DONE, CATHERINE !

TACK MARKING at Rodborough

Many thanks to our cheerful local police, who came and stamped tack for free - here they are getting down to it ! Having your specially fitted saddles and bridles stolen is every rider's nightmare, and having your tack coded can be an aid to recovery of stolen items, or can act as a deterrent to thieves.



ROAD SAFETY & HI VIZ

The group also ran a competition to win some Hi Viz items donated by



First Prize went to Sue Bryant from Bisley, who won a pair of Hi Vis Half Chaps - these are worn on the rider's lower legs as part of the High Visibility clothing that MCTTG recommends. High Visibility hat covers, vests and other items can aid motorists in registering a horse and rider on the road, and gain seconds in allowing drivers to respond.

MORE ROAD SAFETY - STATISTICS

Our emphasis on HI Viz also ties in with the research evening I attended with Catherine (see Getting Published), when I was astonished to hear one rider say she had been hit by vehicles 3 times - including being shunted across a main road at a crossing, and a carriage driver describe a car cutting in so close they ended up with the bridle caught on the wing mirror, and another incident of a cyclist rounding the corner behind the carriage at speed, hitting the back of the carriage and catapulting himself into the carriage.

Can we ask all riders and drivers to report such incidents to the BHS at www.bhs.org.uk/content/accident-report-form.asp as they are trying to get statistics on road incidents, and not just the tragedies.

MORE ROAD SAFETY - SLIPPERY ROADS

We want to thank GCC Highways for the horse-friendly areas of new tarmac that we know of - King's Stanley and Hampton Fields. We have received reports from several riders at Hampton Fields saying they are using areas that have they have been unable to use for several years. We understand that they have contacted Highways themselves to thank them personally.

MORE ROAD SAFETY - SAFER CROSSING

Here's a note we received from Olga who has been liaising with The National Trust at Stockend.

Hi Pat,
Last night I rode over the new trackway that has been installed by NT between Stockend Woods and Edge Common.
They have done a wonderful job.
There is much greater visibility, the track is wide enough to accommodate several horses and the clearance of trees means that you can hear the traffic.
I only meant to ride up to the edge and then back again, but the track gave me such confidence that I actually rode across the road and then over the common. Something I haven't done for over 15 years and certainly not on a weekday.
I will be writing to Tim and his colleagues at NT, put a notice in the Parish Mag and email and letting the riders who signed the petition know the good news.
Thank you for starting the ball rolling and then with all your follow up.
It has been a great success and another feather in the MCTTG hat.
Regards, Olga



**MORE ROAD SAFETY
SAFER CIRCUIT**

As we reported in the last bulletin, Tim at the National Trust also opened a new bit of permissive track from Cripplegate to save horses having to venture out onto another part of the fast road that Olga refers to in her letter above. I'm sure the car and bus drivers are as delighted as we are !

Here are Tim's eco-posts FABULOUS !

ADOPT A CoH ROUTE

Having done all the work to ensure that the routes published in *Cotswolds on Horseback* are rider-friendly, we are now looking for Group members to help by adopting a route - keeping an eye on it to make sure it stays open and accessible.

If you think you could help in this way, please e-mail Lois at lois_eyre@hotmail.com.

IF EVERY PARISH HELPED
TO LOOK AFTER ITS TRACKS,
THE WHOLE COUNTY
NETWORK WOULD BE SAFE
AND AVAILABLE FOR ALL

WORK WITH US TO IMPROVE YOUR LOCAL TRACKS



We need local input and liaison to get things done - just help us with ONE of your local tracks and the improvements will all start coming together.

Local riders, County Rights of Way Officers and Landowners are looking at ways to improve a bridleway at Frocester - *we have a cunning plan!*

Hopefully more on this in the next newsletter.

I have also seen a gate on a footpath donated in someone's memory - we could do this too, for people who loved to ride the Cotswolds, or for the horses who loved our hills and valleys.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

There is a general movement afoot for community involvement. We are hoping that both The Localism Bill and a new DEFRA White Paper on Natural Environment will make it easier for groups and communities to help to look after and maintain their local rights of way - if all parishes could and would do this, our tracks and trails would be less likely to get overgrown and obstructed.

I (Pat) have had a meeting with some lovely people from DEFRA on the subject of communities working with Councils and grants-funders, and the problems with getting environmental grants for Rights of Way - they are listening but even they don't have a magic wand. We went to see Gipsy Lane and another project I am involved with, at Marsh Lane in the Stanleys, which a local group are working on with GCC Highways. DEFRA are keen to work on "Best Practices" - passing on ideas that are working between all interested parties around the country - and it is great to be a part of it.

Give A New Meaning To
HORSE POWER

Join In, Be Heard, and Be Active

- even if all you do is share this newsletter or become a member

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