



# MID COTSWOLD TRACKS & TRAILS GROUP

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

## AGM and BIG BRIDLEWAY+ BLITZ .....



Following the AGM the committee remains unchanged.

Monies held are mostly reserved for identified projects, so more fundraising will be on the cards soon.

The talk on bridleways by John Lane which followed the AGM was very well attended.

John gave us the facts and figures from the PROW department:

3,500 miles of PROW

2,840 footpaths for walkers only

669 miles accessible to riders (and others).

Approx £60 per mile has been available for upkeep this year 2013-2014 (all PROWs).

In 2007 PROW department had 26 staff and now has 6.5



The subject of the future of the PROW department caused a great deal of concern and discussion, particularly from the parish council reps and the volunteer groups. The department will be put out to a private company in April (the decision on which company this will be is expected soon).

MCTTG wrote to Gloucestershire County Council expressing our concerns, and underlining the importance of Public Rights of Way as a leisure and health resource for the county. We received the following statement from Mark Hawthorne, Leader of Gloucestershire County Council. *“ The County Council will retain its statutory duties, as it does now and will continue to employ a Public Right of Way officer, John Lane, who will continue to commission the outcomes set out in the Council’s PROW Strategy. John will also be the principal point of contact for the voluntary sector. The delivery staff will be managed by our contractor, just as they are with road. That will help us to spend less money on management costs and more on actual improvements to footpaths etc. When all councils are having to find very substantial savings, I think it’s more important than ever to do as much as possible to run services efficiently and to spend as much of taxpayers’ money on frontline services wherever we can.”*

(.... more on the Bridleway meeting on page 2 .....

At the AGM two things were asked by members ...

## POSTERS

The first was can we produce some posters for people to put up in livery yards etc. We used to have some a while ago and I have prepared another which is in this PDF as page 5, please put one up somewhere if you can.

## MEMBERSHIP

The second question was a request to clarify how we run the membership, given that we don't charge for it. When we began we did charge £10 a year for membership but by year three we had two problems with it.

1. It was expressed to us that many members received nothing directly for their membership if no improvements were made in their particular area. We are very spread out and are not like a club in the normal sense of a village club etc., which is unusual, but we are a group with the same aims, and we do believe that we have a role in representing the "lone rider" by networking with organisations, landowners and other track users etc.

2. Sending around to existing members was quite time consuming, and many people, although keen to keep the group going, just didn't get round to actually sending the cheque, resulting in more time spent sending reminders etc.

Because of these factors the committee decided to try a "free membership" approach, and to fund-raise by offering talks etc. or by specifically asking for donations towards each project. Once someone has registered as a member, they remain a member unless they notify us that they no longer want to be included. Membership numbers are included in the email address we contact you by - although in some cases there may be two members at one email address.

## RAFFLE

The raffle made £58 for funds. Big thanks to all who contributed to prizes. Tack and Field Equestrian, KLM Photography, Emma Green Bowen Therapy, BHS and others.

## MORE PROJECTS

Several new members joined us, and we had quite a few access problems highlighted and some useful new contacts and suggestions .

We are gradually working round contacting everyone and looking at their problems and ideas and will have more bits and bobs on all these things in the future.



We were delighted to have Jenny Carling and Philip Cooke at the meeting and I managed to chat to them about their Forest of Dean Greenways project. Sue and I have also been talking to both Standish and Eastington Parish Councils to see if we can look into the Standish off road track and circuits with them, and Sue has just finished compiling a report on this to see if we can get the scoping report started - you may remember we tried this last year with an application to Paths for Communities, who, despite previous encouragement, were unable to offer us anything unless it was for actual works on a path. Hope springs eternal - we're trying again !

# Bridleway bits and bobs ...

## COTSWOLD WARDENS AT ELCOMBE, ULEY

Big thanks to the Cotswold Warden Volunteers working on behalf of the Public Rights Of Way department and all the walkers, riders and cyclists who benefit from all their hard work. Here they are working on the new track at Uley recently.



## FRITH WOOD, PAINSWICK

PROW also tell us that the bridleway from Frith Wood is having the two stiles replaced by bridle gates (again put in by the Cotswold Wardens) and will soon be open to horseriders. Yaaaay! Great work by all involved. If anyone can get photos I will post them.

**SI 051 STEANBRIDGE, PAINSWICK** MCTTG has been talking to PROW about a similar problem at Steanbridge. It has now been agreed that two stiles here will also be replaced by bridle gates. MCTTG has offered to pay for one of these, and BHS Glos has offered to pay for the second. We think this track has been obstructed for something like 40 years (?) and we really appreciate the efforts made by PROW to accommodate both the riders and the landowners.

**SI 075 MINCHINHAMPTON** New Cattle Grid gates for Minch and Rodborough commons. There was a public enquiry to look at the proposed gate at Swells Hill. We understand there was a procedural issue and it will be resubmitted.

**SI 056 Bad gate at OS 854:994 near Nailsworth.** We now have a photo of this and will be looking into it, but this leads me on to a really great new venture ....



..... new member Stephen is in the process of setting up a **Duke of Edinburgh's Award Riding Scheme**. This will be working out of Barton End stables. Leading on from this, Stephen is keen to improve a few of the tracks in the Nailsworth area, and we are liaising with PROW and Stephen on this, and MCTTG is offering any assistance they require to get this scheme live for next year. SI 056 will be included in this work. Stephen is also keen to get equine "camping" in the Cotswolds set up to facilitate greater circuits for the DoEA participants to use, and he is also hoping to connect and expand the equine Bed and Breakfasts of the Cotswolds for us to trek round, and for increased tourism. There will be more from Stephen as it all unfolds. If you want to find out more contact me.

# BHS ACCESS CONFERENCE ...

Following on from the Marsh Lane improvements, I was asked to talk on “An Example of Community/Co-operative Funding and Working” at the BHS Access conference and it appeared to be quite well received. It was slightly embarrassing being in the illustrious company of the other main speakers, who were all experts in their various fields, and who covered a broad range of subjects which Mark and Amy had selected for us.

BHS are now actively promoting any form of self-help or co-operative working that helps towards the main objective of getting improved or new bridleways.

## SPEAKERS

Sarah Bucks and Phil Wadey talked on **how to find and record "lost" roads and bridleways** - many of these ARE BEING RIDDEN quite happily and are not "lost". They are just incorrectly recorded, or not recorded at all, on the Definitive map. There may also be other rights of way which are no longer in use and not on the Definitive map, but the rights will still exist. All under- and un-recorded routes are in danger of being extinguished if the cut-off date (1st. January 2026) for recording rights of way becomes reality. Such routes can be protected past the cut off date if DMMO applications for them are submitted. Do you know anyone interested in doing a bit of research in the records office etc. ? MCTTG has a copy of the book Sarah and Phil have written which explains it. Sarah has offered to meet a volunteer in the National Archives to help with a preliminary check of the routes in any parish.

Keith Hackett (appropriate name!) from BHS Merseyside was a real joy ! He talked on **urban riding - Liverpool city core and urban edges**. Wow! Their membership includes riders, non-riders and lapsed riders and their mission is urban hacking. 75% of their open land is in public ownership; parks, de-industrial terrain and historic estates etc. The network of participants and partnerships was stunning ! Their grand idea was MERSEY CIRCULAR ROUTE. They said “no” to the gangs at the park when the young lad was shot, by opening up a bridleway and reclaiming the area for the general public - with gates closing at night. The police gave grants and assistance. The council and other grant funders got onboard. They kept reporting illegal scrambling and quad use which was ruining the tracks and creating an intimidating atmosphere, and eventually the police realised the potential of squashing anti-social activity and asked them to report it on 999, whereupon they arrived promptly and seized the vehicles for crushing. They run regular quided rides, and planted willow to form vehicle barriers and much, much more. This group are amazing, but they have a really good core of active riders keen to get out and hack together, which we seem to struggle with.

Other subjects included The Woodland Trust, Windfarms, Examples of Paths for Communities funding, and The Wildlife Trusts and Commons.

Interestingly - the rep from the wind farms used accident statistics from the BHS site - saying there were only seven reported incidents. Three people in the room then quoted their own accidents - so IF YOU DON'T REPORT AN INCIDENT OF ANY KIND THE STATISTICS QUOTED WILL BE ENTIRELY FALSE and WAAAAY under the reality. LOG YOUR ACCIDENTS AND NEAR ACCIDENTS etc. WITH BHS

**quote from Sue Russell HRSA** - *We encourage our group members to report incidents to BHS and the police and almost all of them do, from dog attacks to close calls and dangerous driving. I will expect a marked increase in the last year as every weekend we get negative posts, too many ... it really does make a difference and if everyone signs our petition as well, it might make the government sit up and take notice. Their petition is at <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/52370>.*



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

**MCTTG aims to IMPROVE and EXPAND  
THE TRACKS AND TRAILS NETWORK of our  
area TO ENABLE HORSES TO  
BE RIDDEN OFF ROAD IN SAFETY.**

By working with local organisations and authorities, landowners and other user groups, (such as walkers, cyclists, carriage drivers and the less able) we aim to create new links between tracks, develop additional multi-use routes and circuits, and to assist in maintaining and improving our tracks and trails.

Be part of a group who enjoy the tracks and trails network, help us preserve and improve them, help us with fundraising events.

For samples of  
WHAT CAN BE DONE and for  
more information go to  
[midcotswoldtrails.org.uk](http://midcotswoldtrails.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/pages/  
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Group/163988567007928](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Cotswold-Tracks-Trails-Group/163988567007928)

**FREE MEMBERSHIP**



**BHS  
AFFILIATED**

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