



LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

No 91 September 2017

Last Two Rides of the Season

Saturday 23 September MANTON-BROOKE A new Ride in Rutland's stunning countryside. 7 or 9 miles including loop around new lagoons at Rutland Water. To enter contact Roger Linford, Hawthorn House, Braunston Road, Oakham LE15 8UH. Tel: 07599 754475. email: Honsecretary@bridlewayslrba.org.uk

Fees: £10 per member (£5 for under-18s). **Your 1st Ride with LRBA:** £10 membership + £10 Ride Fee (no Ride Fee for under-18s). **Entry forms**, which include membership application, and our essential *Ride Rules & Information* can be downloaded from www.bridlewayslrba.org.uk

Sunday 1 October TWO COUNTIES. 13 miles and shorter route taking in the new bridleways and routes around Junction 19 of the M1, including a few now much-quieter roads, in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. **Contact:** Mrs Kim Hall, Grange Farm, Knaptoft, Lutterworth LE17 6NP tel: 0116 247 8214. Email: Chair@bridleways.lrba.org.uk. Fees as above.

The Association is concerned about the drop in numbers participating in our Rides. A serious re-think will take place at the Executive Committee meeting on 14 Nov. Let us know what you think we are doing - wrong, right, or not enough of. See back page for contact details.

Passing Too Close to be Safe?

During the summer Leicestershire & Rutland police put some officers on bikes, with head cams, to 'trap' vehicles passing too closely. Ahead there was a police car to flag down and 'educate' the sinning driver about giving cyclists adequate room.

LRBA tried to get riders included in the month-long exercise, without success. In response, though, the Inspector in charge wrote "*I do agree that those who are passing too close to horses should be encompassed within the operation..... am currently working ... to look at the potential of a "portal" to allow their [head-cam] footage for consideration of an evidential review and that would obviously be open to riders as well.*

In the meantime, I would encourage riders to report near misses to us through the traditional channels or send the details through to the station nearest to where the incident occurred. You can find the details of your local team on the force website." www.leicestershire.pnn.police.uk

The Inspector said the force would advertise the "portal" when it goes live. Keep eyes open – and your cameras running!

First Aid Training on Offer

We all know that riding is a (high) risk sport. Whether out on a hack, in the manege or in the ring, accidents can, and do, happen. A body landing *thump* on the ground and then not moving is one of our worst nightmares. The nightmare continues if no-one knows what to do.

An accredited course is on offer to give riders and equestrian workers this vital knowledge. To dispel the myths around Helmet Removal, Casualty Movement, learn what it takes to Save A Life and a Whole Lot More. To give you the skills and knowledge so you can apply the immediate, critical, first aid to an injured or sick rider.

The trainers will come to *your* yard, school or club, don't mind getting dirty, enjoy horsey chat *and* make first aid fun. The qualifications are regulated by Ofqual (Office of Qualifications & Examinations Regulation) so the establishment is compliant with the Health and Safety Executive's first aid requirements.

Medi-K Rider First Aid Training, who were selected to provide our Ride Organisers with training in 2016, are offering a 1-day course, timetabled around yard duties if necessary, for up to 12 people for £495. Well worth it! We urge you to get *your* yard up-skilled by contacting Kay Paterson via Kay@Medi-K.co.uk or 07816 830533

Rides Reports

Mixed reports from our Organisers: weather (as ever!), admin glitches – is it *really* true that some of you don't understand that "enclose an s.a.e." means "send a stamped addressed envelope"? – late entries, too-early arrivals, unexplained no-shows, entries from new members going to the membership secretary instead of both entry and membership fee to the Ride Organiser (the Entry Form *does* include a membership box) and, above all, a serious dip in entries.

The Hambleton Bluebell Ride on 26 April had its usual worries about the blooms – *out? not out? over?* Out on the south side in full intensity of colour and scent but not yet on the north. And the verge-parking. A formerly firm stretch was rutted and unusable. But the weather had been fine and dry so the verges were hard. Except a large late-arriving box – nudged out of the

planned area by inconsiderate parking - managed to find the only wet spot on the peninsula and the local farmer had to tow it off. Instead of last year's downpour there were intermittent hail showers. Entries totalled 58 but only 37 riders braved the slightly 'off' weather, including the youngest, led round the 7 miles by his valiant mother. Several entrants did not, however, realise they are required to wear their *own* hi-viz for this Ride – naughty as this is the one LRBA Ride on which an air ambulance has ever come out to a faller. Due to the peninsula's 10 gates and the parking this is a heavily-stewarded Ride so it was pleasing that there were several emails and texts of thanks and praise for the good-humoured stewards.

The Camping Weekend at Gretton on 3-4 June had a disappointing turnout with only 6 campers in total. 5 in a tent, 1 in their box. Everyone went to the local pub for a lovely meal on the Saturday evening. Numbers were made up by one-day riders so the overall total was 24 riders, including a local family attracted by our banner at the gate. Riders were given maps of the Gretton Ride and other routes but there was no marking done – so it was “hacking in the raw”. As it should be. And no-one admitted to getting lost.

The Prestwold Ride on Friday 23 June was one of the cancelled Rides. Only 4 entries by the 'cut-off' day a week beforehand. With over 40 route-marks to be put out, and many of them to be recovered afterwards, the effort/reward ratio was not working.

Exton Estate on 9 July had a first entry in March then nothing much until the weekend before the Ride. In the end, after cancellations (mainly due to lameness) and no-shows, there were 37 riders enjoying lovely weather and a fantastic route, some minor changes giving lengths of grassy headland for canters. We are always grateful to the Estate for allowing us to ride in this park.

Glaphthorn Sunday 16 July was a new Ride, near Oundle, run jointly with the BHS. Only the 9 and 12 mile routes were used, the 16-mile route being withdrawn because the lack of entries didn't justify keeping the stewards out. The event was nearly cancelled as there were only 13 entries a week beforehand but a lot of effort had already gone into setting up the new route, involving negotiations with landowners and Northamptonshire County Council. In the end there were 25 Riders who enjoyed a very scenic route with a variety of farmland and woods and a pub halfway. Many Riders saw deer, often quite close, which was a new experience for them and their horses. One pair got totally lost and another went round the wrong way – both because they were talking and not looking at the map or routemarks. As so many enjoyed the Ride and asked for it to be repeated, Glaphthorn is being kept in our 'library' of Rides for the future.

Hicks Lodge Sun 30 July had 20 entries, 3 of whom were under-18s, the vast majority arriving in the last week but only 17 actually rode. The route went into the Hicks Lodge Centre twice, resulting in several Riders being in their cafe during the heavy shower, with their horses in the new corral. There were marshals both at the swingbridge near Moira Furnace and at the 'little train' near Conkers to help Riders unfamiliar with these hazards. The route had been very well marked by some youngsters who liveried at Short Heath Farm, the venue. The ground was good and the route offered lots of canters. Pity more people didn't go and enjoy it.

Somerby on 19 August had 31 paid entries and 27 actual Riders. The venue, on farmland at the back of Burrough Hill, has a magnificent view – and wind. But the route is generally more sheltered so the few spots of rain were not a problem. Last year's requests for something shorter than 14 miles led to investigation of a cut-through and permission from Somerby EC to use their drive which many riders took advantage of. Chance knowledge of a ford and a “use it if you can find it” permission also cut out a section of road for most Riders.

Nene Valley on 10 September was also cancelled due to lack of entries by the weekend before.

Reports about the remaining two Rides will appear in the next *Newsletter*.

B I T S

2 new BWs have been created SE of Stonesby running S of King Street Lane down to Gypsy Nook on the **Waltham to Garthorpe** road. A long time ago local riders put in a claim to these routes – based on use. Eventually it rose to the top of the Action pile at County Hall, at which point things speeded up. The Order was made on 20 April 2017 and Confirmed just 3 months later on 27 July – thanks to their being no objections, not even from the landowners, possibly because the claim was for use of existing farm tracks. Congratulations to everyone, including then-LRBA member Joan Loveridge, who took the time to gather the evidence, and then waited patiently. Enjoy!

Welsh footpaths could be opened to horses and the 2026 cut-off date could be repealed if proposals from the Welsh Government's *Access to Outdoors* consultation are actioned. This would give riders in Wales more local riding as well as access to the coast and cliffs via the Welsh Coast Path. **What do you think? Would that work in England?** A survey at the Royal Welsh Show had 83% of riders in favour "where the footpaths are suitable."

For members riding in the **Rushcliffe** area of Nottinghamshire, (see our story on the A453) the new Rights of Way officer is Jim Hatchett and any problems should be reported to him, either on 0115 804 3158 or james.hatchett@viaem.co.uk. Jane Baines, who has looked after this area for many years, now manages the county's Rights of Way team.

Much to be thankful for! Apparently only two thirds of the FPs and BWs in the new extension to the Yorkshire Dales National Park are "up to standard". We estimate that the Leics and Rutland percentage is much, much higher with only a few in the 'persistent problem' box. Cash problems were cited in the north, but we prefer to think we're better because LRBA members and other users are good at reporting problems - and chasing them up if not dealt with reasonably quickly.

Is this true? A farmer told me that, in the days when the horse was the farm motive power, every farm had a walnut tree. The fallen leaves, which have a distinctive smell, were fed to horses as a wormer. Do our vet members know what was in walnut leaves and if it might actually work?

Cosby parish is in the first stages of working towards a Neighbourhood Plan. Members living or horse-keeping in the parish need to make sure there's something in the eventual Plan about looking after and extending the Rights of Way network – especially the multi-user routes, or bridleways. We're particularly keen to get more "behind-the-hedge" tracks so riders, walkers and cyclists can travel without mixing with traffic. [See page #]

At Grimston, the diversion of BW G67 at the back of The Lilacs, 35 Main Street, has now been Confirmed. This takes users round a now-fenced-off horse paddock.

Road safety campaigning group *Brake!* want driving on rural roads to be part of all driving tests. Illustrated by a horrendous video of a car/two riders collision, *BBC News* said there were 943 deaths per billion miles driven on rural roads, compared to just 96 on motorways. If test changes come to pass, riders could ensure "testees" *DO* meet horses by riding often on the rural parts of designated test routes. It is becoming ever clearer that the current suburban testing is inadequate, equipping novice drivers neither for rural roads nor motorways

To put the above report in context, vehicles drove 325.1 billion miles on Britain's roads in the 12 months to June; an annual increase of 1.4%. Rural minor roads, however, showed an increase of 2.3%, with rural A roads increasing by 2.1%.

So our minor roads are seeing the greatest increase in traffic compared with other types of road, and – probably inevitably – the greatest increase in accidents.

The National Forest. A Regional Park?

A Social Evening and our AGM

Our Social Evening on 15 May at Woodhouse Eaves Village Hall was appropriately sited just outside the National Forest but within the proposed Charnwood Forest Regional Park and attended by 30 members and 5 guests. After our Chair, Kim Hall, had welcomed everyone and we'd quickly done the 'boring AGM bit' (see below), a delightful buffet supper provided by Executive Committee members gave everyone a chance to meet old and make new friends.

Sam Lattaway of the National Forest Company then gave a fascinating talk on **the structure and future of the National Forest** and the next stage for the Regional Park. Mooted in the late 1980s but formally created in 1995 after competitive bidding against 4 other sites including Rockingham and Sherwood, then a start-up process, the National Forest covers ### square miles in Staffordshire, Derbyshire but with its largest part in Leicestershire.

This places it within a 1 hour drive for 10 million people but another major factor was the need to counter the dereliction after many years of stone and clay quarrying and coal-mining. Of course, the main driver was to reverse the lack of woodland in the region: at 6% the lowest in the country. Through grants to landowners (who still own the land) cover in the Forest is now at 20%; the aspiration is to achieve the 30% found in England's most wooded areas, such as Surrey.

Sam explained that the National Forest Company is both part of Defra, giving it access to Govt money, and also a charity so it can fund-raise directly. The original tender schemes aimed to plant trees and provide other public benefits. Now the aim is to fill in gaps, link things up, whether woods or routes.

He showed an interesting video of the different nature and activities of the six land-forms in the Forest. They aspire to create a hub for equestrians and to provide new BWs. Equestrian information is moving online as the original leaflets are out-of-date. Tourism activities are estimated at bringing in £373M p.a. and just under 8 million people have visited the Forest. 100km of cycle routes have been created, £172M spent on regeneration and environmental education given to half a million children.

Sam concluded by talking about the then imminent lottery bid (in early June) to develop **Charnwood Forest Regional Park**. The concept, established in 2012, will cover 67 square miles in Charnwood and NW Leicestershire covering the area characterised by ancient volcanic rocks and a relatively low proportion of arable land, containing 23 SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest), some of international standing. If the lottery bid is approved, it will give initial funding for 3 years of further research and development of the Park concept, followed – hopefully – by a much larger award to bring these plans to fruition.

The AGM approved the minutes of the 2016 AGM, the Chairman's Report and the Accounts and Treasurer's Report for 2016. **Kim Hall** was re-elected as **Chair** and **Roger Linford** as **Hon. Secretary**. **Ann Hughes** was elected to take over as **Hon. Treasurer** from Anne Grange to whom a Vote of Thanks was given. The appointment of an Hon. Auditor was reserved to the Committee due to the change of Treasurer.

Janet Benskin (Rides Co-ordinator), John Coleman (Vice Chair), Anne Grange, Lynne Pass (Publicity Officer), and Liz Woolston (Membership Sec) were re-elected and Liz England elected to the Executive Committee. Vicky Allen, as President, is an ex-officio Committee member (Networks Officer). (These positions were confirmed at the June Committee meeting.)

Neighbourhood Plan Submissions.

John Coleman, our Vice-Chair and Planning Officer for Melton (and some other areas), has been involved with his own **Hoby** Neighbourhood Plan but has also responded on behalf of both LRBA and BHS to neighbouring **Frisby-on-the-Wreake**. Following that, we asked him to deal with **Houghton on the Hill**. Below is a flavour of his submissions so you have some ideas on what to say when *your* parish starts the Neighbourhood Plan process.

John wrote: *I am making a submission to the Frisby Neighbourhood Plan with regard to the section on Public Rights of Way (pp65-66). This is made on behalf of Leicestershire & Rutland Bridleways Association (LRBA) which exists to improve, extend and maintain the network of bridleways and other off-road riding in the two counties, and British Horse Society (BHS) which represents and promotes the interests of horses and riders throughout Britain.*

We welcome the importance accorded by the Plan to all Rights of Way, and the intention to maintain and enhance them where possible for the benefit of all users. In this context we would like to see specific mention of horse-riders and riding routes, as well as walkers, walking routes, cyclists and cycleways.

Horse riding has widespread participation in Leicestershire, with significant economic value. The National Equestrian Survey 2015, estimates annual consumer spending across a wide range of equestrian goods and services in Britain to be £4.3 billion. The East Midlands share of this total is estimated at around £310 million, and this is spent very largely in the rural districts. Riding is therefore an activity that merits at least as much attention as walking and cycling.

Riding beyond the confines of riding schools and private paddocks means using public roads and the network of bridleways and other off-road routes. For safety reasons the importance of the latter is becoming ever greater with the increasing volume and speed of road traffic. We therefore wish to see all such routes recognised, preserved and maintained for the benefit of all non-motorised users.

Within the Plan area there are two bridleways of particular importance for horse-riders. These are both valuable as off-road routes across the Wreake and railway, giving the potential for several off-road or quiet-road circuits and loops. We recognise that they are both vulnerable to the efforts by Network Rail to do away with level crossings where possible, but we would argue strongly for their retention for the reasons stated. We request that their significance is explicitly recognised in the Frisby Neighbourhood Plan. We would also actively support any efforts to extend the network of off-road routes for all non-motorised users".

For Houghton, John reported: *There's no section in the Plan dealing with BWs, FPs or cycleways, and no reference to the recreational use or enjoyment of these amenities, despite the abundance of them radiating out from Houghton in all directions. There are several references to the need for new footpaths and cycleways within the village to encourage less reliance on vehicles (pp 4,8,9,23,33). [John was able to pick up on comments about crossing the A47 to make the point that these should provide for horse riders too.]*

He says: The essence of these Plans is that they reflect the views and wishes of the community, expressed via drop-in meetings, surveys, etc. The mantra is "evidence-based", with the evidence coming from the residents, land-owners, employers, etc. We, as an external organisation, can't impose our preferences on their Plan.

So it's important for *you* to keep up with parish news and raise the need for more BWs/multi-user routes - we don't mind sharing to get off the roads.

Ten Years Onthe Story of a road, a bridge and bridleways

Member Lynda Blackburn writes about the A453 (Remembrance Way) dualling between Clifton (a southern suburb of Nottingham) and the M1 at Junction 24.

My first minutes of the NMU (Non-motorised users) Focus Group are for a meeting on 12 June 2007. There was an exhibition of proposals at the Clifton Leisure Centre the same month. By the time the road was officially opened on 20 July 2015 we had got most of the things we'd asked for re BWs and access. But it's taken another 2 years almost to the day – and much nagging - to get a fairly short fence erected between the dual carriageway and the new BW.

Leics BW L62, formerly a short BW off the A453, is now described as: *From the ford crossing the R.Soar at the county boundary, along Ratcliffe Lane and under the A453, Remembrance Way, across a BW bridge over the Ratcliffe Cut and alongside the A453 and Long Lane to Long Lane south of the Long Lane bridge [over the A453]. Long Lane carries the Midshires Way riding route – from the Ridgeway to the Pennine BW – as it goes from Leics to Derbys.*

Towards Nottingham, higher parapets have been put on the Thrumpton over-bridge; a BW and farm access underpass put in from Barton in Fabis (on the W side) to Barton Lane on the E side of the A453. There is now easier access between these BWs, including the Trent Valley (bridle) Way between the river and the A453, and the Gotham/Leakes BW network to the east.

The Highways Agency wasn't able to give L62 users any access from the ford past the power station to Red Hill or Thrumpton, so the only way for riders to go is S towards Ratcliffe. But there is now a much longer, and safer to use, BW as about 200m of A453 has been bypassed.

At the planning stage a 'horse count' had been set up. Not just in the week, when horse traffic would be low, but also in the last week of rebuilding the ford so there would be no traffic at all! By coincidence there'd been an LRBA visit to look at the work on the ford, so we could rubbish the 'nil' result that would have justified not providing for riders.

Eight Years to Claim Missing Rights.

Sounds OK, doesn't it? Well it isn't. Because claiming a lost right of bridleway or a lost bridleway is not always as easy as you'd think it might be. And, if the claim for this lost route or lost right isn't with the county council by 31 December 2025, the right could V A N I S H!

The Definitive Map and Statement – kept by each Highway Authority (Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland in our case) – records rights on foot, horseback, and in carriages (some motorised, some not). It records each right '*without prejudice to higher rights*'. So footpaths could really be bridleways (BW's). Or a bridleway might be a byway so you could drive your carriage on it.

Sounds good doesn't it? Leicestershire's Local Access Forum is getting a team together to find and claim as many lost routes as possible before the deadline. **Would you like to join the team?** Our Networks Officer will do "initiation" visits to the County Record Office in Wigston – just call her to arrange it (see bottom of back page). Not more than 4 people at a time on, preferably, Monday, Tuesday or Thursday mornings, and you should be able to start on real research by lunchtime. And there will be a training evening on the research process on Monday 6 November at Glenfield Parish Council's offices, 35 Stamford St LE3 8DL from 7.30pm – also call Vicky to book as there's a limit on numbers. There are already 2 bookings from current/ex LRBA members. Join us!

Additionally, LRBA and BHS are making initial donations of £300 towards the out-of-pocket costs of research and the team's work.

Autumn Area Meeting dates

Area Meetings are open to all, so bring your friends with you. It's *your* opportunity to work out if that *nagging* little problem should be reported, to learn what others have done in similar situations, or if you need to 'get tough' and report it. If so, to whom?

I look forward to meeting lots of you and, if you can't get to your local meeting because it's on the wrong night or in the wrong place, feel free to come to any convenient meeting.

At our **Hinckley & Bosworth** and **NW Leicestershire** meetings we will be hoping to get members (and their friends) to fill in User Evidence Forms to claim two BWs through **HELP OUT MILL** on the R.Sence, the boundary between the two Areas. If you have ridden through the Mill to the Odstone to Newton Burgoland road or, better still, from **Heather** to the Mill before the quarry opened, and have not yet filled in the forms, please come to one of the meetings **AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS**. We want lots of evidence so that we can get these two routes re-opened to riders as soon as possible.

Area Meetings

Please use the tel. no given to ask for directions, give your apologies or inform us of issues that need discussing. Or use the email below.

Charnwood Mon 25 September 7.30pm at Bishop Beveridge Club, 22 South Street, Barrow on Soar, LE12 8LZ. At roundabout in centre of Barrow, take road for Sibleby. The Club is on R just after a zebra crossing. There is parking for about 6 cars behind or beside the building; or park opposite on the road. 01509 215619

Hinckley & Bosworth Tues 26 September 7.30pm at Sutton Cheney Village Hall, Main St (near Hercules Revived pub) CV13 OA. See box above. 01509 215619

Blaby & Harborough West (of A6) Mon 2 October 7.30pm at Dalton Room at back of Blaby Social Centre (NOT the Civic Centre) Leicester Road, Blaby LE8 4GQ. Large car park. All local members of LRBA and BRRRA invited. LRBA tel: 0116 247 8214.

Melton Wed 11 October 7.30pm at Sycamore Farm Cottage, Harby, LE14 4DB, courtesy of Jean Stanley Drive opposite RES Tractors sign on Harby-Eastwell road 01949 860640

Harborough East (of A6) Tues 17 October, 7.30pm at Goodwins - formerly the Horse & Hounds (or Tea Pot Cafe) - Glen Rise, Gt Glen. 400m from A6 - leave at rdbt signed Glen Rise. LRBA tel: 0116 271 4810

NW Leics Thurs 19 October 7-9pm at Marlene Reid Centre, Belvoir St/Melbourne St corner, Coalville LE67 3PH. Parking behind Centre or in Melbourne St. See box above. LRBA tel: 01283 760353

RUTLAND Mon 23 October 7.30-10pm. Don Paddy's upstairs room. Market Place Uppingham LE15 9QH. LRBA tel: 01572 722329

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