

ON THE RIGHT TRACK



NORTH LANCASHIRE BRIDLEWAYS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER | **SUMMER 2012**



Remote bridleways waiting to be explored



Another summer and another wildly unpredictable array of weather conditions. It is a good job we're a durable lot isn't it? The contrasts between one day and the next (and sometimes morning and afternoon) are enough to make you loopy. Sun block or thermals? Gloves or sunglasses? Ho hum - I guess we'll never get bored or complacent.

Two pieces of sad news must be reported in this newsletter. The first is the death of Helen Wilkinson's pony Bowes William - he of the Think Tank. William was going really well this summer and had new boots for road work. With absolutely no warning at all, William became ill in the field and within an hour had to be put down by the vet. It seems that he had some sort of stroke, from which he would not recover. It was a huge shock for Helen and everyone else who knew William. He was a well known pony at the local stables and had many fans. We have included a final 'Think Tank' article and wish Helen well with her quest for a new pony. William's calm disposition and friendly nature will be a hard act to follow.

The second sad news is Barbara Hartley's Banner. Eve has written a column about Barbara's move south and I think everyone knew of her Fell pony, Banner - who must have been the oldest pony in the county. News that he died has filtered back up north. Banner was 35 years old and had enjoyed the best life a pony could wish for. Barbara will miss him hugely but will have masses of happy memories and Bracken for company.

Finally, a bit of good news - see Kath Richardson's article about Austwick bridleways.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter - it is great to have such a good, interesting mixture of stuff. Keep it coming! If I can get organised I will aim another newsletter some time around November.

Happy riding.

Sheena



Banner and Bracken



William on his think tank

Please send any articles, reports, hints, tips, suggestions etc to sheena@creativemarketingsolutions.co.uk

THEIR GAIN, OUR LOSS

As many of you will already know – Barbara Hartley has sold up and left for pastures new, down near Salisbury. She has decided that she needs to be nearer to her two daughters, son in laws and especially her grandchildren.

What a loss to our society! Her enthusiasm can never be matched. She has worked tirelessly on her own particular 'axe to grind' a safe crossing of the Greta at Tunstall. She was thwarted by red tape and offers, but we owe it to her to pursue this bridleway to a successful conclusion.

Her chatty e-mails about coming events and news have helped us all to feel like one big family and many helpful 'deals' have been struck – homes for ponies, hay, puppies, schooling help etc etc.

It is solely to Barbara's credit that we have such a large membership because as an avid show goes her famous "Are you a member of the NLBS? – It's only £5." Was heard all over the north!

I, together with Sheila Kissack, was lucky enough to go on a week holiday with Barbara and Bracken to Nancy Hunter's by Selkirk, to do the Beccleugh Rides. It was a laugh from start to finish. Her question "How far is the ride today?" and my usual reply "Oh, not a long one today." I was completely forgetting that is six years ago and I wasn't galloping with Vicky Lowe and we were all a lot older (well me anyway). We would arrive back stiff and tired but still laughing.

I am sure Barbara will quickly make horsey and doggy friends down south, as her laugh is so infectious.

Thank you Barbara. You are a hard act to follow. We will miss you but wish you all the very best for the future. Stay in touch!

Eve Hall

SPENRUSS FLIGHT

A Dream Come True

In 2004 I bought a 13.3 bay fell mare, Spenruss Flight, 8 years old, for my daughter and me to share. Her history was very much an unknown quantity, all we really knew was that she was a brood mare, however Beverley Hodgson, whom I bought her from, very bravely tried riding her a couple of times and announced that she was broken to ride, very forward-going and hated water. By this time I had searched hill and dale for a suitable pony and was very disillusioned. But Flight was gentle, beautiful, was the right height for us and was 100% in traffic. So that was how we came to buy her!

The intention was that I, as a happy hacker, would use Flight for pleasure rides and long-distance rides, while my daughter Anna, who was only 9 years old at the time, would gradually grow into her. I soon discovered that Flight did everything at breakneck speed (including downhill!) and could go on all day without tiring, but luckily she did have brakes. For the next 2 years we experienced many white-knuckle rides but gradually Flight learned to walk instead of jog and I learned to relax and loosen my reins. In the meantime Anna continued having lessons on riding school ponies! When Anna was 11 she started having lessons on Flight (quite scary to watch) and that was when we discovered she could jump, and more importantly, loved to jump. I remember that year; Anna's ambition was to win her first red rosette as we had never competed in anything before.

They joined Pony Club and were soon being selected for the showjumping team – what a joy seeing people's faces at jumping comps when we unloaded a hairy short-legged fell pony and she proceeded to jump clear! Flight and Anna were also in demand in the games team, where Flight famously changes leg between each bending pole at a very fast canter and turns so fast that Anna has to hold on very tight!

But not everything ran smoothly – at one point Flight caught flu, which has left her with a respiratory problem, and she also has a pelvic condition which sometimes causes her difficulty cantering on the correct leg (very irritating in Working Hunter & Showing classes!). Despite this, Anna and Flight have had some fantastic achievements including Champion & Reserve Champion in Showjumping, Working Hunter and Showing at Breed Show and County Level.

We also in the early days were unable to transport her anywhere after she panicked and collapsed in the trailer – after months of struggling and almost giving up, this was cured very quickly and successfully by Natural Horsemanship.



Spenruss Flight in flight

In 2007 we went to Hexham to watch the Fell Pony Performance Trials and were totally in awe of the competitors. It became Anna's dream to be good enough at dressage, X-country and showjumping to have a go at competing there – dressage was always their weak point as Flight had been known to jump out of dressage arenas on more than one occasion!

In 2009 they gave it a cautious go, did very respectably and won Best Newcomer. But in 2010 they really went for it! Flight did an impeccable dressage test, and then it was time for their speciality, X-Country. Flight, who can jump over a metre high, totally trusts Anna and will jump anything Anna aims her at. They cleared every single obstacle at the biggest of the 3 height options, and even went through the water. I had said to Anna that she must give Flight a rest whenever she needed due to her respiratory problem, but there was absolutely no stopping them – I couldn't believe my eyes. Unfortunately they knocked a pole in the showjumping, typically the smallest jump, but had accumulated so many points in the X-Country that they were First Overall!

We were thrilled, it had always been our intention to semi-retire Flight after the Performance Trials, as she is nearly 15, but to end her career on such a high note was wonderful. Anna and I would like to thank Spenruss Flight, the best pony in the world, for all the fun, happiness, and love she has given us.

Sue Clowes

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The Settle Loop

The long awaited bridleway link between Clapham and Austwick is finally under construction with work starting at the end of January. I have been in touch with the Yorkshire Dales National Park for several years now to get this done and following much negotiation with the landowners (some of whom were not at all happy) and North Yorkshire County Council, the project has finally got off the ground. Many thanks should go to the National Park for pursuing this as it is NYCC who have provided the main funding with a contribution from YDNP. This small section of new track will run alongside the A65 from the end of Clapham bypass to join the road into Austwick thereby avoiding the fast moving traffic and making riding a circular route possible. The new track will allow access to the large bridleway network in the Austwick/Feizor area and link up with the Pennine Bridleway.



I am in contact with Steve Hastie of the YDNP and have requested sight of the Plans for the project as at the moment I have concerns about the removal of the stone wall between the A65 and the bridleway path. The intention is to erect a new wooden fence between the road and the new path and move the stone wall into the field. This doesn't quite make sense as the stone wall would be better between the horses and the traffic offering a far safer barrier.

Kath Richardson

WILLIAM'S THINK TANK

The Season of the Great Moul

We have just passed The Great Moul season. Those of you, who keep your horses stabled and rugged, maybe even clipped, will not encounter The Great Moul, but all hairy outdoor horse owners will be masters of managing the mountains of hair that billow wildly with every sweep of the Dandy brush at this time of year. Two sweeps and the brush is clogged and ineffective so needs constant cleaning to maintain any efficiency, as hair that cannot stick to the brush it will glue itself to any thing nearby. This is not the time of year to be wearing a cosy fleece jacket!

One friendly pat for your horse and you will have turned into a woolly mammoth. Saddlecloths are inches thick after one ride and impossible to clean. Last year I tried the cellotape trick, but the hair refused to stick to the strips of tape. I tried hoovering the cloth, battering it against a wall (with feeling) and soaking it in a bucket, all to no avail. Eventually in despair I threw it in the washing machine and then hoovered out the machine. This year I have admitted defeat and done away with the saddlecloth all together, much easier to keep cleaning the leather saddle.

William is now looking sleek and shiny in his summer coat and we can turn our thoughts to polishing and shampooing so that he looks smart for the summer. Assuming he doesn't loose chunks of mane or tail. When I lived on a farm my horse always had Mohican mane from reaching under wire to steal a bit of meadow grass. A couple of years ago William had a very sparse mane when another horse decided to chew it. If any of you are battling with similar hair loss do not despair, help is always available. Hair extensions are available in a range of colours, beautifully set on clips ready to attach, they even come ready plaited!

If, however your horse has an abundance of mane and tail you could make a profit by selling some. Previously mentioned extensions are usually made from real horse hair or you could sell your pony's mane for use in brushes, upholstery, musical instruments or fishing tackle. I even discovered one web site extolling the virtues of horse hair in the decoration of ceramic (makes an interesting pattern when fired on to the clay). So there you are, the possibilities are endless.

Helen Wilkinson



A woolly William

NORTH LANCASHIRE BRIDLEWAYS SOCIETY

We are working for all riders in the area.
You will benefit. Please support us!
The membership fee is only £5 per year

To play an active part in the Society brings with it new friends and a chance to participate in many pleasure rides and social activities and a real sense of achievement in promoting safer riding for yourself and others. Even if you do not wish to play an active part in the Society your membership fee helps to provide safer riding facilities in our area for everyone.

Please join now by filling in the following form and returning it to the NLBS Membership Secretary:

ADELE MCLOUGHLIN

Bramble Byre, Howbarrow, Cartmel, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 7SS
e-mail: carmel645@btinternet.com call: 015395 36649

KATE LENNOX

Brandywell, Cark-in-Cartmel, Grange-over-Sands
e-mail: kate.lennox@talktalk.net

Cheques should be made payable to: **North Lancashire Bridleways Society**

NAME:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE:

TELEPHONE:

E-MAIL [OPTIONAL]:

Please tick here if you are happy to receive minutes of meetings by e-mail

I enclose my membership fee of £5

SIGNATURE: