

ON THE RIGHT TRACK



NEWSLETTER • JUNE 2007



Hello

Newsletter time again and as usual the summer months seem to be passing at an alarming rate. Hoping everyone had time to get out and enjoy the early settled weather and are not feeling too cheesed off with May's wind and rain.

I have struggled a bit with content for the newsletter this time. Any thoughts, ads, articles and pictures are great, so please send them to me. Even if it is just a couple of lines with a photo – you never know, it might just inspire someone to follow in your footsteps or take to the saddle for the first time in years. Thanks to all contributors to this edition.

The bi-monthly meetings at Hest Bank Memorial Hall are always informative and good fun. Eve, Vicky, Barbara et al do a terrific job and are incredibly busy on behalf of the NLBS. Many thanks for all the hard work.

Have a good summer. Put pen to paper (or whatever the electronic equivalent is), take some photos and most of all enjoy safe and happy riding.

PS E-mail me on
sheena@creativemarketingsolutions.co.uk

Sheena

MARCH 2007- KENTMERE VALLEY RIDE

We were very lucky with the weather, a really super day and a great start for the 2007 Pleasure Rides. There were 6 of us in total, so a nice size group which looked after itself.

Our first BW was through Scroggs Farm, a fairly short BW, there was a dog in a barn down below which barked frantically. We then went up the lane by the River Kent, a very pretty lane, with the river on our left hand side, lots of trees a few pretty little cottages to look at and of course the lovely Kentmere Pike ahead. We then followed the BW over Ullithwaite Bridge with the fast flowing River Kent beneath our hooves. From there we headed up to Meadowplatts Plantation, where we got great views of the distant Lake District Mountains, it really was spectacular. The tracks were quite stony in areas but generally pretty good. The day we chose seemed to be fairly busy, with quite a lot of cyclists on the route, but they all respected our horses and stopped, patiently waiting whilst we passed. Our next BW took us South to Mickle Moss, all nice and quiet along here, no cyclists or walkers, just us horse riders, and the odd sheep. We then continued our descent back down Browfoot Lane where we were able to have some good trots.

Lorraine

WILLIAM'S THINK TANK A LONG STAND

William and I have been practising standing still - he has to stand still I don't. I think he is getting quite good at it (definitely better than our extended trot) although to be honest he could just be having a quick snooze whilst ignoring anything I am saying! There is an old hospital trick played on new students where they are sent to ask someone for a long stand (an essential piece of equipment) of course the person they ask has to go and find one and the student is left having 'a long stand'. William can do a short stand, but I'm not sure about a long one, certainly not if left on his own, the temptation to find a bit of grass would be overwhelming, but does it really matter? The horse trained for Le Trec has to stand by itself in a marked circle, the show horse has to stand up smartly on command, although still in hand, and the work horse needs to stand absolutely still if some one is sorting out machinery behind it. I had a very enjoyable day out at the heavy horse working day at the beginning of this month where two lovely shire fillies were being paraded around the ring. One was very relaxed and the other was full of beans and bouncing about enjoying the atmosphere. The commentator was very adamant that this filly be made to stand still even though she was only a year old. The commentator obviously felt this was a very important lesson to learn early in life.

Standing still is I suppose just one of many things that make an easy to manage, safe horse. That moment when you swing up into the saddle is quite a vulnerable one, but how many of us do it while the horse is setting off down the road, eager to be going. I am probably not the only person to have been left inelegantly sat on the floor while my horse disappeared over the horizon. With a quiet, short legged horse like William it doesn't seem to matter very much but having said that it is much easier to do it knowing that I have told him to stand still and he will do so until I am ready to set off and not when he thinks we are ready.



MARCH 2007 KENTMERE VALLEY RIDE ALTERNATIVE VERSION

Have you ever thought of what goes through the minds of our 'imaginative' partners sitting at home, or at the office desk, waiting for our safe return and then listening to our idle chatter and 'fishermen's' tales? Here is the 'alternative' version of the ride up Kentmere from a caring, imaginative, 'other-half'! (Couldn't resist using this masterpiece of narrative!) We were very lucky with the weather, a really super day and a great start for the 2007 Pleasure Rides. There were 6 of us in total, so a nice size group which looked after itself.

Our first BW was through Scroggs Farm, where we were attacked by three vicious dogs. Fortunately we escaped with minor injuries, only one of the horses was nipped, and only one rider fell off, breaking her wrist. Luckily one of the ladies had a first aid badge and a bandage, and she soon got the wrist in a sling and the jockey remounted. We then went up the lane by River Kent and then took the BW over Ullithwaite Bridge. This too provided some excitement as some ducks startled our horses and we all bolted. Like the cavalry, charging down the lane, weaving between the trees and the odd petrified walker; we all managed to gain control after about a mile. As we eventually came to a halt, we noticed one of the group was riding in an uncomfortable position, just one foot in a stirrup, hanging on under the horse's neck. This was soon sorted, with the jockey back on top, no problem. From there we headed up to Meadowplatts Plantation, lots of lovely trees. Unfortunately, some bikers came whizzing past us, ringing bells and shouting "Coming through". Naturally this frightened most of the horses. Most riders managed the odd buck and skip, except for Andrea. Her horse was having none of it, leapt in the air and set off at a gallop under the trees. I think it was the third or fourth tree which finally flattened Andrea, sent her sprawling to the ground, with the horse racing off into the distance. We all immediately rallied round and set off to circle the stray horse and bring him under control before he hurt himself. This wasn't as easy as it sounds, and it took a good half hour before matters were in hand. In the meantime, one of

the cyclists had noticed the commotion they had caused and returned to the scene to find Andrea unconscious, and rather untidily littering the bridleway. By the time we got back to the spot, having captured the runaway horse about 3 miles away, the air ambulance was just disappearing over the hill.

Our next BW took us South to Mickle Moss, all nice and quiet along here – phew! Then back down Browfoot Lane where we were able to have some good trots in a nice controlled manner; Andrea's horse seemed to enjoy the freedom of not being mounted, constantly prodded and kicked, but then who wouldn't!

With the day being so clear we got exceptionally good views of the Lake District Mountains. Most of the riders said they had never had a day quite like it, and all were keen to know when the next ride would take place. Well, to be honest, not quite all. We don't know which hospital Andrea was taken to, so we don't strictly know if she will be up for the next ride. Still let's not spoil the day; I'm sure she will come round to it, eventually.

PS. For Andrea – the horse is fine and in stables at Staveley, either £40 or £50 a day!

Anonymous (well, perhaps you can guess)



ICELANDIC PONIES IN NORTH LANCASHIRE

New member Vicki Graham supplied a great article about Icelandic ponies in north Lancashire, but unfortunately it arrived a bit late to include.

Visit our website at www.nlbs.org.uk to read it and see some more smashing photos.

WANTED:

Bomb proof pony up to 12 hands for small child.

(Not Shetland)

Contact Shirley Nicholson on 015395 67236

COLIC OR TUMMY ACHE?

Not sure if there is a distinction between colic and tummy ache, but certainly the word 'colic' is always very worrying when used alongside 'horse'. My big black and white horse suffers from something intermittent and unpredictable and each time it happens, I seriously think he is dying.

He rolls, groans, sweats, lies flat on his back with all four legs pointing skywards, rolls his eyes and generally looks as if the end is nigh. The first time it happened he was just two. I went to check him in the field and a dreadful apparition shambled across to me, covered in black mud with his back legs sticking out at funny angles. He'd obviously been struggling and rolling for some time, hence the dripping mud. I called the vet straight away. Whilst we were waiting poor Jake kept lying down and standing up, just beside himself with agony. He also seemed to want to be as near to me as possible which was a bit disconcerting, as even as a two year old, he was quite big and chunky!

Of course, I don't have veterinary insurance so it was a case of do the best we could and keep our fingers crossed. The vet gave him a muscle relaxant, did a James Herriot up his rear end and came to no definite conclusion. I deep bedded his stable and rushed in and out of the house, on the hour, every hour all night (needless to say it was mid-winter and raining). The vet was great. I often think I'd prefer to deal with a vet than a doctor in moments of human crisis. It was only the following day, when Jake had settled down a bit, that the vet confided that he was surprised that I still had a horse.

On strict instructions I offered toothsome, non tummy ache inducing foodstuffs for the following week or so. Poor Jake - he'd sniff the bucket, roll his eyes, groan and lie down at the merest hint of food. He became a terrible, emaciated creature, worthy of an RSPCA ad. However, eventually he began to eat and regain his condition and I chalked the episode up to experience and made sure that I kept a good eye on him.

Now, Jake is seven. We still occasionally have colicky episodes. There would seem to be no rhyme or reason to them. Spring grass, autumn grass, different pasture mix, dusty hay – I don't know. There seems to be no predictable trigger. Occasionally I think he might have suffered a bout in the night, if he is out at grass and comes in caked in mud. It worries me that he rolls so much as the words 'twisted gut' come to mind. The weirdest thing is if I catch him mid bout. He can be lying down groaning with his neck stretched out and his flanks quivering and providing I rush across to him, rub his tummy and give him a squirt of Bach's Rescue Remedy, he can be up and about, farting mightily, in a matter of minutes. This is silly. In all seriousness, nothing could work that quickly for colic but it does beg the question – is it colic or is it tummy ache and if he were not such a wuss, would he just get on with it? With due respect, could it be the equine version of Man 'Flu'?

If anyone has any info or thoughts, I'd be really pleased to hear from them. Although I probably sound a bit flip about it, it is a worry and it is horrid to see him suffer, (even if there is a touch of acting involved).

Sheena

CARDINAL ALLEN CHARITY HORSE RIDE

22 APRIL 2007

After the recent glorious weather I was very surprised at the forecast for Sunday.....rain?????...surely not after the lovely week we have had. As I got up and looked out the window, yes indeed it was raining but only a drizzle! Luckily we had enough parking on the tennis courts for the trailers and horse boxes, and with over 50 entries the venue was soon busy.

Eventually 56 riders set off with a smile on their faces and no waterproofs, just lightweight jackets as the rain had eased off. Several were new to this type of event but they managed to cope with the distance and enjoyed having a blast on the beach. It was lovely to see the vast range of horses, small, large, arabs, cobs and several younger riders too.

A big thank you to everyone who helped on the day. This year we had no rider casualties and all who took part were glad of the excellent refreshments made by Mrs McGarvey when they returned. Mr Shah took some photos at Rossall Beach and luckily the video of my horse refusing to go on the sand didn't turn out.....at least that's my story and I'm sticking to it!

The ride is becoming an annual event and some riders travelled from as far as Cumbria and West Yorkshire to enjoy a gallop on the beach.

Thank you to all the riders and helpers for their support. We hope to have raised about £700 towards our specialism fund.

Janet Bebbington
Peter Martin

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:

**Mrs. B E Hartley, The Cottage, Millhouses,
Tatham, Lancaster LA2 8NF**

Cheques should be made payable to:
North Lancashire Bridleways Society

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