

ON THE RIGHT TRACK



NORTH LANCASHIRE BRIDLEWAYS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER | JUNE 2010



**BARBARA, OUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY,
WITH COUNTRYFILE PRESENTER MATT BAKER**

Hello - welcome to the slightly belated June newsletter. Not sure if it is the recent spell of wonderful, warm, still weather or just the length of the high summer days but even I am feeling optimistic and relaxed.

As I write, tomorrow (June 7th) I am going to join the Cumbria Bridleways ride across Morecambe Bay led by the redoubtable Cedric. I have walked across before but, after reading Barbara's account of the mishap during recent filming for Countryfile I began to wonder if I had the bottle to go ahead. Jake has never been on a beach before and does not often go out with lots of other horses. Ho hum, he's usually pretty cool about things - so optimism being the order of the day, I am now really looking forward to it. I will put a PS on the back page and let you know how we got on...

Enjoy the articles and info. Thanks to all contributors - it is really great to have such good chatty stuff to include. Don't forget to send articles for the winter edition due out in November / December - depending on whether or not I am still feeling relaxed...

Happy riding!

FILMING FOR COUNTRYFILE - the real story.

I received a phone call a few weeks ago from Phyllis Capstick of West Craven Bridleways inviting me to Humphrey Head, with my pony, to be involved with the filming of cross bay rides in Morecambe Bay with Cedric Robinson, the Queen's Guide to the sands.

Why me? Well, my Fell, Townend Banner, has done the crossing three times in the past, his last being when he was 28 years old so I proudly took Banner, now 33 years old, to experience the fun though I was non-committal as to just what we would do. Probably just watch & enjoy!!

It was a glorious day and we parked in the sunny and sheltered spot of Humphrey Head well ahead of schedule. Banner knew he had come to a 'party'! We had hoped that Matt Baker, one of the popular producers, was to ride with us but disappointingly he was filming at a nearby farm for another part of the programme.

It was probably a couple of hours before the riders eventually set out for the sands but quite a bit of filming took place on the foreshore at Humphrey Head so it was all very interesting. As with many of these rides, the first obstacle to overcome (and only 100 metres from the parking!!) was an awkward dyke, at the bottom of which Cedric had placed bags filled with rubble to enable an easier crossing for the horse and trap and the tractor pulling the 'Sandpiper' which was carrying friends and film crew and both of which always accompany the ride. We watched as they crossed precariously but safely and then it was the turn of the horses. Some jumped, some hesitated then charged, some said 'no way'! After about 30 minutes six riders were across by which time the film crew were getting rather agitated at the time it was taking. Banner and I just watched with amusement because I was beginning to think that Banner would be a 'no way' pony and in any case I was running out of time. Then it happened!!

FRESH PASTURES

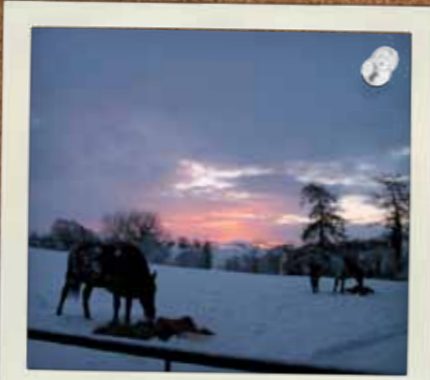
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'Remember last winter?'

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OBITUARY Alex Pimbley

It was with much sadness that we heard of the death of Alex Pimbley of Ardex Farriery last week. Joint-master of the Vale of Lune Harriers, Alex was very well liked and respected throughout the horsey community. You may have met him at Whittington races where he helped to organise the gate or heard him talk when he bravely came to an NLBS meeting and answered lots of our questions. He will be greatly missed. Our thoughts go out to all his family and friends.

PS! Cross Bay Ride Monday 7th June

What can I say? Wow, wow, WOW! Just brilliant. Superb weather, nice people, lovely horses. Thank you so much to everyone who made it possible.

SHEENA

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:
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Filming for CountryFile – the real story (cont)

The horse in the trap spooked, whipped round, the trap flew over, Bryan the driver was thrown out and the horse bolted complete with trap on its side. Anyone who has driven ponies will know just how I felt. That was it. No way did I want any more. I quietly made my way back to the trailer. Thankfully the bolting horse was quickly caught, put back into the shafts and bravely driven out onto the sands to continue with the filming.

Now my story splits into two. Those who did eventually get out onto the sands enjoyed the experience. Of course there was plenty of 'hanging about' and they were out there until 7.30p.m. but there were some wonderful shots of horses on the sands and of Celia Dixon's Fell, Rydan Lucy with Sandra Allonby on top, having a great gallop. All in all, an excellent programme, which showed off the magnificence of Morecambe Bay and the beauty of the horses.

However, that was not the end for Banner and me. Unfortunately, left on the foreshore with us was Pat Oliver & her Highland, Dudley, together with my supportive friend, Kath. We decided to explore a quiet bridleway before we left and, after a few minutes along this track imagine our surprise when we emerged at another point along the foreshore

PUTTING THE HORSE before the cart

One of your primary concerns when travelling is ensuring that your horse arrives unscathed and in peak fitness. Hydration is important for optimal performance – therefore, especially when travelling precedes a competitive event, drinking during and after transportation becomes an important consideration.

Horses lose weight during transport due to backing off drinking and fluid loss through sweat. Even in cool weather, weight loss can be substantial – on average, approximately 0.5% of their body weight every hour they travel which is 2.5 litres for a 500kg horse.

Standing in a trailer or lorry is not the same as standing in a box. One research study showed that horses' energy expenditure during travelling was equivalent to that needed for walking. Rough and winding roads (or poor driving!) will require continuous adjustments by the horse in order to maintain his balance. This burns energy and can result in a very tired horse at the end of a trip.

Some horses just don't drink on the road and this, combined with increased sweating (even in cool weather), means the potential for a horse to become significantly dehydrated during transportation is very real. The stress of travel combined with dehydration can result in gastrointestinal disturbances, such as impaction colic and low fluid levels in the body may cause a horse to tie up or suffer from other muscle problems. Dehydration and weight deficits can persist for three days or more after a trip.

If the horse does not drink on the horsebox or does not like the new water at the competition site, then its water intake will be considerably reduced and dehydration started before it even begins to perform. If not corrected, these may develop into serious complications for the horse with the added stress of continuing the performance.

to find Matt Baker finishing off a lamb chop and just completing his filming. We told him the story, Kath produced a camera and we had a lovely photo. taken of the little group! We missed the filming out in the bay but we had our photo!! Quite a coup!

Banner, Kath & I returned triumphant though quite shattered by the events of the day. Pat was not so lucky. Her jacket, with the keys to her horse box in the pocket, had gone out with the tractor so she had a frustrating time waiting for everyone to return just because the film crew had run out of time waiting for horses to cross the dyke at the beginning and could wait no longer. Very disappointing for her but I hope the photo somewhat made up for it all and, thankfully, the weather was wonderful!

My one regret, when I watched the programme, was that Phyllis, because she was not riding, did not feature in the programme but without her this would have never happened. For many years she has organized and taken part in this ride – a wonderful idea of hers and a tremendous experience for all of us who have been privileged to take part. Thank you, Phyllis, for giving us so many stories to tell!!

BARBARA HARTLEY

All of the above is not meant to scare you from taking your horse on a trip! However, you need to be aware that travelling disrupts normal patterns of water intake.

Carrying enough home water can be a problem and often is not feasible for all but short trips. And clearly, you cannot carry enough water for several horses – each horse will drink 10 gallons or more per day.

Dealing with a poor drinker while travelling takes some originality and resourcefulness but it can be done. Try offering sloppy sugar beet water (although this can be messy on journeys and needs to be prepared in advance).

Other water-enticing strategies include putting a carrot, apple or peppermint cordial into the water, or new product Horse Quencher, it gets horses drinking immediately. Gina Miles, American event rider and Olympic Silver Medallist, used the product at the Games in Hong Kong. "Whenever I travel with my horses, I worry they won't drink enough; with Horse Quencher, my top horse McKinlaigh drank like a champ on the long flights to the Olympics."

Denis O'Brien of Shadwell Stud, is also an advocate. "The hydration of horses when travelling can be overlooked and Horse Quencher will assist those who reduce their fluid intake while being transported nationally and internationally."

If horses are introduced to these additives and new products at home, they should drink them readily while travelling.

Don't give your horse dry hay or a dried-out net of haylage on the way home as this will make him more dehydrated, both draw water into the hindgut that the horse needs elsewhere in the body.

Every one who has taken their horse on a journey and tried to get them to drink, knows the problem all too well. Horses can be difficult! Dehydration is one of the more serious problems that can occur when horses are travelling. Even the slightest dehydration can affect your horse's health and performance adversely and prevention is the best medicine.

LUCINDA STAPLETON



WILLIAM'S THINK TANK

HELEN WILKINSON

I have decided to have some riding lessons. I began my riding life, as many people do, with a ferocious Shetland. He was called Darkie and when he came to live with us he was probably very old, defiantly wise to the tricks of getting rid of riders. Having first been caught (no mean feat) he would with a 'bit' of persuasion allow a bridle to be put on and we would set of round the fields, as I lived on a farm we didn't have to venture near the roads. A saddle was always deemed to be unsafe as after awhile Darkie would decide he'd had enough of being ridden and simply lie down and roll over which meant a fairly rapid dismount technique was required, elegance not essential! At this point we were usually some distance from the farm and walking home was not appealing, so we now had what was generally known as a 'pantomime'. This involved a fair amount of rearing and bucking, and attempted biting so determination and fast feet were needed before a quick scramble back on board and a resigned plod back home. Just as we got big enough and wise enough to reach a more peaceful arrangement Darkie's days came to an end.

I was then very fortunate get one of those wonderful grey welsh ponies that tolerated all sorts of childish endeavours. Endless jumping courses with scarlet curtains to make fire jumps, miles of hacking with five or six children climbing on and off and even a dog that sat on the front of



Any visitor to **Lancaster City Council's Health and Strategic Housing office in Morecambe Town Hall** can't help but notice the rosy complexions and windswept looks of a large number of our staff who clearly spend a lot of time outdoors. Coupled with the attractive straw-speckled hairstyles and wellies (and dare I say that 'fresh organic' odour), you begin to realise that we're a very horsey lot. There are no fewer than five horse-owners in one office, which surely must be a record in the council?

First of all, purely in alphabetical order, there's Alison Biggam, senior admin assistant, who, together with her partner Gordon and their daughter Annie, has a number of horses. Gordon is well-known in the show jumping arena and once competed against Harvey Smith. Alison sold two horses recently, so at the moment there are just three horses and a foal on their farm. Annie can often be seen tearing around the farm on horseback rounding up the sheep.

Environmental health officer Jackie Millatt has a Dales x Appaloosa pony called Kizzie that constantly changes colour, ranging from white spots to brown spots to black spots. Jackie is a 'happy hacker' who loves getting out and about in the Farleton Fell area, and you'd think she was sensible until you see her galloping at full pelt across



the saddle (not a Great Dane), being an Indian pony while we jumped on over his rump and being a race horse (fairly slow one) while we rode with jockey length stirrups. We even managed to go to one proper gymkhana where he tried to eat the potatoes in the potato race and came last. So after many years of riding I have a good sense of a balance, I did have the ability to jump on and if from all angles with great agility, but that has unfortunately worn off, and I can ride with a small dog sat on the saddle.

I have had some lessons over the years but there is defiantly room for improvement. Rachel my instructor very kindly says that my legs are too far forward because of my last saddle but I suspect it is really just a bad habit, anyway she's very positive and keeps telling me they are getting better so that's good for my ego. I've only had a couple of lessons so far but I'm quite sure of one thing – lessons reach muscles that hacking out with friends does not – mine and Williams!

the fell. She's well-known for being fully equipped at all times – anything you might need will be in Jackie's pockets. She's also a dab hand with her whip, whether it's for looping round gates to open them or for chasing away rampant Shetland ponies. Fairly recently Jackie became interested in Natural Horsemanship techniques, which use horse psychology to train horses in a more natural way.

Julie Kilifin, admin assistant, is the 'new girl' in the office as far as horses are concerned. Just last year she and Kevin (CCDS) bought their daughter Charlotte a pony, Johann, who has now taken over their lives, as ponies tend to do. Julie is now constantly heard exclaiming about how much ponies cost to keep, how early she has to get up in the morning and how unfair it is to have to muck out before work. But then you hear 'Awww, but he's worthit'!

Liz Akister, dog warden, has had horses all her life and now has a strapping coloured cob called Apache, a gentle giant. Liz would be quite happy riding quietly around the lanes and beaches in the Hest Bank / Bolton-le-Sands area, but her daughter Kelly recently bought a massive event horse called Seth to compete on, and now Liz gets dragged to competitions every weekend as head groom.

And finally, Sue Clowes, senior environmental health officer, has a hairy fell pony mare called Flight whom she shares with her teenage daughter Anna. When Sue first bought Flight five years ago, Flight obviously hadn't looked in a mirror because she thought she was a racehorse and went everywhere at 90mph. It took about two years to slow her down. Now, however, Anna and Flight try their hand and hoof at everything and have competed in the Pony Club games and show jumping teams, as well as entering just about every class at local shows. Sometimes they even win! Sue, on the other hand, likes to take life a little more slowly, and enjoys her 'happy hacks' on Flight in the Farleton Fell area, often accompanied by Jackie. Sue is well-known for unexpected 'adventures', such as sinking in bogs and losing her riding companions under low branches – all good fun.

In summary, our lives have definitely been enriched by our four-legged friends, but if you don't like repeated soakings, blisters, bad-hair days, early mornings and hard work, don't get a horse!

SUE CLOWES