

# ON THE RIGHT TRACK



NORTH LANCASHIRE BRIDLEWAYS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2020

Hello, hello,

Not even going to bother to mention the c word, but I hope everyone is keeping safe and well. Just received the e-mail cancelling the NLBS July meeting – ah well. Fingers crossed for September.

I have developed a new obsession. Dock. (*Rumex obtusifolius* if we're going all posh.) My field has always had a few patches of dock leaves that I have managed in various ways. I'm probably over cautious but I don't like the idea of weed killers with free ranging chickens and geese, not to mention the ponies. So, over the years I have

bashed and scythed and strimmed which at least contains and stops them spreading across the whole field. I was scything long before the latest version of Poldark that apparently lead to an outburst of scything and some 'Learn to Scythe' courses. Who knew. Bandwagon or what?

My new habit is twenty a day. I have strimmed the bigger patches and now trundle around the field and dig up twenty docks a day. Yesterday I did 27. (I said it was an obsession. I do count them.) Honestly, if you could make something out of dock roots I'd be quids in. They are huge. Even the innocuous looking ones have enormous root systems that seem to go down about six feet. (OK, one foot, but it is still hard work.) I might well be fighting a losing battle but it is good keep fit and oddly satisfying...



*Everything is a series of ups and downs.*



*Combat.*

Thought you might enjoy the map stuff now that we are able to venture further afield. Know it is a usual topic for NLBS members but TREC people may not have the links to map sites. The link to the Scottish library is particularly fascinating. It is on my list to go and walk some of my local routes and check out gates and access – something to look forward to if / when things get back to normal.

Thanks to Helen for 'Lottie's Lines' and Janet for sharing her experience of going bitless with Bella. Brave stuff and really interesting. As usual, if anyone fancies sharing anything fun, useful or informative drop an e-mail to [newsletter@nlbs.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@nlbs.org.uk)

Keep safe and happy horsing,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine'.

# Lottie's Lines

## Forward Going

This year Lottie and I may not get our summer stay at Rest Harrow but we have been out hacking with Sheena. Maybe now is the time to explore our local areas putting all the skills we have learnt in the school to good use? Leg yield and back up for opening gates. Standing still for getting on and off to do the gates that have fallen of their hinges. Straightness for some good long trots and canters on grassy verges. Lots of lovely even circles; well, that just means we have got lost and probably need to go to one of Helen Wain's map reading classes. I am after all the person who got on train in Reading heading for an evening in London and ended up in Penzance!

Maybe later in the year we will be able to ride further afield. Hopefully some organised rides and TREC competitions will take place in the autumn and they are a great way of exploring new routes. The first time I rode the green lane at Ireby was when doing a TREC training session and that is now a favourite ride to do with friends. Meeting up with friends and exploring rides that they know or learning new ways of navigation all expand our chance to explore the country from horse back. When I went to Scotland with three friends we rode in the forest; miles of confusing gravel tracks but one of our group was an experienced endurance rider and she mapped out a route, put it in her phone and the GPS lead us safely through the forest. I think I am doing well if I have managed to charge up my phone and put it in my pocket. Many years ago Linda Hobson and I drove my horse and cart round the Lake District for a week's holiday, on that occasion we had a carefully planned route. Not all B&Bs can accommodate two people and a chunky coloured cob!



*Leslie, Tommy, Sarah and Banner on Ireby Green Lane.*



*Helen and Flint on an adventure.*

While our riding is limited we can still enjoy an evening spent sharing stories about the places we have visited and friends we have made because of our horses. Not forgetting that time Lottie and I did the most marvellous gallop beating the thoroughbreds (OK, I just dreamt that one). On a riding holiday in Middleton in Teesdale we spent all day in the saddle; long fast rides on the moors and pub lunches. One day the clouds came down and in the thick mist we couldn't even see our horses' ears. The ride leader was trying to ride along a track but his horse refused. We all agreed to let the horse go where it wanted and of course it led us straight to the gate off the fell. Sometimes you just have to let your horse lead the way, it will be an adventure!

**Helen Wilkinson**



# Our Journey To Being Bitless

Where on earth do I start! Bella is a 14.3, 11 year old dales x cob who I have owned for six years. We have done 1000kms of pleasure rides but due to a bad knee I found these increasingly painful so we started doing a bit of TREC too. She is a ride and drive, so is very responsive to your voice but not so much to your leg, even less so when her rider can only use one leg effectively, but I feel we have a good partnership and have learnt a lot from each other over the last six years. I do prefer what people term natural Horsemanship methods but do not claim to be very knowledgeable or experienced!



Two Bridles.

I have always been in awe of people riding in just a rope bridle and even though I did 100s of miles with a previous pony using a hackamore... it's not really bit-less in my mind. While recovering from my knee replacement and with Covid19 halting our trips out in the wagon, I decided to have a go at ditching the bit. So, ever the brave one, I firstly put my grand-daughter (aged 11) on Bella with just the rope bridle, in the ménage and she walked, trotted and cantered around with the comment "she's a bit strong in canter". Well, with my 'guinea pig jockey' surviving the experience I gave it a go myself but initially just in the ménage. We walked and stopped and reversed

and did serpentines and even tried a little trot, and although Bella was indeed a little strong and at times questioned what we were doing, she seemed to understand the gist of what I was asking her to do.

During this initial phase, we spent approx 20 minutes, probably two or three times a week, in the ménage doing lots of TREC like stuff:- bending poles, reversing between poles, immobility etc all at walk with the odd bit of trot here and there to ensure Bella was obedient to my aids and responsive. The more we did, the better we both got at communicating with each other and me being more relaxed.

My next step was to go for a hack, so I put on her usual bridle with a bit and the rope bridle too I knotted the bit reins so they were there if I decided I needed them and off we went on a 5k hack out with another horse. I didn't pick up the bit rein once and was very pleased and proud of our achievement. Now, I had to be super brave and go out on our own. Again, I felt it foolhardy not to have the bit there as a safety net but we went solo round the village seeing grazing horses, cows, buses, wagons, tractors etc without a problem. We have also done a second hack round the village with only two minor hiccups – a couple of pigeons flying out of the hedge at knee height gave us both a bit of a shock and standing in a gateway on a single track road to let a tractor and muck spreader pass wasn't the best place to be ...but we survived and I didn't grab the bit reins either!



Bitless.

The next step in this journey will be to ditch the bit altogether while out hacking and at the moment I don't feel 100% confident on the roads without a bit ....so maybe a follow up article will be needed if we get that far on this bitless journey!

Janet Bebbington

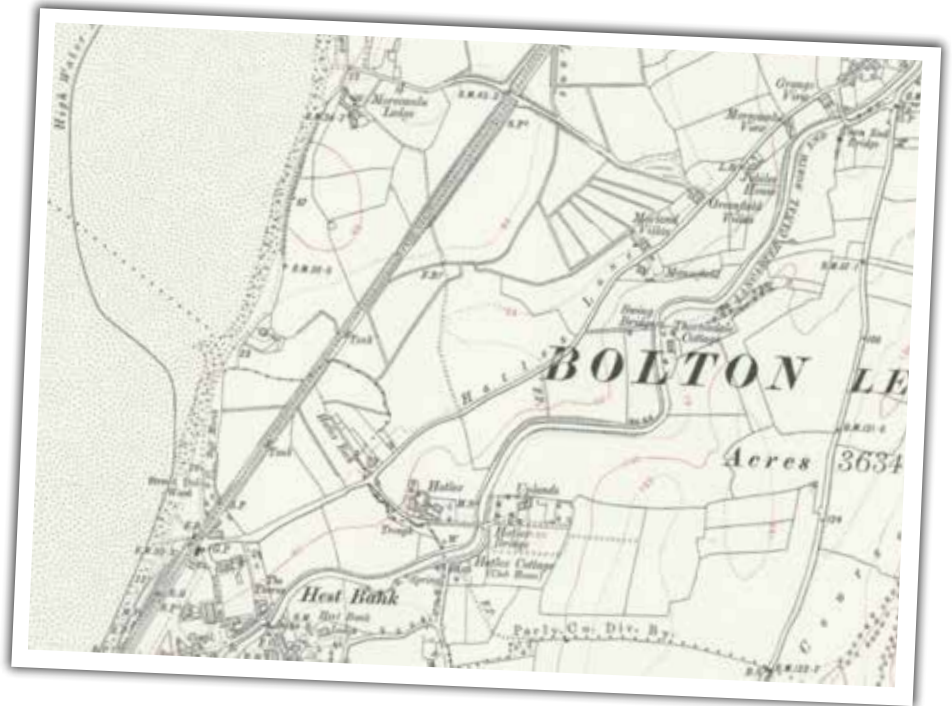
# Path Research

## MAIN TYPES OF DOCUMENTS TO LOOK FOR:

- Inclosure awards and map
- Turnpike records
- Tithe awards and maps
- 1910 Finance Act records
- Ordnance Survey maps
- Books of reference
- Boundary remarks books
- Early commercial maps
- Other maps
- Highway records

Rights of Way - Restoring the Record by Sarah Bucks and Phil Wadey

National Library of Scotland - website: <https://maps.nls.uk/>



## Books

Doing the mass tidy out that everyone seems to have done over the last three months I came across my copies of James Herriot's autobiographical books about his life as a young vet just before the second world war. I guess everyone is familiar with the old television series and films but the books were terrific. Obviously not exclusively horsey but taking in the very last of the working horses and farming practises on the cusp of change.

His writing is great fun and laugh out loud funny. The chapters are a nice length and all the books are easy to dip in and out of – good with coffee and biscuits. They are all worth reading but I particularly enjoyed 'If Only They Could Talk' and 'It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet'. If you've already read them, read them again!



## STOP PRESS!

Just heard that our Chair, Eve Hall, recently had an accident whilst getting off Poppy. She's turned her ankle and is having a pretty miserable time of it. I'm sure everyone would like to wish her well. Get well soon, Eve. Keep your pecker up.

And -

Huge thanks to founder member, driving force and all round goody Diane Richmond who has recently stepped back from the Bowland TREC Group. Wishing you a happy and peaceful retirement - but still looking forward to seeing you again once TREC events have restarted.