

“the WDBA needs you”

From the Chair

My three years as WDBA Chairman is nearly up so this will be my last homily before handing over the reins in November at the AGM. A healthy organisation thrives on change and I know that within our membership there are those who could easily take on the challenge of either Chairman or Secretary at the end of this year. Please come forward, don't be shy, the WDBA needs you and its heaps of fun.

Some of you will know that I am currently in training for a fund raising bike ride to Paris in September. To begin with I have found it too exhausting to ride Kitti and cycle on the same day so choices have had to be made. However until this morning I had not considered that cycling might even be dangerous. On the way up to the yard to turn Kitti out, my tyres skidded on the gravel and I took a bit of a tumble. As I lay with my nose buried in the dirt it made a change not to have to leap up and catch the bicycle before it ran off.

Another bonus was not getting the 'horses are dangerous' lecture from the nurse as she washed out the grit and gave me a tetanus injection. In fact no-one, not even my husband, has even touched on the subject of perhaps giving up cycling because it might be dangerous!

Of course there are similarities between the two sports and being safe on the road comes to mind. Being seen is vital so always wear a 'bright'. Even if most of your ride is off road, there is usually a short stretch of roadwork, so please buy one now. The WDBA have them on sale at all our events.

Recently, an article in Horse and Hound urged us to make sure our riding hats fit correctly, with the chin strap done up securely and not left loose as so many of us do. We are reminded that any impact reduces its effectiveness and just by dropping it we can be putting ourselves at risk. Seek expert advice when you buy a new one as different brands fit different shaped heads better than others.

I am sure all of you have heard about the horse friendly Pegasus crossings especially for horse riders to negotiate a busy road safely. I used one for the first time last week – yes, whilst out on my bicycle! It was a great experience to press the button, albeit at the lower level and then wait for the flashing green horse to appear before crossing the road. We are so vulnerable on the roads whether riding a horse or bicycle which is why the work of the WDBA must continue. We are currently seeking funding to resurface a permissive path on Backside Common and another useful link on Sheets Heath. By supporting our activities, either as a participant or voluntary helper, you are making a positive contribution to our programme.

Finally if you feel you would like to have a go at being Chairman or Secretary for a while, call Philippa or myself for a confidential chat. The work is not particularly onerous, is good fun and has the support of an established Committee. I look forward to hearing from you.

Enjoy the Summer,

Wendy



For the latest news
on dates, entry
forms and tickets
for our events, visit
www.wdba.org.uk

High Viz – High on safety

Traditionally, High Visibility (Hi-Viz) clothing has been thought of as something you only wear on the roads or in bad weather. Increasingly the importance of hi-viz clothing when riding out anywhere, at anytime of day, is becoming more apparent. In the summer the sunshine and long evenings mean that many people do not wear hi-viz clothing at all.

Hi-viz is a must on roads. Even when you are out on the bridleways hi-viz should be part of your safety kit. If you are riding on your own and happen to part company with your horse, a hi-viz jacket can help emergency crews find you more easily in long grass or woodlands. Your horse should also wear some hi-viz items so they can be seen if you are not on board.

David Kerry, Senior Road Safety Officer for Cumbria says, "With insurance companies and judges looking to re-apportion blame in road collision cases, it is vital that riders wear high visibility clothing at all times of the year and in all weather conditions. In any case, you owe it to yourself and your horse to give yourselves as much protection as possible. Don't give drivers a chance to say they didn't see you."

It is a scientific fact that leg-bands are seen first by motorists because they are moving as the horse walks along. In low light, especially at dusk in the summer, high visibility clothing and stirrup lights will increase your chance of being seen by at least 30 metres on the roads.

A simple hi-viz tabard is a start but will not be enough if you come off your horse. Your horse should wear hi-viz accessories too. Take time to think about the different angles you want to be seen from, especially the front and rear when on country lanes. Boots for your horse, a quarter sheet and brow band are a good all round combination. For the rider a hat band and tabard.

WDBA hi-viz tabards are available from The Secretary at £7.50 incl p+p!

A prize riding Lesson with Alison Craig by Marian Sage

As many of you may recall the star raffle prize at the Jumping for Fun demonstration was a lesson with Alison Craig BHSI (Reg'd). I was slightly stunned when one of my numbers was first out of the hat. When asked what theme the lesson would take I opted for something similar to the Jumping for Fun demo.

The little horse I ride is 26-year-old Mishari, a 14.2hh Arab belonging to Lisa Cresswell. She bought him as an unbroken 8 year old with a lot of attitude. I believe she initially had some 'fun' breaking him in as he already had some strong opinions of his own, but he went on to be well schooled and did a lot in those early days. In later years he's mainly been hacking and when he began stumbling a couple of years ago, Lisa more or less retired him. Although I've been riding for over 50 years, there was a long break when I didn't have my own horse and only rode very occasionally. About 3 years ago I decided either not ride at all or do something about it so I started having regular lessons. A chance conversation at work led to me riding 'Shari' & now, with a new farrier, he has been back in work this last year and with the help of lessons from Geoff Dorsett he seems to be going from strength to strength.

Alison first worked Shari on the lunge, commenting on what she was doing, asking him to work in a correct manner and getting some results with him, graduating to poles. After a while I took over with Alison giving advice and reminding me what I should be doing. It's a long time since I last did any lunging and I tried not to get too muddled. Shari, as usual, was taking everything in his stride but quite happy to take advantage given half a chance. We progressed to some ridden work, first on the flat, and then using the poles and a small jump. Shari has a very powerful jump, I remembered to look into the distance but my jumping position could have been better! At our request Alison finished the afternoon by riding Shari herself for a few minutes, again commenting on what she was doing, asking for some lateral work and showing how he would keep his shape when 'given' the rein. Lisa and I thoroughly enjoyed watching her put him through his paces. Alison left me keen to capitalise on the day but obviously, considering Mishari's age, we need to curb our enthusiasm.

My thanks go to Lisa who allows me to ride her wonderful little horse, Geoff Dorsett and Gillian for the use of their outdoor school and to Alison for being so generous with her time. Her enthusiasm and good humour made it a very enjoyable afternoon.

Maybe I should also thank the person who sold me that raffle ticket!



Resurfacing Public Bridleway 413, Sheets Heath Common

Several months ago, we started to investigate possible funding avenues for a very boggy and impassable bridleway linking Stafford lake, Bisley with Sheets Heath, Brookwood. The track has recently been claimed as a Public Bridleway thanks to local rider, Michelle Gleed and Chobham Common Riders Association chairman, Diane Beach. Unfortunately, as a recently claimed bridleway, it's not eligible for funding from the local authority. So, building on our success with gaining Lottery funding for the Normandy path, we contacted the Lottery to see what grants would be suitable for this project.

The Lottery's "Awards for All" scheme seemed suitable, as the path fitted neatly into the criteria for a community-based project that would benefit local people. But the scheme's application form required details of the owner of land that the bridleway crosses, and this has proved to be a substantial problem, as a Land Registry search found the land to be unregistered.

The MoD and Woking Borough Council have confirmed that they don't own it. Historically much of the land in Brookwood area was owned by Lord Onslow, so we've contacted him to ask if he owns it. As I write this, we have yet to hear from him. By the time you read this, however, we will probably know the answer!

We hope that the issue of land ownership won't prove the downfall of this project, as resurfacing this important path would make a huge difference to riders and the wider community of this area.

Quiz Night



Over 100 WDBA members and friends gathered in St Mark's Church Hall in January for the first WDBA Quiz Night. Pictured above left are the winning team (led by Neville Bryan).

Jumping for Fun Lecture Demonstration



Our demo at Parwood Equestrian Centre lived up to its title AND raised over £600.

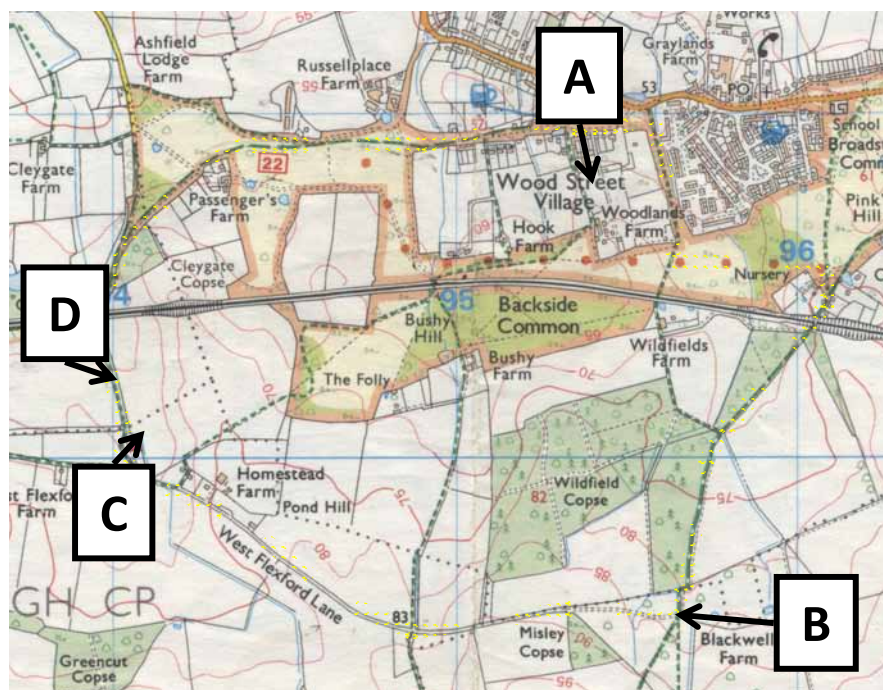
Alison Craig (BHSI) and Tracey Smale (BHSII), our lecturers for the demo, used 3 very different horses to demonstrate the methods and benefits of lungeing over poles and jumps. The first horse, Ameera, a grey mare with plenty of confidence and enthusiasm for the job, was lunged by Jo Haward. Ameera was a great example of how pole work can help to control a keen horse. Next up was Smartie lunged by his owner, Sarah Ainley. Unlike Ameera, Smartie can be spooky, so Alison was able to show how to get a less confident horse to accept the poles and tackle jumps. Lastly, Tracey lunged her horse, Ronnie. As Ronnie had recently completed a period of rehab following injury, Alison and Tracey were able to show how poles and jumps had been used in his rehabilitation.

The evening finished with a demonstration of how to ride over poles and through grids. Tracey & Alison talked about the related distances, how to ride the jumps and poles at different stride lengths, and how to jump fences at an angle.

Caroline Finch, international dressage press photographer, took many wonderful photographs throughout the evening. For anyone interested in Caroline's work, see www.caroline-finch.co.uk.

A DVD of the evening is available at a cost of £5 (£1 from each sale goes to WDBA). Please contact WDBA member, Sarah Ainley on nick@ainleyh.fsnet.co.uk if you would like to order one. (If you'd like a copy of last year's Lungeing Demo, please ask Sarah for details.)

The Damson Ride



This is a circular ride of about one hour's duration starting and finishing at Wood Street Green where you can usually find a place to park your trailer towards the south-west corner of the green (labelled **A** on the map). There is no real road work involved. Note, however that the section of the ride from **B** to **D** is on private land, for the use of which the WDBA was granted permission several years ago. It is really important, therefore to confine yourself to the route shown on the map in order to maintain the good will of the land owners. Set off around the southern edge of the green and down Pound Lane stepping over the metal gate at the far end and immediately turning left along the windy track through the woods. Go over the wooden bridge; continue uphill through more woodland to reach the top at Pinks Hill Drive.

Turn right over the railway bridge then right & immediately left going downhill along the bridleway. You reach a staggered cross-roads on the track where you effectively go straight on to follow the bridleway, riding along the very edge of a farmer's field.

At the end of this field (marked **B**) you turn right off the bridleway onto the track going across the field towards the gateway in the opposite corner; as there is often a crop in the field you should stay in single file to minimise damage; do not ride around the edge of the field which is designated for conservation purposes. At the gateway go down the well defined track & eventually straight on along West Flexford Lane, a roughly made up road. Along here in early autumn you may spot damson trees on the right hand side, which is why we call it the Damson Ride.

After about a mile take the track on the right where the now disused Wanborough Youth House is. At the wooden bridge (labelled **C**) cross with care to bring yourself onto a narrow track high up through the trees (beware of roots), running parallel to the stream and footpath below. Do not go into the field on the other side of the trees but continue along the track to the end (labelled **D**) next to the brick arch under the railway.

Go under the railway arch and follow the made up track taking the right hand fork at the top of the hill. this track will take you back past Passengers Farm and eventually the cricket pitch and White Hart Lane which leads back to the green where you started from.

Fun Trec June

After blazing temperatures all week July 4th dawned grey and windy - perfect for all the horses, riders and stewards participating in our Fun Trec Event. A full report will appear in the next Newsletter but congratulations to everyone for a most successful day.

Dates for your Diary

11 Sept	Quiz Night at Normandy Village Hall
19 Sept	Wood Street working party 10.00 to 12.30
19 Oct	Visit to Imber Court
15 Nov	AGM

Your Committee

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To contact your Committee or Area Representative please email wdba1992@msn.com or contact the relevant telephone no.