



MID COTSWOLD TRACKS & TRAILS GROUP

Helping to improve our tracks and trails ... from this generation to the next

TRACKS & TRAILS the grand vision

Many of you may not know of the national movement towards creating

Interlinking Greenways all across Britain

These are for local riders and visiting riders to use, in the same way as the walking trails are.

There are already many long-distance multi-user routes just waiting for you to box out to and ride them - for example The Southdowns, The Ridgeway, The Pennine Way, The Sabrina Way, Prince Llewellyn Way and loads more.

Riders in The Forest of Dean have started looking at a 54 mile "spine" route from Dymock to Breen, which will have some circular routes off of it, and spurs to allow livery yards and riding schools to access it. This is a huge project, and is part of an EU initiative to encourage economic opportunities to the area via Equine businesses, plus the extra business to pubs, cafe's, hotels and livery yards etc. that these routes might generate.

Here in the Cotswolds we are also looking at ways to improve the Equine Tourism opportunities as well as your local riding viability, by working on a cobweb of linking routes. As those of you who have followed us during the last few years will know, Lois has done a brilliant job of mapping the 22 routes in the Cotswolds which are on the BHS Emagin site.

(I find the site a bit confusing so: BHS site: Home: Riding: Find Where to Ride: Find A Route To Ride: Riding Off Road: EMAGIN: at the top Routes by Region: South West: see routes 7-28) Eight of these routes can be bought as printed maps from BHS. *(again - google BHS BOOKS: Books: Road Safety and Travelling: Cotswolds on Horseback £6.95)* There are also another 5 routes prepared by Lois which are not fully cleared for publishing yet.



We also have a draft plan, prepared by William and Lois, for a Long Distance route, running north to south, to link us to adjoining counties and other areas.

Our Cotswold section will form part of the John O Groats to Lands End route. The logic behind The Plan is to be part of the National network of Multi-User Trails, but the benefits will also be local, both for riders and businesses. What use is a livery yard with no riding? There is also the opportunity for Equine Bed & Breakfasts and day-time pub stops for food and a rest, both on the main route and the networking circuits.

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Sue and Pat spent an afternoon with the BHS mapping officer having a look at the proposed Long Distance route and how it links to the Cotswold on Horseback circuits, and getting it as a draft version onto their electronic maps. Unfortunately, the BHS licensing rules of Ordnance Survey mean we can't publish it for you to see at the moment, but we could show it to anyone interested, or organise a meeting to explain it if several people would like that.

Although our ultimate aim is grand, we are starting small, and just beginning the learning curve. Our first project is to look at the area between Edge and Eastington, including Standish and Nupend and all the problems entailed here. While we are specifically targetting a Trail and some circuits, we are keeping in mind all the linking possibilities of the area, and all the circuits that might extend away and link to other areas. We are trying to find out about some funding to start the first stage of this project.

WHY NOT RIDE 2,500 MILES AROUND ENGLAND ?

Talking of Trail Riding our founder Chairman, William, asked himself the above question and then decided to have a go !!!!

Starting in Spring 2013 and taking 6 months ... William says

"Help me raise £250,000 and bring smiles and laughter thanks to two charities that make a difference:

- * The Family Holiday Association helps many hundreds of families in dire circumstances to have a simple break.
- * Wormwood Scrubs Pony Centre brings the transforming power of horses and ponies to inner London children and young people who face physical, mental or social challenges.

The Challenge for me is to ride a horse across the country to four corners of England, going through towns and cities, visiting 30 cathedrals and abbeys on the way. I want to make enough noise (I am learning to play the trumpet) to raise that £250,000."

rideroundengland.org

GO WILLIAM !!

Successful Workparty

On 22nd October 2011, Lois, Margaret, Jane, Sue, Debbie and Christine cleared about 400 metres of bridleway BBR2 near Birdlip (Brimpsfield Parish).

Well done, everyone.

If you think you might like to tackle anything like this, contact us to see if it can be organised. We can arrange insurance for the day with BHS, and have a Health and Safety system to comply with the insurers requirements.

MCTTG Who, What, Why and How Many

Who .. The Group formed in July 2008 and took a while to get known and for the committee to get to grips with some of the issues. We were very lucky to have William as our Chair for the first year, as his knowledge of Tracks & Trails is legendary, and he is still supporting us with advice and editing on many issues. Rights of Way is a complicated subject.

We were also unbelievably fortunate that Lois took on the huge task of researching and progressing the Circular Routes which are the stepping stones of the group's aims. Although Lois has now stepped down as MCTTG chair, she remains the BHS County Access & Bridleways Officer, so continues to be very busy with all things Tracks & Trails.

The committee is now Pat Harris (Chair), Sue Ellis (Secretary), Katrina Thacker (Treasurer), Steve Radcliffe (Web & Mapping) and Jo Chapman. Having only 5 committee members is not ideal. Emma Chandler from Stinchcombe has offered to step up and join us, and we would REALLY welcome any other offers, as it is important that we should be quorate for each meeting.

What and Why .. The AIMS of the group are:

- 1 To improve and expand the tracks and trails network (bridleways, byways, unsurfaced roads and other off-road routes open to horse riders) to enable horses to be ridden off road in safety.
- 2 To develop new links and create additional multi-use routes to benefit horse riding.
- 3 To promote safer conditions for horse riders on roads.
- 4 To promote use of local riding routes and facilities to promote sustainable tourism, which may include publication of maps and guides.
- 5 To establish good relations with local authorities, landowners and other user groups, such as walkers, cyclists, disabled, trail riders and carriage drivers, in order to achieve the above.
- 6 To provide assistance in maintaining existing tracks and trails.

We only meet every 2 months, so if you think you could join us, you wouldn't necessarily be required to work on any specific tasks, but your input would be greatly appreciated.

How Many .. How many riders are there in our area who are over 60 ? How many less-able riders are there (any age) who couldn't walk 3 or 4 miles but who can manage to ride out into the countryside ? Help us gather some information on the benefits of good bridleways in keeping bodies and minds more healthy.

... TALK TO US ON FACEBOOK.....we've just changed to a GROUP PAGE ... (still trying to sort it !)
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/204449259636921/>
or search for Mid Cotswold Tracks and Trails Group and choose "Group"

Or come and meet us - Our next meeting is 7.30 January 11th at The Amberley Inn

WHAT CAN BE DONE ?

Lois shows us the steps at Cranham



This bridleway leads down from the lovely Saltridge Woods, passes Brook Farm and continues to the edge of Cranham (and the award-winning Black Horse pub!) but hardly any riders risked using it, because this section is very steep and narrow, and had become especially difficult, due to some trappy, exposed tree roots which presented serious trip hazards to horses (and to walkers) – my wellingtons are deep in mud behind two of those roots.

GCC Public Rights of Way Officer Jaci Harris agreed the need to improve the surface over this section, and negotiated permission from Natural England and the National Trust for this work to be done.

With materials provided by Jaci, a party from the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens Service led by Ray Crabb carried out the work: installing three well-spaced shallow steps to cover the exposed tree roots; cutting back over-hanging branches; and repairing the adjacent fence, the wires of which had broken in several places, leaving snaggy trailing ends.

Mention must also be made of the kindness of the adjacent landowners, Mr. & Mrs. Turnham, who assisted the Wardens by allowing them to store the materials needed for the job on their land, accommodated the Wardens with car parking, and helped them with the actual work. What an improvement! Many thanks to Jaci, Ray, Mr. & Mrs. Turnham, and everyone involved!



2 NEW GATES AT FROCESTER - Aug 18th 2011



Another group of Cotswold Wardens, led by Noel Banks, worked in the rain to install 2 new gates at Frocester.

These are beside the main farm gates. Glos County Council Public Rights of Way Dept supplied the gates. The latest catalogue I have quotes these gates at £217 (excl VAT)



The first gate finished. Gate is hung the safest way to open, and a fence has been erected to keep the horses away from the softer ground. The gates also have hinges that off-set the weight and assist with closing.



The second gate being installed. MCTTG assisted PROW department by preparing a report on the bridleway, and talking to the farmer at the Frocester end, to see what would be the best solutions for him and for the riders. Many thanks to Dave for his co-operation.



The second gate finished, with stone to improve the footing. If you know a Cotswold Warden - be nice to them - they do brilliant work! Further improvements are planned on this route.

THE CHURN VALLEY CYCLE GROUP MULTI-USER PROJECT



The CVCG formed in 2009 for the purpose of reclaiming a three mile length of bridleway and restricted byway between North Cerney and the edge of Cirencester. The PRowWs follow the line of the River Churn along the valley, and used to be the highway into Cirencester; but the route was prone to flooding, and early in the C19, the Manors of Cowley, Colesbourne, and Rendcomb jointly employed Thomas Telford to construct a new road – now the A 435, which was above the flood plain, though had the effect of cutting off most off North Cerney village from its parish church.

The CVCG envisaged that the PRowWs could provide a safer route to Cirencester for walkers and mountain bikers, but they had not been properly maintained, could really only be used by walkers, and so needed attention!

Lois attended the Group's monthly meetings from the summer of 2009, went to discuss the project with one of the tenant farmers, and in January 2010, participated in a Group walkover together with Mike Barton, GCC PRow Officer, to identify work needed. The list was long – installation of several new gates and some existing gates re-hung, a lot of cutting back of overgrown hedges, some very muddy sections to be scraped, a new French drain to be installed, a fallen tree to be cleared, a lot of barbed wire to be made safe, an electric fence to be moved, and waymarking.

The Group started fund-raising for the improvements, and later in 2010, Mike Barton's contractor started on the heavier work.

In August 2011, Lois was invited to bring Lakin on another 'walkover' to review work so far – here they are pictured on the route with Paul Hodgkinson, Group Chair and District Councillor on his mountain bike, and Jane, Sam, and Andy, three members of the Group.

The new gates are lovely! – proper two-way opening bridleway gates with rider-friendly handles. Many other small but important improvements have been done: electric fencing has been removed; Mike Barton of Glos County Council Rights of Way Department has waymarked the route, and rectified the worst instance of protruding barbed wire, and is looking at the problem of a bank which prevents one gate being opened wide enough for safe passage by horses.

The Group hopes to fund their own waymarks to indicate their input along this route, and Lois has offered to organise and lead a work party (or two!) of volunteers in the autumn.

If anyone would like to make a donation to this project, please contact Paul at paul.hodgkinson1@virgin.net

MEMBERSHIP THIS IS STILL FREE

WE NEED YOUR
BACKING WHEN WE
ARE TALKING TO THE
PEOPLE WHO MAKE
DECISIONS ON OUR
TRACKS & TRAILS.

For letters to MPs,
Councils, DEFRA,
Sustrans and all the
other decision-making
bodies we need the weight
of your numbers behind us.

**Access to cycle tracks ?
Grant funding rules ?
Obstructions on routes ?
Upgrading of tracks ?
New cattle grids ?**

These are some of the
issues we have been
busy with over the last
year, and which are at the
heart of the talks we are
having right now.

Give A New Meaning To

HORSE POWER



MID COTSWOLD TRACKS & TRAILS GROUP

Helping to improve our tracks and trails ... from this generation to the next ...

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

*(one form per person, more forms available at
www.midcotwoldtrails.org.uk)*

NAME

.....

ADDRESS

.....

.....

PHONE

.....

email

.....

Areas I ride / walk / cycle / trail ride / carriage drive

I am interested in helping by:

- BEING ON THE COMMITTEE MONITORING A BRIDLEWAY
 FUNDRAISING

OTHER - please say if you can offer help or knowledge in any other way

- NONE OF THE ABOVE, I only want to be a general member, please
keep me informed of your events and I'll help or join in where I can.

.....

BHS
AFFILIATED

FREE MEMBERSHIP

Please post to: SUE ELLIS (Membership Secretary)
Willow Bank Cottage, 3 Far Westrip, Stroud,
Glos GL6 6HD

MCTTG 3. 01.03.11

PIX of the new crossing at Edge

We wrote this up last
time but I now have
pictures of the new
crossing that
The National Trust
have made for us
many thanks Tim (NT)
and Olga (MCTTG)

