



NEWS AND VIEWS

Your committee has two new members!

Amanda Hamley moved into a cottage in Luckwell Bridge this summer. Amanda owns a stunning coloured horse, an ex-gypsy trotter, Lady, a venerable 34 year old cob, Ebony, and a very cute palomino Shetland pony, Talullah, two little terriers, Brian and Betty, and Roger, a very smart black and white cat. Amanda has agreed to look after our website.



Amanda has always enjoyed pleasure riding and when she had the opportunity to move to Exmoor with its fabulous outriding, she upped sticks from Kent and moved with her three horses, two dogs and cat.

Since arriving she has wasted no time in exploring the area, already putting many miles under her horses' hooves.

Amanda has organised pleasure rides and riding camps in Kent and Sussex and is keen to gain further support for the WS&EBA and promote its good work to all horse riders within its remit.



Peta-Jane Field who has lived with her husband (and very important crew person) in The Old Chapel, Luckwell Bridge for the past four years. Peta-Jane owns two part-bred Arabians, Sprite, an 11 year old endurance horse, and Wizzy, a 27 year old ex-endurance horse, and two rescued cats, Dinah and Tom.

Sprite in action earlier this year, in Cornwall and on Exmoor.



Peta-Jane was a member of Cornwall's West Penwith's Bridleways for many years and looks forward to helping her fellow committee members by bringing the activities of WS&EBA to the attention of everyone who rides on Exmoor.

There were two scheduled escorted rides this year. Sadly, Shelagh Deane's ride in April had to be cancelled as it was too wet! A fairly common occurrence on Exmoor, but hopefully, all being well, Shelagh is hoping to lead a Summer Solstice Ride on Sunday 23 June 2019. Watch this space!

Led by Barbara Wigley, the second one took place on a boiling hot day in the middle of this summer, as you can see from these glorious photographs taken by Ian Wigley. Five riders joined her on this ride and, as Barbara says:

"We started at Webbers Post and rode clockwise, downhill into the woods, right turn beside the river until you reach the ford, then cross two fords and turn left along first track until you reach the bridleway up through Horner Wood. Follow this out onto Flora's Ride and then onto Ley Hill.

This lovely photo of the riders from behind shows the views across to Wales.



We rode on down through Halse Combe and onto the Coleridge Way to the road at Horner. (If you ride this route, be aware there are some scary narrow bits before you get to the road!) Then, riding on past Horner Farm, we turned right up a track and then went left through the deer gate onto a firm track. We followed this track, just above the road until we reached Chapel Cross.



We rode down onto road and went straight across it to join track again, and continued on this track until we reached a sign pointing to the left indicating a bridleway to Huntscott. We turned right here and followed the firm track uphill round the edge of the woodland.

Barbara leading riders along the track in the woods

We followed this track until you meet the road used as a public path (RUPP!) that takes you back to Webbers Post.

To sum up, this route was spectacular, with far-reaching views of the surrounding hills and, as you can see from the photo above, even across to Wales in some places. There were plenty of hills to climb, it was nice and cool through the woods, and we had some good canters on firm tracks. A really lovely ride to do, but perhaps better in spring or autumn, when the flies wouldn't have been so persistent.

Barbara waves her 'swisher' at Freddie en route back to Webbers Post - there were lots of flies!



The mini Trec and Treasure Hunt on Sunday 2 September was a huge success!

The twenty five entrants were lucky to have a dry sunny (but not too hot day) for this event. Everyone set off with staggered starts from Wheddon Cross market place and headed down to Luckwell Bridge for something a bit different!

Thanks to the encouragement from Trec South West member, Shelagh Deane and her sister, Jenny Moore, who set up the mini Trec course for folk to try, almost everyone did give it a go and, in doing so, did indeed have great fun!

Gary Mills's lovely horse stepped very carefully over cross poles ...



Other obstacles included bending round traffic cones, neck reining, opening a gate and walking through the stream at Luckwell Bridge

Peta-Jane Field and Sprite attempted the bending while, watched by Sue Rose, Steph Blackmore crossed the stream perfectly on Rollo!



The joint winners of the Trec section were Carole Burge and Zoe Willford

Meanwhile, the route of the Treasure Hunt took riders through Blagdon Woods, up across the bottom of the Dunkery Hill on the Coleridge Way, down to Ellsworthy Allotment and on round via Style Down to East Harwood.

Mel Brown on George imitating a well-known saint facing a dragon!



The route crossed another series of open fields to West Harwood Farm and back up Drapers Way into North Hawkwell Woods. And into the grounds of Raleigh Manor and back to the market place

Philippa Verry and Shona Grey make their way through a bamboo jungle.

The winners of the Treasure Hunt itself were Joanna Webber and Gary Mills, with a perfect score of 6/6. All the other riders received a rosette and some chocolate 'treasure' and the horses were given carrots!

WSE&EBA's Treasure Hunts take a massive amount of organisation and huge thanks must go to Barbara Wigley and her husband Ian, all her helpers, Julia and Jeremy Holtom, Shelagh Dean, Jenny Moore, Jaye Jones and her sister, Helen Asher.

We had a hugely successful and very sociable AGM on Thursday 15 November, thanks to the tremendous efforts of Alison Kent, Jaye Jones and Julia Holtom who sent out a letter to each and every member, past and present!

In addition to being delighted to see new faces at the meeting, I am sure everyone enjoyed Leonie Martin's presentation. One of Exmoor's hardworking The Brooke's fundraisers, most of us know Leonie, after all who can resist buying bits and bobs from her tack stall at a local show– I bought a lovely leather head collar last summer. What we might not know is that Leonie is Brooke's Exmoor Group's eBay expert and made £1,505 last year mainly from her online tack sales. So if you are wondering what to do with that old saddle which is gathering dust in your tack room, please give it to Leonie! She knows how horsey things, like old leather, can be transformed by craftsmen and given a new lease of life in a very different guise!

Leonie spoke very eloquently about The Brooke's history as well as its present-day work and, despite her positive attitude, few of us were able to remain dry-eyed during her talk. I am certain most horsey folk are aware of The Brooke, founded by Dorothy Brooke who sought out and cherished aged and neglected war horses in Egypt to give them a few days' tender loving care before allowing them to die in peace and with dignity. However, perhaps we are not aware, as Leonie explained, now The Brooke's main aim is to educate owners.

The Brooke works with owners, communities and policy makers to bring about lasting change, even in some of the world's most challenging areas. We use our expertise to train and support owners of horses, donkeys and mules, local vets, farriers, harness makers and animal traders to improve standards of care. Operating in 11 different countries, and funding projects in four others, the Brooke now reaches over 2 million working horses, donkeys and mules – more than any other organisation.

Exmoor's Brooke Group has an excellent website, which is worth visiting: www.thebrooke-exmoor.co.uk



Your two new members, Amanda and Peta-Jane attended their first committee meeting on Thursday 15 November, where it was agreed Amanda would look after the website and Peta-Jane take on the PR role. The full minutes of this meeting will be posted on the website in due course.

One important message is that the WS&EBA aims to be the voice of all riders on Exmoor. We need to hear about any problems or concerns you have regarding bridleways in your area, otherwise they cannot be addressed. All the committee members' contact details are on the website.

The WS&EBA is fortunate enough to have Ian Wigley who takes very many beautiful photographs of members on rides. He is very happy to share these with folk, so don't forget to email him at ianwigley02@gmail.com to see if he took one of you!

Next year we thought three rides would be a good plan. The first to be led by Barbara from Cromers Gate on Sunday 28 April, a Summer Solstice Ride lead by Shelagh Dean on Sunday 23 June, another Treasure Hunt on Sunday 1 September – and if there are enough folk interested to help as well as ride, a Christmas Cracker Ride in December.

Finally, Peta-Jane would love to hear any feedback about this newsletter and also if any member has any stories after our future rides, she will only too happy to hear them and write them up! All words and photos always welcome! This is YOUR newsletter! Please use it! peta-janefield@outlook.com

Please could you let me know if you would prefer to receive your newsletter by email or by post. Remember to keep looking at our website www.westsomersetbridleways.org.uk where you will find the details for all the committee members, minutes of meetings and future events - and don't forget we have a Facebook page, too. Thank you very much!

