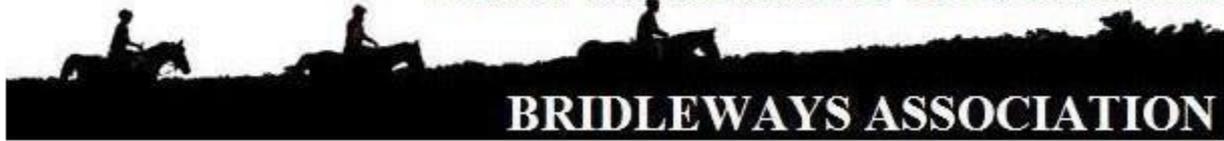


# WEST SOMERSET & EXMOOR



## BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

### NEWS AND VIEWS Winter 2019

Hello again to all our members!



Well, here we are again, surrounded by large puddles, slushy mud and raging waterfalls where there used to be bridleways – ah, yes, the joys of wintertime on Exmoor!

Yet if we remember back to Sunday 1 September, what a very different story it was back then! Your committee worked very hard to put on the WS&EBA's annual Pleasure Ride, Treasure Hunt and mini Handy Pony competition which Brendon Manor Trekking Centre very kindly hosted for us.

Brendon Manor's proprietors, Charlotte and Chris were very helpful, and worked with us on the route over Cheriton Ridge, which was walked at least three times by various members of the committee. It was checked, tweaked a little bit and checked again and finally clearly marked for us by Exmoor Trail Bikers, Grant, Andy and John.



Sarah Eustice on *Northern Genes* at Brendon Two Gates



Sarah Eustice on *Northern Genes* and Frances King on *Peaches* on Cheriton Ridge

It would seem everyone who rode it had the most marvellous ride, which made all our hard work well worth it! As you will see from Su Elsdon's ride report below.

### *From Soggy Bottom\* to Bilbo's Base"*

*What a brilliant ride. What amazing scenery. What fantastic weather - I put it all down to excellent organisation and an extremely kind and generous team of stewards and helpers.*

*We set off, (that's Mary on her well-behaved Exmoor and me on my overly bouncy Welsh) with every intention of cracking the various clues. We were too confident. The main hitch was the need to get the glasses out with every clue, find the pen - (in a pocket? - have we dropped it?) and attempt to scribble a possible answer as we bounce along over the heather and gorse.*



Mary Hannah on *Kingsy Fennel* as seen by Su Elsdon on *Rocky*

*The first clue - so simple with the car parked outside a house with an 'easy to read' manufacturer's name on it! Ah! Wrong! As we found out later - of course, we had to cross a 'Ford'. So canny! And so it continued - we got the next one, but were frantically trying to find a reference to a Soggy Bottom\* or a pie, or something surely relating to Mary Berry - Wrong again! The 'wet bottom' referred to a water butt. Lack of lateral thinking on our part there!*



So we concentrated on the ride - and what a ride! Amazing scenery and perfect going as we skirted over moorland and up to Brendon Two Gates (could it have been one or even three for clue no. 5?) Then over the



road and down to cross the river (Farley Water? clue no 6) and back up a steepish track (assuming we'd taken the right route - given that some of the well placed markers had been unfairly nicked!) passing what must have been Bilbo's preferred hovel, and back to the field we'd parked in.

And it didn't stop there ....

*Rocky* takes in two views from Cheriton Ridge

We were 'persuaded' to show ourselves up in the 'handy pony' course - attempting a controlled walk (hah!), a steady trot or even canter (fat chance!) weaving around the markers - and some shifty moves with a ball in a bucket and dropping a post into a cone . . . time we called it a day!

A huge thank you for the brilliant planning and route marking and for making it such a memorable ride and all for the right reasons. Roll on the next one!" Su Elsdon riding with Mary Hannah.

Thank you very much, Su! This glowing report warmed the cockles of your committee's hearts!

Indeed, Shelagh Dean and I did have fun setting up the mini-Handy Pony, sadly we don't have any photos, but there were a number of very clever ponies and riders who did very well manoeuvring themselves around our odd assortment of obstacles! In the end, it was actually won by Peter Vaughan on *Aston*, very much a horse, who was accompanied by Shannon Toms on *Scan*.



Other riders who enjoyed themselves were Lucy Hernaman on her Fell Pony *Freedom* who obviously found being in a stream perfect for a well planted cool down, and Bethany Rawle whose lovely Anglo-Arab *Urchin* looks handsome enough to do well in a show ring!



Now the next riders seemed to be having a lovely time too, but I am afraid we failed to keep records of who was riding whom, so please identify yourselves and I'll let everyone know in the next newsletter ...



Mel Brown and Michele Binx bouncing along the ridge



Lovely white-faced pony and happy rider at Brendon Two Gates



Pretty pony bowling along Cheriton Ridge



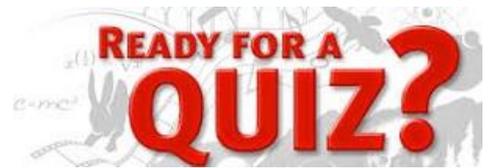
And here are another pair having a great ride

But, oops, we don't know who's who son whom in the last three of these photo! Please email your names and the names of the ponies to [peta-janefield@outlook.com](mailto:peta-janefield@outlook.com) – thank you!





The next item which gave your committee more hard work in the autumn was the AGM, which was held on Thursday 7th November 2019 at 7pm at The Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross. You will find all the details of what was discussed and decided on the website. Towards the end of her Chairman's report, Alison Kent said that to the best of her knowledge WS&EBA has been about since the 1970's so we must soon be approaching our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Now this surely must be a cause for celebration, a good horse filled day with a guided ride in a favourite place followed by a night out with a quiz?



Following our usual AGM business, which included a very encouraging financial report prepared and presented by Nic Kemp, David Gervers, the South West Director the British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BASC) entertained everyone present with a very informative and wide ranging illustrated presentation on ***“Co-operation in the countryside between shooters and riders.”***



David began by outlining a shoot's annual routine and what happens on shoot day. He explained planning for the programme for the shooting season starts twelve to eighteen months earlier, which is why it is difficult to make changes once committed to a plan.



There are different forms of shooting, 'driven game', which includes pheasant shooting, 'rough shooting' which is usually used to control fox and vermin and pigeon and corvid numbers. In other parts of the country, deer are controlled by 'stalking' instead of hunting.



David talked about legislation for shoots, which covers rights of way, the use of guns in public places, trespass and, interestingly, the legal status of game birds, the framework of behaviour for a shoot and the limitations to code's legal authority.

Whilst acknowledging concerns exist between shooters and riders, David thought a good relationship could exist between the two groups and any problems or risks could be overcome. Noise is most controversial issue which needs addressing: - noise from the guns, noise created by spent shot as it falls as well as any falling shot birds, noise from sudden movements made by dogs and beaters working in cover as they approach a ROW and the noise of a flushed animal.

Other risks include drives near regular riding routes which may be responsible for spent shot falling on or around those routes.

Finally, we were advised the following guidelines will help to contribute towards the safety of the riders and horses:

- Riders and shooters should show courtesy and consideration towards each other at all times
- As soon as a horse or horses are spotted, all shooting and beating should stop until they have passed
- All guns should be aware of bridleways as well as fields where horses are located and drives should be organised with this in mind.
- Dates of shooting days should be published and local riding centres informed of any drives which may affect them.
- If appropriate, signs should be placed notifying riders when shooting will be taking place.
- Shooters and riders should ensure that they have adequate third-party insurance.





## ENPA/RIGHTS OF WAY UPDATE Whose Rights? What Rights?

The Definitive Map and Statement is the legal record of a Public Right of Way.

In the 1950's each Parish / District and County Councils and other interested parties were legally asked to record on a map, with an accompanying written description (the Statement) of any paths which they understood to have "public" rights of access and to indicate what they believed the status of that path should be. After several draft maps and extensive public consultations, the Definitive Map was born. If a route is shown on this map then it is conclusive evidence of the existence of that route. Each County in England and Wales (Scotland has different access Laws) must legally keep a Definitive Map which should be kept up to date and accurate.

Unrecorded routes can be legally recorded and errors corrected where there is sufficient evidence. This is only allowed under specific legal requirements and not done on a whim!

Somerset County Hall in Taunton hold the map for all of Somerset. Whereas at Exmoor House in Dulverton, there is a copy showing all the ROWs, but only within the National Park. These maps can be viewed by anyone and also can be found the SCC web site. [Somerset.gov.uk/rights\\_of\\_way/ROAM](http://Somerset.gov.uk/rights_of_way/ROAM)

### There are four categories of PROWs.

**Public Footpath (FP)** - Public rights to use on foot.

**Bridleways (BW)** – Public rights to use on foot, on horseback, leading a horse, on a bicycle.

**Restricted Byways (RB)** – Public rights on foot, horseback, bicycle and horse drawn vehicles.

**Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT)** - All the above rights plus motorised or non- motorised vehicles.

No other country throughout the entire World have the same recording system allowing such specific legal public access that we enjoy in England and Wales.

So, get out there and explore your local Rights of Way, be it on foot, horse or bike- it is your privilege!



Despite the horrible wet weather, in the few clear and bright gaps, my little grey pony, Sprite and I have had couple of glorious rides on Dunkery Hill.



I have included these pics to encourage you folk to send me pics of your pony, or horse riding along your favourite bridleway, be it through a wood, across the open moorland or over fields, which I can include in the next newsletter.

Remember to keep looking at our website [www.westsomersetbridleways.org.uk](http://www.westsomersetbridleways.org.uk) where you will find the details for all the committee members, minutes of meetings and future events – guided rides, another Treasure Hunt and maybe even a Christmas Cracker Ride and don't forget we have a Facebook page, too. Thank you very much!

**A very Happy Christmas and New Year to you all!**

