

HODGEMOOR RIDER

New Brochure: More Members

At the AGM last October we discussed how to increase membership. There are about 100 members in a local estimated riding community of 300 to 400. The more members we have, the more we can achieve. It was pointed out at the AGM that it was sometimes difficult to convince new riders

coming into the area of the need to raise funds: they don't know what the woods were like and how much they have been improved for hacking in the last 4 years. So the new brochure has before-and-after pics, and photos of trails that still need surfacing. The brochure also stresses the need to maintain all the trails: local riders cannot risk Hodgemoor being closed to them because of trail degradation. There are also photos of the XC course, available to members for £5. These brochures have been distributed to livery managers to give to all new arrivals, and to existing clients who have never joined. I'm afraid those of you renewing have just got the old form for economy's sake! But if any of you feel you could make use of some of the brochures to promote the Association, please contact Susie Bicknell.

Subs due for 2005

There are no changes for 2005: £10 for adults, £20 family, £5 for under 15s and walkers. We do still need to raise funds. The Association has £3000 in the bank. At current prices, it costs £6000 to do 200 metres (Amber's Trail was 260 metres, our last project). This winter has shown one trail that needs work: the Glade leading down to the Dell where there was a fallen birch tree (see above). Perhaps we should aim for this as a



Work still to be done

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Repaired trail with culvert

next project to be done in 2006 or 2007. But please let us know other areas you feel need work.

British Horse Society Special Offer to Hodgemoor Members

Help UK's Biggest Horse
Charity

We presume that many of our Hodgemoor members already belong to the BHS, and we want to encourage more of

you to do so. Since the Association won the BHS national access award last year, it has begun to sink in what a lot the BHS does for horses and horse riders, and how important it is that it should grow in power and size. It is the UK's largest equestrian charity and contributes effectively on a great number of issues, the most notable being welfare and breeding, access, road safety, riding school and livery yard approval, equine career qualifications, competitions and Riding Club support.

For some of us in the horsey crowd, the BHS might have had a bit of an old-fashioned image, but after going to the award ceremony last November, we came away feeling that Noel Edmonds, the new chairman since 2004, is very determined to use his business acumen and PR capabilities to bring about improvements to image and performance.

BHS Member Goodies

In becoming a member of the BHS you don't just contribute to a charity and that's it - there are benefits too. Depending on which membership you take, you could have: "British Horse Magazine", welcome pack, BHS yearbook, BHS bookshop and other supplier discounts, access to help lines, and cheaper entry to BHS-organised XC and TREC events.

Need for Public Liability Insurance

The BHS Gold membership offers one particular advantage: public liability and personal accident insurance cover. In this age of litigation, especially with liability and negligence, a successful claim could cost an uninsured rider or horse owner their home. Damages awarded by the courts - combined with legal fees - are often now so high that most insurance companies have withdrawn from the market. Could never happen to you? What about these situations? A horse getting out and causing an accident or damage; spooking on the road when ridden and a car crashing to avoid it; kicking the farrier; injuring the saddler, or someone stubbing their toe in your yard. A farmer was sued recently when ramblers left a gate open and a cow escaped.

Much of this increased legal action has arisen as a result of law firms advertising their "no win, no fee" policy, and the situation has been exacerbated since 2003 by the Law Lords ruling in the *Mirvahedy vs Henley* case when horses escaped from their field at night causing an accident. The owners, initially, were not judged negligent because they were not aware that the fencing would allow the horses to escape. However, because an equine has the power to escape, spook, and generally be unpredictable, the Law Lords judged that the rider/owner should bear the ultimate responsibility for its actions, and therefore these owners were held liable. This is a very significant decision for us proud owners of our "fright and flight" animals, and could make us more susceptible to claims.

Unique BHS Insurance Cover

We made several calls to insurance companies regarding public liability insurance, including South Essex Insurance Brokers which arranges the BHS policy. We understood all of them to cover for somebody else riding or handling your horse, and for you to ride and handle somebody else's horse (an important consideration when we think it would be

fun/interesting to ride another horse).

What appears to be unique to the BHS cover from our enquiries is that the policy holder is covered for all horses that he/she owns, providing the horses are privately owned and for private use only. Commercial use and racing are specifically excluded. Other companies require a separate premium per horse. This is obviously a great advantage to all you lucky people who own more than one horse! Also the BHS policy will pay damages up to £10 000 000 whereas others pay much less.

Some of you will be covered for public liability by your house contents liability insurance, and others by your horse death, theft, vet fees, insurance. Again phone enquiries showed that whereas before companies offered public liability as package with this, they tend not to now.

BHS Special Offer to Hodgemoor Members

The BHS is offering Hodgemoor Riding Association members the chance of joining for free, saving £5. Please see the enclosed brochure for membership details and



Audrey Holbrook and Brenda Wickham with Susie and Marcus Bicknell for BHS Award

annual subs. Gold membership costs £49.

Just to show you how keen we are for you to join, any Hodgemoor member will get a free "Hodgemoor Riders" florescent tabard worth £10 if they join. Either use the enclosed form or phone 08701 202244 quoting AMB 31.

BHS membership currently stands at just under 60,000 with an estimated horse riding population in the UK of 2 and a half million. It would be good if Hodgemoor could add a few more!

BHS Access Award for Hodgemoor

Marcus and Susie Bicknell, Brenda Wickham and Audrey Holbrook were at the Saddlers Hall in the City of London last November when the Hodgemoor Riding Association received the National access award for 2004 from Noel Edmonds, BHS Chairman. Brenda Wickham, Treasurer for BHS Bucks County, has been a constant source of support (the Wickham Way bridleway is named after her!) and Audrey has boosted us all by raising so much money for the



Association with her riding school kids.

Trec Day

It seems a long time ago now, but the Association's first attempt at TREC went well. 18 took part with 4 riders coming all the way over from Winchmore Hill. At the last moment we decided to make it competitive rather than a practice session. This was hard work as none of the 4 judges had ever seen a TREC event let alone tried judging one. But everyone seemed happy with Annie Harris and Ziggy, and Simon Thornton on Harry doing well.

Fancy Hats, and that's not all

Just before Christmas, we celebrated 6 month's existence of Amber's Trail. Several young riders from Aescwood Farm Riding School came, and two of them had particularly good festive hats! Then a large party all the way from Austens yard in Jordans turned up in decorative gear. And finally, rather out of breath, so did Father Christmas. He'd had problems catching his horse.....



A Plea from the Secretary: Keep on the Horse Trails

We've been contacted recently with complaints that riders have been straying onto to walkers' paths. Horse riders do now have quite a good network in the Woods, so it is not a great hardship to stay on it. Walkers can sometimes not be very friendly to horse riders but please don't give them justification by going on their trails! If you find yourself talking to walkers who don't like horses in the woods, point out politely that walkers still have twice as many paths for themselves, AND can go on the horse trails as well (the converse is not the case obviously). It's my telephone number up in the woods, so I get the complaints.

New Contractor in Charcoal Yard

A local woodsman has taken over the old Charcoal Yard, and part of his contract entails collecting firewood. This year he will be working from the A355 side through to the old bridleway (the sides of which he will clear in the process). He can work weekdays only, so if you hear chainsaws, that's what it is. This will mean an end to meeting stoned ravers staggering around the yard early on Sunday mornings!

From "The Times" 11 Feb 05: "Horse Rage Driver"

A motorist who hooted his horn and shouted at two horse riders was fined £250 in what is believed to be the first case of "horse rage" to go before the courts. Eric James, 75, was convicted of driving without reasonable consideration for other road users and had his driving licence endorsed with 8 penalty points".

A victory for horse riders, this is true. But it would be great if horse riders took care not to provoke "horse rage". There I was on Narcot Lane recently on the School Run. Two riders side by side, totally absorbed in their chat, and totally oblivious of queues of cars behind and in front. It would have been nice if they could have least looked concerned at the delay they were causing and perhaps pulled in to one of the many convenient driveways to let cars pass, even if they were fully in their rights to stay where they were.

Livery Profile: Austens Farm

Set in approximately 50 acres off Twitchells Lane, Jordans, Austens is run by the former eventer and current dressage rider Sacha Hamilton. There are sixteen stabled horses and ten grass liveries, looked after by a rota of dedicated and enthusiastic staff. Two Czechs and a Pole amongst the staff meant that the recent cold weather wasn't a problem - Zebbe doesn't even call it cold until it reaches 25 below! Facilities include a full-size, all-weather area with floodlights, a set of show jumps, a wash area and solarium, and the use of a field for jumping in the summer. Human facilities include the all-important kettle, toaster, fridge and toilet, as well as a few comfy chairs and a resident black and white cat. Austens offers full, part and grass livery.

Sacha completed Bramham three day event during her cross country career, but now sticks closer to the ground and concentrates on dressage. She is bringing on her own five year old, and also trains and competes one of the full liveries at advanced medium level. She helps train several of

the other livery who are keen dressage riders, and there are regular clinics by the dressage rider Annie MacDonald-Hall. The yard also contains two hopeful eventers and three horses who go drag hunting with Berks & Bucks Draghounds. Versatility is a theme of the yard, with one livery competing in dressage and cross country and dressing up for Civil War Renactments. Another has completed 40 kilometre distance rides but has also taken part in novice dressage and show jumping, as well as winning the first HRA Trec competition. One grass livery is an experienced games pony who is also learning the Parelli system of training. The growing band of woolly ponies do everything from lead rein events to sponsored rides, and there is usually a cheerful lorry load heading off to most local events. Almost everyone at this yard is a member of the Hodgemoor Riders Association as nearly everyone hacks out in the woods regularly. Sacha can be contacted on 07774 236995.

Georgina Blair

XC Course

Don't forget this can be rented at any time to members for £5 per rider. Marcus Bicknell has just made a new height choice jump (3ft or 2ft 3"). First Fun Jump is on May 1st. The course may also be used for a Dog Agility event!

Jordans Lane Speed Limit: Limited Success in Sight

Prospects are finally looking good for a 30mph speed limit on part of Jordans Lane. The Just 30 committee of Jordans village residents has worked long and hard to persuade Bucks County Council that the current national speed limit on Jordans Lane, which becomes Twitchells Lane at its northern end, poses a danger to driver, pedestrian, cyclist and horse rider alike. A recent meeting of the Council's speed review committee backed the proposal to impose a 30mph limit on a stretch of Jordans Lane. The limit would apply on a section running from the entrance to Wilton Lane to somewhere between Old Jordans Hotel and the Friends Meeting House. A request had been made to extend the 30mph area, but apparently the Council feels that motorists will ignore the 30mph limit if the area is too long and not directly related to Jordans village.

The Council will be holding a public consultation about the limit within the next month or so, and there will be the opportunity to write letters in support of the proposed change in speed limit. We urge our members to write in support of the change, and will be letting you know when and where to send

your letters.

The new limit will help people who hack along Jordans Lane, but still leaves the last section, which is Twitchells Lane, with a very high legal speed limit. As this is the usual route towards Hodgemoor and the Wickham Way bridleway for riders based on Twitchells Lane, in Jordans, or on Welders Lane, there is still an urgent need to look for off road routes to the woods.

Georgina Blair

What you need that Passport for

Just to remind you, a valid passport will be needed to accompany your horse if it is being:

- used for competition or breeding
- sold or ownership is transferring
- moved to premises of new keeper
- sent for slaughter

- exported

Call Donna Yates, Horse Passport 0207 904 6215 for info.



Nicola McGivern to help Association

Local Olympic dressage rider Nicola McGivern has said she will help raise funds for the Association by giving a demo or talk. This will not be till the autumn as she is already very busy preparing and then taking part in the European Championships. We shall look forward to this!

Future Plans

XC Fun Jump, 100 Acres, Sun 1 May 10-12 am

TREC Morning, 100 Acres, Sun 29 May 10-12 am

Also planned: Endurance Clinic, XC Training with Jonathan Chapman, Rides to Penn and in Wendover Woods, Treasure Hunt

Dog Agility practice on XC Course: some of the many walkers who pass XC course suggested this! Half proceeds to Hodgemoor, half to Hearing Dogs for the Deaf. Volunteers?

Classified Ads

4 Piece Hifi system and speakers, Yamaha, Mowantz & Denon, for sale. Very good sound quality, good condition. £200 ono tel 07973 183975

Dressage Saddle, brown Albion, 17 ½ inches £350
Tel 01895 833805 or 07802 440546

Rug Cleaning and Repairs. Also bridle repairs. Call Anna Stubbley for estimates: 01895 833805 or 07802 440546

Weekend Groom Needed: Saturday or Sunday. Friendly private yard near Chalfont St Giles wants reliable animal-lover to look after 2 horses & 3 ponies. Lots going on (eventing, dressage) & good facilities (all weather arena, wash area, lots of coffee & biscuits). Good pay & flexibility to right person: Call Zoe 01494 872475 or 07932 417842.