

# HODGEMOOR RIDER

## Hacking in Hodgemoor again!

At long last we can again ride through all of Hodgemoor Wood and surrounding bridlepaths! The foot and mouth outbreak has had repercussions on millions of people, not least horse riders: no shows, no events, no hunting, restricted hacking. It has, however, really brought home to many of us round here how important Hodgemoor Wood is to the local riding community and how important it is to preserve it. I'm sure that many of you, like me, have really missed the wood, and have hated being forced to ride on the roads. My horse is a bit jittery on roads, and we have had several bad frights in the last three months. These frights were not necessarily drivers' faults or mine or my horse's: it's just that horses and vehicles are not easily compatible. The British Horse Society has statistics which show that there are at least 3000 road accidents involving horses every year (8 a day), and other reports suggest this figure might be nearer 29 a day. Obviously we must try to encourage drivers and riders to respect each other on the roads, but we must also try and get more off-road hacking. This is a principal reason why the Association exists. So please continue to support the Association: we need as many of you as possible!

**No. 2 - Summer 2001**

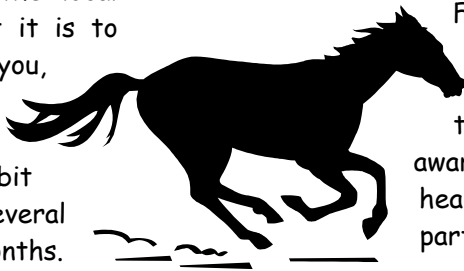
Susie Bicknell, editor

## Changes to Riding Trails

After discussions with the Association, Forest Enterprise is changing some of the trails. The principal aim of these changes is to close the trails that run near the car park, which really did become dangerously impassable in January and February because they were so boggy. Please refer to the enclosed map. So it will still be possible to do circular routes. Either you can go up Mulcern's Drive to Bottrells Lane, go

along the road (relatively quiet except in commuting times) and back down Bracken Ride.

Or you turn right at the east end of Highfield and then across the wood via The Mount to the Yellow Brick Road. The Mount is a lovely trail, and is basically much harder under hoof than the old peaty trails by the car park.



Forest Enterprise should be moving the trail signs any time now. Bear in mind that walkers may not be aware of the changes, so don't head off at full gallop, particularly on The Mount.

## Onyx Environmental Trust Grant Application

At the end of April, the Association submitted with Forest Enterprise a grant application to this trust, which funds projects as part of the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. As Hodgemoor Wood is within 10 miles of Wapseys Wood

(Onyx's huge landfill site on the A40 near Gerrards Cross), and as our plan comes

within their category of improvement to a park or amenity, they could possibly fund us. We submitted a 3-year plan, of which just the first phase would cost tens of thousands of pounds. Why so much money? We need to give a hard base to most existing trails in the Wood, and to create new ones, not only a link to the new bridlepath, but also across the other side of Bottrells Lane in Hales Wood. This is an ambitious project, and we hope that Onyx might fund if not all at least some of it.

We have since heard that the application has been deferred until September, because more information is required, particularly on the role of Bucks County Council. So we are working hard with Bucks County Council and Forest

Enterprise on this. Apparently Wapseys Wood Landfill Site is one of Onyx's biggest sites. Therefore, they are interested in projects near Wapsey. We will resubmit our application for early September, and if the project is recommended by the panel, it will go before the Onyx board in October. So we will keep our fingers crossed. At least we have not so far been rejected: only one in four of projects submitted to Onyx get finally accepted.

## Press Coverage

As part of our effort to raise the profile of the Riding Association and get more members, we managed to get articles both in the Bucks Free Press and Bucks Advertiser at the end of April. There were even big headings on the boards outside local newsagents saying "Threat to Riding Trails"! Both papers have since rung up again asking if we have had any news on funding, and they would certainly publicise any fund-raising events that we have.

## BHS Membership

The Association has joined the British Horse Society for £25 a year. Their Access and Rights of Way department has sent a lot of very good information on the whole issue of bridlepaths. Part of our responsibility as a member is to report on the state of our local bridlepaths, and help maintain them. So please let us know if a builder has dumped a skip-load on one, or a tree has fallen, so we can inform Bucks County Council. We will also offer clearance working parties if the Council does not have the facilities available.

Our BHS membership also gives our Association 3<sup>rd</sup> party Public Liability cover which would cover for any fund-raising events such as sponsored rides. This is a great perk as previous quotes for this cover were over £300.

Hodgemoor Riding Association encourages its members to respect other users of the Woods: unfortunately horse riding seems to have a bad image with walkers and cyclists. We must look quite intimidating from down below! It just needs one rider to create a bad reputation for the whole riding community.

## Children's Sponsored Ride

Audrey Holbrook, who runs Aescwood Farm Riding School in Rawlings Lane, has very generously offered to organise a sponsored ride to raise money for the Association. It will just be for the children who come to her riding school and will take place at the end of September in Hodgemoor Wood. The theme will be along the lines of: "Preserve the Woods, and get riders off the roads!" The last time Audrey did a sponsored ride, she raised nearly £2000!

If she raises that much this time, then we might just be able to get the new bridlepath going in the autumn. We are very lucky to have her help.

By the way, if anybody is interested in riding lessons for children, call Audrey on 01494 875048. She leads hacks in the Wood and lessons in a covered school, as well as full days.

## Join-up with the Penn Bridleways Association

Those of you who are brave enough to cross the Amersham/Beaconsfield main road know that once you are over it, there are pleasant routes over towards Coleshill, on bridlepaths, gallops and relatively quiet roads. And in fact, it really only takes about 45 minutes to get from Hodgemoor as far as the Penn area, where the local bridleways association has a permit system for Common Wood, and also access to permissive riding trails on farmland.

In our next newsletter we will provide maps not only of our own local bridlepaths, but also of those in the Penn area.

We are working on the possibility of a sponsored ride with Penn. With pressure from two associations, we might be able to persuade Bucks Country Council to put warning signs on the Amersham/Beaconsfield road both at the

Magpie crossing and the other crossing at the Grange.

## Our Website is up!

We are pleased to announce the launch of Hodgemoor's own web-site. Now you'll be able to get these newsletters, calendars of events and other items of interest on the Internet. With encouragement from other organisations we have got the rights to use the Hodgemoor name and the address is

[www.hodgemoor.org.uk](http://www.hodgemoor.org.uk)

The opening page is a home page not only for the Hodgemoor Riding Association but also for the Friends of Hodgemoor Wood and in the future for any other group of users of the wood with which we would like to work together. The idea behind sharing with other users of the wood is to enhance the spirit of co-operation between casual walkers, rambles, cyclists, horse-riders, Forest Enterprise, Bucks County Council and other relevant bodies. We hope to make the links page more useful with the passage of time. You can see that the web site is at an early stage so please email us with your suggestions for content and improvement.

## You can help ...

Maybe you have some opinions you'd like to share with other riders in Hodgemoor Wood, or maybe you'd like to offer your help in representing our interests with the various bodies with whom the Hodgemoor Riding Association works.

Much of the information here was communicated at the Annual General Meeting that took place on 1st March at the Reading Room in Chalfont St Giles. But even if you were there we hope you will pass a copy on to other interested parties to encourage them to get involved. The last page of this newsletter is the membership application form, of course.

Why do we need members? Not really for the membership fees. We need members to increase the influence of our voice in negotiations for bridlepaths with the authorities. We need members to add weight to applications for funding. And we need members to help give direction and objectives to the Hodgemoor Riding Association.

Please play your part in the membership drive!  
Thanks.

## Your representatives

Susie Bicknell is doubling as secretary of the Hodgemoor Riding Association and editor of this newsletter. She can be contacted as follows:

Telephone 01494 872447  
E-mail [sBicknell@ndirect.co.uk](mailto:sBicknell@ndirect.co.uk)  
Address Homefarm Orchard  
Threehouseholds  
Chalfont St. Giles  
Bucks HP8 4LP

The committee is presently

Marcus Bicknell (Chairman)  
Susie Bicknell (Secretary)  
Robin Richards (Treasurer)

Heather Black Terry Holbrook  
Audrey Holbrook Judith Broadley

**Next Open Meeting: Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2001 at 8 p.m.  
in the Reading Room at Chalfont St Giles (opposite the bakery)**

On the agenda...

The changes to the permissive trails (an updated map will be handed out)  
Update on the new bridlepath from Threehouseholds to the East side of Hodgemoor  
Links with Penn Wood

# Hodgemoor Riding Association

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - 2001

NAME:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

ADDRESS:

TOWN:

POST CODE:

NAME & ADDRESS OF LIVERY STABLE:

Please send a minimum payment of £5 per person to the Membership Secretary:

Judith Broadley  
Tor House  
23 Hillfield Square  
Chalfont St Peter SL9 ODJ

Tel: 01753 883882

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To help us know what you want, and what you do, please answer the following questions:

1. How often do you hack in Hodgemoor Wood?  
Daily / Weekly / Monthly / Other
2. Do you ever cross on horseback the Amersham/Beaconsfield main road by the Magpie Public House to ride up to Coleshill and the roads?
3. Would you enter a Sponsored Ride in and around Hodgemoor Wood? Would you be willing to pay a contribution of £20 / £15 / £10 / or more?
4. Would you prefer a Sponsored Ride to take place on a weekday summer evening or a weekend?  
(n.b. many riders are already busy most weekends during the spring and summer)
5. Would you support a Bring and Buy sale for riding goods?
6. Would you come to a summer social event?

Thanks!