

# HODGEMOOR RIDER

## Improvements in the Wood: we're nearly there

We have good news! Thanks to Audrey's sponsored ride, Bucks CC and the British Horse Society, our funds will by April stand at over £5000. And they could be far more if our application to Brett Environmental Trust is successful (see story below).

So when can work start?

Our priority is to complete Wickham Way, the new bridleway, where it goes through the East end of Hodgemoor Wood to Bottrells Lane. We cannot start the work until we have enough funds to complete the whole 250 metre length. Contractors' estimates currently range from £6,500 to £11,000. As Hodgemoor Wood is a Site of Special Scientific Interest the final specifications and contractor have to be agreed by English Nature, and also by Forest Enterprise. The current estimates may be revised to lower figures, but it looks as if we will still need more funds.

Luckily, we have the fund-raising demonstrations generously offered by Joni Bentley on 28 February (see "Laming or Training" below). Sue Edwards will give her dressage demonstration in early spring. We are looking forward to these events and hope that you will attend in huge numbers!

February 2002

**Joni Bentley Technique Demonstration  
28<sup>th</sup> February, 7.30 p.m. at  
Waylands. Help us continue to raise  
funds and improve your riding.  
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So with any luck work in improving the boggy trails in Hodgemoor Wood could start in April.

## Audrey's Sponsored Ride Raises £2,200!

Audrey Holbrook and her helpers at Aescwood Riding School in Rawlings Lane, Seer Green organised a hugely successful sponsored ride at the end of October. Sixty four young riders aged between four and fifteen who regularly take lessons at Aescwood managed to find sponsors to fund them on rides round Hodgemoor Wood. Five riders - Georgina Blunt 6, Jade Anderson 9, Mark Blackett 9, Amber Gunn 7, and stable assistant Lisa Cooke 23 - raised over £100 each, while twelve others raised over £50 pounds each.

At an award ceremony on December 4<sup>th</sup>, rosettes of all sizes were handed to the plucky fund raisers (see photo).

Not only has this meant that the



Association's bank balance has more than tripled in volume, but it has shown everyone that we are serious about raising money. We would like to thank the parents, relations and friends for giving the children so much support. And we would like to thank Audrey for this tremendous effort, and hope it will be an inspiration to others in the Association to organise similar fund-raising events.

## BHS and Bucks CC help funding

The South Bucks branch of the British Horse Society has very generously donated £500 to the Association, and Jonathan Clark, Area Bridleways Officer at Bucks County Council, has confirmed a contribution of £2000 for April.

## Are you laming or training your horse? Come and find out about the Joni Bentley Technique, 28 February

Joni Bentley has generously offered to give a fund-raising introduction to the Bentley Technique and Saddling System. Her unique technique combines the principles of F. M. Alexander developed over 100 years ago with those of the Classical School of Horsemanship. The Alexander technique releases physical and mental tension whilst improving balance, poise and co-ordination in order to achieve good posture. It is used world-wide in such disciplines as acting, dancing, and many sports including riding. The Classical School believes in the well-being of the horse: the rider through achieving a correct position will help rather than hinder the horse's movement.

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, Joni and her assistant Lynn will work with two volunteers, both dismounted and mounted, to correct their position primarily through straightening the pelvis. They will then show how this affects the horses' movement. Spectators will have the opportunity to have a positional assessment. Joni will also talk about saddle-fitting and its affect on the horse's posture and well-being.

The event will be at Waylands Equestrian Centre in Rawlings Lane, Seer Green, from 7.30 p.m. till around 9.30 and will cost £5. There will be refreshments. Joni's workshops normally cost £25 for spectators and £55 for participants so this is a great opportunity for us!

**As space is limited, please call Susie 01494 872447 by Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February to reserve a place, or mail her a cheque (£5 per person). The address is at the bottom of page 3.**

We need two volunteers! As this is a fund-raising event, we are going to auction this opportunity for you and your horse to have a session with Joni. A not-too-spooky horse would be preferable, and obviously the volunteers must not mind being watched by (hopefully) 40 to 50 people. Susie and Marcus Bicknell will start the bidding at £15 each. Please call Susie Bicknell 01494 872447 if you are interested.

Joni travels all round the country giving workshops. An article on her technique is being published on March 14<sup>th</sup> in "Your Horse" magazine. Her books and tapes will be available on the 28<sup>th</sup> February as well as magnotherapy products.

## Please Keep Off Public Footpaths Near New Bridleway

It's great to see the new bridleway being used so much. Until the route is completed, making a circuit round the fallow fields is tempting. **But if you do this, do NOT go down the official public footpaths.** Riders may not be aware of these footpaths so a **map is enclosed**. Posts have just been put up along the footpaths with "No Horses" signs, so please respect these. Your editor does not enjoy getting complaining phone-calls from walkers as it's my number that's on the notices!! Remember we're trying to co-operate with walkers, not antagonise them.

## November 4<sup>th</sup> Sponsored Ride To Common Wood and Penn

It must be said that this "grown-up" sponsored ride barely raised £100, a poor show in comparison to the children! There were only eight of us to do the 15 mile round trip to Common Wood and

back, but it was good fun. Wine and beer and other goodies had been hidden in the Wood for a half-way break. Common Wood was a great discovery with a half-mile sandy gallop through the middle. We know it's hard for most of you to find the time for a 3½ hour ride, but it would be nice to see more of you next time.

Vicky Gregory should be congratulated: she comes all the way from Welders Lane, has come on both sponsored rides and raised more than £50.

## BHS Road Safety Day

Volunteers from Manor Farm went round Seer Green on October 13<sup>th</sup> distributing leaflets to raise local awareness on the problems of horses on the roads. Our picture shows, left to right, Barry Hall, Doug Guild, Joy Martin (at back), Sue Guild (front), Andrea Mayo (in trap), Callum Guild and Karis Kane. Thank you for doing this! Hardly a week passes without somebody coming back from a hack with an account of a near miss on the roads.



## Sue Gibson's Road Safety Evening

And on the same subject, Sue Gibson - the BHS Bucks Road and Safety Officer - gave us a very instructive and entertaining evening on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Again, a pity not more of you were there: you missed some good advice, Indian food and drinks!

## Volunteers Needed

The charity MARES is interested in hearing from volunteers to help at their centre just outside Old Amersham. The project provides day therapy

and skills training for people, especially those from minority ethnic groups, who suffer from mental health problems. By showing these people how to look after and communicate with horses, MARES aims to improve their physical and psychological well-being and develop new skills. Help would be welcome, and volunteers might find they would learn a fair bit too, for example, about the concept of Natural horsemanship.

Please call Dave or Debbie 01494 729522

## Funding Application to Brett

Thanks to the initiative of Bill Richards, External Funding Officer for Bucks CC, the Hodgemoor Riding Association has submitted a grant application to the Brett Environmental Trust. Members of the Trust board visited Hodgemoor Wood on December 12<sup>th</sup> to see the delapidated state of the trails, and a final board decision will be made at the end of February. If our application were voted, we would have enough funding to complete the

bridleway, and repair all the worst trails in the wood!

Whether we get this grant or not, we will still continue to raise funds and find support.

## Subscription Renewal

Subs will be renewable on 1 April. It will be raised to £10 p.a. and £5 for juniors under 16 by 1 April. The committee feels this

raise is justified to consolidate the progress made so far. In a sphere where it takes a long time to do things, in under a year a new bridleway has been opened and should be completed soon, and much has been done towards raising funds.

## Check out the web site

If you are on the Internet please look at our site at [www.hodgemoor.org.uk](http://www.hodgemoor.org.uk) It is quite an effort to update it with the newsletter so we would like to know whether you think it is worthwhile.

**Our address:** Susie Bicknell, Homefarm Orchard, Threehouseholds, Chalfont St. Giles HP8 4LP