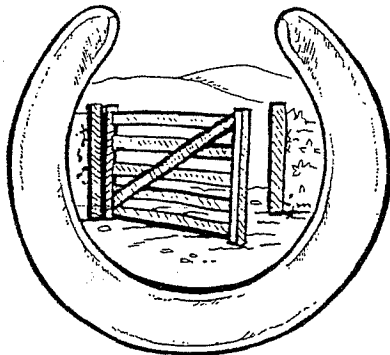


*With very best  
members, our  
horses for a*



*wishes to all our  
friends, and our  
successful 2015*



**LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION**

## ***NEWSLETTER***

No 82 January 2015

# ***All Ride participants will have to be members of LRBA***

The Executive Committee has decided that all entrants to LRBA Rides in 2015 will have to be members before they start the Ride.

This is so that we can be *sure* that everyone is covered by the Public Liability insurance for our events provided by LRBA's affiliation to the British Horse Society.

Also so that all Riders get to see the other, long-lasting, side of our work via the *Newsletter* and the opportunity to attend at least one Area Meeting where we discuss the "mud & gates" of local BWs, how to deal with really sticky problems, look at opportunities (or threats) presented by planning applications and identify other ways of "network building".

It will also increase our numbers - and therefore LRBA's influence.

And improve the flow of information from and to local riders. It would be good to have at least one member in every yard, however small.

So if you want to do our Rides it's an incentive to renew (renewal forms enclosed) rather than dropping out and paying extra to do a Ride. That option won't be available.

The 2015 Ride Entry Form will include a membership application. Non-members joining to do a Ride will be charged £10 membership + £5 entry fee, even if they join virtually on the day. After that they will pay the standard Advance (£5) and Late (£10) entry fees. Under-18s entry fees will remain at £5, whether Advance or Late.

The current Membership Form will still be available, so if you have friends who are planning to come on our 2015 Rides, get them to download it from [www.bridleways.com](http://www.bridleways.com)

# Rides Report – last three of 2014

**Nene Valley, Sun 14 Sept.** Again very successful with wonderful weather, good going and the canter opportunities were enjoyed. Despite it being Gala Day on the Nene Valley Steam Railway there were no incidents reported where our route was close to the line. All had departed, even after some picnics, before the 3.30pm end time. 34 entrants: 13 members, 21 non-members; slightly lower than last year but thankfully no entrants on the day.

**Conkers Discovery Sun 12 Oct.** Sadly the Organiser taking the entries fell ill and was unable to be there on the day, putting the onus on Mary Holland who'd been dealing with the route. The entry numbers were good considering the 25-vehicle limit on parking, although several locals rode in, but it is obvious this is very attractive to non-members. After a foggy start, the weather turned sunny. Riders were able to canter round a new plantation. 49 entrants: 15 members; 31 non-members; 46 actually rode. Well done Mary, and many thanks.

**Swinford, Sun 19 Oct.** Unfortunately the Highways Agency failed to order the 2 bridges in time for them to be installed so that we could celebrate the diverted BW that now avoids us playing amongst the HGVs around Junc 19 of the M1. Luckily there are enough BWs for a good route to be offered, including the route through the Swinford wind farm (11 or 12 turbines). Altho' the Hon Sec and the Chair listened hard we could not hear the blades above the wind, and the 'hairy beasts' were unaffected. The weather was sunny and warm as well as windy. The parking amongst the barns etc at Park Farm UK Chasers was firm and we even found a loo. Apparently 2 or 3 vehicles got lost on the way there, possibly because of the Junc 19 works which are affecting the local road connections at the M1/M6/A14 junction. 32 entrants, all of whom rode; 21 members; 11 non-members.

**Our 8 Rides in 2014** had a total of 370 entries – an average of 46 per Ride - from 229 riders, of whom 117 were members. So 112 – nearly half – were non-members. Many thanks for your support.

## ***First Joint Meeting with BRR***

**On 29 October**, as part of its regular series of Area Meetings, LRBA held its first joint meeting with the **Blaby Recreational Riders Association (BRR)** in the very comfortable surroundings of the Blaby Civic Centre, the parish council offices on Leicester Road. BRR has affiliated to LRBA under the terms of our recently-revised Constitution.

The aim of these affiliations is to enable groups concerned with bridleways and extending off-road riding to consult so that we speak with one voice (see pp 5-6 to show why this is necessary). Of the 25 riders present, the great majority were from BRR, many of whom obviously rode all over Blaby District and beyond as well as participating in the shows etc that BRR puts on.

It is our hope that future Area Meetings will have more equal representation from the two groups, especially as the LRBA Area includes Harborough District west of the A6 and is one of our top Areas for member numbers.

***Our Greater Harborough Area is being re-named East Harborough as it deals with Harborough District east of the A6 to clarify LRBA's split of the vast Harborough District Council area. Most LRBA Areas reflect local council areas as they are the planning authorities. Harborough is the only one which is so big that we felt we had to split it up and the busy A6 seemed to be the right line to follow as it is only crossable at a few points.***

## Vicky's Role

Many of you think of Vicky just as the Chair of LRBA. The older ones amongst you might also know that she founded the Association in 1991 and has devoted much of her time and energy to it ever since. Those who are BHS members might also remember that she was East Midlands Regional Access & Bridleways Officer for 8 years, a Trustee of the Society for 6 years and Chair of its Access & Rights of Way Advisory Committee until 2009. She has since served as Treasurer, then Vice-Chair, on the BHS' Leics & Rutland County Committee. And is still the Society's District Access & Bridleways Officer for Charnwood and NW Leics as well as national adviser on wind turbines/renewables and level crossings.

As if that wasn't enough, it surprised LRBA's Executive Committee to realise that, when you tally up all Vicky's present roles for the Association, she is

1. Chair
2. Rides Programme Co-ordinator - and Organiser of one, usually two, Rides each year
3. Area Meetings coordinator, attendee at 7 twice-yearly meetings and note-taker for 4 of them.
4. Newsletter Editor/compiler & dispatcher, co-ordinating (& often creating) all the inserts.
5. Web Editor
6. Respondee to Public Right of Way consultations, mainly diversions, from the County Councils and planning authorities.
7. Respondee to planning applications that may affect BWs but seeking to extend off-road riding, especially in those affecting large areas eg surface mining (see pp7-8), housing estates, etc.
8. Historical Researcher seeking to reclaim lost BWs/ Archivist
9. Advisor on Bridleway matters to external bodies including Local Authorities, Developers / Planners, including representing riders on the Leics Local Access Forum and the National Forest's Access & Recreation Advisory Group (of which she is one of the longest-serving members).
10. General answerer of awkward questions.

In a year when she has had a 'significant' birthday, she only had a couple of free evenings in November and is using the end/start of year lull to catch up and do some filing. She is working virtually full time on LRBA business and on behalf of riders. Apart from a modest honorarium and expenses, she is unpaid so her remuneration amounts to about 1/35<sup>th</sup> of the minimum wage! She has discussed with the Executive Committee how she would like to shed several aspects of routine administration. There are parts of her present role that she would very much like to retain – for example the Historical Researcher (no one is better fitted to do this!) and the Newsletter Editor; also the Web Editor post, which is closely entwined with the work on the Newsletter. But she would like members to be more active in running the two main 'legs' of the Association: the Area Meetings that deal with problems, and opportunities, 'on the ground', and the Rides programme. She wants to be sure that there are people to take over these essential parts of

The Executive Committee has asked Vicky to consider the Role of President from 2016, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of LRBA. If this is endorsed at the AGM, then Mrs Kim Hall, the Vice Chair, has indicated her willingness to take on the role of Chair. Roger Linford, the Honorary Secretary, is to work with the local convenors to arrange the Area Meetings and the Committee is seeking a new Rides Programme Organiser to shadow Vicky during 2015 and learn what the role entails.

I cannot conclude this brief note without expressing the warmest thanks, both personally and on behalf of the Executive Committee, to Vicky for the tremendous amount she has achieved for bridleway creation, preservation and improvement in the East Midlands.

*Roger Linford, Hon. Sec. LRBA Dec 2014*

## Vicky says....

*I'm not proposing to suddenly vanish but would like to fade away like the Cheshire Cat's smile – slowly. Ideally having handed over enough knowledge of what can be achieved, and how, to ensure that LRBA continues to flourish and fulfil its Aims. Particularly its first Aim:*

***To preserve and improve and where possible extend the Counties' bridleways and byways** as this will be our legacy to future generations of riders. Note particularly the word 'extend'. That requires persistence and commitment, but it is where the big rewards can be gained.*

*What is known in the business world as "succession planning" takes effort and time. But without it enterprises collapse. I do not want to see the LRBA enterprise collapse. But it will unless yo, the members, get stuck in and help. Although eventually I will have to let go of everything, I'd like to start by handing over some of the well established bits as Roger has suggested, and then progressively hand over the rest.*

*As well as a Rides Programme Organiser and Area Meeting Convenors/Chairs, we already need **Note-takers at several Area Meetings** who can turn these into documents to be sent to local members and the Executive Committee. These are a vital record of our work and their detail can come in useful many years later – often when a quite different problem arises.*

*We also need a **Publicity Officer** to make more noise about our successes, which will get more riders to join who will also, in time, share the work.*

*And our **Membership Secretary** only took over the role for a couple of years and would like a well-organised member to be working-in as her successor.*

*I know that a lot of you know a lot more than you used to do, and that you all know a lot more than some of you think you do. Please put that knowledge to use. Many hands, as they say, make light work and the work doesn't necessarily have to be done on a horse – horselessness can even be an advantage – but it does involve putting ourselves out and about a bit, particularly where we can remind others about horse riders and what **THEY** need (instead of "them" just thinking about walkers and cyclists). See P7 for what Lynne and Mary are achieving for us.*

*It would make me very happy if each member would – as their 2015 New Year's Resolution – put that knowledge to work and commit to being more active in the Association. in however small a role. Many of you already do, thank you very much. Without your help and support LRBA wouldn't have achieved what it has. But could you do a bit more?*

**Recreational Melton Bypass inches forward:** A 2015 planning application seems likely to make it possible to take the long-planned (by LRBA) "Melton Western Bypass" a step forward by asking for a crossing over the A607 into new housing so that riders can reach Kirby Lane and go past Old Guadeloupe to BW D93 and the many routes S of Melton. Leics Co Council's RoW Dept tell us they're already on the case so they will be asking for this too.

### Winter Clearout - For Sale - tel 01509 215619

Black leather Free 'n' Easy saddle, bought 'as new' but not used due to problems with horse's back. Good condition. £650 or offer. Free delivery to LRBA member.

6ft 9inch 'mac' horse rug. Brown with buff trim. Only used for short time. Washed, reproofed & repaired. £22 to cover cost of reproof & repair. Free delivery to LRBA member.

Black Thorowgood Griffin saddle. 18 inches, wide fitting. Spare girth straps & knee rolls. Not used much due to not being wide enough for horse. Best offer obtains. Free delivery to member.

# *Is a Bell Better than a Shout from a Cyclist?*

## *Your responses:*

*About the cyclists bells I agree that bells are best as difficult to hear shouts or polite requests. My horse was completely ok with bikes but I have nearly jumped out of my skin on many occasions when they have overtaken without letting me know they were there. Also on Mill Lane BW Blaby, I once nearly leg yielded into one I didn't know was overtaking. Maybe I should get some wing mirrors for schooling on a hack!* Sharon

I heard a yell behind me on the village street. Serious, mature, cyclist came past and I asked if he had a bell? If so, would he please use it. So he asked me to stop, which I did, and he said he now yelled "Hello Horse" because when he'd used a bell the rider had angrily told him not to, because it frightened horses. I told him that I couldn't always hear a yell, didn't always know what it meant, and it was more important for the rider to understand what was going on than for the horse. He seemed angry at the mixed messages riders were giving him. We need to agree!

*Elizabeth*

*Several verbal responses all indicated a preference for bells. There were no votes for yells.*

## *Startling Statistics*

In 2013 there were some 1700 road deaths. Of these, about 100 were on motorways – so about 2 a week. About 500 were on urban or major roads. But over 1000 – nearly 3 a day – were on rural roads.

So, contrary to popular perception, it's not motorways that are the most dangerous roads, but rural lanes. The ones we ride! No wonder we don't want to be on them. Or that we want to get off them.

Isn't it time governments and highway authorities did something to make the rural lanes safer?

Area-wide 40mph speed limits e.g. on Charnwood Forest? Maximising verges by clearing back bushes and trees and improving their usability by walkers and riders by limiting the number (and depth) of drainage grips? Creating behind-the-hedge or parallel routes for walkers, riders and cyclists so that they're quite separate from traffic?

*And a Sad Fact - 97% of Britain's lowland meadows have disappeared in the last 100 years.*

## *With Friends Like These Who Needs Enemies?*

*Just come home from Network Rail's public consultation about the Barrow on Soar BW level crossing that's now been closed for SIX years, putting riders on another mile of road through busy Barrow in order to get to the rest of the BW. Network Rail told us about the thirteen options they'd considered without being able to satisfy anybody so far.*

*Absolutely horrified to find that one of the best options had been dropped because some local riders had said it would be dangerous to have horses riding beside the railway if a BW was created alongside it.*

*Presumably this was said at one of the previous local consultations - but obviously without having talked to either LRBA or BHS, or thought about the benefits or the alternatives.*

*We all have our worries about what we and our horse can do. But we must recognise that these are our PERSONAL fears and worries and won't apply to every other horse and rider pairing. I wouldn't ride round Burghley for a sack of gold bricks, but many do. And good luck to them.*

*It's OK to say "I wouldn't do that on Rusty", but NOT OK to say NO RIDER WOULD DO THAT. Because many riders would.*

*So be careful what impression you give about riders. You should NEVER close off options for partnerships bolder, or just bigger/smaller, than your own.*

*Anyway, the many riders at the meeting laughed the idea to scorn that riding beside a railway was "too dangerous". As one local rider said to me: I'm much more worried about having to ride along the road immediately beside the railway, with trains 30 feet above, even though it's only for a few hundred yards. Because if he spooks, he does it in the traffic.*

*If you're on a BW, you're not in the traffic, so any issues with your horse can be dealt with "privately".*

*The 'lost' proposal would take out ¼ mile of busy road AND create a 5-mile virtually traffic-free circuit by linking BWs I 4, I 20 and I 14a. Bliss! And worth riding alongside a railway for about a sixth of it.*

*And it gets your horse used to trains. To say it's "seen trains" in the way we might feel it necessary to say that it had "seen hounds" is, surely, part of any horse owner's duty to their horse's future. (I'm working on "seeing deer" and "seeing donkeys" - but we seem OK with seeing horse-drawn carriages.)*

*We're hoping that Network Rail will go back to that option and re-explore it with the, admittedly reluctant, landowner.*

*In the meantime, please think before you speak. And ask your friends to do the same. We can't afford to have riders other than united about any proposal that could get us off the roads.*

*And this is not the first time it's happened. A rider in Rutland lost us a footpath upgrade because she thought it dangerous to share a field edge BW with cyclists, oblivious to the heavy, accident-free, sharing involved in using the new BW at Sounding Bridge, Manton. We are sometimes our own worst enemies.*

*PS At the Charnwood Area Meeting the night before, those present had agreed that the long deck (across 9 lines!) and long slopes beside the railway, would make the very costly bridge unattractive to many. A BW beside the railway line linking BWs I 4 and I 20 would be much nicer - and cheaper. Apparently a footbridge will cost a minimum of £1M, a bridleway bridge £2M - for the structures alone.*

## *How many horses in Rutland?*

It's almost impossible to physically count all the horses in a county - even a county as small as Rutland. So what do you do?

In a larger county you might count the farriers, assuming that the work they do outside the county (farriers respect no barriers!) is balanced by that of other farriers muscling in. And then apply the results of a limited survey of local farriers or the national average of horses per farrier to multiply up to an acceptable total.

In Rutland they decided to do a detailed horse count over 6 parishes, and relate the results to the population and area of all 58 parishes in Rutland. Population varies from the military-inflated figures for Edith Weston and Cottesmore down to nil in Beaumont Chase and Martinsthorpe.

Rutland has a total population (based on the 2011 census) of 37,369. Based on the 6 parishes there is 1 horse per 35 people. Dividing 37,369 by 35 results in 1070 horses.

On average there are 7.6 horses per square mile in the 6 parishes, so for a county area of 150.4 square miles, the result is 1140 horses i.e. 70 more, an acceptable degree of (un)certainty.

But, if you'd taken the Rutland-based farriers – 5 – and multiplied by the national average range of horses per farrier – 240 to 300 – you'd have got 1200 horses at the lower end of the range. Not that different from the long-way-round result.

You can decide for yourself if – on the basis that there are always more horses hidden behind the hedges than you thought there were *and* the special nature of Rutland as a horsey county - the figures should be nearer the top end of the farrier range i.e. 1500 horses. But that would be almost one-third higher than our lowest figure. Perhaps too high.

*Thanks to Audrey Morley for the horse count and Roger Linford for the mathematics.*

## ***And Now for the Good News***

\*\*\*\* The bridleways in what is now Diamond Jubilee Wood near Heather and Ravenstone are, at last, open and usable. They consist of a long N-S BW running from the sharp bend on BOATs O38 (Spring Lane) and O39 down to what was the dead-end of BW Q45 from Sweystone. And from there a branch goes to the Heather-Ravenstone road, a short length of which has to be used to reach Byway O41 to Sence Valley Forest Park and onwards. It's been very frustrating, not only campaigning for these over decades but waiting for UK Coal and then the Woodland Trust to carry out the necessary work to restore the land and open these routes. But good things come to those who wait - and persist. And this is very much an LRBA-generated "win". The usual yellow posts with blue arrows will be put up as soon as all the legal 'dedications' are in place.

\*\*\* Blaby District Council is going to take over ownership and management of **Countesthorpe** Country Park once the developers of the nearby housing estate have removed the debris they've left behind. The District will let horse riders into the Park which is good news for local yards as it will provide just the short exercise circuit which will please their clients, whether they start on Winchester Road or come down from Mill Lane, Blaby on BWs Z53 and Z45. Don't rush – there's still a lot of discussion and work to be done before the previous informal use of this land can be formalised. Great credit to Sue O'Connell of Blaby Recreational Riders Association for weathering some local animosity *and* building good relations with the District Council. Persistence is again paying off.

*\*Riders who've been deterred from using the Bagworth to Nailstone BW, R67 by the dogs at Crown Farm and the bad and locked gates will be glad to know that the County Council is, at last, taking the farmer to court with the hope of getting an order to make him remove all the obstructions on his land at the Nailstone end of R67. We hope it includes a prohibition of either him or his dogs harassing users of the BW. This is one of LRBA's oldest problems and it's good that there is the possibility of 'our side' winning. But this could still run and run.*

\*\*\*\*The Heart of the Forest Forum Access & Connectivity Sub-Group on which we're represented by Lynne Pass and Mary Holland, has great plans for multi-user trails radiating from both Conkers and Hicks Lodge. Conkers to Rosliston Forestry Centre, Hicks Lodge to Moira Furnace, Hicks Lodge to Ashby (de la Zouch), and Willesley Wood to the Ivanhoe Way (the disused railway

sometimes known as the Moira Trail) are proposed and being actively pursued with landowners. If these come off they will significantly increase connectivity in the area and extend off-road recreational tracks. In the meantime, would any riders using the BWs in Hicks Lodge please KEEP OFF the bike tracks. We are trying to negotiate more riding access with the Forestry Commission and GOING "OFF PISTE" DOES NOT HELP! Stick to the BWs please.

**\*Encouragement from Govt.** In Spring 2014 Dan Rogerson MP, a Defra Minister, wrote to the Chairs of Local Access Forums congratulating them on their combined annual report. His letter ended: *I encourage you to continue advising local highway authorities on the revision of their Rights of Way Improvement Plans. I am particularly keen that you ensure that revised ROWIPs cover access to woodland, and consider how to provide improved provision for horse-riders.*

\*Our Hon. Sec reports that the short BW at **Wothorpe by Stamford**, going past Wothorpe House, is "perfectly rideable" with the BW hedge well cut back. But "there is no evidence of hoof marks or droppings". A shame because we took up its cause with Peterborough City back in 2010 and thought there might be difficulties in getting it put right. This BW goes to the "Warren Rd" BW which provides a means of crossing the A1 on a wide cart bridge. Stamford area members – please get it used!

\*\*\*The long-term 'temporary' diversion of BW X27 at **Shawell** requested by Lafarge Tarmac will result in a behind-the-hedge BW for a length of Gibbet Lane. The original proposal has been improved, following our request, to get a longer off-road length (to the current exit) and we have asked for an entry/exit point at the other end so that riders using Gibbet Lane, which is quite narrow, can have a respite from traffic.

## *The Things You Learn ...*

As Chair of a Bridleway Association, it's important to keep up with what's going on, particularly plans to build houses, industrial estates, roads, high speed railways, golf courses, airports, supermarkets, as well as traffic growth, local history, and many other things that touch on riding on our roads and public rights of way. So, 2 or 3 times a week, I buy the *Leicester Mercury*, most weeks I buy the *Loughborough Echo* (as I live in L'boro and ride in Charnwood) and – when I see it – the *Melton Times*.

Most issues are thrown away but every so often a 'bumper crop' of interesting articles comes up. This time it was the *Echo* from which I saved EIGHT pages – such a large number that I felt I should share the "issues" with you. In order of page number they are:

- Photograph and article re **an ancient bridge** and its surrounding land being given to Charnwood Council by Jelson Homes (who presumably built the nearby houses). The article quotes a councillor "*For hundreds of years, people used to make their way from Thorpe Acre across the footpath and over the bridge to go to Dishley Church.*" Thorpe Acre is now part of Loughborough and Dishley is about to be swallowed up too, but is it possible this was also used as a BW? The bridge looks solid enough. Action: add to our Investigation List.
- **New solar farm bid at Paudy Rise Farm, Barrow.** Lots of horses between Barrow and Paudy. Will there be a need to comment? [But see Theddingworth – below.]
- **Protest against a further 175 houses being added to Rothley.** In the article a spokesman says that 8 years ago there were about 1500 properties in the village. Since then a further 850 have been built or given planning permission and now another 175 are under consideration. My simple maths tells me that Rothley – already a large village – is nearly doubling in size. Concern re rideability of roads in and around Rothley.



- **Barrow on Soar “cannot cope with more housing”**. Residents on the other side of the Soar valley protesting about a proposal for 70 new homes on the Cotes Road which, being 1 mile from the village centre, they condemn as ‘unsustainable’ i.e. it would generate a lot of car journeys. So far 450 houses have been given planning permission in Barrow. This application was refused. Will it be taken to appeal ??? Wait & see – and despair!
- **“Shepshed is facing 593 new homes”**. Three out of five applications before Charnwood’s November Planning Committee meeting were, after argument, approved: for 180 and 380 houses on sites off Tickow Lane and for 33 houses on nearby Oakley Road. The application for 103 houses in Iveshead Road and 250 houses N of Hallamford Road were refused, but an earlier application for the latter has already gone to appeal. These are all W of Shepshed. Few BWs and the once-quiet roads are becoming rat-runs.

[Riders in other Areas: if you think you’ve got it bad, look at Charnwood with c.8000 to come!]

- **Slash Lane between Barrow on Soar and Mountsorrel** (and with BW I 30 off it to take riders over the R.Soar) shares a top spot in a national list of roads from which vehicles have been recovered from flooding with, apparently, 42 vehicles having been rescued since 2009. *(Surprised it’s not more. The other week I rode down it and suggested to a being-rescued vehicle that a more traditional form of transport could cope better. Ed)*
- **Pedestrianisation should mean just that: No Cyclists** Another letter griping about cyclists riding in Loughboro’s pedestrianised market place and other streets. Writer (name & address supplied!) says he/she saw an elderly lady bumped into by a cyclist and nearly knocked over, then approached a street warden who said *“we have no authority over cyclists and we don’t say anything to them as all we get is a load of abuse.”* No wonder cyclists get a “bad press”, but there’s lessons there for us horse-riders: don’t ride inconsiderately (or in crowded market places) and keep a civil tongue in your head.
- **Unaware of the dangers ....** Apparently 14% of recently-questioned pedestrians admit crossing roads without looking; distracted by mobile phone usage. 69% of 18-24 year olds admit using their mobiles whilst walking (but only 31% of those aged 55+). 27% of motorists said they’d had to brake or swerve to avoid a phone-using pedestrian and the number of pedestrian deaths is increasing year on year – by 3% for adults and a huge 35% for under 18s. Walking off-road in the countryside is less lethal but this disconnectedness from ‘real’ life makes it difficult to meet and pass the earphone wearers. Walkers, runners, cyclists and, yes, horse-riders need to be made more responsible if their mobiles or earphones lead to their causing an accident. As the article said: *the law has no sympathy for drivers talking on mobile phones....the time has come to point the finger at others.*

A huge solar farm at **Theddingworth – 185 acres/70 ha** – is likely to be turned down by Harborough District. As it doesn’t affect any BWs, there’s been no opportunity for LRBA or BHS to comment as we weren’t informed. If we had, we’d have been looking for behind-the-hedge BWs for at least the life (probably 25 years) of the ‘farm’ in the buffer zone between the field boundaries and the solar units. If it eventually *does* get approval – as the refusal will almost certainly be appealed – then we may have lost a good opportunity to get ourselves off the roads.

*We’re always glad to be alerted by any rider to big developments like this, as they present opportunities, but most riders only do so when a much-used route is directly threatened. We need to turn more large developments into “gains”.*

**To Rutland County Council**  
**Request for selected Bridleway Improvements to be included in**  
**the 2014 Capital Programme Prioritisation List (CPPL)**

*The following was sent to Rutland County Council on 1 December by our Hon Secretary.*

After a preliminary communication from the RCC Rights of Way Officer to the BHS Access & Bridleways Officer for Rutland, the LRBA were invited, at fairly short notice, to make a selection from the 150-item Wish List submitted to RCC in 2010. This wish list was compiled from suggestions of LRBA members across the County.

We were pleased to have been asked to respond in this way as the most recent British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) National Equestrian Survey (2010-11) indicated the importance of horse ownership to our local economy:

- 3.5 million people (6% of the GB population) have ridden a horse at least once in the past 12 months. 73% of riders are female, although there has been an increase in the number of male riders over the past 10 years. In 2010 8% of riders considered themselves disabled in some way. 25% of all GB riders are below 16 years old; 20% are above 45.
- Leisure riding is the most common equestrian pursuit, although riding lessons and non-affiliated competing also increased in 2010-11
- Of riders who ride once a week or less, 46% cited access to safe off-road riding as a factor that would increase their riding opportunities.
- The estimated GB horse population, including both private and professional ownership, is just below one million horses (988,000).
- The estimated cost of the upkeep of horses is £2.8 billion - £3,105 per horse. LRBA showed that there were about 1200 horses in Rutland so this adds £3.7 million to the local economy.
- Other indirect consumer expenditure associated with equestrian activity is estimated at £557M.

Having read the CPPL briefing note, several LRBA members, including the Access Officers of the BHS, met on 17 November to compile a list of first and second priorities. The basic principles for selection that we used were:

1. **To increase road safety.** 3 people die each day on rural roads, compared with 2 people a week on motorways. In 2013, of about 1700 road deaths, 1070 were on rural roads. These figures indicate why we need to get vulnerable road users – cyclists, horse riders, walkers – off rural roads, many of which have no footways/pavements or usable verge (and cyclists don't use verges). BHS considers horse-related traffic accidents to be significantly under-reported, a view supported by the Hospital Episode Statistics Online. The HES data concerning external causes of visits to hospital in 2011-12 reported 4,199 episodes requiring treatment in hospital for 'animal – rider or occupant animal drawn vehicle injured in transport accident'. There were 183 Road Traffic Incidents reported on [www.horseaccidents.org.uk](http://www.horseaccidents.org.uk) in 2012. These included 2 rider fatalities, 12 severe rider injuries, 14 horse fatalities, 3 severe horse injuries.
2. **To spread applications over the County.**
3. **To link villages that lack bridleway links and to provide community circuits.** These are loops that can be used (as the routes are BWs) by mixed-use family or friendship groups for exercise, enjoyment and contact (either with other people or with nearby communities) or

by individuals using different modes of (self) locomotion on the assumption that they will end where they started (A to A travel) rather than making journeys (A to B travel).

4. **To provide bridleways in parishes that do not at present have any.** Barrow, Beaumont Chase, Cottesmore, Glaston, Little Casterton, Thorpe by Water and Tickencote have none and Seaton has a few metres.

For the CPPL we have decided to submit 12 first priorities and a further 21 second priorities as a reserve list. The first 12 are spread across the county so we are reluctant to rank them 1, 2, 3 etc as this means we would be trying to favour one area against another.

The Hon Secretary contacted the Ward Councillors, Parish Meeting Chairs and Parish Council Clerks in the areas affected by our first priority proposals who had email addresses, giving the details of our proposal(s) in their area. We also obtained some feedback on whom the landowners might be, but until RCC considers our list and whether to accept, reject and/or substitute items, we have not approached any landowners.” *Roger Linford.*

*We will let you know the results in due course. The majority of our First Priority list gave alternatives to A and B roads and included the parishes of: Bisbrooke, Caldecott, Empingham, Glaston, Greetham, Horn, Langham, Lyddington, Morcott, Ryhall, Seaton, Stoke Dry, Thistleton, Tinwell, Uppingham and Wardley. Several councillors and parishes have already replied supporting our proposals. We are compiling a list of landowners to be approached. Chair*

**Tallington, NE of Stamford** In order to eliminate the level crossing where the A16 crosses the East Coast Main Line railway, a Tallington bypass is being proposed. “*There is in principle agreement with the principal landowner to contribute to the cost of the bypass [N of the village] in exchange for planning gain on the land between the new highway and the village – new housing to the W of the railway and light industrial units to the east.*” Members who ride in the area should look out for and attend an imminent consultation as the new road will mean the road from Bainton to Tallington will no longer end at the A16 but at a quiet village street. The new A16 should be designed with grade-separated crossings (under or over bridges) for local roads and for the A16 over the railway. It may also be possible, depending on the landownership and/or pressure on the various planning permissions, to make links northwards across Casewick Park to Barholm, or round the S edge of the Park to link the Casewick lanes from both Tallington and Uffington. Either link (or both) would enable riders to reach the network towards Ryhall and greatly increase the quiet road/PRoW network in all directions. As far as OS maps reveal, Tallington, Barholm and Uffington are parishes without BWs, so there is a great need for more safe routes. But as none of this is in LRBA’s area (altho’ it’s happy to share its expertise in planning, road and railway matters), **it needs local riders to get stuck in and start asking to be included in what is decided and designed.** Gather your friends and Go For It!

NB There is no equivalent of LRBA in Lincolnshire (or Northamptonshire).

## **Bridleway diverted UPWARDS!**

Charnwood Borough Council gave planning permission for Network Rail to construct a bridge over the Midland Mainline to replace a level crossing S of **Loughborough** Station, carrying BW K51 (Allsopps Lane). The bridge is directly above the old crossing. So, apart from going up & over, what’s different? Apparently, to keep the records in order, it’s necessary to describe it from where the new slopes start “*increasing in height to approximately 8 metres*” to the other end. We’ve never had an *upwards* diversion before. Pity K51 ends at the narrow and busy A60.

The Notes of our seven autumn Area Meetings are enclosed for members riding in Leics and Rutland. Please read, and help us with any projects in your Area, whether checking out a BW problem or recording evidence of having ridden a 'missing link'. Dates of the spring 2015 Area Meetings will be in our March 2015 Newsletter along with the 2015 Rides Programme.

## **2015 Rides Planning Meeting – Sunday 18 January**

All current Organisers have been invited to this meeting. But if YOU have a good idea for a Ride in your locality, we'd love you to join us so you can find out from those of us who've already done it what's involved. We always need more Rides to add to our programme and we'd like some new Organisers to have had a go before our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2016 when we hope to have a bumper programme.

The day starts with coffee etc from 10.30am and then, at 11am we get down to business with a look back at 2014's Rides – what went well, what didn't, what lessons can we learn for the future? How the change to all Riders having to be members before they Ride will work? And then looking at offers for Rides in 2015 and building up a draft programme. With on tap coffee/tea + biscuits, and a delicious buffet lunch (courtesy of our Vice-Chair, Kim Hall). We aim to finish by 3pm so you can do 'evening stables'. Mileage at 35p per mile can be claimed.

As the Association is now very much into "succession planning" (see pp 3-4) we're hoping that each Organiser will bring a Significant Helper so that no Ride is run by a "one-(wo)man band" but by two people who know, roughly, as much as each other and can pick up if one drops out.

By popular demand these days are held at the Rutland Water Birdwatching Centre at Egleton near Oakham, LE15 8BT, in the Conference Room which has a fabulous view over the Water.

**The Hambleton Bluebell Ride needs a Rutland-based Organiser.** Vicky is no longer willing to do it due to the distance. But she will hold someone's hand for 2015. It needs organising skills due to the special nature of this Ride and the number of entrants but the route is set and needs just a little pre-Ride checking. Would a couple of Rutland members *please* volunteer – and join us on 18 Jan.

PLEASE CONTACT VICKY – below – BY WED 14 JAN IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND  
*ESPECIALLY IF YOU WANT TO HAVE LUNCH!*

**REMINDER: KEEP A NOTE OF ALL YOU SPEND ON YOUR HORSE(s) IN 2015.**  
*The Grand Total will be requested with your 2016 renewal*

### **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME AGAIN.**

Renewal Forms are enclosed, together with an envelope for their return. If you pay by standing order and did not send a renewal form in 2014, then there will be a note asking you to PLEASE RETURN THE FORM. We need to keep our records up to date so that we know who to ask, or not to ask, if there is a local problem or initiative on which we need your help or views. Please help us to help you, and all other riders, by sending the forms back, completed, by return. The deadline for renewing if you pay by cheque is 31 March. Standing Order payments should have been taken from your bank account on or around 10 January.

Leics & Rutland Bridleways Assn, c/o 123 Park Rd, Loughborough LE11 2HD Tel: 01509 215619  
www.bridleways.com e-mail: vicky.allen@freeuk.com