



The  
British  
Horse  
Society

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The British Horse Society

Presentation to Hertfordshire Local Access  
Forum 10 March 2011

Equestrian Access

# The British Horse Society

- 72,000 members.
- 430 BHS-affiliated Riding Clubs and 20 Riding Club centres with approximately 36,000 members.
- 149 BHS-Affiliated Bridleway Groups and 199 volunteer Bridleways Officers.
- 995 BHS-approved riding centres in the UK, Ireland and worldwide (in 2009 there were 717 such establishments)

# The British Horse Society

- 2,658 registered BHS-approved instructors.
- In 2010, 6,500 candidates sat BHS examinations.
- Approximately 4,000 people took the Riding and Road Safety Test.
- BHS Welfare Officers responded to more than 1000 reported welfare issues in 2010

# The British Horse Society

- A membership charity
- Charitable objects include: To promote and secure the provision, protection and preservation of rights of way and of access for ridden and driven horses over public roads, highways, footpaths, bridleways, carriageways, public paths and other land.

# Why does equestrian access matter?

- 4.3 million people in Britain have ridden in the previous 12 months (7% of the population)
- The equestrian sector is the largest sporting employer in the UK: 270,000 direct and indirect jobs.
- Horse owners, carers and riders in Britain spend more than £7 billion per year in gross output terms
- £100 million per year contribution to Kent's economy in 2005

# Value of Horse Industry to Hertfordshire

- 14,211 horses in Hertfordshire
- Annual contribution to the Hertfordshire economy £42,633,000

# Who rides?

- 4.2 million people
- 65 percent of equestrian participants are from socio-economic groups C, D and E
- 75 percent of horse riders are female
- 31 percent of horse riders are aged under 16, 18 percent are aged 16 to 24

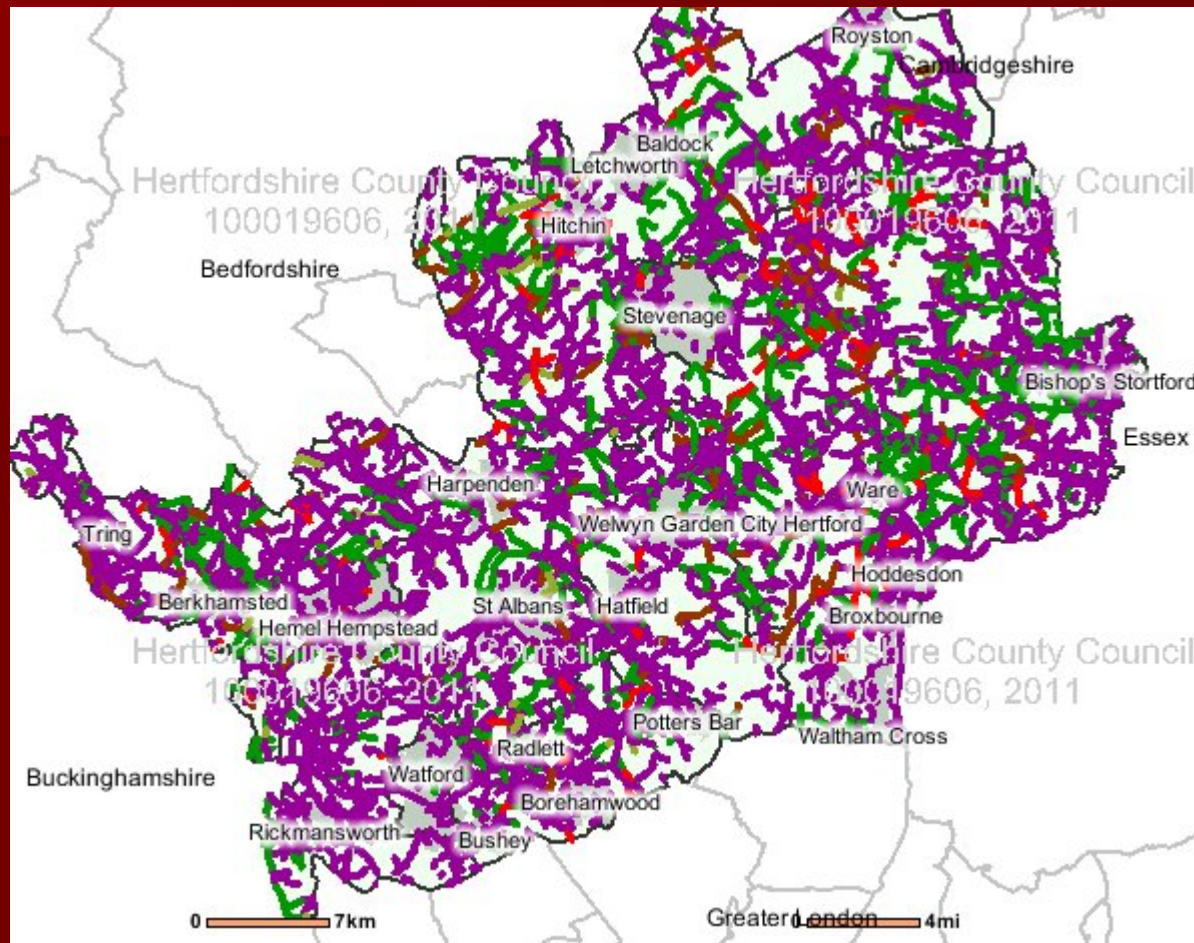
# Where can they ride?

- Only 29% of the 3,100 kilometres of Public Rights of Way in Hertfordshire carry rights for horse riders.
- Only 9% of Public Rights of Way in England are available to carriage drivers
- Most of these paths do not link to form an off-road circuit.

# Access for Walkers

- Access to 100% of the public rights of way network
- Walkers have access to 153,246 hectares of Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, only 0.24 hectares have been made available for equestrian use in England

# ■ The network



# No bridleway network

- A circuit of at least 3 miles is needed for even a short hack
- Most bridleways don't form a rideable circuit without using roads too

# But the roads aren't safe

- Many 'A' and 'B' roads are not used by horse riders because of vehicle speed, volume & size.
- Horse riders tend to use minor roads but even minor roads have become very hazardous to ride:
  - 60mph speed limit
  - Drivers in a hurry
  - Narrow / high hedges
  - Blind corners
  - More traffic from diversification /
  - increased building

# But the roads aren't safe

- BHS Hertfordshire Survey in 2000 showed that 50% of the respondents had faced verbal abuse from other road users and 25% had suffered physical intimidation;
- 5% of respondents had been in a road accident involving a horse and motor vehicle in the previous twelve months;

- Primarily involves the road network
- MOTOR TRAFFIC can be a serious problem

**Horses are trained to accept vehicles of all shapes & sizes but is this wise .....**

***Rider trying to get to the next bridleway***



# But the roads aren't safe

- Dept for Transport 1/2006: *46 percent of serious road casualties and more than half of road deaths occurred on rural roads - those roads horse riders tend to use.*

What many horse riders fear is summed up in Eleanor and Terrapin's story (see separate BHS video clip).

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



Statistics make a difference...  
Help us make a change

# Aim & Purpose

- Many equestrian accidents go unreported
- Provide a user friendly and accessible medium through which equestrian incidents can be reported
- Gather meaningful statistics to support concerns and provide quantifiable evidence to those in authority

# Incident types

- Dog attacks
- Road accidents
- Low flying
- Fireworks
- Slippery roads
- Gates
- Wind turbines

Opportunity to add further incident types if demand requires it

If you wish to report an incident not currently covered by a report form you can send an email to [s.hardy@bhs.org.uk](mailto:s.hardy@bhs.org.uk) or [r.lucas@bhs.org.uk](mailto:r.lucas@bhs.org.uk)

# The Website

- Has three major sections denoted by yellow tabs



- How does it work?

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

# Progress

- Marked increase in reports received with new reporting system in comparison to old hard copy form system

Type of Incident	Launch (13th Nov 2010) – 23rd Dec 2010	23rd Dec 2010 – 31st Jan 2011	<i>31st Jan 2011– 21st Feb 2011</i>	Total
Dog attack	54	20	15	89
Road accidents	39	24	25	88
Fireworks	9	4	0	13
Low flying	4	6	8	18
Slippery roads	7	6	7	20
Gates	7	2	0	9
Wind farms	0	0	0	0

- For the purpose of comparison, the old system received reports of only 27 dog attacks and 43 road accidents in total for 2009.



# Dog attacks

- As you can see the most reported incidents to date are dog attacks
- We are working closely with police and RSPCA to tackle this issue
- The existing legislation is not satisfactory.
- One of the changes we would like to see is the provision for the issuing of Dog Control Notices in incidents where a dog has :
  - chased or physically attacked a person, a horse or other livestock in a public place.
  - causes fear or apprehension to a person that it may injure them.
  - in a private place where a dog has physically attacked a horse or livestock.
- There have been some encouraging developments recently

# Developments

- The safety team are currently working on a hi viz campaign.
- Hi viz is so very important to maintaining safety of horse riders on and off road

Did you know?

- ✓ Wearing hi viz gives drivers up to an extra three seconds to react and pass appropriately
- ✓ Helicopter pilots can see you up to half a mile sooner if you are wearing hi viz
- ✓ The recommended minimum hi viz equipment is one piece on you and one on your horse
- We will be launching a survey surrounding opinions on hi viz including whether or not it is worn and the reasons behind that decision
- We hope the data will then provide a focus for a campaign in the public interest

# Problems in accessing the network

- **Severance of bridleway networks by trunk / major roads / new rail routes**

Poorly maintained  
surfaces



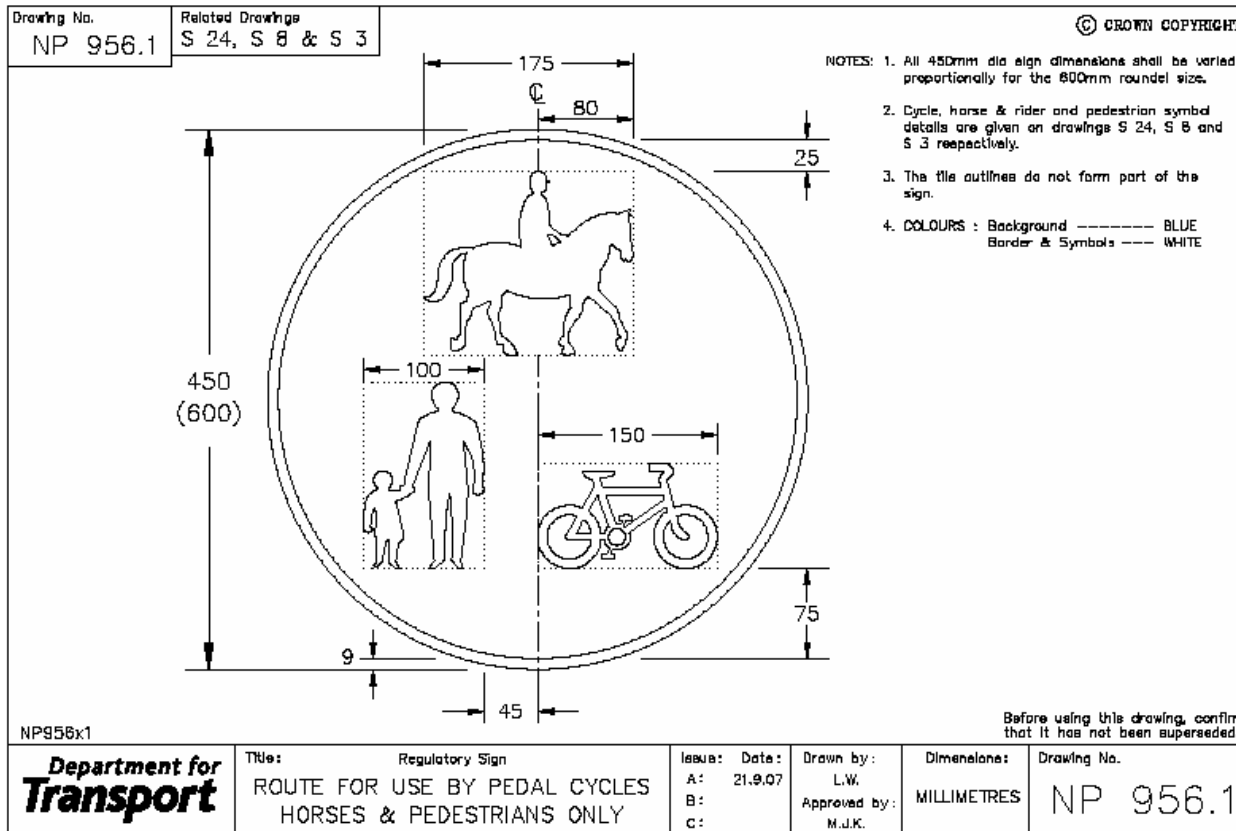
Difficult gates



# Access for All

- What equestrians are asking for does not have to cost more
- Access should be for all users
- Represents best value.

# Access for All



# EMAGIN

- Equine Mapping and Geographical Information Network
- [www.emagin.org](http://www.emagin.org)

# Questions

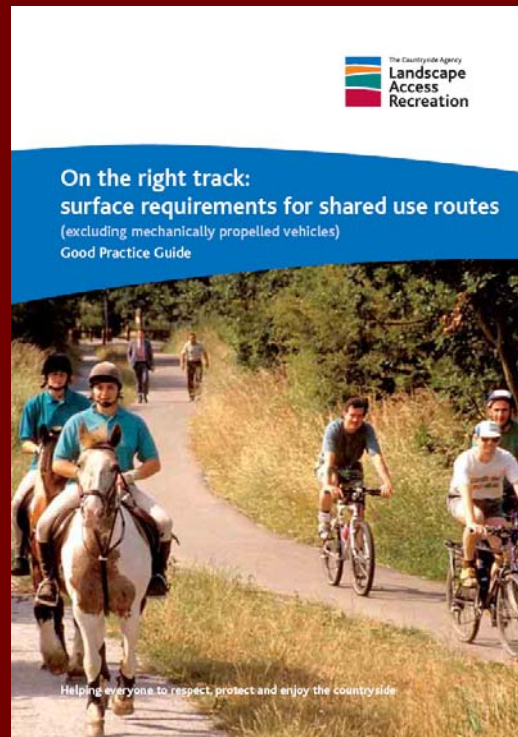
- Mark Weston
- Director of Access, Safety and Welfare
- [Mark.weston@bhs.org.uk](mailto:Mark.weston@bhs.org.uk)

# Questions

- How successful has the BHS been in upgrading routes
- Do the BHS promote and encourage permissive paths

# Questions

- Do the BHS have a preferred surface that they recommend to Row units or for permissive paths?



Photograph courtesy of Devon County Council ([www.devon.gov.uk](http://www.devon.gov.uk))



Example of recycled asphalt surfacing

### Examples of use of recycled asphalt planings

For many years the Three Points Lane Bridleway, Buckinghamshire, was heavily waterlogged all year round and overgrown, making it difficult to use. In 2004, Buckinghamshire County Council used several tons of loosely compacted road planings to upgrade the route. The new surface is user friendly for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, and blends in with the locality.

Source: Ramblers' Association

Leicestershire County Council completed the resurfacing of 1.2 km of 3 m wide route using 200 mm of recycled asphalt compacted over a geosynthetic membrane, topped with 25 mm of granite dust. The recycled asphalt was £1 per tonne less than the alternative from non-renewable sources. Similarly built routes constructed about 3 years previously are in good condition.

Source: Cheshire County Council  
[Cheshire County Council, 2004]

## Examples of blinding as a surfacing

The Green Crescent is a shared use route for walkers, cyclists and riders which skirts around the western side of Burgess Hill. It delimits the edge of the town from the adjacent countryside and villages. These pictures show a section of the routes made up from a sub-base layer blinded with 3 mm to dust limestone fines. This specification will be used on further phases of the Green Crescent project.

Photographs courtesy of Mid Sussex District Council  
([www.midsussex.gov.uk](http://www.midsussex.gov.uk))



# Questions

- Do the BHS have a preferred option for the type of gates used on Bridleways?

Gates



1 For health and safety reasons good gate design and installation on public equestrian routes are essential to avoid injuries to horse and/or rider

1.1 Very serious injuries may be caused to a horse by poorly designed or installed gates, latches or hinges.

1.2 A rider's leg may be gashed or severely bruised while passing through a gateway. If a rider is unseated or thrown when the horse is injured or frightened while going through a gateway, very serious injury or even death of the rider could result. The horse is likely to be frightened if it is bumped or trapped by the gate, if the horse's or rider's leg becomes caught on anything attached to the gate or gatepost, or if part of its bridle, martingale, saddle or stirrup becomes caught up.

1.3 Once injured or frightened while going through a gate, a horse will remember the experience. Afterwards, it will then either refuse to go through gates or panic and rush through them making it more likely that the rider's leg will be caught against the gatepost and possibly the rider be unseated and/or severely injured. Even after months of

Registered Charity No 21194 and 30285616

Gates July 2010

## Bridle Gate Installation Checklist



This checklist covers some of the most important points.  
For more detail please refer to the BHS leaflet on gates.

1. A full five foot (1525mm) gap should be available for clear passage of horse and rider through the gate. The approach either side of the gate should be straight and clear of obstructions.
2. The ground must be even through the gate line and approaches.
3. The gate must swing freely on its hinges and not require lifting to open or close it.
4. Ensure there are no unnecessary obstructions in the gateway, for example badly designed or badly sited catches that can injure horse or rider or snag on the tack.
5. The gate must open to at least a full 90 degrees and preferably to 130 degrees.
6. There must be sufficient clear manoeuvring space in front of, behind and on either side of the gate to turn the horse safely and easily to operate the gate. There must be no low overhanging branches, barbed or electric wire, ditches, overgrown hedges etc.
7. The gate should be operable from horse back with the lever or catch on the gate itself to enable one handed opening. Where the fastening is not mounted at the top of the gate an extended handle should be provided to enable use on horseback.
8. It is desirable for those riders who do dismount that mounting blocks are provided and placed on the left hand side on exit from the gate, but well outside the horse's manoeuvring space for the gate.
9. For self closing gates, ensure that the gate closing times, and the force of the self closing action are slow and gentle enough to allow clear passage of the horse once the rider lets go of the gate to ride through. (It is normally not feasible to hold on to the gate whilst passing through). As a guide a close time of at least six seconds (from 90 deg) and preferably considerably more is recommended. A closing time of four seconds or less can be very unsafe for horse and rider.
10. One way opening self closing gates can be very difficult for riders and other users to negotiate when going against the direction of opening and having to open the gate towards the horse. One way self closing gates should only be used where there is absolute necessity for the security of stock. Alternative solutions should be used where practicable.
11. The gate, its fittings and installation should also fully take into account those with disabilities and younger users.

# Questions

- How can this LAF work with the BHS to ensure existing access to our forests is maintained and additional access is achieved?
- What progress has the Equestrian Access Forum and the British Horse Industry Confederation made?
- Is there a vision to improve access for equestrians from the new Government, DEFRA and NE?

# Questions


- How can LAF help to improve access for equestrians?
- We have major and busy roads across Hertfordshire. Many of our Bridleways and Restricted byways are severed by these roads. What can the BHS do to help move horses off these roads and keep them safe whilst using them. Is there evidence to support that horse signs help?

# Questions

## ■ Are there signs for carriage driving?


Up to	Over
Up to 30	70
31 to 40	110
41 to 50	150
51 to 60	200
Over 60	Not suitable

600  
(750)  
(900)  
(1200)  
(1500)




550 Wild horses

600  
(750)  
(900)  
(1200)  
(1500)



550.1 Accompanied horses

600  
(750)  
(900)  
(1200)



550.2 Horse-drawn vehicles

*The above signs may be used with diagram 570. Diagram 550.1 may also be used with diagram 572 or 573*

**10.8** Where conditions at a cattle crossing site meet these criteria and, on the same road within approximately half a mile there is another site which does not meet them, consideration should be given to the provision of flashing lamps at both sites.

**10.9** The flashing lamp units should be erected on both approaches as close as practicable to the start and finish points of the cattle journey. The mid point between the flashing lamps must be between 2.4m and 4 m above the adjacent carriageway. This allows a minimum headroom of 2.1 m to be maintained when the assembly is mounted over a footway.

**OTHER ANIMAL SIGNS**

**10.10** Signs to diagram 549 (sheep), 550 (wild horses) and 551 (wild animals) may be used wherever such animals are likely to be found in the road (see also para 10.3).

**10.11** Diagram 550.1 warns of accompanied or ridden horses or ponies (as opposed to the wild or stray variety indicated by the sign to diagram 550) where numbers of horses are frequently walked or ridden along or crossed over the road. Warning of horses crossing the road ahead, e.g. where a bridleway crosses the road, can be given by adding the diagram 572 distance plate (or 573 if the crossing is in another road). Diagram 550.2 is used to warn of horse-drawn vehicles in the road ahead.

# Questions

- Parking can prove to be very difficult for carriage drivers when they travel to designated routes. Can you give some advice on how to overcome this?
- Do you have a dialogue with John Parker Chair of BDS?
- Horse riders and carriage drivers wish for circular routes, often routes are severed or there are gaps, or a RB turns into a BW or FP, how does the BHS help ROW improve these anomalies?

# Questions

- Do the BHS have guidance on maintaining routes, overgrown hedgerows, ploughed fields?
- Has the report of the Stakeholder Working Group on Unrecorded Public Rights of Way been issued?
- Equestrian Access was not promoted strongly under the CROW act. How have the BHS managed to adjust this?