



## ACCESS & BRIDLEWAYS - Frequently Asked Questions

<p>The surface of my nearest bridleway is so deep in mud/eroded/deeply rutted that I often can't use it.</p> <p>What can I do?</p>	<p>Maintaining the surfaces of bridleways is the responsibility of Hampshire County Council's Rights-of-Way team for your area. Report the problem to them using their website <a href="http://www.hants.gov.uk/maps/paths">http://www.hants.gov.uk/maps/paths</a>. This will display the definitive map, which shows all the paths for which they are responsible. Find your bridleway and click on the 'i' button on the right. Place the cursor over the problem, and click and you will be given the parish, status and reference number of the path. Click on the blue text, and you will get a box to report the problem.</p> <p><u>What can the BHS do?</u> Getting maintenance work done is difficult because of lack of funding, and this is unlikely to improve in the foreseeable future. BHS (Hampshire) has recently made contributions towards repair work on 2 paths:- Steep BW16 and Fareham BW24. This money has come from the proceeds of its Fun Rides, particularly Compton. Please support these so we can help out with more repair work in 2012.</p>
<p>The hedges alongside a bridleway I use are so overgrown I have to lie on my horse's neck to get through!</p> <p>How can I get them cut back?</p>	<p>Cutting hedges is the responsibility of the landowner(s). It can only be done in the Winter period. Ask your Parish Council to write to them to request the work is carried out. Most Parish Councils allow 10min. at the beginning of meetings so you can go along in person to ask for their help - take maps and photos, and friends for moral support!</p> <p><u>What can the BHS do?</u> Where private landowners are concerned this matter is usually best dealt with at local level. If the land belongs to public bodies like the Highways Authority or the MoD your BHS Bridleways Officer may be able to help.</p>
<p>There are no bridleways in the area where I keep my horse, and the landowner has closed a permissive path he used to let us use, so I can only ride on the road.</p> <p>How can I get safe off-road riding?</p>	<p>Hampshire County Council has produced a series of Countryside Access Plans (CAPs) to try and improve the bridleways network in the county. Riders have helped by showing routes they use, or would like to use on maps, and this process is on-going; if you have not taken part in this exercise yet but would be willing to do so please contact the CABO stating which parishes you are familiar with. One way of adding extra paths to the definitive map is by proving it is an ancient highway of 'lost way'. Hampshire is recruiting volunteers to take part in its PATHH project, to research old maps and documents to look for historical evidence. If you would like to help with this please contact Stephen Fisher on email:</p>



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	<p><a href="mailto:path.project@gmail.com">path.project@gmail.com</a>; training sessions will be held in the New Year</p> <p><u>What is the BHS doing?</u> BHS bridleways officers are working with CAP Action groups in all areas. Progress is slow, but new paths are being added to the map all the time. We are short of local knowledge in many areas, so please let us know where you are and what your needs are. We are currently seeking information about the Test and Itchen CAP area in particular.</p>
<p>My enjoyment of off-road riding is often spoilt by motorbikes and 4WD.</p> <p>Can anything be done about them?</p>	<p>Motorised vehicles have the right to drive on byways open to all traffic (BOATs), but not on other rights-of-way, so you need to check the status of the track they are using (instructions in answer to Q10. Some BOATs already have Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) on them prohibiting certain types of user, and this will also be shown. Even if there are no public vehicular rights on a path, there may be private ones so you have to be sure of your facts. If the motorised use is illegal it should be reported to the police, using their non-emergency number. It helps to identify offenders if you can provide photos, or registration numbers, but it's not advisable to get into a confrontation. You need to be persistent, and get your friends to report nuisances as well, as it takes a number of complaints to be recorded before any action is taken. Make sure you are given a crime number for your complaint, or it may not be officially recorded.</p> <p>Also report the incident on <a href="http://www.horseaccidents.org.uk">www.horseaccidents.org.uk</a></p> <p><u>What can the BHS do?</u> We work with other user groups to try and reduce conflict (some people complain about horse-riders too!). We all deplore illegal use and inconsiderate behaviour of any sort, which often has a negative effect on what we are trying to achieve. Sadly there will always be a minority of users who have no respect for either the law or law-abiding users.</p>
<p>I find it difficult to access a good riding area because I have to go through a gate which is badly sited, and difficult to open and close when mounted.</p> <p>What can I do?</p>	<p>Gates are only permitted on bridleways where they are necessary for the control of livestock. They should have a clear width of 5' when open. There should be no barbed wire or electric fencing for 5' either side of the gate-posts. Installation and maintenance are the responsibility of the landowner, though grants are available to help with costs. If this gate is on private land, then ask your Parish Council to act (see question on hedges above); if it is owned by a public body then contact your bridleways officer. If you are injured by a gate, report the accident</p>



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	<p>to the Health and Safety Executive.</p> <p><u>What is the BHS doing?</u> Many problems have been reported recently with self-closing (mousetrap) gates, and the BHS is currently carrying out trials to establish how these may be made safe for riders. Advice will then be incorporated in its guidelines on bridleway gates. It is also collecting statistics on accidents involving gates; if you or your horse has been injured in a gate-related incident please report it to <a href="http://www.horseaccidents.org.uk">www.horseaccidents.org.uk</a></p>
<p>My horse spooked recently at a pile of old tyres which had been dumped at the entrance to a bridleway, and we were almost hit by a passing car.</p> <p>I don't feel safe using this path again; what can I do?</p>	<p>To get the tyres removed contact the Environmental Health department of your local council. Their number will be in the 'phone book. Some list a number for 'Fly Tipping', but, if not, the switchboard should be able to put you through to the right person. Make sure you are able to describe to them exactly where the problem is. If you see suspicious vehicles when you are out hacking, note their numbers and report to Hampshire Horsewatch.</p> <p><u>What can the BHS do?</u> If you are still not confident about using that path even when the tyres have been removed ask a local BHS instructor for advice. If possible go out with another more confident rider until you've got your nerve back. Make sure you are wearing hi-viz clothing so passing motorists can see you in good time.</p>

We hope this advice has been of some assistance, but if not please do not hesitate to contact the BHS Bridleways group. This meets bimonthly at Meon Hut (Two for One Pub), West Meon, at the junction of the A272 and the A32, usually on Monday evenings from 7.00-9.00p.m. The meetings are quite informal, and you are welcome to come along and discuss your problem in person. This helps us understand it better than simply exchanging emails, and we can then decide on the best way of tackling it.

For details of meetings please contact the Secretary, Maureen Comber, email: [m.comber@btinternet.com](mailto:m.comber@btinternet.com)