

A group of people are seen from behind, riding horses and bicycles across a grassy, rolling landscape. The riders are wearing high-visibility vests in various colors like yellow, pink, and green. The background shows a line of trees and a distant building under a cloudy sky.

# Mark Weston

## Director of Access

### The British Horse Society

20 May 2014

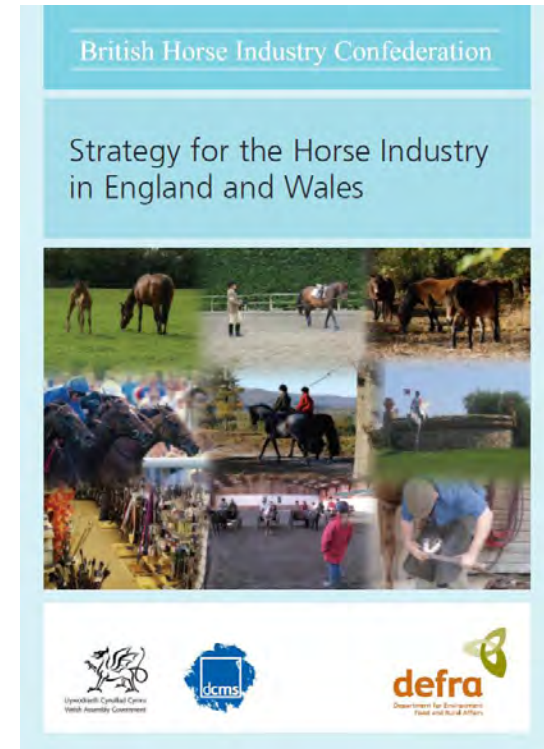
“Sharing Routes with Horse Riders”

- 
- Strategy for the Horse Industry
  - The size of the Horse Industry
  - Why horse riders need to share routes
  - Issues
  - Advantages
  - Examples of best practice
  - Making Ways for Horses
  - BHS information

# Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales

- AIM 5:

‘Increase access to off road riding and carriage driving’



# The value of the horse industry

## Overview of horse numbers

Based on NED Data 2009



# Value of the Horse Industry in the South East LAF Region

Number of Horses = 135,335  
Annual investment in local economy = £406,005,000

# Why Horse Riders need to share routes

- The Every Day Rider
- Extent of current provision
- Road Traffic
- Discrimination of equestrians
- Best Value



# The Every Day Rider



Fulfilling your passion for horses

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British  
Horse  
Society

# Current Provision





# Discrimination of Equestrians



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# Road Traffic

- 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.
- 4000 hospital admissions as a result of traffic accidents (2010)



# Accessing safe Off-road riding

- 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*

This problem is not specific to horse riders but to cyclists and walkers too



A photograph of a muddy path leading to a large puddle. In the background, two riders on horses are visible. The scene is surrounded by trees and brush. The word 'Issues' is written in white text in the upper right area of the image.

# Issues

- Conflict
- Surfacing
- Maintenance
- Dung

# Conflict

- Perceived rather than actual
- Scotland
- Bridleways, Restricted Byways, Byways
- Surrey University Research
- Sportives



# University of Surrey Research

- The results of the behavioural observation demonstrate that actual conflict is a rare occurrence. The questionnaire survey supported this and found that perceived conflict too was extremely low. Even when people recalled their route experience later, it was not seen as conflictual, although perceived conflict was recalled as higher than when in the route environment. It is only when people talk about conflict that the incidence, or assumed incidence of conflict escalates and appears to be more serious. Therefore, in the scenarios and focus groups, conflict emerged as a serious issue, although it was not considered a serious problem. We conclude, therefore, that the discussion and focussing of attention on conflict serves to escalate its perceived existence.

# Surfacing and Maintenance

- On the Right Track
- Paths for All
- BHS surfacing advisory leaflet
- Maintenance

# Dung

**If he could clear up  
after himself, he would,  
so please do it for him!**



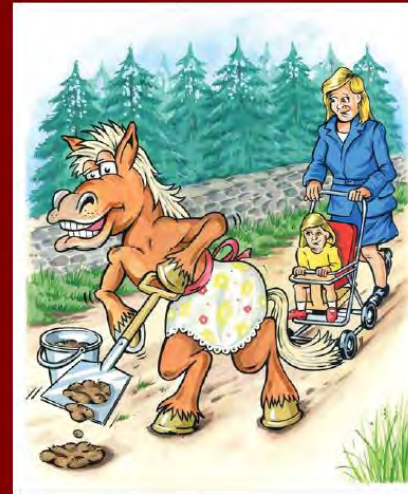
Think of others and value your access.  
Please clear up your horse's dung on  
paths and tracks, e.g. dismount and  
kick it to the side. Others, especially  
those with wheels, will appreciate this.



The  
British  
Horse  
Society

Scotland

## Dung Guidance



This guidance applies to Scotland only.



# Advantages

- Best value
- Traffic calming
- Families like seeing horses
- Security
- Increased usage helps to keep paths clear
- Increased health benefits
- Bolsters community cohesion
- Creates a better understanding between users



# Examples of Best Practice

- Railway Paths Durham over 100 miles on 11 paths, in use since the 1990s, with a further four paths under development for walkers, wheelchair users, horse-riders and cyclists.
- The Derbyshire Greenways 22 shared use trails for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, prams and mobility scooters.
- Monsal Trial and Tunnels Peak District 8.5 miles, opened in 1981 and extended in 2011, for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, funded by the Dept of Transport, with a code of conduct

# Examples of Best Practice

- The Camel Trail, Cornwall: 18 miles, claimed to be the most successful recreational multi-use trail in the UK with 400,000 users each year providing access for walkers, joggers, cyclists and horse riders. Running through a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation
- Downs Link West Sussex 37 mile shared use route links the North Downs Way at St Martha's Hill, Surrey with the South Downs Way near Steyning, West Sussex, disused railways.

# Evidence of Need - Paths for Communities

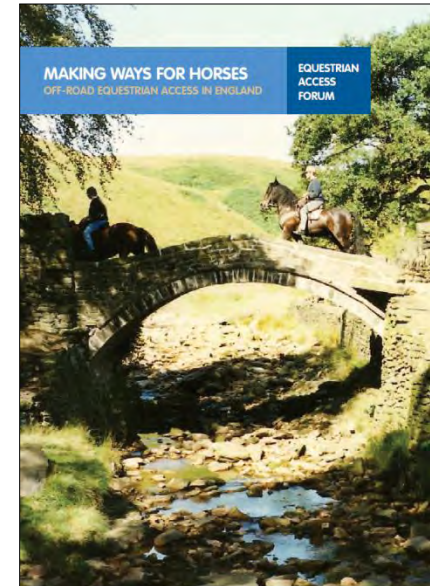
- 76% of the projects have produced bridleways.
- 59,013m new bridleways created
- Penrose Cornwall –National Trust - 12km of new bridleway
- Kilmersdon – Sustrans – 60m – vital link
- Chopwell Woods Durham 2.6km new bridleway

# Making Ways for Horses

## Off-road equestrian access in England

### Equestrian Access Forum

- BHS
- Byways & Bridleways Trust
- National Federation of Bridleway Associations
- South Pennine Packhorse Trails Trust
- British Driving Society



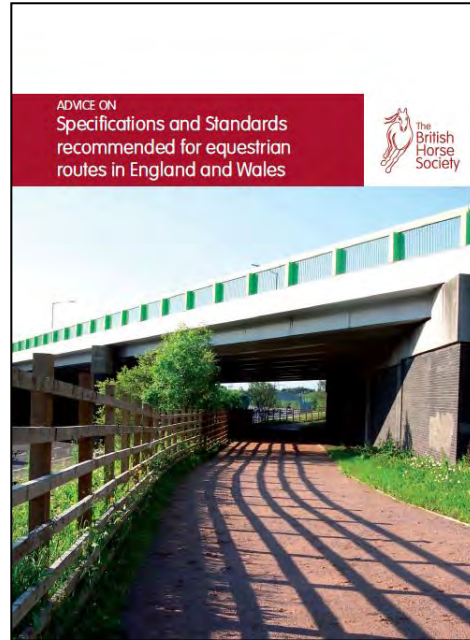
# Shared User Proposals

- Proposal 1 – access should be for everyone
- Proposal 5 – Adopt a single status for footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways
- Proposal 30 – routes leading onto and over common land to be recorded as restricted byways or bridleways

# Shared User Proposals

- Proposal 33 – remove the restriction on taking horses onto access land
- Proposal 37 - include horse riding and carriage driving on the coastal path wherever physically possible
- Proposal 39 ensure that access leading to the foreshore includes horse riders and carriage drivers
- Proposal 40 – Horse riders and carriage drivers should have access to woods and forests on the same basis as walkers and cyclists

# BHS Information



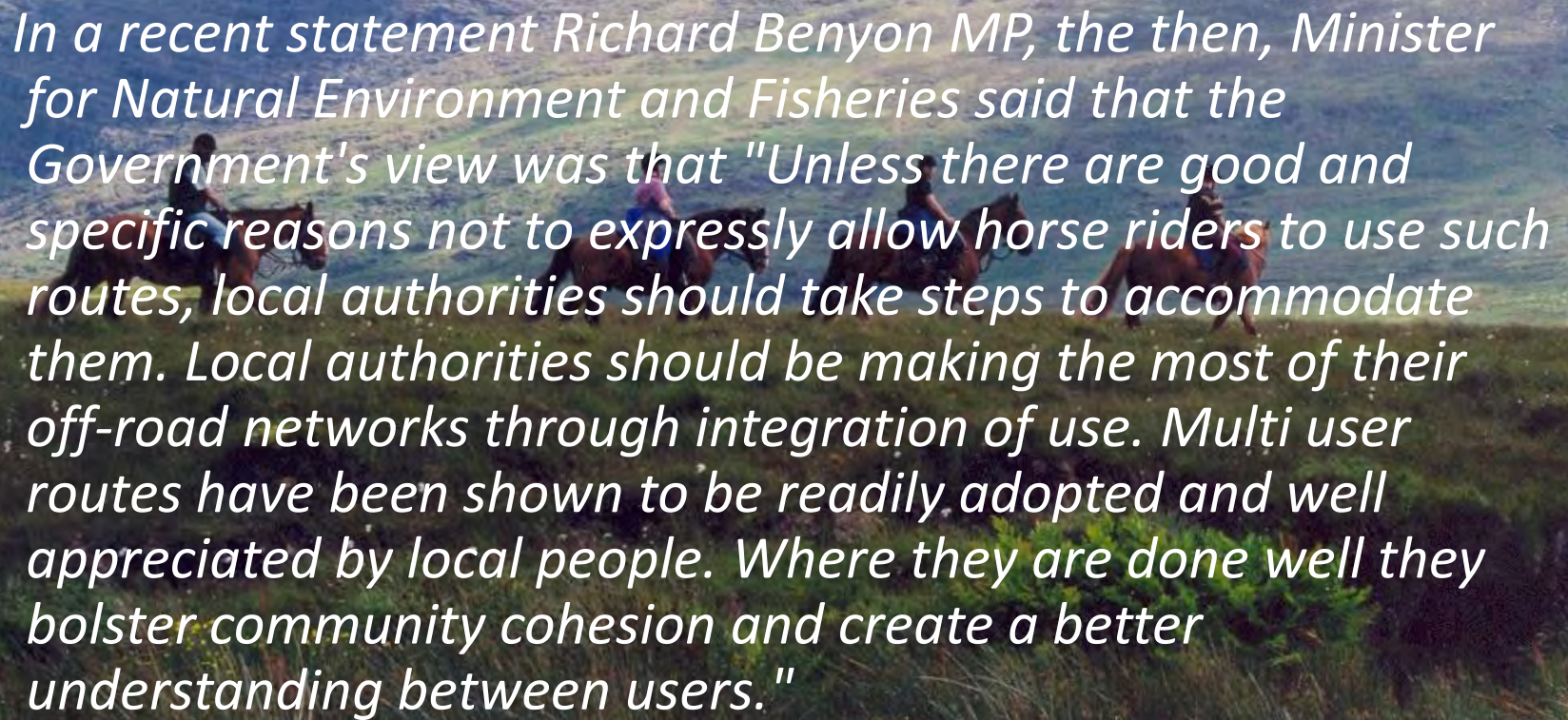


# The Health Benefits of Riding



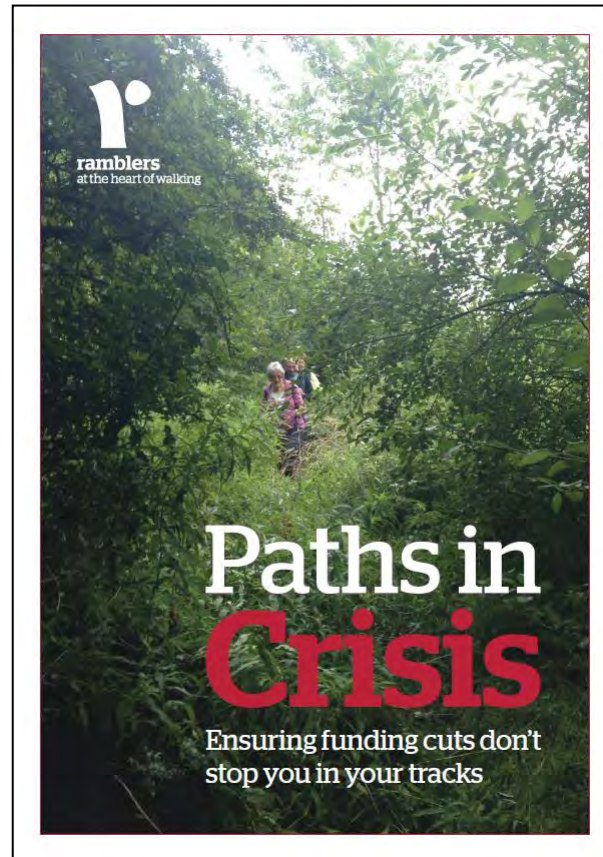
Fulfilling your passion for horses

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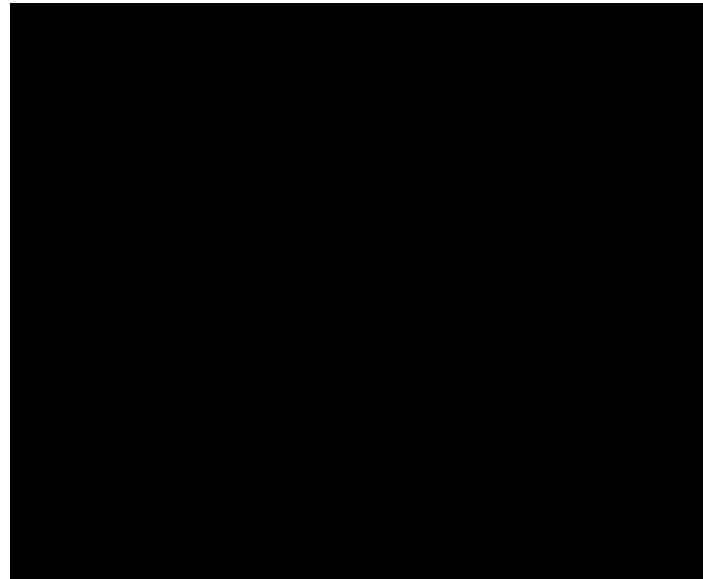
A group of four horse riders is seen from behind, riding across a grassy hillside. The background features rolling hills under a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, italicized font.

*In a recent statement Richard Benyon MP, the then, Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries said that the Government's view was that "Unless there are good and specific reasons not to expressly allow horse riders to use such routes, local authorities should take steps to accommodate them. Local authorities should be making the most of their off-road networks through integration of use. Multi user routes have been shown to be readily adopted and well appreciated by local people. Where they are done well they bolster community cohesion and create a better understanding between users."*

# Sharing Paths in Crisis Report- The Ramblers



# Eleanor's Story



A photograph of a field of tall, golden-brown grasses in the foreground. In the background, several people wearing high-visibility vests and helmets are visible, suggesting a field study or maintenance work. The sky is clear and blue.

Questions?

[mark.weston@bhs.org.uk](mailto:mark.weston@bhs.org.uk)

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

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

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