



S.A.F.E.

SAFETY AND FACILITIES FOR EQUESTRIANS

Xmas 2020

Merry Christmas

S.A.F.E. AGM 2021

SAFE is due to hold its 2021 AGM in February.

Due to the current restrictions, we aren't sure how this is going to work, exactly, however it is unlikely that a face-to-face event will take place, unless a vaccine is rolled out and restrictions are relaxed.

We will keep you updated by e-mail and by links to the web site, where further information will be posted, as it becomes available.

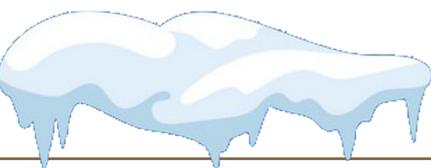
SAFE is a self-help group and if you have an idea for a project in your area or you want to apply for grant funding etc. we are here to support you .

SAFE worked with land owners to secure many miles of non statutory horse routes e.g. in Wenallt , Case Hill Woods, Craig-y-Parc Woods, Lisvane , Forest Ganol and Fforest Fawr , Ruperra to name a few.

It has lobbied for and paid towards the improvements to many statutory bridlepaths e.g. in Rudry, Draethen, Pentych and Mynyddislwyn and Caerphilly Mountain Areas.

SAFE is non profit making and your membership is valuable to support grant applications and raise money to provide better facilities.

Mayor of Caerphilly borough council at the opening of bridlepaths in Draethen and Rudry following improvements made in 2008.



New Members

If you ride with anyone who is not a member of SAFE, e-mail them a copy of this Newsletter and ask them to click the button, below!



It's only the price of a couple of coffees to join for a full year, and support the work carried out by SAFE's volunteers.

Chipping

A reminder to members that Wales has set a deadline of **12 February 2021** for all horses to be microchipped and passported.

Horses need to be microchipped, and the (PIO) Passport Issuing Organisation notified to update the horse's passport. There are delays due to COVID-19, so allow plenty of time to comply before the deadline.

More information at these:-

[Vale of Glamorgan site](#)

[BHS](#)

[Youtube \(Wales.gov\)](#)

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Cwmcarn Forest Drive

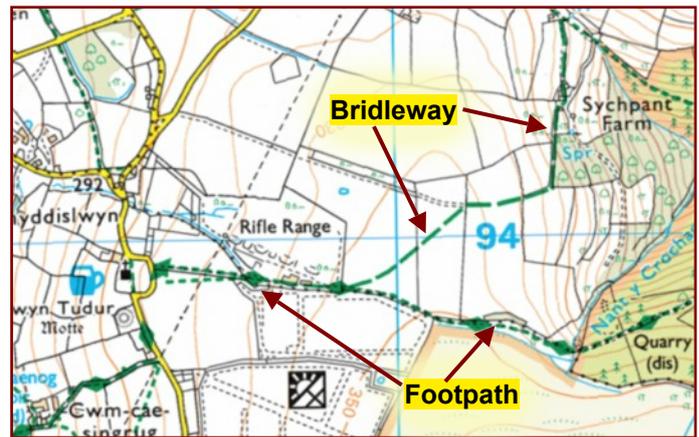
A piece of good news on the Access front. In the vicinity of Rhyswg Ganol Farm, near Cwmcarn Forest Drive, (grid reference ST 24545 95239) Bridleways RBW's 182 and 189 leave the forestry and go onto the common. Previously there was a cattle grid across the route, which prevented horse rider access. This was originally put in to stop sheep getting into the woodland and eating newly planted saplings.

With the help of the local ramblers group Graham served a section 1 Notice on the council as this was causing an obstruction to equestrians.

After several meetings and a site visit Natural Resources Wales (NRW) agreed to install coral type gates. These work very well and are a great improvement as riders can now access a lovely circular ride. Great result and well done Graham. 👍



Mynyddislwyn



Near the clay pigeon shoot on Mynyddislwyn there is an old parish road that went from Cwmcarn, Abercarn to the church up there (also near The Church Inn).

Just before the shooting range there is a bridleway which runs all the way up to a disused farm called "Sychpant". About 200 metres from the end of bridlepath, it turns into a footpath per the OS maps which is rather odd.

Graham is waiting to be able to visit Gwent archives in Ebbw Vale to go through the old records to see why it suddenly stops being a Parish Rd and became a footpath. In the old days the Parish Rd would have been used for burials, as chapels traditionally did not have surrounding burial grounds so the abrupt change in status doesn't seem to make much sense.

Hopefully the archive records will help shed light and will provide evidence that the Parish Road continues therefore allowing horse access.

Mynyddislwyn 2

At West End, Abercarn, if you go up a road called Pennar Lane, you come to Mynyddislwyn - and then to a house called Cefn Pennar.

There is restricted byway which goes through the back garden of the house and there are a number of obstacles making it very difficult for anybody to get past on horseback or walking.

Graham with support of ramblers is in discussion with Caerphilly Council about this and the Council have made some improvements to the route by grading a section - but it is still quite a steep climb. A local farmer who rents the land for sheep grazing does not welcome anyone who accesses the area, and has placed a fence across the restricted byway again preventing access.

Graham is challenging all these obstructions.

Recently the house and land has come up for sale and it has been suggested that diverting the byway around the garden might be a better outcome for all.

Rudry Update

Passing 3 Counties Agriculture, there is an access onto Rudry Common, cutting off a lane you would need to ride before you access the Common via Rudry village.

However some channelling has been possible at the top end a limited amount of surfacing also undertaken.



BEFORE

This access has been problematic for many years due to both steep terrain and bedrock, with some riders avoiding riding down it for fear of slipping.

The terrain is very challenging, and fixing the problem has been difficult due to water run off and limited drainage opportunities.

After a number of meetings between representatives of SAFE, contractors and Caerphilly council, the work on improving access to the common has finally been completed.

Problems included the water running off from both sides and that it is impossible to divert the water off on to the lower side as this would cause extra run off onto the road (Caerphilly highways understandably gave this proposal a big thumbs down).

Crucially the path has been widened to give horses and other users width to pass and for horses more options to find better footing. The steepness and run-off water means any surfacing on the steeper section would have quickly eroded.

It's certainly an improvement so please spread the word to any local riders to support SAFE by joining.

Thanks to Caerphilly council and grant funding obtained via the Caerphilly Landscape Project and a special shout out to Chris Jones (community ranger) who drove this on despite challenges of Covid .

AFTER



Blackpool Ride

OK, having got your attention, this is description of a ride through Cefn Pwll Du woods (Pwll Du is black pool).

This newsletter ride talk around is a short and relatively uncomplicated ride along forestry tracks in Cefn Pwll Du woods between Machen and Draethen. It probably will take between an hour and an hour 20 minutes depending upon how fast you go.

For parking, if coming from the Caerphilly direction travel into Machen and then take a right down into Forge Rd just before the local chemist and takeaways. Next, go past the British Legion club and take a right into The Crescent. There is parking alongside that road or in the adjacent community centre car park (if parking there please do take any horse poos home ☺) .



Once saddled ride back towards the British Legion and take a right over the river bridge.

Ride up past the houses and past Clos Trefeddyd (on the left).



Take the next left into Rhyd y Gwern lane. Then go past the first of the forestry entrances on the right (that is a bridlepath signed up as a narrow track but not an easy access as it can be overgrown in places - so ignore that!)

Shortly after there's entrance on the right with a horse step over. That's a much better option it is only about 6 minutes from start to that point .

Once over the step over follow the widish forestry track . The tracks here are wide and surfaced and probably lend themselves to mainly walking and trotting, though there are some areas which provide opportunities for cantering, particularly if you keep an eye open for a softer verge.



A couple of minute later you come to a section of track where you could go straight on or take a right turn. You could go either way at this point because both options form a loop which returns to this point.



For the purposes of this ride talk we kept straight on (that is, keeping left) and ride on up this track.

(continued next page)

This ride took us about an hour with a mix of walk, trot and canter.



After about 25 minutes from the step over you come to a cross roads in the tracks. If you carry straight on you could come out by a forestry car park or the Maenllwyd pub if you right divert onto an adjoining lane .

Once you are back at the junction mentioned at the start of the loop take a left and head back towards the forestry entrance retracing your hoofsteps...

We cut our ride short at this point so take a right turn here and start heading back towards the start.



Carry on down this track - half way along there are views of Machen Mountain and Quarry over on the right.

This takes you to the stepover which took you into the woods at the start. Over the stepover turn left.

Down the lane, taking a right at the end of Rhyd y Gwern Lane and head back to where you parked up.



Further on down the track, you are now dropping back towards Machen.



My Horsey Healers

An article from one of our younger riders.

Hello, my name is Lily-Faith, I am 9 years old and I am going to tell you about the horses and how they help me with my anxiety.



Kira and Lilly Faith trying out an upper gear

Some people are scared of horses because of how big they are, but I think of them as my big cuddly friends.

I struggle with my anxiety in school.

If I have a lesson that is hard, I find it difficult to tell anyone.

If the teacher explains it again and I still don't understand it, I feel like I'm going to pass out.

I have the best of best friends called Joy and she lets me go to her stables, and ride and play with her horses. I have been riding Kira since I was 5 years old.



Reuniting after a week apart!

Kira is a part Shire and I used to have to stand on a box to brush her.

Even though I was so small, I never felt scared of her, because Kira is a big gentle giant.

I can tell Kira all my problems and I think she listens. Kira is my wonderful gentle giant friend.

Sometimes I ride Rolo, and he always licks my face which makes me laugh.

I tell jokes with Guinness on video and it makes other people laugh.

When Nanny gives Kira a good scratch, she puts her muzzle around to find me and snuffles my hair up and everyone laughs at my messy hair do.

When I am with the horses, all of my worries go away and nothing feels so bad.

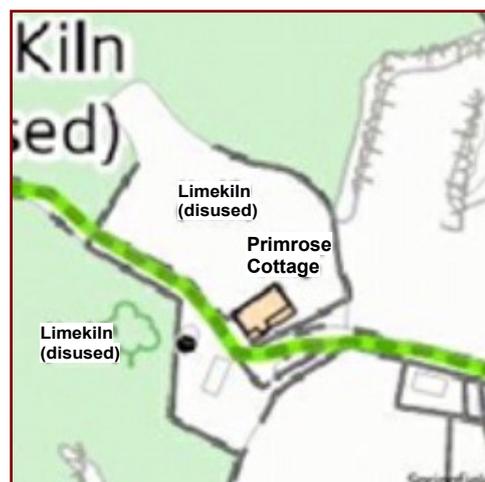


Draethen Bridleway by Primrose Cottage

Caerphilly council have now signed the bridlepath running north and south through Draethan. (See December 2019 newsletter, where this was first mentioned).



But there are concerns that the route around Primrose Cottage by the metal railings is not suitable as an alternative and the statutory bridlepath which follows the cottage driveway is often blocked by a shut gate or materials and equipment placed on the bridlepath at the rear of the property - this has been referred to the council.



2026 and why that date matters

On 1 January 2026, bridleways in England and Wales that aren't formally recorded will be lost to the public. These unrecorded routes actually exist in law, but have never been registered on the definitive map, the legal record of public rights of way.

Just because you currently ride on a route doesn't mean it's recorded and protected from being removed. You can see if a route is recorded as a bridleway on an OS map or by checking with your local authority (more information can be found on the BHS site).

BHS has information about this [HERE](#).

Each county borough council in Wales keeps a Definitive Map and Statement of public rights of way which is the formal legal record of the existence of footpaths, bridleways etc.

Each right of way is given a unique reference. The Map shows status and alignment - these could be brief giving a start and end point, or it may include details of width, gates, bridges or restrictions.

Following a call to the BHS access department it has been confirmed that the 2026 cut off date does not affect claims arising under evidence of 20 year continuous use "presumed dedication" as outlined below.

This can be a complicated issue but to give you an idea, under Section 31 of the Highways Act or under common law it is possible to establish that a right of way has come into existence by means of "presumed dedication"

That is, enough use over a period of time without the landowner preventing the use, so he or she is presumed to have dedicated it. Evidence is required that the rights exist and an application then has to be made to the local highway authority for the route to then be added to the definitive map.

The application needs to show that the route has been used by the public as of right of way for a considerable period, evidence of uninterrupted use for a period of at least 20 years and with reference to witness statements is often key.

A BHS leaflet giving much more detail about this can be found [HERE](#).

The BHS also provide a [Toolkit](#) that gives a step by step guide to how you can check on your local bridlepaths and how to take the matter further.

Machen - New Gate Installed

Riding up Penrhiw lane you take a bridlepath which leads to Machen common.

The first farm gate encountered had been impassible on horseback for a long while as the main gatepost was no longer holding the gate up off the ground and there were some jagged bits of metal to contend with.

SAFE were told that the council had originally installed the gate many years ago.

However, it was apparent the landowner and council were no longer in agreement in respect of what was needed next, to ensure grazing sheep were contained, while permitting access to horseriders using the right of way.

With concerns over horses and riders safety mounting the landowner agreed to install a new rider friendly gate if SAFE contributed towards the cost of the materials.

SAFE contributed funds, the work has now been done and the route is now accessible on horseback.



CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR PUZZLE PAGE

1. WORD SQUARE

How many words of 4 or more letters can you find from those in the square below.

1. Each letter can only be used once in a word.
2. No proper names, plurals or conjugated verbs (ending in "s").
3. Every word must contain the highlighted letter.
4. There is one 9 letter word to find and, as usual, it is horse related (and may ignore the above rules).

N	O	C
R	P	R
E	E	H

18 words fair; 24 words good, 30 words very good, 40 or more Excellent! (My research found over 60).

All words verified in the Scrabble™ Dictionary.

Christmas Tips

If you intend buying an Advent Calendar, this year, better hurry! Apparently their days are numbered!

There's a new film about a boy who doesn't believe in Santa - it's called "Rebel without a Claus".

Boris Johnson has apparently asked Santa for furniture, this year - rumour is that he's looking for a new Cabinet...

Santa went to see the doctor because he had a mince pie stuck in his bottom. "No problem", said the doctor, "I'll give you some cream to put on it."



F	L	W	K	I	R	A	V	E	B	H	S	I	I
I	R	N	H	T	E	H	N	E	R	D	T	M	V
E	N	A	D	W	E	E	H	N	I	E	E	P	V
R	S	W	N	A	A	A	T	I	D	F	P	R	A
N	T	D	L	C	A	M	R	C	L	I	O	O	R
E	O	E	E	L	E	E	O	C	E	N	V	V	W
W	R	A	E	S	S	M	P	A	P	I	E	E	A
S	R	D	E	A	S	B	S	V	A	T	R	M	L
L	A	S	I	F	E	E	S	T	T	I	O	E	E
E	C	L	T	E	C	R	A	E	H	V	N	N	S
T	H	O	S	T	C	O	P	T	N	E	A	T	S
T	R	W	S	N	A	H	R	E	V	E	L	C	T
E	S	T	A	T	I	S	T	I	C	S	M	E	S
R	A	B	E	R	C	A	R	N	E	H	C	A	M

2. SAFE WORD SEARCH

All answers will be posted to the Fun Stuff section of the Website, probably in February!

Find the following words in the grid.

They may be horizontal, vertical or they may be diagonal - and may read either forwards or backwards! Where the item to be found has a space, ignore it.

ABERCARN
ACCESS
BRIDLEPATH
CARROTS
CLEVER HANS
DEAD SLOW
DEFINITIVE
FRANCE
HEALERS
IMPROVEMENT
KIRA
MACHEN
MEMBER
NEWSLETTER
PASSPORT
SAFE
STATISTICS
STEPOVER
VACCINE
WALES

** I see BHS also appears, but that was completely unintentional!*