

BRISTOL GROUP EVENTS CALENDER 1993

JUNE

6th GWENT POLICE OPEN DAY

VOLUNTEERS REQ'D to man T.R.F. Stand

Pls contact Ian Jeffries 0272 678115

13th RUN: Hilperton, Ldr: Steve Cousins

PLS Tph Steve for details; 0225 446148

14th CLUB NIGHT @ WARMLEY 20.00 - PROMPT!

*PUBLIC INQUIRY

*15.06.93: BATHFORD RUPP

*10.00 at Bathford Parish Hall

19/20th AVON ROAD SAFETY WEEKEND

Contact: Nich Brown or Dave Clegg

Volunteers req'd to man TRF stand

? RUN: WHERE, WHEN, WHO?

SOCIAL: Tph; Derek Jones, P.H. of yr choice?

JULY

*PUBLIC INQUIRY

*06.07.93: HIGH LITTLETON + FARRINGTON GURNEY

*RUPPs: CL11/40 & CL 10/7

*10.00 at Midsommer Norton Town Hall

12th CLUB NIGHT @ WARMLEY 20.00 - PROMPT!

SOCIAL: Tph; Derek Jones, P.H. of yr choice?

AUGUST

*PUBLIC INQUIRY

*03.08.93: SANDFORD RUPPS AX 29/66a & AX14/70

*10.00 Sandford Village Hall

9th CLUB NIGHT @ WARMLEY 20.00 - PROMPT!

SOCIAL: Tph; Derek Jones, P.H. of yr choice?

SEPTEMBER

9th CLUB NIGHT @ WARMLEY 20.00 - PROMPT! *

18th NATIONAL EXEC MEETING; see Richard Tallon

SOCIAL: Tph; Derek Jones, P.H. of yr choice?

Lake District Weekend: See Jason Bamford

* BRING AND BUY SALE IN CAR PARK ?

Please note that the views expressed in
this magazine are not necessarily the
official views of the

TRAIL RIDER'S FELLOWSHIP
or the **BRISTOL GROUP'S**

Trail Riders Fellowship

The national club for the encouragement of non-competitive
"green road" motorcycling and maintenance of rights of way.

Bristol Group



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Meetings: 8:00pm 2nd Monday in the month
Warmley Community Centre
Deanery Road, Warmley, Bristol

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Ed's Edification

Issue 3, that you now hold in your sweaty hand, was very nearly this first "Run Report Free" B.G. '93 Mag! If it hadn't been for Steve Cousins' valiant efforts a large part of the "raison d'être" for this Mag would have been negated. So let's be having those run reports!

Out of the 14 (or whatever the "mob-handed" complement was) riders who were on the last Fossway "Sludge Run" let's have at least a page of A4 before the next Mag. Run leaders really must ask for/assign a Run Reporter. I can always find something to put in the Mag if you TRF'ers don't want to read about the exploits of your pals.

Maybe it was too much to expect that by putting out a Mag bi-monthly in an effort to report our activities a little more currently it would in turn stimulate more interest in B.G. activities (which appear to be at an all time low). I always thought the Herts Group was renowned for its minimal riding program but at least they had an outstanding "social calendar" including the weekly "Putting the World (as the TRF know it) to Right" - over a pint of real ale, of course.

Anyway, having had an editorial whinge, onto the good news and the bad news.

Jason Bamford says he wants to organise a week-end in the Lake District this autumn. My name's down for it already - we just need between 4 - 6 more!

RIGHTS OF WAY NEWS

We must all congratulate Martin Harding, whatever our political convictions, on his election to Avon County Council. A lot of hard work was involved and I'm sure he will work diligently on the TRF's behalf while still addressing Patchway's law and order problem, and without getting hit on the head by a dustbin, again!

I hope I didn't tempt fate with Issue 2's editorial? But I now personally welcome Martin to that exclusive club: "Maggie's/Major's Millions". It's a wonderful excuse to do Rights of Way work and "Socialising". I'm again job hunting as my E.T. course will have finished by the time you read this plus, unfortunately, so will the placement in the Avon PROW Office. So if anyone hears of any "nice little earners" (that pay more than £3/hr! - which appears to be the going rate that current recession is forcing upon us) please let me, or Martin, know.

PUBLIC INQUIRIES

You will see in the Bristol Group Event Calendar that there are a number of Public Inquiries this year, in fact one a month. So even if you can only spare an hour or so go along (on your M/C - don't be shy). If there's as much evidence as Twelve O'Clock Lane all the opposition failed to reappear after lunch ('cos they knew they were beaten).

SOCIALS

On the subject of "SOCIALS", and I'm guilty myself but I can claim mitigating circumstances - but NOBODY even phoned Derek to register any interest in the April Social. As an ex-B.G. Social Sec I really do think that the Social Sec should be given more support. In my opinion, the once a month Group Meeting is just too infrequent for any continuity.

TALY BONT, Not on Usk,
(or what to do over Easter if you're an atheist)

Brecon, Rhyader, Brecon, Rhyader. How many Bristol Group have trogged up to the Trod or done the Gap Road? More than once? I've got to admit the Gap Road is great but if you just go bit further up the A44 and hang a right you find the other Taly Bont (on the River Leri) and enough RUPPs to ride for week without doing any twice.

In my previous existence with the Herts Group the "Easter Extravaganza" to the Dovey Valley/Afon Rheidol area has been an annual event for nearly 20 yrs, taking on almost the significance of a religious pilgrimage.

The biggest problem with the area is trying to decide which RUPP to ride next. The next biggest problem is the pub, the White Lion, at Taly Bont (on Leri). It's a Banks' house - Banks' don't have to introduce a low alcohol beer - as per the K9P that Billy Connolly advertises - they have one already - it's called "Bitter". But at £12 B&B for a room you could swing a cat in, plus an enormous breakfast, one shouldn't complain. Not only that, this year, in four days of riding there was only one puncture and about an hour's delay (really serious as it just before lunch - Marston's - on the last day) when I dumped/drowned the XR 250RL in a ford. (* Also see Hilperton Run Report.)

For fluid run leading (I'm not talking about real ale) and demonstrating that a DT 125 on trials tyres, and with the O.E. SILENCER is more than adequate even for the toughest Welsh track, Dave Jarvis takes 1st prize. If I could just get up some of the climbs as neatly and memorise the route as well as Dave can I'd be happy. Also, I'd be happy if the XR 250 was a few kgs lighter (or I've got to lose a few lbs) because the tyre/ground loading was just enough for DCC + XR to break through the surface of the average Welsh bog in such a way that I'd not experienced on the XR 200R. It's definitely a case that "small is beautiful" in bogs! The XR 250 is a dream with taught ride and handling making rocky, shale tracks boring even at, well, faster than my XR 200!

cont.

TALY BONT, Not on Usk, cont

I could go into a list of unpronounceable Welsh names of the tracks we rode so I will restrict myself to the lunch stops (what else?) which were the limit of each days run: Machynlleth (twice), Dolgellau and Devil's Bridge. Covering 75 to 100 miles each day without any "aggro" from the indigenous population and only one Forestry locked gate where a very conveniently located spare railway sleeper allowed us to do the TRF version of the Royal Tournament Field Gun Competition and get all five M/Cs over in about the same time as the RN take for one Gun Run. (Admittedly we didn't have to dismantle the M/Cs and no shouts of "Up Devonport"!)

Easter has got to be the most ideal time for an extended Trail Riding Expedition. You all missed out!

Dave Clegg

* Re: Hilperton break-down

It could have possibly been water left over from this escapade that caused the XR to expire on Steve's Hilperton run. I have now restored confidence in the beast by a totally trouble-free solo ride down Cheddar and back.

FEEDBACK

"Trail Bike Fun Day"? Whatever happened about May 16th???

It was on the B.G. calendar for months and, in dry weather, Heals Scar is a superb site just to "go and play". So, before SOME OF US go to trouble to organise another "Fun Day" we really do need a little more commitment from the majority of the members. Also, I feel that in order to maintain good relations with the farming community we still ought to offer our "remuneration" to Farmer Reeves.

DISASTER AT GLOUCESTER CROWN COURT: FRIDAY, 19TH MARCH 1993
Highways Act 1980, Section 116.

I was unlucky enough to be present at an historic moment in the life of trail riding: the "Stopping Up" of Unclassified County Road, Number 51191 at Bisley in the County of Gloucestershire.

Although we only have the verdict so far - the reason/rulings will follow soon (his honour doesn't want to make any mistakes in the application of the law and thus give an excuse for yet another appeal). Unfortunately, it would seem to be that the unsurfaced route was unnecessary because an alternative, which was suitable, was available. It was also claimed that no one ever used it anyway! When user evidence was called it was stated that the use was "de minimus" or "not a lot".

If we look at this ruling for a moment, almost all the lanes we (TRF) use are "unnecessary" because if they had been heavily used they would have been tarmac'ed years ago. The argument was tried that the road was necessary as a recreational amenity but was to no avail. Rambling is recreational, trail riding is not.

It was also put forward that the alternative route was not so safe to use as the unsurfaced route but one gained the impression that any tarmac road must be safer than the insanity of driving on mud, grass and rocks.

We must therefore look where it went wrong, whose fault it was and how we can turn this disaster around.

1. Not enough use by not enough people. Everybody at fault.
ANSWER: Ride More
2. Not enough people in court to give user evidence.
Everybody at fault.
ANSWER: Fill out run sheets. Be prepared to go to court.
3. The case for a Road is heard by Magistrates (Lay person) and not by a DOE Inspector trained in Rights of Way Law.
ANSWER: Lobby your M.P. to change the law to bring the lanes we use in line with footpaths and bridleways.

cont

4. It was stated that the lane was not necessary as part of a network of roads. Everybody at fault.
ANSWER: Use whenever you can for any legitimate purpose.
5. Landowners invariably say that they never see anyone using the lane in question. Everybody at fault.
ANSWER: Make sure you are noticed (in a reasonable way!)
Say "Hello" and get a reply (if possible?)
6. The TRF have been too reasonable too long and maybe we should be prepared to be a more confrontational by WRITING LETTERS of complaint and/or enquiry to the Highway Authority, i.e. the County Council Officers and/or Elected Councillors, even your M.P. (don't be shy - you don't need a IBM 386 P.C.)

WE MUST ALL VOW TO WRITE A LETTER ONCE A MONTH -
WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT!

(Avon PROW Section receives AT LEAST ONE LETTER A DAY from the Avon Ramblers "Hon Sec" plus loads from ad hoc members. Ed)

7. This is not a problem we can cure by throwing money at it although with no money we will fail.

The heart of the matter is, to my mind, that the question is resolved by a Magistrate and then by a Crown Court Judge (plus two lay Magistrates at the Appeal hearing) who may or may not have had previous experience knowledge of the intricacies PROW Law and DOE Statutory Instruments. If this duty were to be transferred to the DOE Inspectorate as with footpaths and bridleways, we would be putting our case before experts.

If you are in doubt then look at our success rate at Public Inquiries with the application of the ruling:
"ONCE A HIGHWAY ALWAYS AND HIGHWAY."

Perhaps we need a co-ordinated letter campaign to M.P.s, M.E.P.s and the DOE to get this current system changed.

If you think so then - let's get on with it.

Nick Crook

"POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREAS WITHIN CONSERVATION

Current CONSERVATION "BUZZ Phrases" or Glossary of Terms to look out for if RUPPs or BOATS are in the area. Anti-vehicle pressure groups are ALWAYS at work and can use any of the following as an excuse to either downgrade a RUPP or attempt to impose a TRO.

This is not a general Doom & Gloom whinge but we are "playing from behind the 8 ball"! Being motor-cyclists in the countryside, sensibly ridden legal and QUIET bikes are "a must" if we are to create any credibility as a responsible organisation.

National Park:

11 Parks in England and Wales cover over 14,000 sq km. Mutterings about increased vehicular usage in some areas "reducing the QUIET ENJOYMENT of park."

NNR: National Nature Reserve

130 NNR now exist covering 43,500 Ha of England, "declared" by English Nature.

LNR: Local Nature Reserve

221 LNR's designated by local authorities covering 11,000 Ha in England.

AONB: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Only 39 AONB in England and Wales but they cover a total area of over 20,000 sq km.

SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest

3,500 SSSI's in England covering nearly 800,000Ha.

NOTE: AONB & SSSI were used as justification to impose a "Blanket" TRO on a network of woodland BOATs in the District of Dacorum, Hertfordshire.

ESA: Environmentally Sensitive Area. Yet another new designation so new that I can't find a definition!

CLA calls on local authorities to pay for rights of way

By Liz Mason

LOCAL authorities should pay farmers to manage and create public rights of way, says the Country Landowners' Association in a new report.

But the CLA also recognises that changes in national and local laws will be needed if a partnership between farmers and local authorities is to work.

Ramblers' Association leaders welcomed the CLA document, which a spokesman described as "a conversion on the footpath to Damascus". But the Open Spaces Society immediately condemned the CLA's efforts as an "irrelevant public relations exercise". Both groups said the CLA should expel or suspend landowners who persistently block paths and ignore its new policies.

The report, *Recreation and Access in the Countryside, A Better Way Forward*, urges landowners to respect public rights of way and ensure all existing paths are properly open. It also asks users to appreciate farming pressures.

Ewen Cameron, chairman of the CLA working party on recreation and access, said local authorities should start by producing definitive maps detailing rights of way to be finished by the year 2000. The authorities should also:

- Establish countryside recreation and access groups (CRAGS) in each county within two years.
- Tackle the backlog of maintenance

by working with landowners.

- Contract landowners and farmers to manage public rights of way through management agreements.
- Improve policing of rights of way.
- Give more attention to the need for safe riding and more bridleways.
- Regulate vehicles using byways by using Traffic Regulation Orders.

Mr Cameron said the CLA encouraged the creation of new rights of way or "permissive" paths which are not statutory public rights of way. The CLA says paths should be the result of voluntary agreements between landowners and walkers.

Sections of the 1980 Highways Act which allow a path to be created by "deemed dedication" if it has been used for at least 20 years should be scrapped, says the CLA. "It does not fit our new mood of harmony," said Mr Cameron. "It would be better if the rule of deemed dedication was scrapped. It leads to confrontation."

The CLA report also calls on the government to tighten the law by:

- Legislating to give highway authorities the power to make footpath diversion orders.
- Resisting pressures for an unqualified right to roam.
- Devising comprehensive byelaws to control irresponsible behaviour by walkers.
- Preparing guidelines on creation, diversion and extinguishment orders.

Free copies available from Publications Dept, CLA, 16 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8PQ.

STEVE'S (Late, but I print the magazine) SAY.

As always, I believe the future survival of the TRF will be down to new (younger) members with plenty of time on their hands to both ride and research. To this end, a few weeks back, myself and Ian Jefferies took two young lads, 'L' plates and all, out for a spin to show them what it is all about. Needless to say, we all had a good time and completed six lanes in the Lansdown area without to many problems.

One funny moment stuck in my mind when traversing Back Lane at Pucklechurch. At the start of the Lane I explained that it would be a little muddy but should present no trouble so off we went. At about half distance, what appeared to be a little mud hole loomed so I changed down to give everybody a demonstration of skilful riding which resulted in a nose first dive into a wheel deep quagmire. As one of the young lads rode by on the dry side he commented "are you coming". So much for seven years of trail riding experience!

Anyway, what I am trying to get across is, encourage new younger members even if you struggle to ride slowly or don't like small bikes with road-going tyres. They are the members of the future and most are normal people just like we were at their age!

Steve Say

GAZELLE

Gazelle can offer virtually overnight production of a stainless steel system for almost any bike - especially classics and vintage. It makes pipes in top quality 304 grade stainless steel, and offers an exclusive noise plug system for green-lane trail-bikes to cut noise while off-road.

Examples:

- Honda CBR600FL - £300-£350
 - Honda CBX six-into-six - £600
 - Kawasaki GPZ550 four-into-one - £300
 - Suzuki GS500 two-into-one - £250.
- Available from Gazelle, Wentlo, Rhoshill, Cardigan SA43 2TU. Tel: 0239-841715.

HILPERTON RUN, Sunday 25th April 1993

As the newly appointed "expert" (read scapegoat) for the Fossway Run (Thanks Steve) I thought I had better jot down a few lines about next "expert" area - Wiltshire.

As no one else in my time (albeit very short) with the Bristol Group had ridden this area I acquired the O.S. L.R. 173 & 184 I strung together a route (and even managed to find a good pub stop for lunch.)

So on a dryish Sunday morning five Bristol Group members, including new member Tim from Weston super Mare, set off from Hilperton. The first few lanes went well until Dave Clegg's XR 250 suddenly stopped. After much swearing, cursing and dismantling, there was no way that plug was going to spark, so it was out with the tow rope and back to the lay-by. Dave, in true TRF spirit said he would meet us in the pub for lunch.

Back to the lanes we quickened the pace to still make the pub in time for lunch. From Bullenhill and on to East Town which was very muddy as Tim on his brand new KDX found out while attempting to avoid the quagmire he went down a drainage ditch. On through Keevil, Bulkinton and Lusty Farm (can we do some research it how this name came about? Ed) to the George and Dragon at Earlestone, where, to our amazement, Dave was already there! After a roast beef lunch the best was to come, Dave won a bottle of Scotch and bottle of brandy in the pub raffle.

From Earlestone it was up onto Salisbury Plain - where the lanes go on for what seems like forever, but I hasten to add it is also very easy to get lost, as we found out. We finally got off the Plain at 5.30 to ride some lanes around Devizes to get back the Hilperton at about 6.30 having clocked up 85 miles.

A good day's riding - pity about Dave's bike but I'm sure the two bottle of booze he won helped make up for it. *

If there is enough interest I will put on this run again later in the year.

Steve Cousins

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 1991

How will the new Act effect you?

If you already familiar with the Act or just don't care don't bother to read on! But if you don't read on - The main effect could be a conviction for Dangerous Driving - up to two years imprisonment, 12 month disqualification and a compulsory retest before a return to the road. This retest will be both more stringent and more expensive.

The new offence of Dangerous Driving has three main changes from the old Reckless Driving. Two should not effect us (TRF) but the third one will very much.

1. The offence now applies to any Mechanically Propelled Vehicle and not just a Motor Vehicle. (A Motor Vehicle is defined as a mechanically propelled vehicle Intended Or adapted for use on the road. Thus the law now applies to motor mowers and motocrossers. This obviously does not effect us TRF'ers as WE only ride road legal machines.

2. The law now applies to Road or Other Public Place instead of just a road. A road is a Highway or any other road to which the public has access and this includes any bridge over which the road passes + ANY Right Of Way; i.e.: BOAT, RUPP, Bridleway. A Public Place would include carparks, garage forecourts or motor sport arena or venue. This obviously does not effect us TRF'ers as WE only ride Legal Highways.

3. Dangerous driving is now defined as:

a) the way a driver drives falls far below what would be expected of a careful and competent driver and
b) it would be obvious to a competent and careful driver that driving in that way would be dangerous.

Where dangerous refers to i) Injury to any person,
ii) Serious damage to property

Reckless is defined as careless, heedless of the consequences, rash, so that the old offence of reckless driving was said to involve a certain amount of "Mens Rea" (or Guilty Knowledge).

cont.

RTA 1991 cont.

That is to say that a driver would have to admit being heedless of the consequences and it was thought that it was necessary for the driver to be aware of the consequences to choose to ignore them. It was thought that if the driver denied foreseeing the consequences he could not be prosecuted.

A ruling was made by Lord Justice Diplock which stated that if the jury were satisfied that there was a real risk of personal injury or serious damage to property they may infer that the defendant saw the risk and took it or was oblivious to the risk and in either case was guilty of reckless driving. The Diplock Ruling is remarkably similar to the new offence. However, the new offence is in black and white in the Act and not a precedent from one case.

Now this is the one that could affect us TRF'ers.

You may be guilty of dangerous driving if it is obvious to a competent and Careful Driver that driving the vehicle in its current state would be dangerous, regard may be had to anything attached to, or carried on or in it and to the manner in which it is attached or carried. The danger to us (TRF) is that the phrase "Obvious to a careful and competent driver". It is inviting any person to become a witness for the prosecution and to have their opinion be the major plank of the prosecution case. In any Court case the Magistrate or jury have to be satisfied that the defendant is guilty beyond reasonable doubt.

If the case is the defendant against one ordinary, uncorroborated witness the benefit of the doubt should go to the defendant and they should be acquitted.

However, if there are a number of witness or other physical evidence then a conviction may well follow. You may be unlucky and be up against Institute of Advanced Motorists Rambling Club or the local Constabulary Walking Association.

cont.

RTA 1991 cont.

You may give your witness all the evidence he requires in the form of a physical injury or damage to clothing or maybe a mud spattering. He is likely to say "it was only good luck he was not killed."

A few points to ponder are that it says if it Appears dangerous not that it Actually was dangerous. Which means you probably be better off as a novice going slowly or a real expert making your riding look easy. Those who will fall foul will be the average rider having a good try and occasionally tying himself up in knots. Any wheelies, dough-nut turns, rooster tails or similar antics may well attract unwanted attention. Furthermore, if you wear all the motocross gear including a chin guard/full face helmet you are giving Mr Average the message is that this form of motor-cycling is more dangerous than American football and hang gliding combined. Anyway, to Mr Average/2.4 children/wash the company car on Sunday merely riding a motor-cycles dangerous so riding one on something as slippery as mud must be close to insanity. You may not even be able to see them but they'll be able to see you!

There is an exception for anyone driving in a public place in an authorised motoring event. However, this exception does not apply to any part of a motoring event on a road. Many long distance trails have sections or tests on a highway of some kind.

The Highway Code applies to ALL Highways including "Green Lanes" (not a legal definition). RTA 1988, Section 38 may be summarised that the failure to comply with the the Highway Code is not in itself an offence but any failure may be used in any proceedings (civil, traffic or criminal) by any party to establish or negate liability.

So what does the Code say of relevance to us TRF'ers? Just have look at the following Rules: 28, 29, 49, 51, 57, 63, 64, 70, 80, 81.

cont.

RTA 1991 cont.

Walkers also have responsibilities too. So when you do the "W" word read Rules 1, 2, 4, 5, 220, 221, 216,

Is it all doom and gloom? Should we all take up gardening?

The first thing to do is to ask yourself why do you go Trail Riding? If the answer is because it is less expensive and less paperwork than enduros or motocross then I suggest you pay up and take up competitive riding.

If you ride to gain access to the countryside and to preserve Rights of Way you should be all right but it is human nature to pit yourself and machine against the terrain if not a fellow rider.

So cut out the over-exuberance, enjoy the ride and the countryside but always be aware that you may be being watched. Obey the Highway Code and the TRF code of conduct at all times.

If this means going slower and that you may be bored then try an underpowered, vintage or classic bike (a B 40 perchance? Ed) I recently went "two up" on a BSA Bantam with road tyres and Ian Thompson supposedly went trail riding on an NSU Quickly (rather him than me! Ed) You maybe slow but it will be * challenging and Fun with a capital "F"! And at those speeds no one could ever call it dangerous. So, remember someone maybe coming the other way and if you would not drive like that on a tarmac lane don't do it on a green lane.

Or alternatively you could ignore all the above, possibly carry on as before (!?) and make history as the first TRF'er to be convicted under the RTA 1991 and open the flood gates for us all to prosecuted and if you are lucky you may get your licence back before Trail Riding is finished for ever.

Nick Crook

* Yes, I agree. If you want fun at low speed try an old TS 250 (not mine) up Grand-Mother's Rocks after New Year's Eve celebrations. Ed

PHOENIX LONG DISTANCE TRIAL, 14th FEBRUARY 1993

There are some on the committee who wish to distance themselves from the fact that some of us actually like to compete on motorcycles; they would probably wish all references to bikes to be omitted from the magazine. However, I get my kicks pitting my meagre skills against the clerk of the course and fellow competitors.

On 14th February Bristol Phoenix MCC put on a long distance trial starting from Radstock, covering ground familiar to many of us. I was riding with a friend, Pete Smith, a long time adversary in MCC trials who has just moved from North Wales to four acres in the Wye Valley. He also happens to ride a BSA Victor like me. Your chairman Steve Say was also due to be part of the team but he bottled-out, sorry, was confined to bed all week with flu.

I'll give section names and map references, although you may know different names for some of the lanes. I do not know which have rights of way and which were "by permission", so find out before you try 'em.

First was Clandown (682556). Simple enough but sufficiently slippery to indicate we were in for a tricky day and to make me wish I had used a bit more momentum.

Four of us then got lost and it was a couple of miles before I was confident I was back on course. On to Burlidge (578585) where the section was on the banks either side of the lane. A tight left hand turn defeated most of the entry, including me and wiped out one of my Acerbis hand protectors. The "real" pre-65 bikes with tight steering locks made it OK though.

Nanny Hurns (604580) was not observed and it was on to Strode (532614) near Butcombe. The observer here was Pete Fennell, who assured me "it's easy". However I crunched to a halt on the first rock step with a lack of ground clearance. Smithy cleaned it OK though.

Reddings (535639) and Chicken Run (545640) were not observed, but very muddy. The next stretch of tarmac (near Littleton) had a fast running stream running along it's right hand side. Pete decided to wash his wheels in this water but went A-O-T the instant his tyres touched the ice like bottom! I turned round to help him kick the footrest straight, mend the headlight, mudguard etc. We later found Pete was not the only one to suffer this fate.

Sandy Lane (588627) was no problem and the next section was Ringspit (620655). I have enough trouble riding this downhill and was not looking forward to attempting it uphill for the first time. For some unknown reason the section (observed by Richard Earle) was set out as a series of tight turns amongst the stolen, burnt out cars in the stream at the bottom. I scored an immediate 10 here and just don't enjoy this sort of section. I imagine most other riders don't either. Although the uphill lane wasn't as bad as I'd feared, I bet very few riders made it feet-up. Why this isn't observed instead I'll never know.

Harveys Ditch (640659) wasn't observed, so on to Little Uplands (653666). Again the section was set out as a tight turn off the lane itself, although I managed a clean this time. My wife and daughter came to watch and reckoned riders had more trouble climbing the ordinary lane than the nadgery section.

Stanton Lane (675622) was OK and the next section was over the road at Kings Lane (675618). The morass of muddy ruts were far too much for my low ground clearance and footrests. No doubt you monoshock boys wouldn't even notice them.

The famous Twelve o'Clock Lane (700630) was next, and I was again defeated by the muddy ruts.

On to Wilmington (700623) which has always been one of my favourite lanes. The section was again a bit tight, but I managed a clean. I would have thought a couple of "gates" in the tricky bits of the hill would have been sufficient.

Englishcombe (710625) was next, with the section set out in the deep mud at the side of the lane at the bottom by the bridge. Another maximum score! My petrol tank had worked loose so it was out with the spanners for the first time.

Middle Wood (722569) was not observed, so it was on to the dreaded Pipehouse (770605). I have spent many hours lane clearing here, but never ridden it. It was even worse than I'd feared. By the time I even reached the section both I and my clutch were totally knackered! I would need a much lower bottom gear to ever make a decent attempt here. A bit more riding skill would help as well!

White Ox Mead (730584) was not observed and gave me and my clutch time to recover from the previous ordeal. Brimscombe (722569) was next as a timed special test. This was dead straight, narrow, down one side of a valley and up the other. Great fun and I actually reached the previously uncharted waters of second gear!

Neither Home Covert (734560) nor Faulkland (183/733547) were observed, so the last section was Turners Tower (183/721535). This looked innocuous, but an angled rock step pushed me against a wall, trapping my hand in the clutch lever and ripping my glove. Another maximum! The lane after the section was so slippery that it was almost impossible to travel in a straight line, and both Pete and I thought we had picked up a puncture.

Back to the finish for a pint and a burger and to exchange tall tales.

I lost 51 marks to finish a fair way down the pecking order. The winner was former British Sidecar Trials champion, Paul Howells, who didn't drop a single mark all day! Hmm.

My bike, basically a converted road bike from the mid sixties, loses out against the true pre-65 trials bikes with their lower gearing and tighter steering lock. However it also loses out against the modern bikes with their plush suspension and high ground clearance. I'll just have to dust down my pre-65 trials bike from the back of the garage.

An enjoyable trial, but I feel the sections could be left much more natural without the mickey mouse taped tight turns. Great to have 70 miles of route laid out in front of you without any worries of whether anyone was going to dispute your right to be there.

Ian Hingley, Secretary