

~What's Happening Bristol TRF~ Summer 1997

- July 20: Quantocks /Exmoor Run Rodger Fowler 0117 9602999
- August 12: Club Night: 8pm Warmley Community Centre
- Road Run: To Be Announced!
- September 9: Club Night: 8pm Warmley Community Centre

For the *Latest Run Update* please Contact the Run Coordinator
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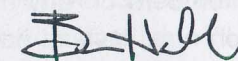
for the good times...

from the editor...

I (actually) went out trail riding 2 weeks ago and we like to publicly thank Richard Jones, Andy Horseman and Tim Frost with rescuing my GS out of the mud. If it wasn't for them the bike would probably still be there. I vow never to take the GS trail riding again (until the next time!).

Sadly (for me anyway!) this is my last issue of Bristol Trail as editor. Work has taken over and won (for the time being) and I just don't have the time.

Have a good summer!



This issue is truly choka with great trail tales and thanks to all who contributed. I almost ran out of space.

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The Chairman's Chat...



ever ridden. All of 28, yes 28 kilometres with only 50 metres of road along the way. The missing link which I have now ridden is some 10 kilometres of peat bog along the slopes of Wherside which links Dead Mans Hill with Starbottom.

I can also state that coming down Horsehead Pass is just as exciting if not quite as tiring as going up!

**Steve Say
Chairman**

Being the eternal optimist, I won't dwell on the Norton Marlreward public enquiry or the fact that only 15% of the members do any more than turn up on runs, instead having hopefully made some people feel guilty I will move on the more exciting things.

By the time you read this I should have had 3 evening runs all of which have been reasonably attended with no breakdowns and no get offs that I can remember. We even had a sensible conversation with the farmer at Mad Axemans Lane, as we manhandled the bikes under the illegal bridge.

This month's highlight from my point of view was yet another jaunt around the Yorkshire Dales with two lads from the West Yorkshire group especially as one of their bikes was also from back in the early eighties like mine. For those of you who do venture north to the land of trail riding, the next group tour will take in the longest off road section I have

Secretary's Scribble

I don't know about you, but I reckon our monthly meetings have been really good recently. Richards talk onto tools certainly generated some interest, and I'm sure we all learnt something. Wrapping an old inner tube round your existing ones for extra strength, sawing nicks near the end of your levers so that only the ball ends can break off, should Finilec be used before or after a puncture, or not at all? Can't wait for his talk on suspension set up.

Jane Winkworth's First Aid talk was also a good refresher for all of us I'm sure.

I am greatly encouraged by the groups response to our financial difficulties. Doubling the room subs now means that if we can get 20 people to a meeting, the group makes 12 quid rather than two.

The auction raised a lot of laughs as well as 65 pounds for the group. Steve certainly made an excellent auctioneer. We must repeat the exercise later in the year.

Last month's raffle of a map 172 raised a further welcome 15 pounds for the group.

Well done everybody - keep up the momentum.

Responses to the questionnaire continue to trickle in. If you've not given yours in yet, how about sending it to me NOW? Sorry if someone thinks telling us if they have kids and where they like to ride is an affront to their civil liberties! I'll try and present the results in the next mag.

**Ian Hingley
Secretary**



Exmoor Backwards

Ever since I learnt the Exmoor Run from Steve Say we have always ridden it, with minor variations, in one direction— sort of clockwise on the map. Having thought that maybe there are more climbs in the usual direction why shouldn't it be ridden the other way around? So it was one Saturday in mid March that eight of us set out from Dunster to see what it was like.

On our way through Timberscombe I remember thinking that we wouldn't have to ride Slade Lane out of Pitt Brodge as the first lane of the day. For those of you who don't know it, it has a vicious little rocky climb right at the start of the lane which I never look forward to as I like to "warm up" a bit. Must be getting old! Instead we tried two lanes that we don't normally include - Elscombe Lane and Digland Lane which proved a suitable start to the days riding. At the end of these lanes the sun was almost shining which was most unusual for Exmoor weather.

Stone Lane was soon after and I thought it would prove an interesting

challenge as it consists of many rock steps which we usually ride down and this normally gives the arms and the suspension some exercise. going up could prove interesting! Before we got to this point Knight Riders Serow was in trouble with a flat front tyre, so it was all hands to help out, well I held the bike! Once fixed we breezed up the rock steps with consummate ease only to find Pete was still looking for his ring spanner at the bottom. I rode up to check if anyone had picked it up but everyone looked blank. Just as I was about to ride back down to help Pete look, I noticed something shiny poking out of Knight Rider's pocket. On pointing this out Keith looked confused and couldn't understand how the spanner got there. Moral of this story - don't lend Knight Rider tools, he nicks them!

Dropping down to Yealscombe we all crossed the river with ease as it had been very dry over the preceding weeks. We rode on to White Cross and found that the cloudy and misty drizzle had moved in with visibility down to 50 yds. This was more like the Exmoor weather that I was accustomed to. The recent dry weather was still apparent though as the lane going back to Withypool was very dry where there are normal deep puddles.

Out of Withypool we rode up to Porchesters Post for some temporary bike swapping which was instigated by myself. I wanted to see what Jim's XR400 was like!

Penny Bridge proved an interesting rocky descent before we went for the usual splash about at Tarr Steps. Not everybody went across and back but those who did stayed dry, still we entertained the sightseers! Just Hawkridge before lunch at Dulverton which was memorable for Ian on his KMX200. First a flat on the rear and then a fall in the stream crossing! He managed to find the boulder the size of a football which lurks in this particular stream.

A quick lunch stop at the pub in Dulverton but this was not without incident. While some of us were in the pub the others were bump starting a car belonging to two little old ladies outside. Good deed for the day done, we headed for fuel at Exebridge as the petrol station in Dulverton was shut. After that we rode the lane into Bury which I have done in the opposite direction (as a climb) before. I remember the experience as I was completely knackered by the top but, going down? easy! not!! It had the sort of mud that even going downhill, stops you dead. Eventually we all reached

the bottom and we went for a clean up in Bury ford. We rode up to Louisa Gate before the notorious climb up to Oxgrove. Its the one that goes up a narrow track on an adverse camber, turns 90 degrees right and up a very steep slippery shale climb. Progress was good apart from Keith and Earl who took unplanned excursions into the trees! Jim liked it so much he went back down for another go! The gulley up through Barlynch Wood saw the end of 3 pretty exhausting lanes but Pete had a big grin on his face by the end of them. Paul Weston decided on an early bath as he was staying near by so he bid up goodbye on the way back in to Dulverton.

Time was pressing so we rode Court Down and Edbrooke Hill in the way back to Winsford before riding West Howelton to join the A396. We rode back towards Dunster with a short excursion to take in Hare Path. Just as we were getting close to the start point Jims XR400 decided to get a flat on the front so he decided to limp back to the cars with Pete. The remaining 5 of us rode Hopcott Common into Minehead and out to Kitrow Lane on the other side. Black Monkey lane was "Lane of the Day" for me. Firstly you descend into this evil slurry from a farmers field to end up riding the second half of the lane

in a stream.. Knight Rider managed to stop in one large pool of the offending 'soup' only to find this kickstart snapped clean off when he tried to start it again. Well I wasn't going in to get him. Maybe it was payback for nicking Pete's spanner! In the second part of the lane (stream) we came upon a large group of bikes all up on the bank on the left with seats and petrol tanks off. Obviously their bikes don't like water! As I rode towards them there was frantic waving of arms but although I knew it was deep, it wasn't that deep. Little did I know some heavy farm machinery had been down the lane and I only realised when my front wheel started rapidly disappearing into the water. Luckily was all

managed to get through although the Wyvern Group of the TRF, as they turned out to be, had not been so lucky.

With nice clean but very wet bikes we rode park Lane (you need to look your best when in Mayfair!) back to the cars.

All in all an excellent day, hope those who came enjoyed it, I did!

Paul Creed



Route Finder Run 1st June 1997

Fine weather when eleven of us met at Tog Hill Picnic area 9.30am.

Three groups of three riders each set off at 10 minute intervals to find their way. Using a mixture of map reading checked by compass bearings they had to cover some 60 miles, taking notes and making observations on the way. the plan was for us all to arrive at Banbury lamp around lunch time, with Barry Pope and myself acting as last men in case of breakdowns or other mishaps.

Unfortunately we had two retirements, Andy Horseman and Barry Hall both had an early shower.

I had two punctures en route due to an enormous thorn that flattened my rear tyre twice, once at Marshfield and the second time at Banbury lamp.

Paul Creed and Ian Hingley were first to arrive at our secret lunch stop and were tucking into Burger and Chips at the cafe as I turned up with George Pritchard and Tim Frost (Jim Gaisford had gone home half way due to a prior engagement, something to do with having his brother-in-law for lunch!) The ghird group of Don Williams, John Moore and Barry Pope arrived just as I fixed my second puncture, and in time to have a light lunch, before we compared answers to the 12 questions.

The first and second groups had all answers correct, so it was down to the tie breaker question to determine the winners, a quick jog to the observation point 100 yds from the cafe, check the compass bearing and back to me with their ansers. Ian Hingley clinched it on behalf of himself and Paul, with George Pritchard coming a credible second for himself and Tim Frost.

Bellies full we found a garage to top the bikes up and green laned home via Headington Steps, Kingston Langley, slaughterford and finally St Catherines which was very easy as it had been so dry all day.

We did meet some 4X4's at Headington who advised that there is to be a TRO on the steps soon so

stop erosion, but that the bridleway to the right of the steps can be opened up for vehicles officially.

We arrived back in Kingswood at around 7.30pm all in good fettle, although a few had missed evening engagements, I think the day was enjoyed by those who took part, it could have been a little wetter.

Lane Clearing Report

Redford Lane - 2 March 97 It was a clear day and I thought the kids might want to join me. We parked on the tarmac and started to walk up the lane.

Wow! an absolute morass with two four wheel drive ruts to contend with. This would be tricky enough by myself but with a three year old and a seven year old things fell apart rather rapidly.

We tried Daddy in the middle high ground, but this left a child in each rut in water deeper than their wellies. We then tried Daddy in the rut, Jessica in the middle ground and Peter trying to stay on the bank on the outside. Both were equally unsuccessful.

Finishers Certificates to be presented at next club night and I hope more of you will get involved in the next one.

Richard Jones

Peter left a welly stuck in the mud and got his foot wet and muddy, then repeated with the other welly. Not a happy bunny.

Jessica turned to see what was going on and immediately slipped flat on her back in the mud, looking like some refugee from the Somme.

At this point, with both kids crying to go home, I decided to abandon and retrace my steps. The kids lane clearing debut could wait for another day.

At least I tried to make it. Other than Martin Harding and Roger Fowler, where were the rest of you?
Report: Ian Hingley

The NEWBURY RUN: A Tail From Behind!

Nine o'clock start from Keynsham rugby ground. I arrive on time and sign the run sheet, naming next of kin. So far so good. One of our group is just finishing his full breakfast in the Cafe opposite. I decide against this as I am wearing a full face helmet, and feel there is a likelihood of what goes down could come up later.

We all pull out of the lay-by. I turn left towards Trowbridge. Everyone else goes straight across the road. It appears we're not riding by road to Trowbridge to pick up the Ridgeway !!

First lane, all goes well for me. Unfortunately the brown cylindrical object I've just ridden over, is the exhaust belonging to one of our fellow riders. A delay here as motorcycle engineering comes into a world of it's own. The exhaust is refitted to the broken frame mount using a piece of metal packing strip which was growing in the hedge. A very successful repair as this lasted all day and took quite a battering.

We cover the next few lanes with me towards the rear of the group. Eating mud on various occasions. We stop at the entrance to the next inconspicuous looking green lane, where Sam our run leader, gives a

little advice. "Take it steady and go to the right towards the top of the lane". Apparently this is Pipe House Lane which means nothing to me. We all set off. Amazingly I bounce and paddle my way ~ way up until the rooted incline slows up a couple of our group. Not too difficult I thought. The 2 lads who were having difficulty finally make their way up. Now it is my turn. Attempt No. 1 was futile. So was attempt No. 2 through to 5. "Why doesn't a G reg XT350 have an electric start" I thought.

After having to hold the bike upright and kick it over several times, my strength has completely gone. I wonder if the AA will accept a grid reference !! By now some time has elapsed and Sam comes back down to see if we've gone home or if there is a problem. A much needed helping hand is offered and accepted.

After a welcome drink supplied by a kind hearted group member, we continue on our way. At Trowbridge we stop to refuel and a chance to cram in energy rebuilding solids i.e. Mars and Snickers bars.

After leaving the petrol station we are on THE RIDGEWAY within minutes. I'd heard about this 30 odd mile green lane, but still am surprised at how rutted it is in places. At one section we all set off together and as usual I am at the back picking my

way gingerly between the ruts. They seem to act like tram lines. You get your wheels stuck in them and you go where they go. Coming up to a forked junction, I indicate right but the bike follows the ruts and we go left !!

As I look up I can see another group of riders on the horizon only to realise that this is the rest of my group. It is amazing how we all start off together, yet withing ~ mile I am so far behind. At the end of each section the group are waiting for me and off we go again.

Our E.T.A. at Newbury was 1.00 p.m. we actually arrive at 3.45. What more can I say. A stop here for body and bike refuel. A splash of oil on the chain. A wash of the number plate and it is time to remount. We make our way back using different lanes over what I have to say is some really beautiful scenery. By 5.30 p.m. we stop for a breather and some of the group to use the phone. (I think their weekend passes were running out!).

At this stage the muscles in the top of my legs feel as if I've run from Keynsham to Newbury. On speaking to Sam, it appears we have about another 90 minutes of green lanes before we reach Bath. Common sence and an expired BUPA card tells me it is time to call

it a day.

I'm pointed in the direction of Marlborough say my fond farewells and set off homeward. I reach Bath at roughly the same time as the rest of the group who green laned their way home. That must say something probably about my riding.

On reaching home I garage the bike and wonder if Trail Riding is really the RELAXATION I'm looking for. It's amazing how after a bath and a good night's sleep, everything doesn't seem quite so bad.

3 days later I did a mid-week evening run. By the end of the run I was actually picking where the front wheel should go as opposed to the other way around.

Finally, I would like to thank Sam for the well put together run and the rest of the group for their patience and words of encouragement even when I spent 5 minutes trying to restart a bike with the ignition switched off !!!!!

TIM FROST - A VIRGIN TRAILLIE

Four Punctures and a Kickstart

Exmoor Run 15th March 1997

Eight of us met at the usual lay-by outside Dunster, Paul Creed XR400 run leader, Jim from Corsham XR400, Pete Diccox XR250, Earl Barrett KDX200 on his first TRF run, Paul Weston XL185 also on his first run, Ian Jeffries KL250, Keith Knight Yamaha Serow and myself KMX200, riding Exmoor with the TRF for the first time.

I'm afraid I dont know many of the names of the lanes, but apparently it was pretty much the usual run but ridden backwards (and I have enough trouble riding forwards). The first couple of lanes were new to Paul, but had been described in Trailbike magazine. Nothing too tricky, but enough to pump up my unfit forearms.

It was after only a few lanes that Knight Rider had the first puncture of the day in the front of the Serow. With plenty of willing hands available to help we were soon back in action. There was even a duckpond to test the tube. There was plenty of discussion of how Jim was taught to

do it at the Geraint Jones Enduro school, but not much evidence in practice. We had stopped right at the bottom of a lane which was described to me as made of a series of rock steps, each one getting bigger and bigger. However, despite being suitably psyched out, it turned out to be the section Rocks from the Neil Westcott long distance trial, so I had ridden it a couple of times before. Pint of mild really.

The next few lanes seemed to consist of ever deepening ruts, which I seem to ride with either no trouble at all, or make a complete mess of.

Unfortunately an Exmoor mist descended over us as we rode over Porchester Posts, a long, open and very sensitive lane, and also very rutted.

I was next to fall foul of a puncture in the rear of the KMX. A compression burst despite me not having lowered the pressures from their normal commuting level. Once again many hands made light work and we were soon back in action. My threadbare rim tape was the subject of some ribald comments.

Down to Tarr Steps, where it was a case of riding through the ford, turning round and riding back through again. No complaints from the

gathered rambblers.

The next stream crossing caught me out however. I'm normally OK crossing streams, but got this one totally wrong. We've all done it I suppose - each successive rock knocks the front wheel 6 inches to the left and the back one 6 inches to the right. In no time I was pointing due downstream and with a stalled engine and a back wheel wedged between two rocks for good measure. Despite waterproof boots the water simply went straight over the top and I ended up with wet feet. I eventually got things sorted and leapt up the opposite bank in double quick time.

Lunch was taken in Wiveliscombe. Paul, Ian and I went into the pub, others preferring to stay outside with their pie and pint despite the light drizzle. When we came out we could hear but not see the others. However they soon hove into sight attempting to bump start the car of an elderly local lady.

One of the first lanes after lunch was full of thick glutinous mud and was very tricky to ride even though it was mainly downhill. Earl certainly struggled on this one.

There soon followed what is apparently one of the runs more

notorious climbs. It starts climbing through trees before a 90 degree right hand bend and an even steeper rocky climb to finish. I managed without stopping, but had to foot furiously - only because KR had stopped in front of me of course. Jim enjoyed this one so much he went back down for another go.

Next was another lane with a reputation, this time a snotty climb lined with rhododendron bushes. I again claimed a baulk on this one, but once stopped, I had real trouble getting going again. Plenty of wheelspin, furious scrabbling with my short legs, but precious little forward motion. Boy was I ready for a rest at the top of that one! Paul Weston decided to call it quits at this point. He had ridden his XL185 down from Bristol the day before, stayed in a Youth Hostel overnight and was faced with the return journey the next day. That's enthusiasm for a first timer!

Shortly afterwards Jim's XR400 succumbed to our third puncture of the day. As the run was nearly over, Jim and Pete decided to head straight back to the trailers, rather than flash the tyre levers again. Some reckoned this also had something to do with Pete's dislike of the mud and water of the last couple of lanes.

So onwards to what is apparently the longest ford in the country, just north of Dunster, called something like Monkey Puzzle Lane. This is reached via a long muddy slot, which again had my legs flapping. I eventually made it to the far side and we all waited for Keith's attempt. However he was stranded on the far side of the morass with a stalled Serow and the kickstart lever lying on the floor. - should have bought the electric version Keith! We pushed him through the mud and managed to bump it in an adjacent field. Keith rode the remaining lanes with strict instructions not to stall it.

So onto the famous long ford. We met a group of riders coming the other way, or at least trying to. Despite top notch machinery, they had bikes stalled in the ford, bikes on the end of tow ropes, bikes upside down being drained and bikes with tanks and seats off being pumped out. Despite all this, we all sailed through with no problems at all. It turns out these riders were from Wyvern/Black Country TRF - I was their secretary way back in 1985. It was good to chat with my old mate Bob Lawley - the last time I bumped into him was in the

Brecons about 10 years ago!

Only a few forest trails left as we headed back to Dunster. An excellent day's riding. Thanks to Paul for his excellent navigation as usual, to Ian Jeffries for his diligent back-marking and to all the others for making the day so entertaining.

The fourth puncture? There wasn't one actually - it just made the title sound better!

Ian Hingley

