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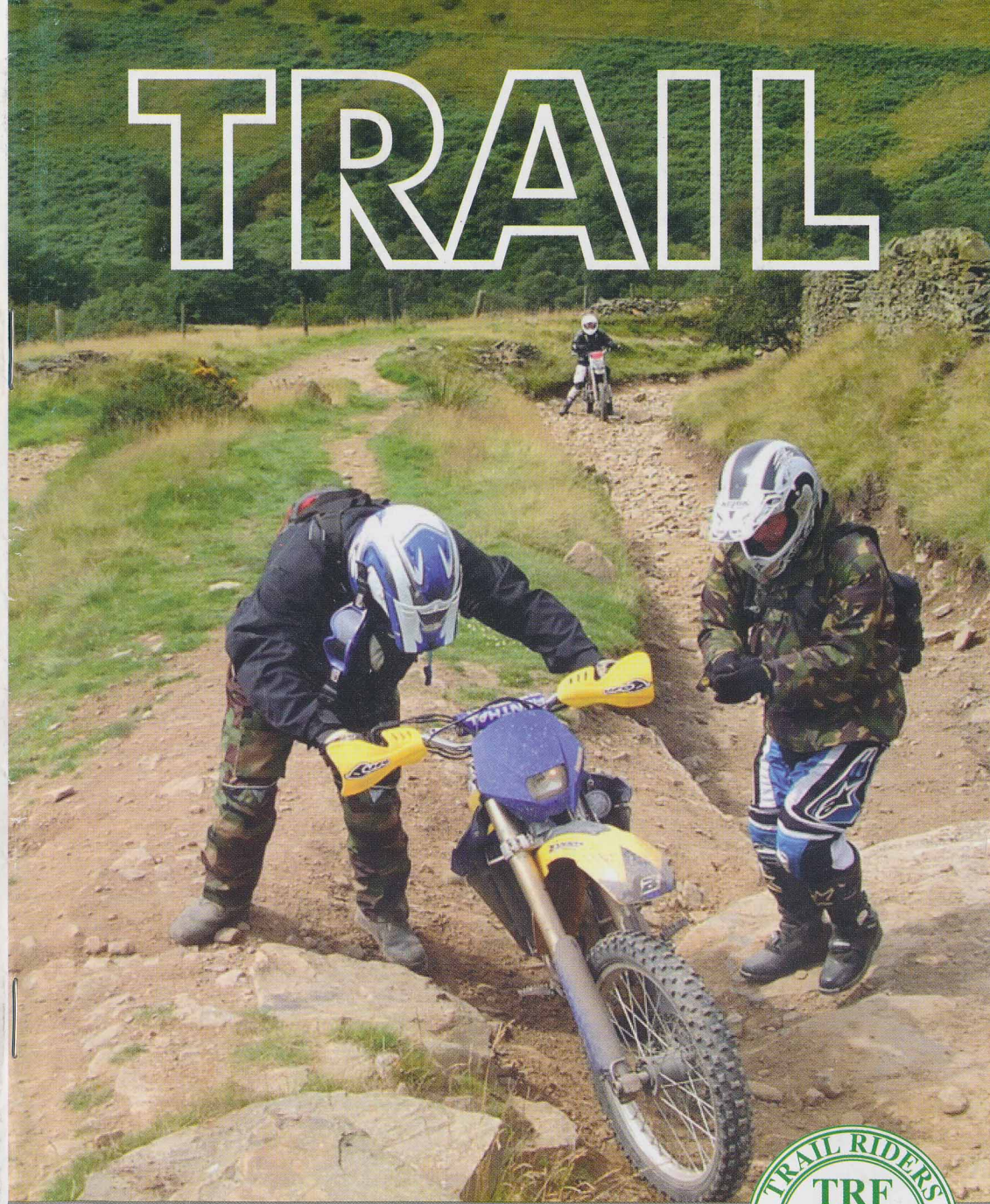
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TRAIL



The magazine of the TRF, the National Club for all who wish to ride Legal Motorcycles on Legal Carriageways

APRIL 2010 No. 380 EDITOR: FRED ELLISON



Patron: Lord Fairfax

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TRF EXEC MEETING

Sunday 25th April
from 10.00 am until 5.00 pm

Heritage Motor Centre, Banbury Road,
Gaydon, Warwick CV35 0BJ.
Syndicate Room 6
Tel: 01926 641188

Please make sure your group is represented and bring along your membership card if you are attending.

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served in the morning and the afternoon. There is a café at the museum where you may purchase lunch.

Free entry passes for the museum will be available.

If you would like to raise anything at the meeting please email secretary@trf.org.uk

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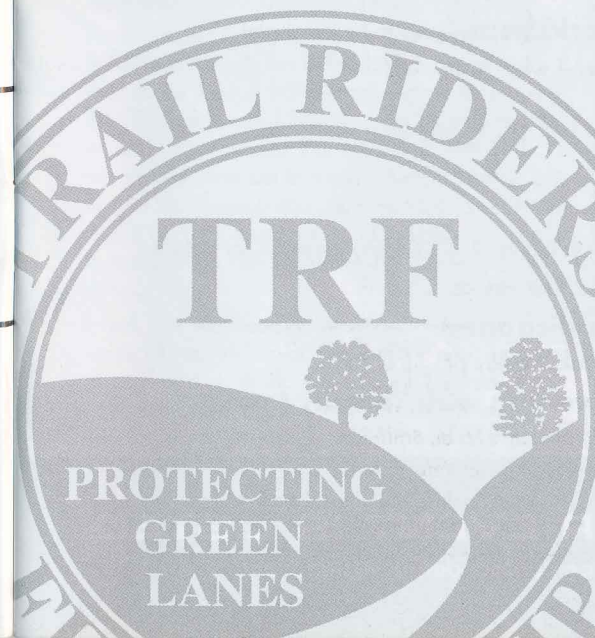
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From The Chairman

This week I am mostly reading "La Vie Correziene". There's nothing about off road as such apart from what a great success the recent round of French enduro championship was. Couldn't help but notice a poster in the local tourist office showing all forms of exciting local activities including off road m/cs and 4x4s as well as the normal stuff, pretty much the same as the adverts for the National Parks in the UK.....

Sunday did about 85km (about 25km on tarmac) on trusty CRE250, looking for a new route to a favourite destination ('The Climb of Certain Death' at Mt Gargan) which because "You Engleesh like ze water" meant crossing what are normally shallow trickles..... ho hum, wet pants all round! Frenchies are a bit

lightweight where water is concerned, they will plough through impenetrable forest rather than risk a puddle and had no concept of 'eat my bow wave' until I showed them. Oh how we laughed (well I did anyway).

Yesterday only did 65km, but took best part of 4 hours as only 8km on tarmac! Fortunately footage of the Chairman looping it a new 'Climb of Doom' not available (Secretary wisely took liaison route!).

Brilliant lanes, fantastic weather and a slap up meal after, must organise PO meeting here some time!

Off to 4 hour lunch soon so better attempt to clean bikes of half the French countryside while I'm able.

Andy Gerrard

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

National and Regional RoW Workshops Dates to be arranged.

bmf Events: see www.bmf.co.uk

bmf Show: 15th/16th May 2010

Garden of England Show (GEMS) 12th/13th June 2010

Kelso 10th/11th July 2010

Tail End 18/19 September 2010

Bikes, Bevies & Banter 2010 5th & 6th June 2010 - see page 12 for details.

Austin Vince 7th June 2010 - see page 20 for details.

Trail Rides for the Mentally Handicapped

Trail Run: Saturday 5th June 2010. Charity Trial: Sunday 6th June 2010

Two Days Trail Riding and an Evening with Tamsin Jones

31st July and 1st August. Contact Marianne Walford, 01686 430522.

MAKE SURE YOUR EVENT IS LISTED

Send any details to The Editor (see contact details inside front cover)

A View From The Exec

By Don Oakley, Vice Chairman

It has been an interesting start for me this year on the exec at national level. Meeting some of the team has been really good and getting to know what areas they are focusing on has been an eye opener for me.

We are trying to get more structure around the finances this year with monthly management accounts moving forward, in order to track the finances as we go throughout the year. For those that attended the AGM this year you will have seen Arnold's Treasurer's report showing how the impact of interest rates has changed the dynamics of funding. Clearly with the focus on supporting new ROW cases and Area Contractors continuing the drive to support groups on specific cases then we need to ensure funds are available when required to support this excellent work.

Robin has been working hard to ensure we have a platform for success moving forward in terms of expertise. The workshops have been well supported and clearly the more informed we can be to continue to make the case for access the better. He makes a strong case for succession and ensuring we have the right skill set within the TRF moving forward.

Andy made a case for us to support the tread lightly initiative. If this helps the Education battle then so be it. I felt that a small contribution from the TRF makes sense (we signed off less than 2% of annual income to this initiative). I think that we should continue to explore every avenue to ensure that the countryside remains open to trail riders and we must ensure that funds are used to support the TRF in its own fight to keep lanes open.

I feel that we need to ensure we become the voice of trail riders across the UK as a united group and I think the AGM showed that generally the members are united in that aim. The more we can do to make membership easy and support the trail rider where we can the better. It is good to hear when we support individuals in their own personal case, where funds are provided to support a legal precedent

or where an informed ROW contractor is able to assist a local group. I know I pay my membership to the TRF to ensure that a coordinated team help to do that (otherwise why be a member?).

The web forum seems to move forward with an increasing pace. The Exec unanimously supports the move towards providing a PDF facility for Trail magazine moving forward. I know it has the finance vote simply on the basis of reduced postage cost. Whilst some members clearly have moved to a paperless environment a large number of members also wish to have a monthly paper read. I think we need to continue to have both whilst accepting the world is changing.

I also sit on the Wilts CC countryside action forum. I think that inevitably we move towards a world where motorcyclists are increasingly unwelcome in some sectors of the community. I do also see the harm that aligning ourselves with other vehicle users sometimes does (simply because of the sometimes overwhelming evidence) however we also need to take an open minded, tolerant view sometimes and work effectively with other user groups to achieve the best outcome. Locally we have been quite active in asking the Council to be more selective and not excluding motorbikes. Whilst there is light at the end of the tunnel (and even written agreement) the proof of the pudding will be when we see the evidence on the ground. In Wiltshire we are assured on three substantial routes there will shortly be access given back to 2 wheeled vehicles. Let's wait and see but on the face of it a supporting argument for dialogue rather than court action here. Looking at Chute and Stonehenge it looks however as though the only way forward is by public enquiry or litigation. Funny old world.

There is also a drive towards activities to increase membership. Some would like to see us try and move towards monthly payment for membership. If we can do it cost effectively then why not spread the cost? Cost seems to be the

barrier currently but if people are prepared to add an annual fee there must be a way forward here. If it is cost effective to pay to insure your telephone at £2 per month then £4 for the TRF should be possible?

Richard is hot on the PR trail of the magazines. It is the TRF's 40th anniversary and a time to highlight what the TRF do. I also know that Simon has been arranging a bit of a bash at the BMF do this year and the shop produce examples went down well with those who attended the last meeting.

Andy, Simon and Robin continue to work on the

proposal for a TRF Trust and the sharper eyed of you will see that TRF Ltd has made its statutory return to companies house. So lots on the go at the TRF with a great deal of effort from a number of people.

Sorry if I missed out any people in the commentary. Fred asked me to volunteer to do an initial piece in the magazine from the Exec. This is just my view, hopefully we can make it a feature and ask someone else for their views for future issues.

Don Oakley is Vice Chairman of the TRF and Chairman of the Wiltshire TRF.

NOTICE BOARD

HELP PLEASE - EQUALITY STANDARD

Due to pressure of work I urgently need a keen volunteer to see this through to completion - you will be guided by Roger at CCPR and all that is really needed is some hours on organisation and making sure an action plan is followed.

Arnold Brewer, see contact details inside front cover.

KENT TRF

The fourth annual Sidcup Long Distance Trial

A charity event in aid of the Kent Air Ambulance Trust, Sunday, 2nd May 2010

Kent TRF will be helping out at Sidcup and districts long distance trial.

We have already plotted a nice route and are now looking for volunteer observers.

You can still enter the trial if you want to. Or you can ride the course stopping off at your section. If you're interested please get in touch with the group rep (in the back of this mag)

About the event: the trial is run under the "Sidcup" banner but it is only possible with the help and co-operation of members of various other clubs.

The route planners are offering a brand new course, starting at the Kent Gliding Club at Challock, near Ashford, Kent and using approximately 93 miles of lanes and Byways.

If you haven't ridden a Long Distance Trial before and you would like to have an enjoyable trail ride in the beautiful Kentish countryside as well as help raise some much needed funds to keep the Kent Air Ambulance flying, why not have a go. You can enter on any road legal bike, although most suited are trail, enduro or trials type bikes. They must be road legal, taxed and insured and you must have a motorcycle driving licence.

Don't delay; get entering using the form on the Sidcup Club website, www.sidcupmotorcycleclub.co.uk. Request a copy of the regulations by sending a s.a.e. to Secretary of the Meeting: Mrs Allyson Spicer, 3 School View, Tunstall, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8DX. Tel: 01795 420538. To volunteer for observing phone Rich on 07802 902797.

Horse Events - We have a number of horse events to marshal this year, volunteers are required. Refreshments are provided and you'll get to ride around places that you don't normally get to ride. You will need a quiet exhaust though. E.mail Brian for details, b.hyland@sky.com

HIT YOUR PROSPECTIVE MP WITH THIS

Question your Candidates!

If the pundits are to be believed, then the coming General Election may well result in a hung parliament, with the outcome in the marginals holding or swinging on just a few votes, and 'interest blocks'. Here, motorcyclists could have a significant effect on results. If you have the opportunity to question candidates on their attitude to motorcycling in general, and trail riding in particular, then please do so, and let the TRF know what response you get. Please send the questions you asked, and the reply you got (and from whom), to: southandsouthwest@trf.org.uk

This General Election sees more sitting MPs standing down than any in modern times. Asking the sitting MP about his or her track record on, e.g., the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, will therefore not be possible in many constituencies, and that Act is starting to slip into history in parliamentary terms anyway. These questions are mainly applicable to England and Wales, but do have some impact in Scotland, and MPs for Scottish constituencies can vote on England and Wales national legislation, although issues affecting Wales are increasingly being considered and commenced independently.

At the time of writing this (early April) the best way to find out who are the main candidates in your constituency is via the principal parties' web sites. Once the election is announced, and candidacy papers are lodged, it is likely that the BBC News website, www.direct.gov.uk/ and other local resources will have a full national list.

Conservative Party:

http://www.conservatives.com/People/Prospective_Parliamentary_Candidates.aspx

Labour Party:

<http://www.labour.org.uk/ppc>

The Liberal Democrats:

http://www.libdems.org.uk/parliamentary_candidates.aspx

UK Ind Party:

<http://candidates.ukip.org/>

Plaid Cymru:

<http://www.plaidcymru.org/content.php?nID=10;iID=1>

The Green Party seems to have prospective candidates on a local area website basis. They are fielding 300 candidates, but do not have one central list.

At the beginning of April the **BNP** site carried nothing about prospective Parliamentary candidates.

The current sitting Members of Parliament are listed here:

http://www.parliament.uk/mpslordsandoffices/mps_and_lords/alms.cfm

These are some specimen questions to ask, but feel free to modify them to your own viewpoint or local circumstances. The last two questions, specific to NERCA 2006 and to traffic regulation orders, may simply be too 'technical' for candidates who have not been MPs before, so use your judgement in deciding what to ask. Try to keep questions simple. Long, multi-part questions tend to get vague answers:

1. I am a motorcyclist. I often feel that motorcyclists get a rough deal from the government, although there are millions of us, and we are mostly mature, responsible citizens. Do you have a motorcycle driving licence? Do you have a view on motorcycling as both transport and recreation?

2. As a motorcyclist, I am also what is known as a 'trail rider'. I use my road-legal, quiet, machine to explore the minor roads and byways of Britain in a responsible and sustainable way. In recent years my activity has been progressively squeezed out of the countryside. Do you believe that I have a legitimate expectation to be able to enjoy Britain's minor highways, along with walkers, horse riders and cyclists?

3. There is undoubtedly a problem caused by 'cowboy' motorcyclists, making noise and driving where they should not be (e.g. in country parks and nature sites). My friends and I are not 'cowboys', yet we are usually caught by the measures imposed to prevent the illegal use - measures that often do not address the problem and only bite on hitherto legitimate and responsible motorcyclists. No government would dream of penalising innocent people on the basis of the race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual preferences, but governments do on the basis of people's hobbies and transport. What is your view on this?

4. It seems to me that there is a steady trend towards 'privatising the countryside', making more roads 'access only', and giving more powers to the National Parks. Do you agree that Britain's highway network, and the freedom of the individual to use and enjoy it, are fundamental rights that must be protected?

5. As a recreational motorcyclist I spend a lot of money in the countryside over a year. As a group we are significant contributors to the rural economy. Do you understand that not

everyone wishes to walk or cycle, and that the 'spend' of the private motorist remains crucial to the survival of many (probably most) rural cafes, shops, petrol stations and B&Bs?

6. Public facilities in the countryside require sufficient investment to keep them usable. Our network of byways and public paths is a jewel in the crown of Britain, and must have enough resources to keep it in repair and to prevent obstructions. Will you defend the public's access to our minor highways and ensure that sufficient funds are allocated and applied?

7. In 2006, Parliament passed an Act (Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act) that closed many old roads to motorcyclists. From sensible beginnings the Bill was hijacked, and the end result is a nonsense. Many good and sustainable routes were closed to motorcycles, whilst some others that were left open to motorists are not sustainable. This Act created a 'nonsense' situation that even closed some proper tarmac roads. If elected, would you/your party be prepared to rescind the bad parts of NERCA 2006 and create a workable, equitable statute?

8. Often, a local highway authority will impose a traffic regulation order on an unmetalled road to 'manage' traffic by prohibiting it. The law requires these roads to be maintained at public expense, yet the power to prohibit the public is regularly being abused. What will your party do to rectify this situation?

Alan Kind and Dave Tilbury

WWW.TRF.ORG.UK

TRF WEBSITE & FORUM

PLEASE TAKE A LOOK AND SEE WHAT YOU THINK AND SAY HELLO ON THE FORUM.

WE WILL BE PLEASED TO HEAR FROM MEMBERS WITH ANY FEEDBACK OR IDEAS FOR CONTENT THAT YOU MAY HAVE.

TRF members need to be aware that in order to access the Members' Only Areas, you will need to ensure that the email you use to register your account on the website is the same one that we have for you on the TRF database. If you have any queries or difficulties please contact it@trf.org.uk or web@trf.org.uk

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A Gentlemen's Day Out

There is a group of trail riders based in and around North Lancashire and Cumbria who are long term motorcycle riders. Their combined experience of riding and fettling their machines can probably not be exceeded when you add up the number of years motorcycle riding they have between them.

Frank, Maurice, Stan, Dave, Dave, Dave & others have a regular ride out in the North of England every other Thursday. Dave (the younger) tends to plot the routes and puts together what is affectionately known as a Gentlemen's day out.

Each year they find it more frustrating as routes previously navigable are removed by changes in legislation, council actions, redefining of routes, reclassification of rights of way and general changes in the political and legal framework in the UK.

They have however continued to take a responsible attitude in looking for the right place to ride.

All are members of the TRF and all of them continue to legally enjoy their pastime.

They still eat at pubs and cafe's in the North of the country that are easy to stop at and contribute to the local commercial infrastructure by spending money (unlike many other users who they will quietly point out "take sandwiches"). They do so with a smile on their faces and a shared delight in engineering of engines and an ability to reminisce with the best of them. They ride responsibly and enjoy the countryside and feel somehow that it seems so unfair to be prevented from enjoying their pastime.

Why is that any different from the rest of us in different parts of the country? They ride a

varying assortment of trail bikes, converted trials bikes and Enduro motorcycles just like the rest of us. Well the fact is that at least 3 of them will admit to being over 70 years of age and one of them is over 80. They trailer/van their vehicles to a common starting point and often put in over 100 miles each ride.

I think they set an example as to how a responsible trail rider should behave and they will, I am sure, want the rest of us to share how they set an example with their approach. I am sure they will want to encourage the rest of us to carry on riding and carry on enjoying life to the full.

Sadly they recently lost one of their group in Kevin who had been riding with them for many years and recently lost his fight against cancer. He will be remembered fondly as they continue with their Gentlemen's day out.

WHY AREN'T THERE MORE TRF MEMBERS?

A few months ago I asked this question on a small trail-riding forum, these are the replies:

Question: I just want to get a 'feel' for your opinions regarding the TRF. It seems most riders who I talk to, be it at a meet in Britain or at an event in Europe is that they fall into at least one of these categories: 1. Are in the TRF. 2. Used to be in the TRF. 3. No intention of ever being in the TRF. (For the record I am a member of the TRF who has noticed one question, in particular, that gets asked all the time: Why aren't there more TRF members? Why people leave etc... Don't worry, I won't be taking your opinions personally, it'll just be interesting to know why!).

Rider 1: I am in the TRF and am an active member with the Virtual Peaks Group. To be honest the groups that I have been a member of in the past (Southern/East Anglian) were never that welcoming and I always felt a bit of an outsider.

I think the Internet based groups are the way forward as it means less time away from family and is easier to attend.

However I think we are all wasting our time, give it another 10 years or so and there won't be any legal green lanes left, the govt will have removed our right saying we are a risk/unwanted/hooligans, take your pick. That will then be the time that I de-register my bike, take the plate off and I will ride illegally at night....

But until that time I will ride within the law.

Rider 2: I was a TRF member for about 10 years - again like Rider 1, I mentioned I felt they didn't really want any "outsiders"

attending their group! At the time there was a policy of if you were not active on ROW work you were not wanted - I had paid ten years of subscriptions and helped at a couple of horse events etc so felt that enough members like me would be useful to keep the numbers and coffers up but that was not the view prevailing in Trail - so I gave up the struggle!


I also felt the TRF were too keen on a low profile - compared with the 4x4 group's etc that was not good for a long-term strategy.

Rider 3: I'm not a member of the TRF, I've not been a member and I have no objection to being a member. Simple fact of the matter is that for the most part, this forum is the only community I'm involved in with any commitment. The main reason for this is that you certainly don't feel an outsider, there is no expectation or pressure and no cost. The members have a great ethic and approach toward trail riding and comps, and it's a superb social network.

I think we could say that this forum is supportive of the TRF in principle but most of the active members here tend to want to get out on the trails (if I'm wrong, apologies).

At a purely personal level I think the TRF is fighting a futile battle unfortunately. It's only a matter of time before our lanes are closed and this is largely due to misuse and abuse. Unless the TRF or anyone else can police this it will continue. Sadly, I think once all of the legit users have been all but barred the abusers will carry on until they get bored and crawl back into their holes. We can only control our own behaviour and I don't think it's enough.

Please correct me if you disagree.



Rider 4: I'm not a member of the TRF although have ridden with them in the dim and distant past but never joined.

Don't get me wrong, I am all for RoW Campaigning, just that I also lane on four wheels, so I am a member of GLASS (on the Committee and County Rep), so it seems pointless joining a group that has the same aims when I'm already a member of another. We do work very closely with the TRF at both National and local level but that is one of the problems with the TRF, that the groups are virtually autonomous and are often at odds with National Policy. There is also a large anti 4x4 movement within the TRF that seems to believe that trail riding would be entirely acceptable if it wasn't for 4x4s "tearing up the countryside". Needless to say there are GLASS members who feel that laning in a 4x4 would be totally acceptable if it weren't for trail bikes riding too fast on RoW and being too noisy!

The difference is that GLASS won't accept that opinion and is not one held generally by the organisation. Sadly it is allowed to be voiced by certain TRF groups and even National Executive members.

Let's face it, both groups have their hooligans (who are almost always not members of GLASS or the TRF) and there is some truth in both accusations but let's be quite clear, the likes of GLEAM would hate us on principle just because we drive/ride motor vehicles in their countryside, no matter how well behaved we are.

The crucial thing is, we all enjoy the same thing (as do quad riders and buggy drivers) and we have the same enemies so we should be inclusive and not cliquey (a common criticism I hear of the TRF) and work together as much as possible.

Sorry if I have hijacked the thread a bit but I'm just trying to give my honest view of my experiences of the TRF.

I have to say I went to a local TRF meeting recently to be shown a video of their last trip to Wales. Can't say I was much impressed by the film of them openly using what I perceived as a restricted byway.

Rant over.

Rider 5: Rant away. How can problems be ironed out if they are buried?

I think many groups isolate themselves as the 'ones that have got it right'. Perhaps naturally so as you wouldn't join a group if you didn't think you have it right.

As you say, it is more often the non-group members that are at the heart of the real problem. The flip side is that more often than not, it is walking groups and horse groups that are most likely to be offended by our presence than individuals. Groups only come about because of problems and problems are usually caused by the minority of individuals. I come across many walkers and horse riders on my local lanes and these encounters are almost always positive on conclusion and if not they are neutral.

Perhaps one day all the groups will get together and there will suddenly be no more need for groups. Then everyone will feel better equipped to tackle the problem caused by the mindless minority... or perhaps not.

Rider 6: I'm actually going to join the TRF next year, more because I promised someone I would to be honest. The problem with the TRF in my humble opinion is they are too softly softly. Ironically they could actually do with learning some lessons from the Ramblers Association and the likes. Get out, be seen, be human instead of faceless apologetic hide in

the background waiting for scraps types. Organise rallies and get together with local groups such as horse events so on so forth, organise a big ride out to Downing Street, get out and talk to the public, be seen at country shows, not just dirt bike shows where you're preaching to the converted etc etc. Just be more proactive with all sorts, make friends and allies.

Anyway, next year could be my first year and last depending on what I see and hear.

Rider 7: I am a TRF member, I attend the monthly meeting, and the Herts branch is fairly active on the ride out front.... which is good. We are drumming up more interest. There is talk of getting a dedicated ride organiser / planner... which will be awesome!

Rider 8: I have been a member of the TRF since I started green laning over 12 months ago. The main reason for joining was to find out what the score was regarding riding off road. As a member I get a monthly magazine, I get emails telling me when a ride out has been arranged. I have met and ridden with a

good bunch of folks and most important I pay subs to an organisation that do a lot to keep our BOATS open.

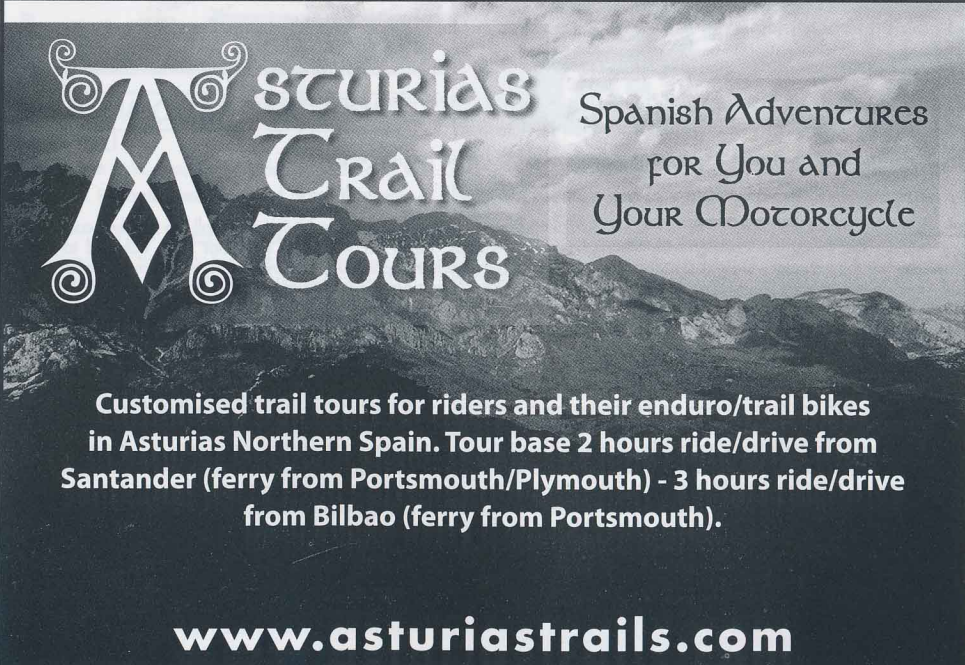
I will be paying my £40 for next year and I think it is £40 well spent.

I would pay £40 to any organisation if it meant I could keep riding byways.

I don't spend all of my riding time with the TRF, probably only about 10% (the club thing can be a bit????). END.

...And that was that, as you can see, there was a bit of a pattern that emerged. I guess that with just 8 riders making comments, coming up with a conclusion either way was always going to be difficult. More than 180 people looked at the question but didn't comment. In all, I thought it was a question worth asking because as I said at the beginning, the question does pop up from time to time. By asking TRF members the question is futile but asking riders who aren't in the TRF and you will get some answers...whether we like it or not!

Glenn Vieira



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RIDERS DETAILS (complete accurately and in CAPITAL LETTERS)

Name

TRF Membership number TRF Group

Address

..... Postcode

Email:

Tel No. (preferably mobile)

To help us organise your weekend with a suitable route can you tick your preferred weekend ride:

I am attending as an individual and will ride with any other riders I am allocated to

or I am booking as part of a group and wish to ride with

(please indicate the lead person from your group you wish to ride with)

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All rubbish must be taken home. This is NOT a competitive event, it is a fun weekend suitable for all the family. I confirm that any vehicle that I use will comply with the highway regulations, be fit for road use and that I am licensed to ride it. I confirm that the exhaust will be a standard part of the machine (original part supplied by the manufacturer) or after market unit which is as quiet as the original unit. I also confirm that the silencing is effective and baffles are intact. I will NOT take part if I have any doubt about my ability or the safety of the venue. I confirm I will not hold any run leader or the TRF responsible for any traffic offences that might arise in prosecution such as section 59 or financial penalties. Run leaders will take all necessary precautions to avoid potential prosecutions but neither the local club nor the run leader will be held liable for any traffic or financial penalties imposed on individual riders. I will read and be bound by and comply with any safety instructions issued by the organisers. I further agree that I shall not seek to claim against the National TRF, the Northumbria Branch of the TRF nor their officials or the land owners connected with the fun weekend in respect of any damage to my property how so ever caused, and whether by negligence or breach of statutory duty of the said bodies or persons. That I am fit and not suffering from any physical or mental disability which would impair my safe participation in the meeting and I undertake to inform the organisers immediately should any change in my condition occur which I have reason to or ought to have reason to believe would affect my ability to continue to participate in this fun weekend. I agree it is up to me to supervise my family and take full responsibility for them. I also hereby AGREE that if the applicant should sustain any injury from any cause whilst taking part in the event and as a result bring a claim for compensation against you or the organisers or officials or sponsors or entrants or owners of the venue I WILL INDEMNIFY AND REIMBURSE any sum which you may be required to pay as a result of such claim.

I have read, understand and agree to comply with the terms and conditions

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Rights of Way - A Rural Collective

"OI! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE GOING? WHO SAYS YOU CAN GO DOWN THERE?"

BY PETE BULL

Never bodes well as a starter but a confident approach and a well intentioned and polite cheerful optimism never goes wrong either. When challenged I have looked up the answer to the questions beforehand.

The difference between; **"I think I have a right to be here."**

and; **"I am going to drive along this way which is recorded as a highway maintainable at public expense and is not subject to any legal restrictions, according to the County Council at County Hall, who also hold a wealth of other evidence of this way as a public carriageway, which the public may inspect for free."**

is huge! I have always enjoyed exploring, going out alone with a map to see what's there. For years I drank in the same pub that Devon Trail Riders Fellowship used for their monthly meet but never knew who the guys with the maps in the pool room were, no motorcycles outside. I had an OS map which I had used to identify unsealed roads by experimentation and exploration and the discovery of the TRF was a revelation to me.

I found out about legal highways their research had uncovered, that my map either didn't show at all, or represented otherwise. They readily admitted that there was no definitive record of where we may enjoy our pastime legally and I was encouraged to research before riding.

Ancient parchment Tithe maps are awesome documents, huge Treasure Island scrolls bound with silk. Legal records of roads, Parish by Parish all of England, one set only 1836 vintage. Here's the sweetener, a legal maxim: once a highway-always a highway, (but only if you can prove a NERCA exception these days). So, if you can spot an anomaly in the road network, it's a signal there may be something worth checking out.

So far so good but more is needed, much more. I became familiar with the County Council Public Rights of Way department, where footpath / bridleway / byway maps were housed right next to road maps. The Land Charges section, with its huge books 1 km per page, Unclassified County Roads coloured in blue and maintainable at public expense. Historical records provided many fruitful sources of ideas for exploration.

The look on someone's face when they get to use some forgotten wild gem of a place to pass along is priceless. The breathless shared exhilaration at the top of a slippery ascent is infectious. It means the afternoons spent indoors pay dividends. Do not underestimate the value of being sure of your facts before riding. Otherwise the nimby wins, because you have to admit you aren't sure when challenged.

It doesn't sit well with me to have to say to someone who challenges me that I will go away and check to see if they are right in their assertion that I should not be there. The TRF

has always encouraged research before riding so we should all know the basis upon which we base our right to ride before our wheels roll.

On a number of occasions I have been challenged when riding and have been able to explain the reasons why I claim a right to ride there and where the challenger can go to look up the facts. It is remarkably satisfying to see off a belligerent nimby like this and many people's misconceptions about us can be easily confronted and countered by a smattering of Rights Of Way knowledge. It is often not enough to say "I have a right" if you cannot say why and pointing the way for sceptics to check for themselves allows for dialogue which breaks down barriers. I regret that the evidence upon which we rely to justify our passage is presumed unnecessary by some. The information is freely available to all, but used by few and sadly it is not unnecessary.

The point here is that the knowledge of why a lane is legal should be more widespread. When I joined the TRF, maps were freely available for members to copy, just as overlays are now available. Information technology allows us to share overlays very easily and it seems a shame that the reasons for our being able to use lanes are not just lost on some people but never were understood at all. The Devon Trail Riders Fellowship Group welcome pack is excellent and sadly on a number of occasions people ask questions which make it plain that they have neither read nor

understood it.

Map reading is apparently a skill which is no longer required; particularly by those able to afford GPS. My opinion is that a GPS is a backup system, not an alternative. My Magellan never did work well under trees. I saw a video on a forum of a tasty looking track in an area where I thought I knew all the legal lanes and was excited about discovering somewhere new. Turned out that the rider's GPS lost signal and the rider had followed his nose along a bridleway in error. Simple map reading would have prevented this.

The TRF is not a riding club. Its roots are deeply embedded in the legislative changes which led to the formation of the fellowship to counter the 'anti' brigade. Whilst it is true to say that the research has been, for the most part, done already and the information made available to members, there is still a great deal to be done. Support your local Rights of Way Officer by sharing his burden and in so doing help yourself. We can defend ourselves against the anti's who are very active in campaigning to outlaw our pastime. You could now have your bike seized if you attract two Section 59 notices, for riding a motor vehicle on land not forming part of the public highway.

We will continue to lose lanes hand over fist, if our membership treats the TRF as a riding club rather than the campaigning fellowship it was created to be.

Taken from the Devon Group Newsletter

Make sure you buy a bike with a quiet engine and a decent exhaust system. Don't give us the 'it's a standard pipe so it must be o.k.' Spend as much on making it quiet, as racers do on making their bikes go faster. This is the single most helpful thing any of us can do.

STEALTH, YOU KNOW IT MAKES SENSE. TAKE THE NEXT STEP. Seek out the stealth e-trail rider's forum, where ideas and tips are discussed.

WINTER SUNSHINE IN THE ISLE OF MAN

After three months of dismal weather a high pressure settled over the British Isles. The sun came out to warm the cockles of my heart.

With fine weather predicted for four more days (you can trust a stable high pressure system) I booked a ferry crossing to the Isle of Man for the next day and then spent the rest of the day on the internet trying to book a reasonably priced, B&B, off-season.

At seven thirty at night I got desperate and rang a Hotel in Douglas, the last place I wanted to stay. Nevertheless a room was available for the two nights and at a bargain price.

Being off-season there was only one ferry per day from Heysham, my nearest port, and the Friday return Ferry was fully booked, so the two nights was no choice unless I wanted to spend a whole week on the island.

I travelled the motorways to Heysham to avoid early morning ice on the minor roads, stopping off at Kirkby Stephen for a coffee.

Just as I parked up in the main street a sheep farmer in a Reliant Robin (c.1970) pulled in alongside. The guy was in his mid eighties, dressed in a green doe-skin jacket and heavy trousers. One of the true old timers, judging by the aroma he must have been around his sheep or his coat had for a long time. He reminded me of the advert which shows a little boy after he had eaten his porridge glowing. I would have still been in Kirkby Stephen if I had not made my excuses and left, after an hour. This guy could talk for England. It had obviously been a long, hard, winter for him with few visitors. To tell you the truth I could

have listened all day to his interesting stories going back to the winters of 19 plonk, when three hundred sheep were lost in a blizzard but I had a ferry to catch.

The new turbo catamaran ferry out of Heysham was fast. Those engines were impressive, blasting out water at forty miles per hour producing a wake seventy foot wide and a six foot high crest where they met in the middle.

The sea was flat calm on both crossings, a blessing after some of the tales I had heard about the Irish Sea crossings. I was the only motorcycle on the midweek ferry, which surprised me because I imagined it would be heaving with enthusiasts.

I have been watching the TT Races on and off for the last forty years and wondered how they could get round the course averaging over the ton.

I had recently studied the winning lap of Shaun Harris who, after thirteen years of trying, won the production 600cc and 1000cc races in 2003.

I was intrigued by the fact that the course has about two hundred and fifty corners, some of which required speeds of less than thirty miles per hour, yet even at two hundred miles an hour on the straights, I failed to see how they could average one hundred plus.

As soon as I arrived I headed for the TT course for my first circuit. It was a revelation to see all the iconic place names, Union Mills, Crosby, Glen Helen, Kirk Michael, Ramsey (hairpin), Kate's Cottage and Crag-na-baa.

I could not believe how steep Bray Hill was, no

wonder they bottom out the suspension at one sixty.

At Ballaugh Bridge I could feel my suspension working overtime even at thirty miles per hour, the legal limit. No wonder all the riders take off during the races.

The island does not have a speed limit outside the main towns but there are plenty of "safety zones" 20/30/40/50/60 mph limits where conditions demand, something I was glad of, as it gave me a rest from the intense concentration required outside these zones.

Some of the course has been altered over the years but I hope they do not touch Ballaugh Bridge in pursuit of yet higher lap records.

I was shocked to see a neon sign stating that the Mountain Road was passable with care. The thought had not occurred to me that it might have been closed. This section is one of the highlights of the course and had only just been opened a couple of days before I arrived because of snow. I assumed the sea would have moderated the temperature on the island and the snow would not have lasted. However although the sun was out, the temperature was still hovering around two or three degrees above freezing.

Coming out of Ramsay, through the hairpin and into the goose neck, the video images started to live. The peripheral vision is much better than anything you can experience on the TV. The rise and fall of the road is also much more dramatic, any camera flattens the view, so the experience was even more dramatic than I had expected.

With empty roads, even I was pulling over a hundred up the mountain, without even trying, as Shaun remarked "you can go flat out on any bike up here".

The descent was a little more controlled.

Psychologically I always feel safer going fast uphill rather than downhill. Perhaps it is the mistaken notion that if something goes wrong the gradient going up hill will mitigate the damage and help me to stop, whereas going downhill?? I imagine just barrelling down the road unchecked. I just hope I do not find out.

Back at Douglas I checked into the Kings Hotel, Guest House, a modest, well run Hotel but very well situated on the Queen's Promenade with palm trees lining the bay.

After a good night's sleep I was out on the road by eight thirty and circumnavigated the island's coastal roads to take in all the viewpoints.

An interesting island with lots of coves, villages and beautiful coastal landscape. Some of the resorts were showing signs of recession. One or two hotels were boarded up but overall it was worth the trip.

The Southern end of the island approaching the Calf of Man was more interesting than the flatter northern end. The entire island was dominated by the mountain of Snaefell.

I would say a road trip would be better on a large trailie, rather than a sports bike, if one wanted to explore all the back roads. The road surfaces were, like all minor roads in Britain, in need of repair.

My tourer coped with them all but I was

primarily there for the TT course and in the afternoon three circuits of the thirty seven mile course took me to new heights. Suffice to say I returned to the Hotel a very happy person still buzzing from the experience.

Now I know how the records are broken. Of the two hundred odd corners only about ten need special attention i.e. brakes. The rest can be straightlined, as taught at the Advanced School of Motoring. Although it looks manic on the video when you are actually on the course you can see through five or six corners at one time and as Shaun Harris said "if you are not revving, you are not pulling and you are losing time". Easy for him to say.

This is not to take away anything from the riders who must take out that part of the brain that says "This IS dangerous". They do risk their lives, even on closed roads, using all the road. Using a factory prepared machine still requires more bravery than I would be prepared to risk.

The very thought of an animal or a bird crossing in front of me, and I saw a few, would put me off completely, from such high speeds.

Reminds me of the old saying "would you rather live one day as a Lion or a hundred days as a Lamb". My answer was always Baa! Baa!

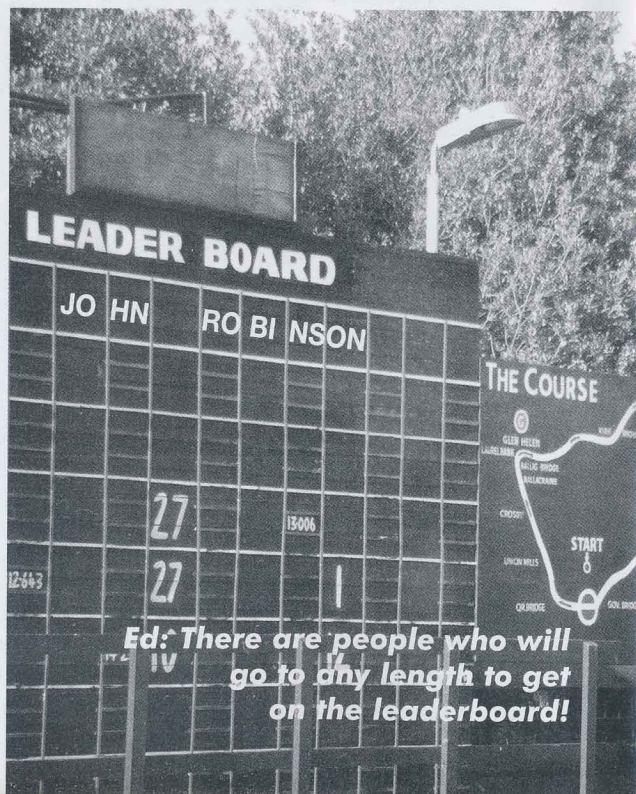
Would I return for the Race Week? Not for me, too many people. I would rather ride it than watch it. Besides you get a much better coverage on TV, not that there is any substitute for the real thing. Sights and sounds that will last a lifetime but at my age I have plenty of those.

In true Harry Hill fashion, sing it: "Close encounter of the Week" A young lady, in her father's Civic, type R, was approaching the roundabout from my right and signalling to turn right up the Mountain Road I had just come down. I was thinking someone's going for a burnout when she shot

straight across in front of me, as my front end took a dive. Not exactly a stoppy but close. I could see her shocked face as she glanced across and I bet she was thinking "another bloody tourist".

Moral: never trust a signalling car and always remember where you are i.e. on a bike, on a public road full of loonies. The trouble was, I was feeling pleased with the ride and was almost starting to relax. Now that is fatal!

The return crossing was calm as a millpond. I always stay on deck, in the fresh air where a Manxman struck up a conversation during the two hour crossing. He was an ex biker who had had a bad accident on the island and we had an interesting discussion about motorcycling and island life. He said most of the island's income comes from off-shore investment companies and its position as a tax haven along with tourism. I said I was surprised that I only saw six bikes on the island. He said outside the main motorcycle events, the place is mainly family-orientated



holidays. So if you are put off taking your family to the IOM because of the number of motorcycles don't be.

The island just happens to be world famous for the TT event. In fact I have met many motorcyclists, on my travels in Europe, who have a visit to the IOM as their lifetime goal.

Arriving at Heysham late morning I headed for the Dales: Kirkby Lonsdale, Ingleton, Hawes and Tan Hill for lunch.

I ordered Beef and Ale. When the dish arrived I was taken aback. The plate contained a massive Yorkshire pudding filled with mash, steak and ale stew; big enough to choke a donkey. The people on the next table looked across astounded as well. I wondered if I would ever be able to finish it but in the end it

was so good I did it justice.

I bet you enjoyed that said one couple as I got up to leave. Great food shame about the music I replied.

They have banned smoking from pubs and restaurants maybe it is time they got rid of the "Music" at least in one part of a dining area.

Head banging music does nothing for the cuisine.

Four hours later I was still digesting the experience. No need for any dinner then.

Home via Arkengarthdale, Richmond, Scruton, Yarm and Ayton. Three days of dry sunny weather. Long may it continue.

Rev up and take off, whenever you can.
John Robinson, T&NYTRF

PRODUCT REVIEW HIPROTEK

New improved HIPROTEK was created by Clifford Wharton (a long standing Ribble Valley TRF member) after he found that coming off on stoney ground was still painful despite the usual padding.

There was nothing on the market that quite met the strict criteria which Clifford set, so being a resourceful chap, with an engineering background, a trip to the garden centre for two foam kneepads, a roll of white duct tape to seal the foam and everything was ready for the first trial - a trip to Wales.

After a good day's ride in which I had seen little of Clifford I asked him for his verdict and he replied "I haven't fallen off so I'm not 100% sure but I did throw myself on to the car park a couple of times and they worked absolutely fine.

It was felt that this product should be made available to all TRF members at £19.85 + p&p, all profits to the TRF Fighting Fund.

Fred Ellison



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BIGMARK'S DALES RUN WITH RICKY AND THE BOYS



Well after about 3 months of doing the same run round Scarborough and being up to me elbows in mud most of the time (much to the amusement or annoyance of some fellow TRF members depending on which side of the ride in mud don't ride in mud fence you sit on) I finally got out for a run somewhere a bit different.

Although I have known Rich for over a year now I have never actually managed to get out on a ride with him so we finally arranged to go for a steady run in the Dales with him and a few mates. The original plan was for my normal riding mates Steve and Juz to go with me but Steve had a better offer (a week in Tenerife) and Juz could not get out of bed early enough to make the 3 hour trip to the meet point at Scotch Corner.

My other riding mate Andrew from the Teesside & North York's TRF (KTM 400) was on the run list as well and due to Steve & Juz dropping out I got my mate Mag from East York's TRF (KTM 400) an invite to the party.

We met up with Rich (KTM 300) near Scotch Corner and he had three of his mates with him Calvin (KTM 400), Paul (KTM 125), Dave AKA "The Nelster" (KTM 200). After a quick introduction we were off on my first proper trip to the Dales. Andrew and Mag had done quite a few of the Dales routes before but I had only been once on a sunny summer evening last year but we only did about a 3 hour loop so I was looking forward to a full day's riding.

Rich promised me a full steady day's riding with lots of photo opportunities and a tour of the Dales' finest tearooms but he clearly has a sense of humour the lad as I never saw a teashop or scone all day.

Some of this is probably in the wrong order as I was trying to concentrate on staying on my bike and not embarrass myself too much so I have probably missed some stuff off but these are the bits I can remember.

As the area is new to me I do not know a lot of the lane names but they were all good to ride and a welcome change to the good/bad/ugly.

Within the first few lanes it was clear that Rich and his mates were used to riding together and they were all pretty competent and covered ground on the bikes and the boys on the 2 smokes could really make their bikes sing a sound we got used to as the day progressed. After a fairly uneventful first few steady lanes we found the snow and Rich managed to have the first big off of the day well I say the first, I think it was the first because the other boys were always too far in front for me to see if they had a little lie down and if they did they were up too quick to get a glimpse of. Anyway Rich and the other boys took a high line on some snow which looked solid and was pretty deep. The other boys dropped back onto the trail but Rich's front wheel dropped through the snow cover and the bike stopped dead sending him flying superman style over the bars. He did a full rotation in the air and

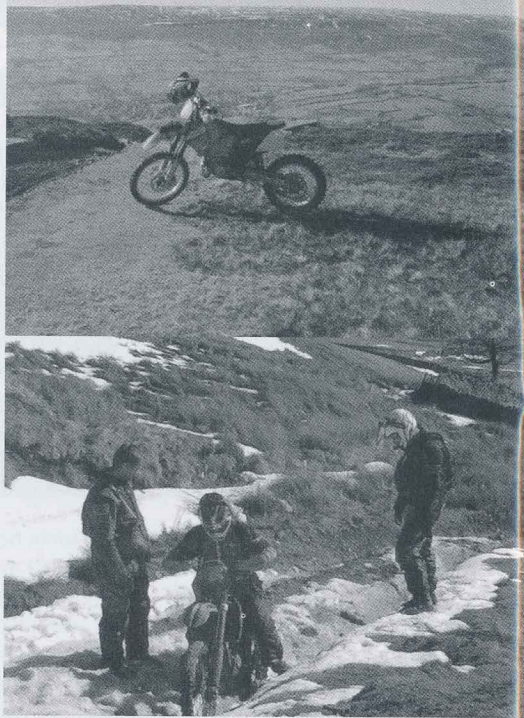
I was just about to get my 6.0 score card out of my rucksack when I realised that his bike had not stopped but was actually doing a full forward summersault itself. Luckily the bike missed Rich (only just) and me and Mag were surprised that Rich was not badly injured, as it was a definite £250 You've Been Framed moment. Luckily there was no serious damage to him or the bike although he had put a bit of a mark on his shiny new Airoh helmet so after a bit of handguard and lever readjusting we were off heading down away from the snow again. Once we met up at the next gate some mickey taking about Rich's superman impression and we were off to the next lane.

There was a good mix of single track, open moorland, rocky climbs and descents which were made even more interesting with either ice/frost/snow or all three and a few water crossings thrown in for good measure to keep your feet wet and cold for the rest of the day.

The rest of the trails before we arrived at the petrol station for fuel and tins of Red Bull and chocolate were good riding but fairly uneventful although Calvin failed to negotiate a bend when his foot slipped off the rear brake and I just caught sight of him rolling across the grass but by the time Mag & I had stopped he had jumped up like a kid who had fallen over in the play ground and thought no one had seen him. He was fine and was back on the bike and off towards the petrol station before I could get the camera out so Mag and me just looked at each other and smiled and set off again.

At the petrol station a bit more good-natured banter was had by all and we set off again full of fuel and topped up on Red Bull and sweets. The first lane almost had me on me backside as I did not spot the sheet ice as I was braking and just managed to regain control before the back end decided to swap position with the front. I am not sure who was behind me but I bet they thought I was lucky but not as much as I did I am sure.

At the first of the water crossings the boys told me of the last time they had a new bloke with them on a KTM 525 and how they laughed when he binned it on the slippery rocky bottom so it was with some relief when we all made it across with only wet feet. Mag was disappointed, as he likes



to watch me thrashing about in the water. It brings back memories of my little swim in the crossing at Glaisdale last year but that is another story. We did a few more water crossings during the day and everyone managed to stay above the water which, when you are riding with me, is a result.

We started to find the snow again which made things interesting as some times you could just ride over it but then others the bike would just drop through it. I had taken up my natural position at the back of the group by now and this made things good and bad in equal measures. Good in that you could see where the others had ridden and follow their line but bad in that as I was carrying about 5 stone more than everyone else (its all the bacon sarnies and pies when we ride from my house) I some times managed to fall down holes that they did not.

Anyway we reached a place that I remembered from my only other visit to the Dales "Deadman's Hill" a name to strike fear into a fat bloke from Scarborough if ever I heard one. The hill was washed out and rutted and in some places still thick with snow so line selection was the name of

the game. Dave picked what looked like the obvious line and made it up in one go although he made it look easy and it was clearly not as his 200 skipped over the steps and ruts. The prospect of following him seemed to be less appealing and I decided to follow one of the other lads to see if local knowledge would help and it did as Calvin picked a line that looked rideable and rode straight up a relatively easy line. Mag followed and also made it look easy so I followed and although not as stylish as them made it up in one piece. Rich decided to have a go at a different line and although it was full of snow he made it up ok. We now had a good view of Andrew and Paul's attempts to follow Dave's line. Both got so far before Andrew just about flipped the 400 and Paul got stuck and did a bit of rock grinding. After picking themselves up they had a change of mind and decided to try the line that Rich had used. Andrew made it up with a bit of help from Dave and then Paul had a seriously good go before just about boiling his head and the bike after a few words of advice from Dave and a bit of pushing/pulling by Dave and Mag he was up.

It was at this point that Dave told me that Paul used to be a fatty like me, had lost about 4 stone which I could understand if he goes out riding with Dave every weekend.

After a few minutes to let things cool down we were on the move again up higher towards more snow.

We did another couple of trails and at the top of one Andrew seemed to have developed a craving for Mars bars although no one had any so I gave him half a packet of wine gums to keep him going.

Later on we started to get to gates that would only open a small amount due to the snow and this made getting through a challenge in itself. At one particular gate Dave skipped the 200 through like a BMX but the next man through had more of a chew on to get up the 2 foot ice bank at the other side which was good to watch but I was not looking forward to my turn. I left the bike on the stand and went to have a look and whilst the other boys were chewing on with the next bike I lifted the gate clean of its hinges. Afterwards Mag told me he was well chuffed when I did this as he was not looking forward to

his turn at getting through the gate so at least I did something right for a change. Once everyone was through me & Paul put the gate back on in a Chuckle Brothers style (to me, to you, no to me) and Dave tried to tie wrap his back tyre on as it was spinning in the rim a bit. I did not hold out much hope of them staying on long because the speed his back wheel turns I expected them to be off in no time which proved to be right as the next time I got close enough to him to see his back wheel it was tie wrap free.

Andrew and Mag seemed to have developed a strange aversion to the snow by now and were both finding new ways to have a closer look at it by chucking themselves and the bikes at it which from my position at the rear of the group was good to watch although we did have a few moments raving and chewing recovering them from deep holes where the wheels had dropped through.

Dave picked a line across a snow bound trail towards the location of the gate which we could not see but as Rich followed I figured it must be OK. Once again Dave made it look easy as the 200 skipped across with Dave in full attack mode. I have never seen anyone ride a two stroke like him and it was a real education to watch him just skip across the snow like he had wings (maybe that's what all the Red Bull was for). Rich made it so far before dropping through and Paul set off as well so I decided that I would give it a go and I got about 20 yards and

realised that this was a big mistake and managed to make it back towards the stone wall and the solid snow. Calvin had gone back to help Mag & Andrew get the bikes out of a snow drift and when they reached us Calvin set off across the line Dave, Paul & Rich had used whilst me and Andrew decided to follow the wall round in the snow. This actually proved to be a result for us, as although tricky it was much easier than the alternative. We arrived at the point where Calvin, Paul & Dave were relaxing as Rich started to make progress towards us although Mag was having a struggle. Dave took Paul's 125 as the tyre was more likely to stay on the rim and helped Mag get his bike back on to the snow near the stone wall and then they both rode round to meet us. I managed to get a few pictures of Mag at this point and he was not looking his best (sorry mate).

Once we had all got our breaths back (well Me, Mag and Andrew) we set off again towards fuel before retracing our way back towards the vans.

At the fuel stop Rich had a goggle malfunction which was soon fixed by Dave with tie wraps (it's amazing what Dave can fix with tie wraps) so after a bit more banter we were off again but this time I had two cans of Red Bull to see if it would make me like Dave. I also bought an extra chocolate bar in case Andrew got the munchies on the ride back to the vans.

A few more snowy trails and we were starting to pick up some of the lanes we had ridden in the morning and we made it back to the vans around

5pm. After a quick thank you to the boys they left us to get changed and head for home in the vans.

All in all it was a top day out in good company on some great trails and a big thanks must go to Rich for setting the ride up and leading us round all day. Also thanks to Dave, Paul & Calvin for helping us out and waiting for us when we needed it. I hope we did not hold you up too much but having seen how you boys can ride I am pretty sure that we did.

It always amazes me how you can meet up with almost total strangers at 9.30 on a morning and ride with them all day and by the end of it you have shared a top day out on the bikes with plenty of good laughs along the way.

If you ever fancy a muddy day at Bigmark's give me a shout boys as you are very welcome and I will order in the bread buns and pies for the steak pie sandwiches you like.

Thanks also to Andrew and Mag for their company and help during the day and I hope that we can do this ride again once the snow has gone and at least we might be able to keep up a bit better next time. Well probably not and definitely not with Dave but we can live in hope.

In the words of our good friend Lee "Juz & Steve you missed the best day's trail riding ever although even blue smartie boy Juz would have struggled.

Till the next time.

Bigmark, Teesside & North Yorkshire TRF

COPY FOR TRAIL

COPY DEADLINE: The first Tuesday of the month.

COPY: Via email, typed or handwritten (please try to make it legible!) to The Editor, Sheepcote Farm, Moor Lane, Wiswell, Clitheroe BB7 9DG, email: editor@trf.org.uk, fax: 01254 887999.

PHOTOS: Digital via email on CD or DVD; scanned originals (high resolution 300dpi jpeg or tiff); or posted originals (please include an s.a.e for return). We prefer you not to include your photos in 'Word' documents, if possible please send images separately.

CAPTIONS: Please caption your photos!

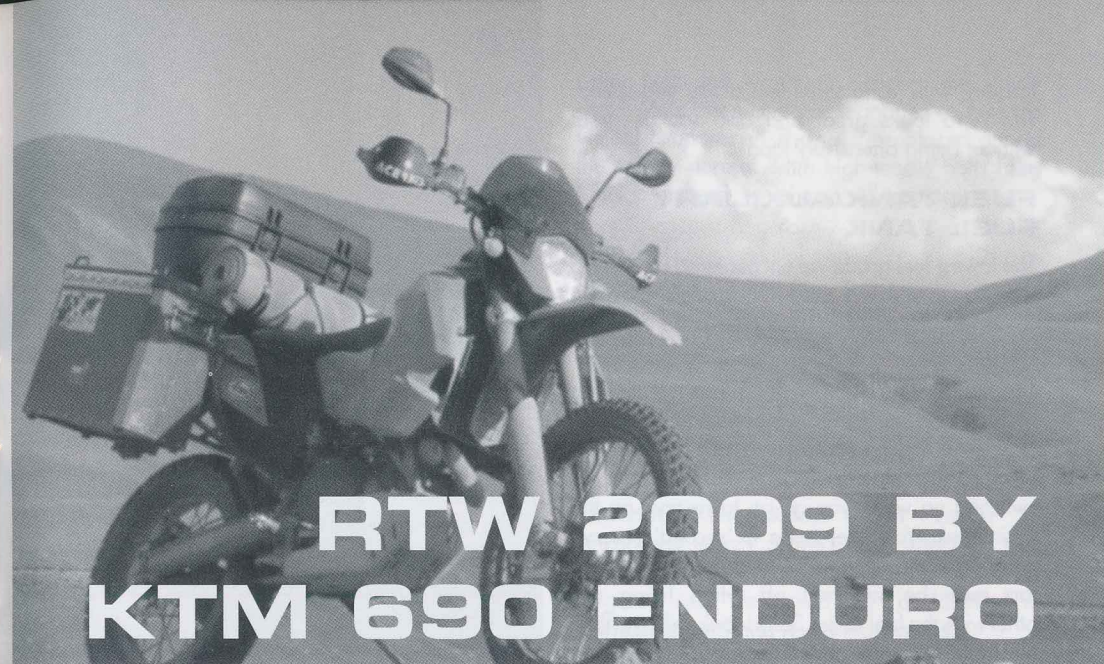
EMAILING: It is best not to place too many images on one email document.

WEBSITE: If you would like your article to appear on the website as well as in Trail, please forward to Simon Bingham (see contact details inside front cover).

WORRIED ABOUT YOUR SPELLING? DON'T HAVE A COMPUTER?

Don't let this put you off, send it in and we'll sort it out.

Photographs submitted for publication may also be used for other TRF purposes.



Last year Dave and I travelled 22,000 miles around the world in 4 months.

The best thing about this trip was the absolute joy of riding the KTM 690 Enduro. While travelling it felt light (weighing only 138kg), powerful and responsive - even with a 14 litre auxiliary tank and hard luggage. It was so much fun to ride that I became totally infatuated with it, but then this is my second KTM and I'm starting to find out that KTMs do that to you!

The route was London to New York via Europe, Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Mongolia, Korea, Alaska and Canada.

Here are some notes about how we prepared the bikes, what worked and what didn't. I hope it is of interest.

FORKS/SUSPENSION

To drop the bike to a more comfortable height for travelling (as I am just 5'6"), I fitted a **lowering link** from the very helpful Norm at www.kouabalink.com. We had to shorten the side-stand slightly as a result, and a larger sidestand foot was made and welded on at the same time. We installed the **KTM sidestand switch eliminator** as the sidestand position

sensor looked a bit vulnerable.

For me (at 65kg), the standard Enduro suspension felt a bit stiff (why else would I be bouncing off rocks into the scenery?), but then I had the **forks revalved** by the lovely Chris Hockey (aka Dr Shox) at www.endurotech.co.uk. The result was a slightly more progressive front

suspension which made the bike feel much more planted and confidence-inspiring. The excellent KTM suspension enabled us to have a lot of fun on the off road sections during the trip, and allowed us to float over the heavily pot-holed sections on the Trans-Siberian Highway.

EXHAUST

The standard silencer on the KTM gets extremely hot so we got our friendly local KTM dealer (Clive at www.tricountymotorcycles.co.uk) to fit the **Akrapovic** alternative and re-map the ignition. Afterwards the bottom end felt more



torque, with just a slight loss of top end speed. The Akro looks great and also sounds great without being offensively loud.

FUEL TANK/AUXILIARY FUEL TANK

The lowest fuel grade we encountered on the trip was 80 Octane. We used the standard (position 3) performance setting at all times, and the bikes ran faultlessly.

The standard fuel tank on the 690 is just 12 litre, so to extend our range we ordered the 14 litre **Aquiline Safari auxiliary tank** from Alec at www.coreracing.co.uk. The Safari tank is switched on when you go on to reserve on the main tank. You later have a 'second' reserve warning when it's time to fill up. The main fuel tap must be switched off when filling up, otherwise the fuel in the Safari tank will overflow the main fuel tank and dribble out through the breather in the filler cap (removing the pretty graphics on the side panels in the process).

The Safari tank worked well and gave us a 300 mile/500 km range. We found that it did not affect the off-road handling of the bike at all. The bike handling was very stable with the tank full or empty, and there was no fuel sloshing. Obviously the ability to slide up the seat right to the headstock was lost but you can't have everything! The tank was very tough, and survived a crash on the tarmac (caused by a diesel spill) with only a few scratches. It also provided good radiator protection without causing cooling issues.

Initial installation (See pictures at <http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/dpeward/Ktm690SafariTank>), and subsequent removal and re-fitting of the tank for servicing, is fairly easy, especially if the original seat front bracket is omitted. Access to the ignition switch is slightly limited by the tank once fitted, but is manageable.

The only slight issue with the tanks was that the supplied taps started to leak. This caused the main tank to overflow if we stopped for the night too soon after filling up. We have since replaced the main fuel tap on each bike.

The fuel filler cap on the 690 standard fuel tank



is very stiff to unlock. The worry is that the ignition key might break off in the lock. Luckily it didn't, but we have since fitted the KTM fuel filler adaptor from www.rally-raidproducts.co.uk which works well, and its high neck also reduces the risk of dirt falling into the tank.

LUGGAGE

We considered a number of options, and I decided to fit the Touratech luggage frame with 31 and 35 litre panniers. When I took the bike on a pre-trip camping weekend to try it out, I found that the panniers covered my gear with black aluminium dust, were awkward to take on and off the bike, had a separate lid just asking to be lost, and did not seem very robust or secure. I could probably have lived with all this, but the overwhelming drawback for me was the width of the system (1-2" wider than the bars), so it just had to go.

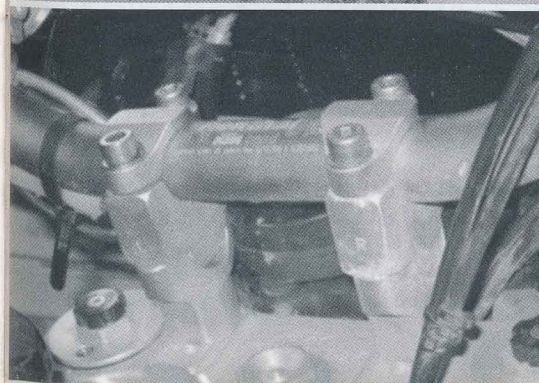
After some pleading, Paul Goulding at www.metalmule.com agreed to use my bike as a

prototype to develop a **Metal Mule luggage frame** and **top rack** for the KTM 690. This meant we were able to use the far superior **Metal Mule 31 and 38 litre panniers**. These are robust, waterproof, secure and powder coated, and are much more in keeping with the high build quality of the KTM.

We also fitted a **Givi top box**. During the trip this was left empty for the stowage of helmets, gloves and jackets when away from the bike or during transit. It also provided emergency stowage space which is occasionally useful when packing in a rush! The top box was mounted on a Givi rack which was in turn attached to the Metal Mule top rack using an aluminium adaptor plate and rubber-lined 18mm P clips.

SUB-FRAME

The **top sub-frame bolts** are a weak point on the KTM 690, relying on 8mm bolts loaded in shear. Mine did not break, but unfortunately Dave's did (after some enthusiastic enduro



riding with full luggage). Luckily the sturdy Metal Mule pannier frame managed to take the weight temporarily! They were replaced during the trip by normal 8mm high-tensile bolts (plus tubular spacers), which are still in place.

SEAT

After much hesitation (due to the cost), I bought a **Renazco Racing seat** (www.renazco.com) which is significantly more comfortable than the KTM original. The Renazco seats are tailored for you specifically, so, as I had asked for it to be tailored to mostly off-road riding, it was my own fault that I suffered some discomfort on some of the longer days! I later bought an **Alaska Leathers sheepskin seat cover** in Anchorage which proved most effective, and very warm in the cold weather. Dave had his original seat reworked by a local firm **Trimania**, and had no comfort issues.

HANDLEBARS

The Enduro has excellent Renthal bars as standard which withstood our only real accident (on the diesel) very well. Dave installed **Touratech 30mm handlebar risers** and also moved the handlebars forwards a little using the standard adjustments. We both added an aftermarket **KTM cross bar** for mounting a GPS, putting rubber underneath the clamps to reduce any transmitted vibration.

WHEELS/TYRES

The KTM wheels are very strong, which meant there were no dented rims for us on the heavily pot-holed Trans-Siberian highway. The other bikes (BMW's and Teneres) travelling with us did not fare so well in this respect.

The Enduro has standard 18/21" wheels so there is a good choice of tyres. We used **Metzeler Sahara** tyres. These lasted well and gave very good grip in all conditions on and off road. We also used **Continental TKC80** tyres for the main off-road section of the trip. Although they are slightly better off-road they did not last anything like as well as the Saharas. We used **2mm inner tubes** and also fitted rim screws which allowed us to run at lower tyre pressures.

CHAIN/SPROCKETS/ OILER

We used **extra heavy duty KTM chains** with **steel sprockets**. Aluminium ones wear very quickly as some of our companions found out. Dave's chain was fine, but for some reason my chain failed catastrophically after only 2 months. We used the standard gearing.

Dave used a **Loobman chain oiler** (www.chainoiler.co.uk) which worked moderately well for him. I used a **Scottoiler**, which would have worked better had I remembered that you need to take a Scottoil bottle (with the special adaptor) to refill it. This may have been part of the problem with my chain.

GPS

We each used a **Garmin GPS60CSX** GPS, which was mounted in a (non-lockable) **Touratech anti-vibration cradle** attached to the cross bar. The GPS was powered straight from the provided KTM accessory power connectors behind the headlight.

We found the 60CSX to be an excellent and robust travelling GPS, and the **Garmin map data SD cards** provided a good routing capability. The only slight issue we had was that the power switches on both of our units became more and more difficult to operate as time went on. Eventually we had to prod the switch with the pointy end of a bike key to get it to work.

GRIP HEATERS

I fitted a **Symtec Heated Grip Kit** (www.windingroads.co.uk). Grip heaters (as opposed to heated grips) have the advantage that you can use your own choice of grips. The Symtec kit is much better than other makes of grips or heaters I have tried. They have more

elements on the clutch side to compensate for the lack of insulation on that side, but I also put 2" heat shrink on the left handlebar to insulate it - this really makes a difference. The grip heaters were powered straight from the switched KTM accessory power connectors behind the headlight.

THROTTLE CAM

When the KTM was new, I felt the throttle response was a bit jerky, so I tried a **G2 throttle cam system**. However the throttle response settled down after a while, and the throttle cam made little difference for the sort of riding we did on the trip.

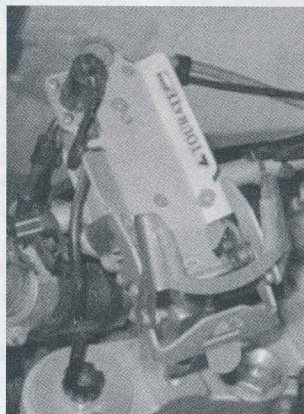
ACCESSORY POWER SOCKET

I fitted a Hella plug **power socket** on the cross-bar for charging my camera and phone. Unfortunately this fell apart due to vibration halfway through the journey and had to be removed, which meant I was then without power charging capability.

HEADLIGHT/ INDICATORS/ MIRRORS/ INSTRUMENT CLUSTER

We left all mirrors, indicators and lights as standard. We took a bulb/fuse kit, but didn't blow a single bulb. We didn't bother fitting a headlamp guard and had no issues. A couple of the mirror stems broke due to fatigue.

After a few months from new, the transparent instrument unit cover starts to give the impression of condensation, but it is just talc-like plastic dust generated by vibration. This is a common issue, and happened on both bikes. The film can be cleaned off by disassembling the unit which is very quick and easy to do. We also shock



mounted the cover using a very thin adhesive pad to lessen the vibration.

The other problem we had on both bikes was that the LCD multi-pin connector sometimes made a bad connection which caused the display to blank out or become intermittent. This was easily fixed by bending the all pins slightly and using a bit of silicone sealant to dampen the vibration.

BRAKES/GEARS

The brakes are perfect on this bike. We used sintered brake pads as these last longer.

We both had a small problem with the 690 rear brake pedal sticking, and had to use WD40 to keep it moving freely. KTM have now designed a **new style pedal** with plastic bushes to fix this problem, but the new pedal does not fit without the new **smaller diameter pin**, as the plastic bushes reduce the diameter of the hole. The original rear brake pedal is also a bit flimsy, however it did survive the trip without incident. To reduce the chances of the brake pedal being snagged and bent during the trip, we fitted a home-made aluminium 'shark fin' deflector (works the same as a brake snake) to work with the after-market bash plate.

We tried the **Touratech gear lever folding tip**, but we found it was not well designed and so sent it back.

CLUTCH

The slipper clutch on this bike is great. You can change down even during a steep descent and not risk locking the rear wheel. We changed the hydraulic clutch fluid once during the trip as it started to look a bit dark.

FAN/THERMOSTAT

We left the standard fan and thermostat. The fan does not come on until almost all temperature bars appear, which is a bit unnerving in heavy traffic, but this is perfectly normal. There were no problems with the bike overheating, even riding in 40-50 degrees centigrade heat in the Karakorum desert.

PLASTICS/PROTECTION

Before the trip we heard that the threaded inserts

which support the standard radiator guard can be pulled out of the radiator and cause leaks, so we removed the two screws that secure the guard to the radiator, and replaced them with four cable ties. We felt that a replacement radiator guard was not necessary on the Enduro as the Safari tank offers good protection. We had no issues.

On my bike, both the plastic sump guard and the front mudguard were damaged before the trip. We managed to repair the mudguard with some aluminium sheet and pop-rivets, but decided to replace the bash plate with an aluminium **GENETX bash plate** from Renazzo. This proved very robust. The only slight problem was that (after a lot of miles and punishment) the aluminium mounting brackets eventually fatigued and broke. We have now replaced the mounting brackets with stainless steel ones that will not fatigue. The extension which protects the brake reservoir also cracked due to fatigue and was repaired using aluminium plate and pop-rivets.

Dave fitted the usual **Acerbis Rallye Pro handguards**, while I tried the new **Acerbis MultiPlo** handguards, just for a change. Both performed well.

I fitted the KTM 690 touring windscreen. It worked fine for the type of riding we were doing and I travel on the motorway to work every day with mine. Dave, being taller, could have done with a bit more protection at speed, but it wasn't a great problem.

KTM neoprene fork gaiters were used to protect the fork legs, and a rubber **mudflap** was fitted to the rear of the swingarm to shield the linkages. We found that the **front mudguard** sprayed water onto the headlight, so bent it down a bit with the aid of a heat gun. This worked moderately well.

Smaller, **flexible plastic number plates** replaced the originals.

SECURITY

We concealed spare keys and cash about the bikes, Datatagged them and carried a snake lock each.

REPAIRS

Constant vibration is the main enemy when travelling. We thread-locked nuts and bolts, and checked for items which were likely to rub or vibrate loose regularly during the trip. Where necessary we used pre-emptive tape to prevent rubbing cables. We took various spare cables, levers, bearings etc but did not need to use them.

SERVICING

Although oil changes have to be done relatively frequently on the 690 as it has a small sump, it is so easy and quick to do that it wasn't really a problem. Valve checks are also very easy to do, and take just over an hour which is under half the time it takes to do the BMW 650GS Dakar valves. Valve adjustment is also very simple if you have the shims, but did not prove necessary (see <http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/dpeward/Valves>).

TOOLBOX

The Enduro is so small and compact that there is very little space to stow tools. After some consideration, we eventually decided to fit a

Tool Tube (eBay or Dave Lomax at www.adventure-spec.com)

This was fitted to the pannier frame using rubber lined 18mm stainless steel P clips. The tool tube worked well, but as you can see, the home-made aluminium mounting brackets eventually suffered fatigue failure similar to the bash plate. We have now replaced the mounting brackets with stainless steel ones. A front fender pack (minus its mounting clips) proved to be the ideal size as a tool bag to go into the tool tube.

TOOLS

The KTM standard tool kit is very good. To supplement it we bought a pair of gorgeous **Motion Pro 27 and 32 combo spanner/tyre levers** from Dave Lomax at www.adventure-spec.com which saved a bit of space and weight. We also made up a small set of jump leads.

We took a second side-stand for tyre changing. This is very light and compact and at full safe extension can prop up either the front or rear wheels.

Danielle Ward

POSTBAG

First I have to say how glad I am to have joined the TRF in 07. This was as a direct result of going to the G.E.M.S./B.M.F. show at Detling in Kent where I found a stand showing off road bikes. This was a stand set up by the Kent TRF Group who introduced me to the TRF. Probably the best introduction I have had because now I know the rights and wrongs of trail riding. I was surprised to learn how many rights we actually have, isn't it a shame that other byway and trial users (including the police) don't also know the rules.

This brings me to an incident that happened to myself and my son on Sunday 28th March 2010 and I think some of your many readers will find this interesting. We met at Bredhurst Byway No. KH94 which has a T.R.O. on it, but we both have

permits from K.C.C. to use it. At this point I have to say that I have used this track since I was 8 years old (now 69) first on pedal bikes then tractors (whilst working on local farms) and more recently quad and trail bikes (all road legal). When the gates appeared approximately three/four years ago I made a phone call to Kent Police and got to speak to an officer appointed to deal with off road bikes, now he didn't know about the permit system but said to me that if the track had a byway sign on it then provided my bike was legal and I could lift it over the gate (which has a low section in the middle for horses and walkers to use) he saw no reason for me not to use it.

This brings me back to 28th March 2010 (sorry

about the delay). 3.00 p.m.: met at Bredhurst end of the byway and headed off, now the travelling time for this track is about 15 minutes end to end including opening and shutting the gates, while we were locking the gate at Scragged Oak Road end the police turned up and it soon became apparent that they wanted us. Out they got, hats on (like they do) first we were asked if we had just come up that track? I replied "well; you've just seen us closing the gate so that's a yes". Next we were asked if we were land owners? To which I replied "No". Then we were asked what right or reason we had for using the track? I replied "we are trail riding and we have permits" (raised eyebrows from the police) "so how do you qualify to have a permit then?" my reply was "that you just had to be legal as this track is a B.O.A.T." again the police didn't know what I was talking about and they had never heard of B.O.A.T./T.R.O./TRF/R.O.W. etc. I then asked the police why they were there? Their reply was that they had been called by (wait for it) B.W.A.G. Now there's a new one for you: Bredhurst Woodland Action Group. Now let's get this in perspective - byway no. KH94 is in a very rural location accessible only by single track country lanes and approximately 10 miles from the nearest police station, but they managed to get to us in 15 minutes (they don't manage that when your bike is being nicked, if they bother to turn up at all) and why send a normal patrol car to an off-road incident? (You know the kind of car we used to see patrolling our streets and estates) so if we had been illegal riders we would have turned back into the woods and disappeared. So how could they pursue us as they didn't even know the code for the gate? All this being said I have to say the two officers were friendly and polite and probably also wondering why they were there. Anyway my point is what a waste of time and resources. But hey, we pay for it in our council tax so who cares? Sorry for the long letter but having been involved with people and transport most of my working life, yes I probably could write a book. As they say in Yorkshire there's now't queerer than folk.

David Driver, Kent TRF

P.S. I would like to thank Steve Neville and Co. for an excellent ride out in February this year, we covered approximately 110 miles that day

including a couple of horizontal positions.

Note: The small number of permit TROs are something that seems to work fairly well and something that should be tried elsewhere. However we all already have one and its called Vehicle Road Fund Licence and in some cases we pay more than cars do in spite of having comparable emissions of CO² and also being zero emission spending a lot of time in their garages unlike small cars clogging up our towns and cities.

STOLEN-RECOVERED

I got a phone call at the weekend from the Cleveland police stating that they had recovered my stolen Yamaha, along with several other bikes, after a tip off from a member of the public.

Thinking I would make an offer to the Insurance Company for the bike, which was only six months old when it was stolen, I went to identify it.

I thought if it had been stored for export or resale it would be worth a bid.

What a sorry state it was in. The bike had obviously been abused for the last three months with black sooty deposits all over the exhaust. The handguards had been removed along with the, two day old, heated grips and both levers were bent double.

I was telling Harry 2 about it and he said "I thought all your bikes were like that". Cheeky Sod!!

Suffice to say it will go to auction and someone will have to rebuild the engine.

At least I had the satisfaction of knowing what happened to the bike, which has been a niggling concern since it was stolen.

Now I understand something of my Aunt Lil's agony, over her eldest son, who at eighteen, boarded a submarine during the Second world war and never returned. Lost at sea. Until the day she died she still had hopes that one day, he would walk through the door and return home. Kind of puts the loss of a motorcycle into perspective.

John Robinson, T&NYTRF

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ACCOMMODATION

BRENDAN CHASE B&B Windermere village centre location so close to pubs and restaurants, from £25 per night bed and breakfast. Off street parking for bikes. Tel: 015394 45638. Email brendan chase@aol.com, website: www.placetostaywindermere.co.uk

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GROUPS

AXE VALE David Clegg, Tel: 01275 373652 (Home), Mob: 0793 1220895.
2nd Tues, 8pm, Windmill Inn, Nore Road, Portishead.

BLACK COUNTRY John Oseland, Tel: 01902 656011
1st Tues, 9pm, The Longford House, Watling Street, Cannock.

BRISTOL Glenn Summers, Tel: 01454 619246
4th Mon, 8pm, The Midland Spinner, Warmley, Bristol.

CAMBRIDGE Tony Lacey, Tel: 07753 820520
2nd Thurs, 7.30 p.m., The White Swan, Elsworth Road, Conington, Cambridge CB23 4LN.

CORNWALL Adam Hedley, Tel: 01579 349217
3rd Thurs, 7.30 - 8.00 p.m., The Victoria Inn, Roche.

CUMBRIA Roger Harris, Tel: 01539 725198
2nd Tues, The Gilpin Bridge Inn, Levens, Nr. Kendal.

DERBYSHIRE & SOUTH YORKSHIRE
Mick Ellison, Tel: 07780 674192
2nd Tues, The Angel Hotel, Sprinkhill, Eckington, Nr. Chesterfield, Derbyshire.

DEVON John Heal, Tel: 01626 366860
2nd Tues, 8pm, The Dolphin Hotel, Station Road, Bovey Tracey, TQ13 9AL.

DORSET W. John Williamson, Tel: 01929 553640,
Mob: 07850 727873 1st Tues, 8pm, Greyhound Inn, Winterbourne, Kingston, Nr. Bere Regis.

EAST MIDLANDS Graham Chinnery, Tel: 01332 863433
2nd Wed, The Clock Warehouse, London Road, Shardlow, just off the A50.

EAST YORKSHIRE Jim Harrison, Tel: 07747 758323
2nd Tues, 8pm, Londesborough Arms, Market Weighton.

ESSEX Cliff Eves, Tel: 07515 330423
2nd Wed, The Wheatheaf Public House, Hatfield Peverel.

GLOUCESTER Richard Simpson, Tel: 07812 402021
1st Wed, 8pm, Wagonworks Club, Tuffley Ave., Gloucester.

HERTFORDSHIRE John Fox, Tel: 01462 811654
2nd Wed, 8.30pm, Shire Park Social Club, Shire Park, Central Drive, Welwyn Garden City AL7 1AB.

HIGH PEAK & POTTERIES
Graham Till, Tel: 01782 510533/07971 477024
2nd Tues, 8.30 - 9.00pm, The Stafford Arms, Bagnall. (2 miles out of Leek).

ISLE OF WIGHT Andy Hawkins, Tel: 01983 617232
1st Wed, 8pm, The Eight Bells Inn, Carisbrooke, Newport, IOW.

KENT Steve Neville Tel: 01474 742705
2nd Tues, 8.30p.m. for 9pm,
The Moat Pub, Wrotham, near Brands Hatch.

LANCASHIRE Keith Westley, Tel: 01704 893215
1st Tues, Black Bull, Hall Lane, Mawdesley.

LINCOLNSHIRE Paul Vernon, Tel: 01522 889079
4th Thurs, 8pm, Lincolnshire Poacher, Bunkers Hill, Lincoln.

LODDON VALE Eddie Mace, Tel: 07973 721059
2nd Thurs, Inn in the Park, Woodley Centre, E. Reading.

MANCHESTER Phil Kinder, Tel: 07809 647293
2nd & 4th Mon, 9pm, Arden Arms, A6017 in Bredbury.

MID WALES Tony Rooney, Tel: 01239 698349
Last Thurs, 7.30pm, The Crown Inn, Rhayader except July & December.

NORTHUMBRIA Nic Gilbert, Tel: 07931 838587
1st Wed, 8pm, The Staffs Club, Blyndon, NE21 4JB.

NORTH WALES Richard Hughes, Tel: 07788 790966
1st Wed, 8pm, Cross Keys, Buckley, OS 117 290 637.

NORWICH Jeremy McNulty, Tel: 07786 426055
2nd Wed, 7.30pm, White Horse, Trowse, Norwich.

OXFORDSHIRE Peter Cole, Tel: 01844 214075
3rd Thurs, 8pm, The Gladiator Sport & Social Club, 263 Iffley Road, Oxford, OX4 1SJ, next to Motorworld VW Garage.

PEAK DISTRICT Steve Cartwright, Tel: 01782 848034
1st Thurs, 8pm, The Joiner's Arms, Church Road, Quarndon, Derby.

RIBBLE VALLEY John Noblet, Tel: 01254 230347
2nd Tues, 8.30pm, Brown Cow, Chatburn, Clitheroe (off A59).

SOMERSET Greg Hughes, Tel: 07824 893144
2nd Thurs, 8pm, The Old Pound Inn, High Street, Aller Langport.

SOUTHERN Colin Lindstrom Tel: 07818 404240
3rd Thurs, 8pm, Southampton & District MCC, Woodside Ave., Eastleigh, (opposite Halfords).

SOUTH LONDON & SURREY Steve Sharp, 0208 773 4204
8.30pm, 4th Wed, Nescot Centre for Sports Development, Banstead Road, Ewell, Surrey.

SOUTH NORTHANTS Graham Walker, Tel: 07841 158820
2nd Monday, 9pm, The Old Sun, 10 Middle Street, Nether Heyford, Northampton NN7 3LL.

SOUTH WALES Stuart Dodwell, Tel: 01446 710851
1st Tues, 8pm, Bedwas Rugby Club, Bedwas, Nr Caerphilly.

SOUTH WEST WALES Last Tues, Corner House Pub, Commercial Street, Ystalyfera, Swansea.

SUFFOLK Richard May, Tel: 01787 374073
Last Wed, Manger Pub, A134 Sudbury Rd, Bury-St-Ed.

SUSSEX Julian Flack, Tel: 01306 740586
Last Thurs, Ashington Social Club, Rear of Red Lion, A24, 9 miles North of Worthing.

TEESSIDE & NORTH YORKS
Harry Nicholson, Tel: 01642 657063.
3rd Tues, The Ranch House, Thoraldby Farm, Nr Stokesley, map ref 93...493074.

THAMES VALLEY Julian Ogley, Tel: 0208 5799778
3rd Mon, District Arms, Woodthorpe Rd, Ashford, Middlesex.

VIRTUAL PEAK GROUP
Paul King, kingy@virtualpeakstrf.co.uk Tel: 07966 289778.
This is a virtual group at www.virtualpeakstrf.co.uk

WEST ANGLIA Mark Andrew, Tel: 01933 413458
1st & 3rd Thurs, Scott Bader Social Club, opp. Parish Church, Wollaston, Wellingborough.

WEST MIDLANDS David Chamberlain, Tel: 0121 783 3438
1st & 3rd Wed, Wilmcote Mens Club, Stratford on Avon.

WEST YORKSHIRE Richard Hoyle, Tel: 07789 644461
1st Thurs, 8.00pm, Cue Gardens, Stadium Mills, Stadium Road, Bradford BD6 1BJ.

WILTSHIRE Vic Price, Tel: 01380 724651
1st Tues, The Bell On The Common, Broughton Gifford.

WORCESTERSHIRE
Dave Gunster, Tel: 01527 456095 Mob: 07960 422523
1st Tues, White Hart, Fernhill Heath, Worcs.